“The standard you walk past is the standard you accept.”

Lieutenant General David Morrison, Australian Army Chief 1.

In his 2013 three-minute speech on unacceptable behaviour in the workplace, Lieutenant General David Morrison makes the above insightful statement. While the context of the speech is the defence force, the meaning of the powerful message holds true for perioperative nursing. Perioperative nurses are part of a profession. Professions Australia, a national organisation of professional associations which aims to advance and promote professionalism for the benefit of the community, provides us with a definition of a profession 2 and perioperative nurses meet this definition. Perioperative nurses possess special knowledge and skills grounded in a widely recognised body of discipline knowledge derived from research, education and high-level training. We control and regulate our own boundaries of work. We adhere to ethical and professional standards and values. Specialty professional practice standards define perioperative nurses as a community of professionals — assisting perioperative nurses when advocating for consistency in quality patient care 3. It is an imperative for every professional perioperative nurse to model practice underpinned by the ACORN Standards throughout their workplace. Hence, Lieutenant General Morrison’s profound statement is a mantra each perioperative nurse could readily adopt and model in their practice environment.

This ACORN Standards update follows from last month’s update on relevant changes made in areas affecting perioperative nursing, and potentially impacting on standards for perioperative nursing practice. The most notable events include the recent release of AS/ NZS 4187:2014 Reprocessing of reusable medical devices in health service organizations 4 and the recent release, for a 12-month trial, of the Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) professional document PS08: 2015 Statement on the Assistant for the Anaesthetist 5. Additionally, the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is overseeing the process of developing Ethical Guidelines for Organ Transplantation from Deceased Donors 6 to inform eligibility of recipients, suitability of donor organs, and allocation of organs. The public consultation phase of the process ended in March 2015.

Three standards were highlighted in the last journal edition: Aseptic Technique, Scrubbing, Gowning and Gloving, and the Anaesthetic Nursing Role. This edition will provide a snapshot of the review process for the two other standards documents currently under review in this round, namely, Loan Equipment and the new position statement for Organ Procurement.

Organ Procurement

Amanda Gore, RN, MHSc, Review Lead, Organ Procurement

The basis of the work of this review team was a member proposal submitted to ACORN recommending a position statement related to organ procurement. The ACORN Board recognised the need for a nationally consistent approach to the perioperative nursing role in organ procurement and subsequently approved work on the document. This Position Statement is timely as it supports the current national infrastructure established in recent reforms.
In the initial stages of the review process of searching published and unpublished literature, Commonwealth and State regulatory documents, and government and professional body websites, the review team acknowledged the lack of formal representation by ACORN on any of the peak bodies related to organ procurement, in particular the Australasian Transplant Coordinators Association (ATCA) which coordinates retrieval resources and publishes the National Guidelines for Organ and Tissue Donation (2008). The role of access to organ procurement education and training to support procedure-specific competence and skill mix within the multidisciplinary team, and as a support strategy, has also been identified as a key issue. Existing perioperative nursing-specific programs offered by DonateLife and the Australian College of Nursing were explored as part of the review process as well as international precedents. Other issues emerged during the review process, such as rights of the donor patient, organisational and emotional support for perioperative nurses involved in organ procurement, strategies for working in unfamiliar environments with unfamiliar team members, and staff rights regarding conscientious objection.

**Loan Equipment**  
Pat Nicholson, RN, PhD, Review Lead, Loan Equipment

My apologies to Dr Nicholson for the omission of her name in the list of review leads published in the last edition.

Implementing and ensuring a documented strategy for handling loan equipment in the perioperative environment is important to minimise risks associated with not only patient and staff safety but also loss of productivity and financial burden. In an effort to reduce the risks associated with loan equipment health service organisations could develop a business case that supports decision making to ensure a successful loan management system is developed and maintained.

The Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities (HWSA), comprised of high-level representatives of the peak bodies responsible for the regulation and administration of occupational health and safety in Australia and New Zealand, support national campaigns that align with national occupational health and safety strategies. In 2008, HWSA recommended a national focus for central sterilising supply departments (CSSDs), to ensure implementation of control measures that reduce the risks associated with manual tasks. Handling of loan equipment falls under this remit. One of the aims of the current revision is to ensure the document addresses new recommendations and recent workplace, health and safety legislation in Australia as these emerge. Other key relevant documents are accessed to inform standards revisions. For example, the recently released AS/NZS 4187:2014 included formatting and terminology changes to align the standard with national and international standards and guidelines. Thus, these changes will be reflected in the new Loan Equipment Standard. The revised Loan Equipment Standard will also be updated to reflect current best evidence related to infection prevention and control, cleaning, transporting and storing loan equipment, sterilising instruments, and manual handling.

**ACORN Standards review process**

ACORN's mission is to promote excellence in perioperative nursing care and places great value on the Standards and the rigorous process of ensuring they are based on the best available evidence and aligned with contemporary changes impacting on practice. Evaluation of all aspects of the process of reviewing standards is ongoing, which results in the opportunity for continual refinement of the process to produce standards and guidelines that are contemporary and evidence-based. Some of the aspects of the review process that has undergone changes over the past two years include the use of a criteria matrix for determining which standards will be reviewed next; the strategic composition of review teams to ensure teams have the required knowledge, skills and resources available to conduct the review; the process of moving from systematically searching for relevant legislative and regulatory documents, new and emerging research studies, and industry trends to then critically appraising and selecting the best sources to support recommendations. In addition, some educational resources were to assist managers and clinicians with implementation of standards and guidelines in the workplace, such as informative webinars and a 'what's new' article published in the ACORN Journal to complement the webinars.

Some of the changes to the review process that will be reflected in upcoming reviews will include a more formal process to extend invitations to key stakeholders to review draft documents and also to incorporate a period of open review where ACORN members will have the opportunity to comment on draft documents.

Involvement on a review team can be a rewarding experience and requires a considerable amount of time and commitment. If you are interested in being actively involved in the review process, send your expression of interest, including a brief two-page CV to Dr Sonya Osborne, ACORN Standards Editor at standards.editor@acorn.org.au.

**References**