



PERSONAL BIOGRAPHY

MAXINE McKEW

Logie and Walkely award winner, Maxine McKew is a journalist of thirty years standing.

She regularly hosts the flagship ABC Television programmes The 7.30 Report and Lateline.

She also writes for various publications and in 2003 the Magazine Publishers Association named her Columnist of the Year

Maxine is in demand as a public speaker and acts as a facilitator for dozens of industry events each year.

Her voluntary activities include the Chairmanship of the Breast Cancer Advisory Council to the NBCC, patron of Osteoporosis Australia and Council Member of the Sydney Symphony.

In 2003 she was awarded a Centenary Medal for services to broadcasting.

OSTEOPOROSIS FACT SHEET

AUSTRALIA

MAXINE MCKEW

The Facts

- Osteoporosis is a major health problem in Australia, and studies around the country show that the incidence of fractures due to osteoporosis is increasing as the population ages.
- Every 8 minutes, someone is admitted to an Australian hospital with an osteoporotic fracture. This is expected to rise to every 3-4 minutes by the year 2021.
- In 2002, 1.9 million people in Australia had osteoporosis. This number is expected to rise to 2.2 million by the year 2006 and to 3 million by the year 2021.
- As many as 4 out of 5 people with osteoporosis don't know that they have it although they are at risk of fracturing a bone.
- More than 3 out of 4 people with known osteoporotic fractures are not treated to prevent further bone loss and stop the fracture cascade.

- In 2002 at the First Women Leader's Roundtable, Osteoporosis Australia was (OA) struggling for Government support & recognition. Indeed Osteoporosis was not significantly on anyone's radar screen. However there have been big successes & significant developments since that time.
- Osteoporosis Australia, under Judy Stenmark's executive leadership, has raised the profile of the disease among consumers, health professionals, and just as importantly, among specialist medical journalists.
- To cite just one recent example - all commercial TV outlets in Australia recently carried news stories in their main bulletins on OA's latest campaign - the role of calcium and Vitamin D in promoting bone health. The booklet that OA has put together on this theme - "A Guide for Consumers - is a model of easy to read information and focuses on the lifestyle adjustments needed to ensure that as many of us as possible remain fracture-free.
- In August 2002 Osteoporosis was named as part of the newly announced 7th National Health Priority *Arthritis & Musculoskeletal Diseases (focus on osteoporosis & arthritis)* and has led to 11 million being made available over 4 years for new programs such as:
 - awareness campaigns
 - research support
 - a national Action Plan & Framework
- The latest federal budget announcements state that the 'Arthritis and Osteoporosis Better Care Program' has been renewed for another 4 years with 14.8 million to support the following initiatives:
 - awareness campaigns
 - education programs for community and health professionals
 - making 'First Fracture initiatives' a priority
 - a campaign by Osteoporosis Australia advocating for reimbursement of BMD testing & medications for prevention in 'high risk individuals'.
- However these efforts must continue. Although awareness of the problem of osteoporosis is HIGH, the challenge is translating that knowledge into action, in Australia and around the world and getting governments to support our cause, with so much competition. Unfortunately, in Australia, BMD testing is still not reimbursed before a fracture occurs & medications are not reimbursed for fracture prevention.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

WHAT'S POSSIBLE? OUR COLLECTIVE STRENGTH

MAXINE MCKEW

As the Australian representative and patron for Osteoporosis Australia, I was a participant in the inaugural Women Leaders' Forum that was held in Lisbon in May 2002.

This marked the first significant Call to Action by an influential group of high profile, energized individuals.

In the presence of Her Majesty Queen Rania, the Duchess of Cornwall, former Texan Governor Ann Richards, and other notable representatives from key nations, the international media heard the accounts of women who had either been personally touched by osteoporosis or were advocates in their home countries for a greater focus on what is a tremendously disruptive and distressing disease.

In 2002 at the First Women Leader's Roundtable, Osteoporosis Australia was (OA) struggling for Government support & recognition. Indeed Osteoporosis was not significantly on anyone's radar screen. However there have been big successes & significant developments since that time.

In Australia, one in two women and one in three men over the age of 60 will suffer an osteoporotic fracture. One fifth of people who suffer a hip fracture will die within six months and of those who don't, one half will not be able to walk unaided or remain in their own home.

As patron of Osteoporosis Australia, I've been able to play a role in highlighting these statistics at a national level, and the Lisbon Forum provided a unique opportunity to garner media attention for what is a worldwide problem for ageing populations.

Needless to say I'm delighted that with a second Forum in Toronto, there will be a further opportunity to report on the progress that we've made in educating health consumers about the need to develop a "bone-friendly" lifestyle. We also look forward to bringing the Forum up to date on our advocacy efforts for improved diagnosis and treatment of fractures.

As well, the Toronto Forum provides an extra avenue, on top of in-country efforts, to send out an international alert to all health officials to make osteoporosis a priority in the provision of health care and to ensure that the most up-to-date therapies are available for the 'at risk' groups.

For the past decade and a half I've played an active role in Australia as an advocate for women's health - specifically the need for women to be conscious of their own health needs and to demand appropriate services.

Hence my decade-long involvement with the National Breast Cancer Centre, the main advocacy body in Australia. In recent months I've been appointed chair of the Women's Advisory Council to the NBCC.

While I have no personal or family experience of osteoporosis, I was more than happy to act as patron of OA when asked to do so in early 2002. It's consistent with my belief, that if I can lend what profile I have to the cause of good health outcomes, then that's pretty good use of one's time.

I've long been convinced of the power of effective public health campaigns and in Australia we have reason to be proud of national efforts that have been directed towards more positive

outcomes in the treatment of AIDS, smoking, skin and breast cancer and more recently osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis Australia, under Judy Stenmark's executive leadership, has raised the profile of the disease among consumers, health professionals, and just as importantly, among specialist medical journalists. The latter has been particularly significant, as Judy's efforts have ensured that issues around osteoporosis have now become regular media talking points.

To cite just one recent example - all commercial TV outlets in Australia recently carried news stories in their main bulletins on OA's latest campaign - the role of calcium and Vitamin D in promoting bone health. The booklet that OA has put together on this theme - "A Guide for Consumers - is a model of easy to read information and focuses on the lifestyle adjustments needed to ensure that as many of us as possible remain fracture-free.

Through OA efforts the latest federal budget announcements state that the 'Arthritis and Osteoporosis Better Care Program' has been renewed for another 4 years with 14.8 million dollars to support the following initiatives: awareness campaigns, education programs for community and health care professionals, for making 'First Fracture' initiatives a priority, and an OA campaign to reimburse BMD testing and medications for prevention in 'high risk individuals'.

My work with OA has also exposed me to multiple inspiring stories from women and men who have refused to be defeated by osteoporosis and whose lives have been substantially transformed by changes in diet, exercise and a mix of other therapies

In light of this, I'm confident that the 2nd IOF Women Leaders' Forum will set the scene for the next set of challenges and I'm happy to endorse a fresh Call to Action.