‘Let go of what holds you back’: Assoc. Prof. Ian Coombes inspires as Fred J Boyd Award winner

Acknowledging his passion and dedication for practitioner growth, pharmacy research and developing leading pharmacy services, Associate Professor Ian Coombes was announced this morning as the recipient of the prestigious Fred J Boyd Award at Medicines Management 2018, the 44th SHPA National Conference.

In awarding the prize on behalf of the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) in Brisbane, President Professor Michael Dooley celebrated the influence and broad reach of Associate Professor Coombes’ vision and leadership.

‘Ian’s passion and commitment to improving the care of patients and developing the pharmacy workforce has been instrumental in the growth of our profession.

‘He has led many innovations in practice that have resulted in the introduction of many impactful, nationwide initiatives and has been instrumental in Australia now recognising advancing practice of pharmacists.

‘Ian’s commitment to professional development and innovation saw him lead the evaluation and development of the tools that became the Clinical Competency Assessment Tool (ClinCAT), which is now widely used in Australian pharmacy for self and peer competency-based evaluation and feedback.

‘Through his PhD investigating the cause and prevention of prescribing errors, he has seen the adoption of a National Inpatient Medication chart which has led to a significant reduction in medication prescribing and administration errors across the country.’

Associate Professor Coombes is Director of Pharmacy at the Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital, a former SHPA Board Director and recipient of the 2003 SHPA Australian Clinical Pharmacy Award, 2010 Medal of Merit and the 2017 SHPA Qld Branch William Harris Award.

In an entertaining and broad-ranging oration, Associate Professor Coombes encouraged the 1,200-strong delegation to ‘let go of things that hold you back’.

‘The DNA of the workforce is essential – what do people actually do? We’ve got to constantly ask ourselves: have we added value? And be brave and say: “let’s do it differently”.

‘It is exciting and promising for the future of healthcare that Australian pharmacy has matured so rapidly in recent years. Formalised, evidence-based frameworks for training and recognition are absolutely essential to ensuring the right people are in the right place to provide the very best care for our patients.’

Associate Professor Coombes said innovating and improving is a two-way street and a constant endeavour.
‘It is about giving back – there is no manual for effective, persistent performance and innovative patient care. These skills need nurturing, over time.

‘As we grow into leaders, we also need to step back when the time is right. Have confidence in the systems you’ve put in place and the practice of the next generation.’

‘Most importantly, think broadly, work creatively and allow yourself to be bold. Nothing is impossible… some things are just more difficult than others.’

Assoc. Professor Coombes stayed true to this creative ethos throughout his freewheeling talk as he abandoned his notes, prompting laughter throughout the plenary hall: ‘Don’t be afraid to make a plan, then throw it away!’

Professor Dooley also today acknowledged Rosemary Burke, Peter Fowler and Steve Morris as very worthy nominees for the 2018 award.

‘This year’s nominees embody the spirit of the Fred J Boyd Award: innovative pharmacists progressing and developing their field for the benefit of the Australian community.’

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Adjunct Associate Professor Ian Coombes PhD, MSc, B.Pharm (Hons), Adv. Prac Pharm. MSHP, MRPS

- Associate Professor Coombes has been a member of SHPA for over 23 years.
- Associate Professor Coombes is Chair of the Advancing Practice Advisory Board.
- His outstanding contributions, both in Queensland, where he is currently Director of Pharmacy at the Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital, and nationally have had an incredible impact on hospital pharmacy and public health.
- Associate Professor Coombes’ many achievements and contributions include:
  - SHPA National Vice President and Federal Council member
  - 2003 SHPA Australian Clinical Pharmacy Award winner
  - 2017 SHPA Qld Branch William Harris Award winner
  - SHPA Education and Educational Visiting Specialty Practice Leadership Committee member
  - Residency Steering Group member

About the Fred J Boyd Award

- In 1978 SHPA established an award in recognition of Fred J Boyd’s contributions to pharmacy. The award is presented to individuals who make outstanding contribution to hospital pharmacy in Australia and is the most prestigious award conferred annually.
- with the following citation: ‘Whereas it was Fred J Boyd, whose vision, perseverance and dedication embodied the fundamental principles of hospital pharmacy, and whereas, Fred J Boyd practised his profession and exhibited his leadership and inspirational abilities in the State of Victoria, as well as the whole of Australia as the foundation President of SHPA.’

About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional, for-purpose organisation for leading pharmacists and pharmacy technicians working across Australia’s health system, advocating for their pivotal role improving the safety and quality of medicines use. Embedded in multidisciplinary medical teams and equipped with exceptional medicines management expertise, SHPA
members are progressive advocates for clinical excellence, committed to evidence-based practice and passionate about patient care.

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