

ORDER OF THE IFEM

Citation - Phillip Kay

Dr Phillip Kay graduated from the University of Queensland Medical School in 1976. He spent the next five years in a variety of posts in rural and urban hospitals including registrar positions. During this time he developed his interest in emergency medicine. After spending 12 months in the United Kingdom under the guidance of Dr John Gosnold, he returned to take up the position of Director of Emergency Medicine at the Gold Coast Hospital.

It was during this time that the Gold Coast Hospital developed one of the most successful emergency medicine training programs in Australasia producing a steady stream of graduates including a number of winners of the College medal. He was deeply involved in the establishment of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine and in particular its training curriculum. He is a Fellow of the College. While also at the Gold Coast he established one of the first helicopter interhospital retrieval services in Australia and made significant contributions to the pre-hospital care system.

He left Queensland Health in 1987 frustrated with problems still very much in evidence today. He established the first bona fide, fee for service emergency department in an Australian private hospital. This was so successful that he took this model throughout that private hospital chain setting up a number of such departments around Australia. The establishment of a viable private sector engagement option for emergency physicians has had a fundamentally important role in the development of emergency medicine in Australia as well as improving the options for high quality care for patients.

Dr Kay remains actively involved in private sector emergency medicine even after resuming a public health role as Director of Emergency Medicine at the Princess Alexandra Hospital, one of Australia's major tertiary referral hospitals. He still manages three private emergency centres as well as working publicly part time.

Dr Kay attended the inaugural International Conference on Emergency Medicine in London in 1986. He subsequently accepted the role of social convenor for the 2nd ICEM to be held in Brisbane in 1988. He understood from his time at Gold Coast Hospital, one of the busiest and more under-resourced departments in the country, how stressful emergency medicine can be and how that burn out must be confronted. He also understood the importance of personal relationships and mutual support in times of stress. Accordingly, he set about ensuring that the social program would provide maximum interaction between delegates and shared relaxation and rejuvenation. This basic understanding of human nature and its response to stress also underpinned his involvement again as social director for the 10th ICEM in Cairns in 2004. His success has been widely acknowledged.

His involvement extended beyond the social program of the Brisbane conference. He was involved in the planning of the structure of the conference and had significant input into the establishing the traditions of the academic program that would apply to the ICEM as it evolved over the next decade and a half and still apply today.

In effect he was co-convenor of the Cairns conference taking on a significantly greater role than just that of social director. It was his business sense that underpinned the financial success of the conference and which may lead to one of its more enduring legacies in terms of the continuing development of emergency medicine internationally and in the region.

Dr Phillip Kay has made an outstanding contribution to the development of emergency medicine in Australia and to the evolution of the International Federation through his continuing involvement with ICEM.