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Australia and New Zealand to host world conference on respiratory medicine in Melbourne, Australia, 2004

The National Asthma Council today announced Australia and New Zealand as the official joint hosts of The International Primary Care Respiratory Group (IPCRG) Second World Conference to be held in Melbourne in February 2004.

The announcement follows the first world IPCRG Conference which was held in Amsterdam last month.

The IPCRG represents 15 national groups of primary care physicians worldwide and provides health professionals with access to information about respiratory medicine, including asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), lung cancer and infectious lung diseases.

The National Asthma Council is a member of the IPCRG through its General Practitioners' Asthma Group (GPAG). The GPAG Chair, Dr H. John Fardy, was elected Co-President of the IPCRG at the conference, along with Professor Jim Reid of New Zealand. They will share the presidency for the next two years.

The Chairman of the National Asthma Council, Dr Ron Tomlins, said that the 2002 Amsterdam Conference featured a strong Australian and New Zealand contingent, both in terms of attendance and participation as official speakers.

"Ten Australian delegates attended the 2002 Amsterdam Conference on behalf of the National Asthma Council and New Zealand was also represented by 10 delegates including Professor Jim Reid from the Department of General Practice, Otago University Medical School," Dr Tomlins said.

Professor Reid presented a plenary paper in the Recent Advances in Therapy section entitled "Combination Therapy – The Future?" and members of the National Asthma Council presented an integrated asthma session focussing on the 3+ Visit Plan for proactive asthma care, which has been supported by the Australian government.

This integrated asthma session comprised:

- An overview of the history and rationale of the 3+ Visit Plan presented by Dr H John Fardy, Illawarra Medical Teaching Program, NSW and Chairman of the General Practitioners' Asthma Group;
- A paper on a randomised controlled trial of the Plan in children by Professor Nicholas Glasgow, Canberra Clinical School, University of Sydney;

- Two papers delivered by Professor Justin Beilby, Department of General Practice, University of Adelaide: one on whether the 3+ Visit Plan was cost effective for parents and their children with asthma and the second on the barriers and facilitators to its national implementation;
- A review of a local asthma program by Dr Ian Charlton, Chairman of the Central Coast Division of General Practice, NSW; and
- The implementation of the 3 + Visit Plan: Politics and Policy, presented by Ms Monica Johns of the Department of Health and Ageing and Dr Ron Tomlins.

Dr Tomlins said that the Amsterdam Conference had attracted worldwide attendance, creating the ideal setting for leading discussion on asthma and COPD. He said that the 2004 IPCRG Conference would also aim to attract global representation. It provided a wonderful opportunity for health professionals in the Asia Pacific region to discuss the management of respiratory disease in our region.

"No country, developed or developing, is free from respiratory conditions such as asthma. Raised awareness and better asthma management within available resources is a global priority."

"The National Asthma Council encourages health professionals from around the country, including primary care physicians, nurses, pharmacists, researchers and educators to register their interest for the 2004 Conference now. Registration will begin via the website: www.ipcrg-melbourne.org and by mail in 2003," Dr Tomlins said.

"The 2004 Conference program will showcase new developments in respiratory disease, research and management and include clinical and scientific issues presented in an atmosphere of friendliness and collaboration. Open dialogue is crucial to identifying primary care solutions to primary care problems," Dr Tomlins said.

As well as attracting a strong international presence, the 2004 Conference will feature a number of local health experts. This will provide an excellent opportunity for both international and local health professionals to share the latest in research and the implementation of best practice.

For further information and to register interest, the advance notice of the 2004 conference is available on the 2004 IPCRG Conference official website: www.ipcrg-melbourne.org The scientific program, call for abstracts and registration facilities will be available on this site.

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For media information or to arrange an interview with Dr Ron Tomlins, please call Caroline James on tel: (03) 9289 9555 or 0413 481 579.

For further information about asthma, log onto the National Asthma Council website: www.nationalasthma.org.au More information about the 2004 IPCRG Conference can be found at www.ipcrg-melbourne.org