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From the President & Committee

"Many hands make light work."

This year has continued to be a difficult one for the Committee. Earlier in the year we were saddened by the loss of ongoing funding for the continuation of our Administration extraordinaire, Tracey.

Tracey worked for POSAA one day per week in our reserved space at the Nad's Office in Sydney and provided a friendly point of contact for members and enquirers. Tracey also provided invaluable support with dispatching online shop orders, membership packs as well as responding to other general enquiries.

The provision of funding for the Administration Assistant was a rare opportunity for POSAA to employ some much needed support. Previously, and since it's inception POSAA has only ever been managed by a group of dedicated and generous volunteers. Each position available on the Committee is an unpaid volunteer role. Many roles only require 1-2 hours per week but there is always scope for more for those who have the time and the dedication to provide it.

With the loss of some key Committee members at the last AGM the Committee has continued to struggle this year to provide member services and to ensure the Association continues to be there for those in need of support. In recognition of the downturn of use of the POSAA online forums, the decision was made to limit membership of the Closed Group on Facebook to paid members only. Thus, providing an additional avenue for a continuing dialogue for members.

"You reap what you sow"

In the next couple of weeks you will receive your membership renewal request for the 2013/2014 membership year and beyond. Included will be a list of the services POSAA would like to focus on for the next 12 months. These services are only available with money, which comes from YOUR membership, and people power, which YOU can provide.

Now is the time to consider what you want from your membership; to truly consider the possibility that you can help by providing an hour of time each week or perhaps a few hours each quarter for a specific task/event.

Do you have a skill? Are you crafty with words? A whizz at fundraising? Perhaps you are good at organising events? Why not consider POSAA as a recipient of your skills?

Your PCOS journey is important to us. Your opinions matter and without YOU there is no US. There is no POSAA to support you, or the newly diagnosed, or to lobby on your behalf for things that matter when it comes to the diagnosis and management of PCOS.

Research updates

High protein, low GI diets help keep weight off

Results from a large European study may hold the secret to successfully avoiding weight gain. Findings suggest that a low-GI diet that is also high in protein leads to better weight management after weight loss.

Source: N Engl J Med, 2010, 363(22):2102-2113



Post-menopause weight woes

Why do women gain weight after menopause, especially around the waist? Scientists have discovered an enzyme that may encourage tummy fat. It's believed the enzyme is suppressed by oestrogen. But, as oestrogen levels drop with menopause, it increases, encouraging weight gain. This is a problem because fat stored around our waist then

wraps around our vital organs. Your best defence? Control how much saturated fat you eat by limiting your intake of foods like cakes, biscuits and chips.

Source: Ohio State University, 2012

23kg

That's the amount of sugar you'll consume in a year if you drink a 600ml bottle of regular soft drink each day!

Rethink Sugary Drink, 2013

Do you have a comment, suggestion, opinion or story you'd like to share with other POSAA members? If you'd like to contribute any articles, recipes etc, please send an email to Jody at editor@posaa.asn.au

On the book shelf...

Sigrid de Castella's book "Half The Woman I Was" is available from all bookstores across Australia (RRP\$29.95) as well as in eBook format via Amazon and iTunes.

Get a great read AND support POSAA:

And for those who buy the book directly from her web site using the link below, Sigrid is kindly donating \$5 from every sale to POSAA.

Just head to:

www.halfthewomaniwas.com/posaa/

And if you're not sure if Sigrid's book is for you can read the first few chapters for FREE: www.halfthewomaniwas.com/intro/intro



Volunteer with POSAA

POSAA relies totally on volunteer support. There are many volunteer opportunities at POSAA from researching articles for the newsletter and website, fundraising, marketing, grant and submission writing, and helping with event organisation through to general administrative support.

Whatever your skills, there will be a job for you. If you want the chance to improve the lives of thousands of women then become a POSAA Volunteer.

You can access more information about the roles and responsibilities, along with the position descriptions, for the committee from the POSAA website in the "Get involved" section.

If you are interested in being a POSAA volunteer, please contact Veryan, our President, via email at: president@posaa.asn.au

POSAA Volunteers have these attributes:

- ◆ **Diversity awareness** – recognises and appreciates team and organisational diversity
- ◆ **Integrity** – maintains high ethical standards and is trustworthy
- ◆ **Interpersonal sensitivity** – shows consideration and respect for others and their views
- ◆ **Team-work** – cooperates and works well with others in pursuit of team goals
- ◆ **Resilience** – able to maintain good spirits even in adversity
- ◆ **Adaptability** – adapts to changing work environments and demands
- ◆ **Organisational awareness** – protects and encourages the achievement of organisational goals
- ◆ **Drive** - enthusiastic and committed

State Delegates

At present all State Delegate roles are vacant. If you feel you could be a point of contact within your state then please consider undertaking all or part of a State Delegates' role.

Duties may include:

- ◆ Organising regular support meetings.
- ◆ Responding to PCOS queries from people in your state.
- ◆ Organising or participating in POSAA fundraising events.
- ◆ Approaching the local medical community with the aim of raising the profile of POSAA and PCOS.
- ◆ Encouraging and promoting membership with professionals and women with PCOS.
- ◆ Lobbying state governments for awareness, education and resources for women with PCOS.

Another important task that state delegates undertake includes ratifying the minutes of committee meetings.

Fundraising

If volunteering isn't your thing then perhaps consider fundraising on POSAA's behalf. This can be as simple as hosting a morning tea or a DVD night with some girlfriends and requesting a donation through to organising a more elaborate event such as a raffle, auction or trivia night.

For more information about fundraising on behalf of POSAA, and for the application form, visit the POSAA website and check out the information in the "Get involved" section.

Yarning about Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)

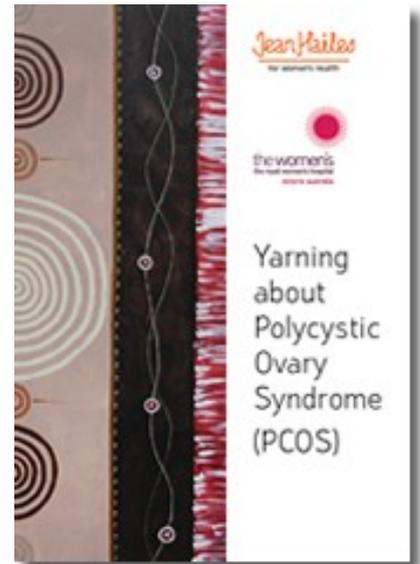
Terori Hareko-Samios is a health worker at the Royal Women's Hospital who passionately believes that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women should have the right information about this condition, to know how best to keep them well.

Jean Hailes joined Terori in a partnership with the Royal Women's Hospital to develop a resource aimed at meeting the needs of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

The booklet is essential reading for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who wish to better understand a condition that may affect them, their daughters or the women in their community.

Get a copy of the booklet:

⇒ <http://www.managingpcos.org.au/resources/pcos-booklet/yarning-about-pcos>



Finding a Doctor

Some women are lucky and have found a doctor who understands Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS). And sometimes it can be really tricky finding a doctor who is right for you and who specialises in treating PCOS.

Remember, the most important thing is that it is a service industry and it's entirely OK to shop around and find a doctor who is right for you.

Alarm bells should ring if a doctor tells you the following: 'don't worry, come back and see me when you want to get pregnant'. If this happens, you MUST find someone else straight away as your symptoms need treating NOW to stop serious complications in later life.

Here are some tips for finding Doctor Right and when to leave Doctor Wrong.

1. Finding the right type of Doctor

There are many types of doctors who can treat PCOS; from your local GP to a range of specialists. The most important thing is that they are up to date with current research and that you feel comfortable with their methods of practice.

2. Let your fingers do the walking

- ◆ Get out your Yellow Pages and look under Medical Practitioners.
- ◆ Contact your local University with a Medical school.
- ◆ Ask your GP or Ob/Gyn.
- ◆ Contact your local Women's Clinics, Hospitals and Specialist Clinics.
- ◆ Ask the POSAA members—post a request in the forums or the closed group on Facebook.

For further reading on how to evaluate a Doctor and when to change Doctors continue reading this article on the POSAA website:

⇒ <http://main.posaa.asn.au/index.php/what-is-pcos/finding-a-doctor>

Member Spotlight



By Jane Lynch

I was diagnosed with PCOS in 2004 and looking back, I had all the symptoms from when I was in my early teens. I was about 12 when I first got my period and had awful cramps and felt really sick for the first day or so. It was never regular though. That was also around the time I started putting on weight.

I had a slipped femoral epiphysis on both sides at the end of Grade 6. Basically it means that the ball at the top end of my femur broke off and slipped down in my hip joint. It took a month and six medical professionals to diagnose what was wrong. I had surgery and was in a wheelchair for a month then all of a sudden I wasn't allowed to do any ex-

ercise for a year. No running, no jumping, no skipping. Try telling that to a 12 year old! So my weight just kept going up and my period started getting more and more irregular.

I didn't really worry about the irregularity until we went on a trip to Canada to see my sister get married and while we were there, Scott (my fiancé at the time) and I realised that it had been about a year since I got my period. We were getting married a few months later and wanted to start trying to have a baby so off to the doctor we went.

The doctor was great and had an idea straight away of what the problem was. He referred me to an endocrinologist who did all the usual tests and diagnosed PCOS. She put me on Metformin which really didn't agree with me and Aldactone which wasn't as bad. I started getting my period a little more regularly but it was still several months between them. She also told me that losing weight would help a lot. So I began to try every diet out there.

None of the diets seemed to help though. I kept finding that after a month or two I would give up because I was feeling sick. There were only certain things that my brain could handle while feeling so awful from the Metformin. So every time I would be starting to get somewhere, I'd feel sick and go back to eating fast food and drinking soft drink. I was having lots of time off work and eventually went back to the endocrinologist who put me on Diabex XR instead of Metformin. I was amazed at what a difference in side effects this had. I felt so much better!

I started going to the gym every afternoon and having personal training sessions which were fantastic BUT I didn't change my eating habits... Obviously not much changed. I felt healthier and stronger than I had in years but my weight didn't shift.

Fast forward a few years and I'm starting to head in the right direction both mentally and physically. My dad always talks about this point when a person clicks over to being an adult. He has seen it with my brother and three sisters and he was waiting for it to happen with me. A lot of big changes have happened with me over the last few months that have helped this 'click over' to happen. I'm starting to look after myself a lot better, exercise again and eat healthier. I'm really looking forward to 2013 being the year I get my body in shape and start putting my health first.

Jane currently holds the Committee role of Secretary. If you would like to contact her, email secretary@posaa.asn.au.

The 10-Step Miracle Energy Booster

By Sigrid de Castella, author of *Half The Woman I Was*

One of the biggest ailments these days seems to be a lack of energy. It's so common that it's become a multi-million dollar opportunity for big business to fleece those looking for real solutions.

If the body or mind is out of balance then tiredness is often the result. Use this simple *10-Step Miracle Energy Booster* program to get yourself back into balance and turbo charge your days.

1. Quit Trying to be Wonder Woman

One of the main reasons for a lack of energy is that we take on too much and are trying to cram far more than is humanly possible into 24 hours. Use these simple tips:

- ◆ Spend 15 minutes first thing in the morning (or the night before) planning your day;
- ◆ Prioritise your tasks and put off tasks that are less important or have longer deadlines so your day is manageable and you don't end up in overwhelm;
- ◆ Stop and think twice before you agree to take on more;
- ◆ Assess what is really important and learn to say 'No'
- ◆ Ask for help from others

Lastly, give yourself a break – you're not Wonder Woman and you don't have to be.

2. Survive Stress

Dare I say stress is often a perception, rather than real. Most of our stresses are self-imposed and many of the things we 'stress out' about simply aren't really that important.

It can help to change your perception by checking when you feel stressed and asking yourself "why exactly am I feeling this way – what's the cause?" This will help connect with and understand the drivers for your emotional stress, and that will empower you to make different choices.

Stress-induced emotions consume huge amounts of energy. If you can't have a more relaxed attitude to life then find an activity that helps you de-stress like talking with friends or a counsellor, joining a support group, meditating, self-hypnosis, yoga, or tai chi.

And don't forget to take some time out for you to recharge.

3. Quit Smoking

You may not be aware that the nicotine in tobacco is a stimulant. It speeds up the heart rate, raises blood pressure, stimulates brain-wave activity to that of an awake state and makes it hard to get a good night's sleep.

4. Exercise Daily

It sounds like a contradiction but exercising actually boosts your energy. This is because cardiovascular activity improves oxygen flow and blood circulation making your body more efficient.

Exercising daily makes your body release the (good) stress hormones epinephrine and norepinephrine which also help to make you feel energised. It also improves your ability to reach deep restful sleep at night. For the best balance do two or three 45-minute resistance training sessions a week and 30 minutes of cardio exercise on your off days.

5. Schedule Your Sleep

Sleep deprivation is a major source of tiredness, and nanna napping during the day may be the culprit. Although you may be in bed for 8 hours, it takes at least 45 mins of unbroken sleep just to reach the required levels of REM that recharge and rejuvenate the body. The longer and deeper you can sleep in one go will ensure you'll wake more energised and refreshed.

Start preparing for bed at least 1 hour before bed by not watching TV or using the computer. Instead do something that will start to get the brain into the right pre-sleep brainwaves. Reading, having a bath or meditating are all good pre-sleep activities.

6. Don't Skip Meals

Skipping meals actually lowers your metabolism and throws your body into starvation mode, thereby reducing your overall energy levels. If you never feel like breakfast in the morning then you're probably over eating at night. Stop eating and drinking (especially coffee) at least 4 hours before you go to bed to get 8 hours of restful sleep overnight. Then you are sure to wake up refreshed and hungry for a healthy breakfast.

The 10-Step Miracle Energy Booster

By Sigrid de Castella, author of *Half The Woman I Was*

7. Five Squares A Day

Studies show that the body can only actively utilise energy from direct food intake for approximately three hours after it triggers a meal has been eaten. After that time any excess food consumption is converted and stored via fat deposits. In order to register the trigger a meal need to contain at least 200 calories.

With this in mind the best method to maximise your energy levels is to eat meals of about 200 calories every 3 hours for 12 hours (5 meals e.g. 7am, 10am, 1pm, 3pm and 7pm) and then have a fasting break of 12 hours overnight.

This approach gives your body a steady supply of nutrients, increases your metabolism, controls blood sugar levels and keeps you energised throughout the day. You'll also sleep better and wake refreshed and hungry.

8. Eat Raw, Steamed and Complex

If you look at the evolution of the human body and our historical diet it's clear to see that our bodies are designed to eat small amounts of lean protein, a little fruit, some complex grains and nuts and heaps of fresh vegetables.

It's the fat, sugar, salt, colourings and flavourings in processed foods that zap our body of vital energy levels and make us feel super tired. Avoid them (or better still throw them all out of your fridge and cupboards) and you'll make a huge step towards increasing your energy.

If you follow this fresh food approach to every meal you'll not only have more energy, you'll feel better, look better, lose weight, and get all the nutrition you need.

9. Rehydrate

Fatigue is a tell-tale sign of dehydration. At rest the human body requires about 32mls per kilogram of weight. So if you weight 80kg you need at least 2.5 litres of water each day just to maintain hydration.

And if you consume coffee, alcohol or any non-water beverages then they all contribute to dehydration. Limit them and offset any consumption with the same amount again of pure water or herbal tea (with nothing added).

And if you're exercising you'll need to drink even more. Be wary of sports drinks which are high in salt, sugars, colourings and flavourings and provide no real nutritional benefit to non-athletes. And no matter how hard you think that gym workout or step class was you're just fooling yourself if you think you need anything but pure filtered water to re-energise you.

If you're thinking now you're going to be bloated with water, relax. After a day or two of drinking this volume your body will adjust and settle into the new properly hydrated routine. But you might want to make sure you know where all the public toilets are!

10. Supplements

If your dietary intake of vitamins and minerals is insufficient then you may benefit from a vitamin or herbal supplement. If your diet is fresh, healthy and balanced then you probably won't.

If you feel a supplement would help your energy levels it can be a good idea to get a simple blood test via your doctor. The test is bulk billed and can highlight any vitamin deficiencies or a sluggish thyroid, which can then be treated appropriately.

Many energy supplements contain guarana or caffeine which can also lead to insomnia. And some herbal supplements may appear to help, but they could also be an expensive placebo that you just don't need.

For more information on any of these steps or how to lose those excess kilograms grab your copy of Sigrid's book "Half The Woman I Was – How I lost 70kg naturally, reclaimed my life ... and how you can too!". Sigrid is kindly donating \$5 from every book sold via this link to POSAA.

⇒ <http://www.halfthewomaniwas.com/posaa/>

PCOS & Depression

By Dr Mandy Deeks PhD from the Information Counsel

Mental and emotional health is just as important as physical health.

One third of women with PCOS have depression compared to seven per cent of women in the general population and research has shown the longer it takes to receive a diagnosis of PCOS, the more likely women are to be depressed.

Life can get complex when you have both PCOS and depression. Not only does depression impact on quality of life, the symptoms of PCOS can also impact negatively. Excess hair growth, hair loss, acne, weight changes and fertility problems negatively affect mood, self-confidence and body image.

On top of this many women with PCOS also have anxiety (anxiety will be discussed in the next issue).

The good news is there are lots of things that can help with depression and lots of things you can do to help yourself.

The first thing is to understand what depression is.

What is depression?

Depression is more than just a low mood it is a condition that can stop you doing everyday activities and change the way you think, feel and behave.

Depression impacts in a number of ways including:

- ◆ Physically – on eating and sleeping patterns
- ◆ Psychologically – on motivation and feelings of worthlessness
- ◆ Socially – on relationships with others

Having depression can make it difficult to follow a healthy lifestyle and make the best decisions about your physical health.

It is very important to recognise the signs of depression and seek help early. The following are some symptoms of depression:

Physical symptoms	Feelings
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Sleep disturbance: either not sleeping or 'over' sleeping◆ Changes in eating: either not eating or 'over' eating◆ Changes in weight◆ Headaches◆ Daily tiredness and loss of energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Depressed mood most of the time◆ Hopelessness about yourself, the future and the world◆ Continuing feelings of sadness, unhappiness and tearfulness◆ Feelings of anxiety◆ Feelings of heaviness
Thoughts	Behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ "I'm a failure"◆ "It's not my fault"◆ "Nothing good ever happens to me"◆ "I'm worthless"◆ "Life is not worth living"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Withdrawal from social situations◆ Less pleasure/interest in activities◆ Loss of interest in personal appearance

PCOS & Depression continued

By Dr Mandy Deeks PhD from the Information Counsel

What influences depression?

There are many factors that influence our mental and emotional health, including:

- ◆ Chronic disease and illness, like PCOS
- ◆ Lifestyle and stress
- ◆ Our genes, personality and thinking
- ◆ Self esteem, sense of purpose and our ways of coping in difficult times
- ◆ Relationships
- ◆ Experiences

It is helpful to think about what influence these have on your own mental and emotional health.

How do you know if you have depression?

Start by asking a few important questions about how you've been feeling. Simply answer Yes or No to the following:

Question	Yes	No
Have you for more than two weeks felt sad or miserable for most of the time?		
Have you for more than two weeks lost interest or pleasure in most of your usual activities?		
Does it make it hard to do your work or be with your friends and family?		

If you answered 'Yes' to any of these questions see a doctor to explore whether you have depression. They can assess your symptoms and then discuss possible treatments with you - this might include talking, therapies and sometimes medication.



POSAA has registered for the **Aussie Farmers Direct** fundraising program which allow us to receive the equivalent of 2% of all sales from our members that shop through them. **Aussie Farmers Direct** is a free home delivery service providing fresh products that are 100% Australian owned and produced. By supporting this home grown business you are helping to support us!

To link POSAA to your Aussie Farmers Direct account, follow the directions on our website:

⇒ www.posaa.asn.au/index.php/get-involved/fundraising

PCOS & Depression continued

By Dr Mandy Deeks PhD from the Information Counsel

What can you do?

There are many helpful things to do if you have depression.

Keep a diary of symptoms	<p>Create a diary of symptoms by breaking up a page into 4 columns with the headings: a) Physical symptoms b) Thoughts c) Feelings d) Behaviours. You can keep a daily diary or just fill it in every couple of days.</p> <p>A diary of the symptoms you experience can help clarify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Whether the symptoms are related to PCOS or are more likely to be depression◆ The things that trigger negative thoughts and feelings◆ The things that trigger stress
Seek treatment for the symptoms of PCOS that are troubling you	<p>If the physical symptoms of PCOS are getting you down, find the best treatment for these in order to minimise their negative impact on your mood.</p>
Keep a diary of things that help you when you are feeling depressed	<p>Sometimes when we are depressed or caught in a negative cycle we forget the things that actually make us feel positive or help to break the cycle.</p> <p>Take your diary of symptoms and add a column that lists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ What is helpful to do when you have negative thoughts or feelings – for eg challenge them, accept them, breathe through them... <p>Next time you are feeling depressed or negative reach for your diary, remind yourself of what is helpful and have a go at one or two things that have helped in the past</p>
Talk	<p>Talk with trusted people if this helps to get things 'out' rather than bottling things inside</p>
Connect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Spend time with the friends and family members who are easier to be with and make you feel more positive◆ If you feel cut off from other people, try joining a sport group (eg Pilates, tennis, walking) or hobby group (eg pottery, bridge), or a book club, use the internet to connect via a reliable system such as email or Facebook or LinkedIn, volunteer with a local charity
Exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Exercise for your mental and emotional health not just your physical health◆ Exercise stimulates endorphins (feel good hormones) in the brain which can improve your mood and help you cope with stress
Nutritious food	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Including some protein in every meal helps with mood swings◆ Avoid the highs and lows of sugary and high carbohydrate foods
Relaxation techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Some people find relaxation can help to feel more calm through the day and is a coping skill in times of stress and distress◆ There are many local and community relaxation classes around, find the right one for you◆ It is important to note, some people find relaxation techniques make them tense and distressed rather than calm, so do what is right for you

PCOS & Depression continued

By Dr Mandy Deeks PhD from the Information Counsel

Small tasks	Set small tasks so each day you feel you have achieved something
Small achievements	Remember the things you achieve each day – even the small ones are worth remembering
Small steps	Rather than worrying about what might happen tomorrow or in the future, take one hour, one day at a time

And finally!

Make sure you take time out for you. With busy, demanding lives we often run from task to task giving our energy to many different roles and to many different people. This is particularly true at Christmas time!

If we give, give, give without taking some time out to recharge, we often have nothing left to give. This can lead to exhaustion and more negative thinking. It can be helpful to think of your energy stores as a well. If you give out without refilling your well you can quickly find you have nothing left to give. So it is very important to find ways to fill your well back up.

Ways we give, give, give:

- ◆ Work
- ◆ Family
- ◆ Friends
- ◆ Daily chores
- ◆ Stressful times like Christmas, anniversaries
- ◆ Having an illness like PCOS that zaps your energy and takes up a lot of thinking time
- ◆ Modern technology – emails, mobile phones, social media
- ◆ Brainstorm ways you give, give, give...



Ways to fill your well back up:

- ◆ Reading
- ◆ Walking
- ◆ A facial, a massage...
- ◆ Making things - being crafty, knitting, sewing...
- ◆ A day not having to be anywhere
- ◆ Listening to music
- ◆ Brainstorm ways of filling your well back up...

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This information is intended to be educational and should not replace specific medical advice from your health practitioner. Please see your health practitioner to discuss your individual health needs and treatment. For more information on PCOS and depression visit www.jeanhailes.org.au

POSAA on Twitter

You can find POSAA on Twitter.

Join in on discussions about PCOS, all things related and sometimes unrelated to PCOS. Have a giggle and share in the highs and lows of PCOS.

Get alerted on related newsworthy articles, requests for participation in research and other announcements.

Help spread the word about PCOS and POSAA—retweet and share newsworthy tweets or articles you find with us.



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QLD

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SA

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NT

VACANT

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Tas

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WA

VACANT

**Would you like to nominate for a POSAA position?
Contact Veryan via president@posaa.asn.au**

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS?

If you have moved, please log into www.posaa.asn.au and update your details.

Non-members, please email us at: info@posaa.asn.au

If you would like to receive this newsletter via email, let us know - info@posaa.asn.au

A NOTE TO OUR READERS: *The information provided in this newsletter is not intended to serve as medical advice. Readers are strongly urged to seek their own independent medical advice from a professionally qualified physician. We cannot guarantee the information contained within this newsletter is 100% accurate or exhaustively complete. Nor can the committee be held responsible for any errors or omissions. The views expressed by those invited to contribute to this newsletter are their own, and not of the POSAA committee.*