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## Australian Asthma Conference - 2004 “A fresh breath – looking to the future”

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## CONFERENCE REPORT

### **Australian Asthma Conference - 2004 "A fresh breath – looking to the future"**

**Ev Thuma**

The Australian Asthma Conference held this year in Melbourne, was hosted by the Asthma Foundation of Victoria. The conference attracted over 300 participants from all states and internationally, and was headed by a range of keynote speakers representing national and international leaders in the various aspects of asthma management from prevention through to clinical care. Participants included the full spectrum of health professionals, with a large number of asthma educators represented.

The 3 day conference included a mixture of keynote presentations in plenary session, concurrent oral presentation sessions, and concurrent workshop sessions. In all there were 10 keynote presentations, 7 oral presentation sessions, and 29 workshop sessions.

The keynote sessions covered: the impact and burden of asthma and the cost to the individual; asthma and smoking; research; evidence-based education; genome medicine and asthma; the changing face of asthma; asthma in children, adolescents, and the older person; asthma as the sixth national health priority; the pharmaceutical benefits scheme. This range of keynote presentations were linked by the horizontal theme, "Looking to the Future". The scope of the presentations, the imminent status of the keynote speakers, and the manner of the presentations were most valuable and provided not only a contemporary profile of asthma, but also a lens to provide an insight into the future of asthma care.

The oral session and workshops provided a broad range of expert-led sessions covering everything from prevention, social and cultural factors, behavioural issues, education, clinical care, research, specific techniques, and current controversies which often made it difficult to choose between two or three interesting sessions which were offered at the same time. Participants would be hard pressed to find a particular time at which they couldn't find a session of interest.

The conference was held in a most conducive setting at the Sofitel Hotel, Melbourne and was supported by an extensive trade display and a selection of poster displays. Socially the conference included opportunity for delegates to enjoy dinner and entertainment at Parliament House.

Of particular note was the ambience generated by the conference organisers which provided a wonderful environment for all participants who enjoyed networking and meeting and making new friends who share common interests in improving asthma management at the community level.

The conference had particular relevance to community-based emergency care providers with two workshops co-led by ambulance service personnel. Many of the other sessions would be of significant relevance to ambulance Paramedics and others involved in emergency primary health care.

The next Conference is in Adelaide in 2006, and will be a conference worthy of placing in your diaries for those who wish to gain an authoritative update on asthma care.

Further information can be obtained from Nigel Cooper on telephone (08) 8238 9300 or Asthma South Australia website at <http://www.asthmasa.org.au>

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