Oncology Massage Limited at the 11\textsuperscript{th} annual Australian Association of Massage Therapists (AAMT) Conference, Hobart, May 27\textsuperscript{th} – 29\textsuperscript{th}

Oncology Massage Limited (OML) was in attendance as an exhibitor at the 11\textsuperscript{th} Annual AAMT Conference, held in Hobart on the 27\textsuperscript{th}, 28\textsuperscript{th} and 29\textsuperscript{th} May. Eleanor Oyston, founder of OML, and Atholl Reid, OML Tasmanian Coordinator, were there representing OML.

The planning for an event such as this begins before the start of the previous conference, so in the case of the Hobart conference, prior to May 2015. OMLs involvement was initiated early, so as to ensure that there was promotion of oncology massage (OM) to the conference attendees and an opportunity to catch up with therapists who have already completed some OML training.

In addition to the stand at the conference, OML had a poster in the poster presentation area that focussed on research into massage. Eleanor was invited to display a poster explaining the part-OML funded research announced in February 2016 (click here to see the news release).

This research is a collaborative research project with The National Institute of Complementary Medicine and the Centre for Health Research at Western Sydney University, and the South Western Sydney Local Health District to quantify the use of complementary medicine (CM) in oncology healthcare services (SWSLHD) and to identify barriers and facilitators to CM integration. This is a vital first step in developing efficacious, effective and viable integrative oncology services to patients.
in SWSLHD and nationally.

In total there were seven research posters: three from North America, one from Canada, one from the United Kingdom and two from Australia. Eleanor spent some time standing next to the poster and talking about the research and OM (click here to see the poster).

The OML booth was colourful both in terms of the items and posters displayed and the OML representatives present! There were many comments on the wonderful green shirts.

Eleanor and Atholl spoke to many therapists about the training courses offered by OML and about working as an oncology massage therapist. There is always a great deal of interest in working with people living with a diagnosis of cancer and how OM differed from other massage modalities. Some therapists were concerned that their emotions would prevent them from doing OM while others said that they thought that it would be greatly rewarding to do OM, with many other opinions also being expressed.

Also visiting the stand were therapists who have already completed an OM course and several times it was good to be able to meet the person behind the Facebook persona.

The booth had for sale two DVDs: the DVD by Eleanor entitled *Oncology Massage – Understanding Cancer* and the William Collinge DVD *Touch, Caring and Cancer*. Several copies of each were sold to conference attendees and both are available for purchase from the OML online shop (click here to visit).

Incidentally, William Collinge is a keynote speaker at the OML conference being held in Canberra in October this year and will be running a 3-hour workshop based on his
DVD ‘Touch, Caring and Cancer’, to encourage therapists to offer carer’s workshops in their communities (click here for details).

A number of the other exhibitors present were interested in OM and several conversations took place. Two exhibitors talked about their massage balms and wanted to know about the OML recommendation for sweet almond oil. It was explained that OML recommends sweet almond oil for a number of reasons:

- sweet almond oil is a food quality oil and therefore adheres to the adage “only put on your body what is safe to put in your body”;
- a body that is already working with cancer and it’s treatments will be minimally impacted by sweet almond oil when it is absorbed by the skin;
- sweet almond oil has little odour and some clients may be very sensitive to odour;
- the pH of sweet almond oil is between 4 and 5, which is close to the skin’s ideal pH of around 5 and therefore assists with protection from fungus and bacteria;
- sweet almond oil has not been shown to be a problem for people living with a nut allergy, however it is wise to do a skin test to ascertain tolerance.

On the final day of the conference, Russell Sturgess, another exhibitor, was given a very important task by Eleanor: to look after and control Atholl when Eleanor was not present. Russell is also a confirmed speaker at this year’s OML conference, where he will be talking about his Enhances Awareness Program (EAP™), which “helps people align their values with sustainable desires and wants, resulting in new behaviours, beliefs and attitudes. Over the past two years Russell has expanded the focus of EAP to include Health Professionals. EAP helps health professionals avoid burnout, and even depression.” Kylie Ochsenbein (OML Managing Director) has
completed this program with one of Russell’s facilitators, Anna Schaumkel, and highly recommends it. OML is very excited about bringing Russell and his EAP work to the OML conference this year for therapists to discover it for themselves.

AAMT made two major announcements at the conference. One announcement was regarding the growth of AAMT, about which Paul McCann (AAMT president) said “...the Board has also reviewed, evaluated and researched options to refresh our brand. They have resolved to bring forward a new, revitalised and relevant brand trading name of Massage and Myotherapy Australia that recognises the breadth and depth of our membership base across the span of qualification and skill. This process has been undertaken thoroughly and with professional input.”

The other announcement made by AAMT concerned the creation of what it has termed “...a roadmap for the Massage and Myotherapy profession...”. AAMT states on the webpage for Certification (click here to view), “Certification provides a universal, formal roadmap for the Massage and Myotherapy profession by describing the competencies skills, qualifications, and professional pathways for Therapists. It will support the growth of the profession and the professional development of Massage Therapists.”

OML will be closely following this matter and has provided commentary to date in a separate article in this newsletter. The matter of Certification has also arisen on the OM Therapists’ Facebook page.

Finally, the OML stand has already been booked for the exhibition area of the 12th AAMT conference to be held in Melbourne in 2017. OML looks forward to seeing you there!