



Australian College of Neonatal Nurses Incorporated

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18th January 2010

Dear Sylvia,

This is an invitation for State representation and consultation on the question of amalgamating the National College and the State Neonatal Nurses Associations into one entity rather than a collection of stand-alone organizations.

Background

A proposal to amalgamate the college and state associations was put before members at the AGM in April 2007. At this time it was proposed that:

1. The College would move towards becoming a company limited by guarantee
2. State associations dissolve and reform as branches under the banner of ACNN

The advantages of this proposal were felt to be:

1. Amalgamation would reduce duplication of effort (i.e. financial reporting; membership database maintenance; payment of capitation & journal fees; newsletters)
2. Increase the College profile at a national level
3. Fits the ethos of a 'College'
4. Fewer reporting requirements for state associations to their respective offices of fair trading
5. Reduced number of executive positions required in a branch (note: filling current exec positions at State level is becoming increasingly difficult)

The concerns and possible disadvantages raised by members in response to the proposal included:

1. Becoming a limited company (cost; increased reporting requirements; different Act)
2. Dissolving State associations and distribution of state money
3. Loss of State autonomy with respect to management/finances
4. Allocation of a budget to branches
5. Proposed significant membership fee increase to ~\$200/year
6. Possible unequal representation of States on executive council in office bearing positions

In consideration of the time required to explore these issues, the decision was made not to amalgamate. At the time the Executive Council felt that internal College processes and structures needed to be streamlined and improved before amalgamation should be considered. The Executive Council has worked hard towards achieving this over the last 12 – 18 months.

On the 25 October 2009, the current ACNN Executive Committee held a face-to-face meeting and at this meeting state representatives reiterated concerns being faced by most State Associations, such as:

- difficulties in filling State Executive positions
- falling membership numbers
- reduced attendance at meetings/education sessions
- general overall 'inactivity' by members

It was felt that the idea of amalgamation should be revisited. The Executive agreed that there are advantages to amalgamating (those put forward in 2007), however the disadvantages and concerns are real and still need to be explored. Therefore the executive agreed that amalgamation should be revisited and the following plan for exploring the issue was put forward:

1. If amalgamation moves forward, ACNN would remain as an incorporated association and NOT move towards a company limited by guarantee. A scoping document prepared in 2008 did not suggest advantages for becoming a company limited by guarantee over incorporated associations, as ACNN would not reach the level of activity covered by the Corporations Act.
2. Representatives from the ACNN Executive would arrange a meeting with ACMI executive who were involved with amalgamating ACMI to explore its experience with running a national college as an incorporated association.
3. ACNN would hold an exploratory meeting on Thursday 20 May 2010 (pre-ACNN conference) in Canberra. In addition to the State representatives on council, we would like to invite the President and Treasurer (or proxy representatives) of each State Association to a two hour session to discuss the issues around amalgamation.
4. If at the exploratory meeting it is felt that amalgamation should be pursued then we anticipate that this process will take approximately 18 - 24 months.
5. In order that the time for the exploratory meeting is used to its fullest potential, we have noted questions and issues (attached below), that we ask each State Association to consider prior to the meeting. The intent of the meeting is to address issues in order to inform the decision making process.
6. Following the May 2010 exploratory meeting, should the decision to amalgamate go ahead, then a plan (including time lines, financial distributions etc) will be formalised.

ACNN asks that each State Association discusses this issue prior to May 2010. We welcome comments and questions on this issue at any time prior to May and/or at the exploratory meeting. Please feedback comments via your state representatives or via email Karen New at acnn@acnn.org.au

The ACNN Executive sees the need for this to be a consultative process and hopes that each State Association will engage in the process and attend the exploratory meeting in Canberra

on Thursday 20 May 2010. Could you please RSVP your attendance by the 28 February 2010.

Kind regards



President Elect
For and on behalf of the ACNN executive

Outline for the exploratory meeting to be held on Thursday 20th May 2010

1. What would be the advantages to amalgamation?
2. What would be the disadvantages to amalgamation?
3. What are the financial implications/concerns for your state association to amalgamation?
4. What funding/annual budget would you need to run as a branch?
5. What is the process for winding up your State Association (procedure; time required etc)?
6. Other issues of concern that need to be addressed