

22 July 2020

Dear Colleagues,

We have been receiving a number of enquiries in relation to the Research and Best Care Conference (RBCC) which is scheduled for 26 – 30 October 2020.

As we all appreciate, 2020 has been, and continues to be, a challenging year for Western Health staff as we respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The enquiries we have received from staff to-date reflect that the RBCC is an event highly valued by staff given it provides an opportunity to celebrate the organisational research and best care achievements. To this end, we will be exploring how the sentiment of the RBCC can be upheld under the current constraints imposed by the pandemic.

We were hopeful the incidence of COVID-19 in the community, and the associated physical distancing requirements, would have reduced considerably by this time of year, however this is not the case. As a result we are now able to provide clarity as to the 2020 RBCC and the proposed contingencies for the event in October.

We can advise that:

- The RBCC format will most likely be accommodated through an online/zoom platform, and:
 - Comprise of 3-6 1 hour seminars over the week in October, most likely around COVID-19 and associated achievements and challenges
 - The keynote or panel of presenters for each seminar will be confirmed by early September
- We are currently liaising with the Western Health Foundation on a new staff grant initiative, made possible through the generous support of our sponsors, which will take the place of the traditional RBCC Awards
- There will not be any discipline/craft group specific sessions to be organised through the Office for Research, **however this does not preclude** craft groups from organising their own webinar session under the banner of the RBCC during that week if they so desire. We would be happy to provide some assistance in organising this if provided with ample notice.
- There will be no call for Abstracts or Posters for the proposed amended RBCC program
- The 2021 Western Health Grants will be postponed for this year

We are disappointed that we have to abandon our usual RBCC celebratory program, however the local and global exceptional circumstances afford us limited options. We can however make the best of the situation as in amongst all the adversity of COVID-19, there are so many examples of exceptional responses to the COVID pandemic that we wish to celebrate. The Western Health media coverage of late is testament to this.

Narelle and I are happy to receive any suggestions on this matter that would help preserve the celebratory spirit of the event within the current constraints that apply.

We seek your assistance to distribute this communication amongst your staff and colleagues.

We thank you for your support and please stay safe and well.

Best regards,

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