

## CEO's update

BRUCE MILLIGAN

### Annual General Meeting

The Association's Annual General Meeting was held last week and was well attended. During the meeting, the proposal to convert from an Incorporated Association to a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) was voted on by the members at the meeting and the proxies that had been received. This proposal was accepted unanimously, which is an exciting step forward for the Association.

One of the changes involves the name of the organisation, which will change to 'Spinal Injuries Australia Limited'.

This is only the first step in the process and we now need to formally apply to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC) and the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC) for conversion of the Association to a Company Limited by Guarantee. This is a formal approval process that will take a few months to complete. I will keep you informed of the progress and let you know when the conversion is complete, and when we will start using the new name.

As a Company Limited by Guarantee, we will have a much stronger governance model and we will be in line with most of the other organisations in the sector. At

a practical level it does not change the services and supports that we provide to our members and clients, and staff will not see any change in the way they are employed.



As part of the AGM, a number of staff received Long Service Awards for their dedication to the Association for many years. Frances Porter (pictured), General Manager – Member and Client Services, received an award for an amazing 25 years, while the following Personal Support Workers were recognised for 10 years of service: Maraia Harvey-Hall, Nicole Iles, Bonnie Elford, Kathleen England, Leonie Harris, Rugelie Walsh, Lee Shearman and Salonika Mersky. Thank you to everyone for your hard work, and congratulations on your achievement.

### Spinal Injuries Awareness Week

One of our busiest weeks of the year (November 10 – 16) has wrapped up again, and I would like to thank you for your support. We had a number of great events and activities, and also focused on engaging with a wider audience through social media. The week is a chance for us not only to raise funds but also to highlight injury prevention, better access and equity for people who have a disability, as well as what it means to have a spinal cord injury. On page 2, you will find just some of the highlights that were achieved as part of the week.

Again, thank you for your continued support and hard work. I wish you and your loved ones a safe holiday season and a happy and prosperous New Year.



# FC & IP update

FUNDRAISING, COMMUNICATIONS AND INJURY PREVENTION

During Spinal Injuries Awareness Week (November 10 – 16), the Association held a number of events and activities across Queensland to raise awareness and funds for our services. Below is a list of initiatives that were undertaken as part of the week and the outcomes.

## Events

Take My Seat events were held in Brisbane and on the Gold Coast in the lead up to Spinal Injuries Awareness Week. We had a wonderful group of participants at each event, who were all able to gain valuable insight by spending a morning using a wheelchair. Across both events, the participants raised close to \$25,000 for the Association, which is a fantastic result. The sixth annual Cruise for a Cause was held in Townsville at the end of the week, when vehicles 'cruised' through the streets of the city before a popular display in Strand Park. The event is aimed at promoting safety, and raised more than \$15,000!

## Media

Letters to the Editor which encouraged injury prevention and promoted Spinal Injuries Awareness Week were published in 20 newspapers across Queensland, including The Courier Mail. Bruce was also interviewed on ABC Radio and a number of smaller radio stations, with the ABC interview replayed several times in the Sunshine Coast, Bundaberg, Toowoomba and Gold Coast regions. SEAT presenter Robert Spencer was also interviewed by ABC Sunshine Coast about his story and the Association's award-winning injury prevention program. Our events also received extensive coverage, including Take My Seat in Brisbane and the Gold Coast, as well as Cruise for a Cause in Townsville.

## Social Media

This year, specially-designed images were posted on Facebook and Twitter each day which promoted an important fact about spinal cord injuries. We asked people to share these facts with their loved ones and on Facebook alone, these fact images were viewed almost 30,000 times. Another great promotion occurred

thanks to our recent collaboration with Black Milk Clothing for the advocate's bright and colourful photo shoot. Black Milk published a post about Spinal Injuries Awareness Week on their Facebook page, which has about 573,000 fans! This post was 'liked' by 1,774 people and received many positive comments, which was a fantastic result. We also established a 'Twibbon' campaign, which saw 100 people put our 'ribbon' – a special badge – on their Facebook and Twitter profile pictures and share messages of support.

## Other Promotions

As a long-term supporter of the Spinal Injuries Association, Yellow Cabs offered space for a message about Spinal Injuries Awareness Week in their SMS messages to customers awaiting a pick-up. A staggering 77,598 messages were sent and received from November 10 – 19. In addition, we had our Association banner at the Kangaroo Point end of the Story Bridge for two weeks, where it was viewed by thousands of motorists. The Association's Peer Support Team also held a display at the PA Hospital where they provided valuable information about our services and activities to many people.



# Information Services

MARION WEBB, COORDINATOR - INFORMATION SERVICES

## INFORMATION SERVICE

The Information Service is the hub of information and resources relating to spinal cord injury, and sits with the Member and Client Service Department. It is an enquiry, resource and referral service that responds to all general enquiries related to spinal cord injury that are received at the Association, but not directed to a specific Service.

As a consequence of the recent audit, Information Service procedures were updated to bring them into line with current practices, hence I draw your attention to specific procedure documents that outline the processes relating to Online Classified advertising (Document No. 102129), and Request Information and Research from Information Service (Document No. 101610),

Ordinary Members of the Association can advertise in the Online Classified page of the Association's website. Members are encouraged to submit their own adverts but for those who are not tech savvy or do not have their own computer, they can contact the Information Service direct, or have their advert/s sent via email to: classifieds@spinal.com.au. The page is not your typical classified advertising because on our site we allow members to have two photographs to complement their advertisement. For those who are not fully paid-up Ordinary Members, i.e., Associate members or members of the community, they can advertise for a cost of \$30.00 for two months. Terms and Conditions for Online Advertising, Document No. 102128 explains.

Enquiries to the Information Service can be received en masse or spasmodically, defined by being interspersed with the other duties that the service takes responsibility for. In

the interest of organising receipt of enquiries, the following information taken from Document No. 101610, 'Request for Information' identifies the procedures that will assist to form, at least a degree on order, and provide copy that can otherwise be referred back to:

3.1.1 The Information Service can undertake general search enquiries, and more in-depth searches relevant to Member and Client services.

3.1.2 General search for information by the Information

Service is required in writing (email), and should include:

- a. Detailed description of the information required;
- b. Identify the member or client the information is on behalf of;
- c. A timeframe the information is required within.

3.1.3. In-depth detailed research to be undertaken by the Information Service is required in writing (email), and includes:

- a. Description of the information sought;
- b. How the required data to be utilised;
- c. A timeframe the information is required within;
- d. Identify recognised source/s if known;
- e. Identify if the search is required on a regular basis
- f. If there is regular frequency for data required the applicable calendar information is to be provided.'

I trust you will be inclined to follow this procedure.

# NQ update

JILL MORISON, NQ REGIONAL MANAGER



**A SHOUT OUT - to two star North Queensland PSW's - Casey Rea and Anne Muigai. Casey and Anne agreed to provide last minute support to a client who lives 1.5hrs from Townsville. Their willingness to travel such a distance at short notice is much appreciated :)**



## TOWNSVILLE

The final JCU clinic was held on 6 November. Leona was able to arrange the MotoMed for trial with clients during their exercise physiology sessions, which was a great success.

Leona has just completed a regional visit to Mackay, marking the the last outreach trip for the year. Belinda Kropp visited the NQ office 19-20 November, which was greatly appreciated. Belinda will be back again 3 - 5 December to offer further support as well as to complete recruitment interviews with Jill. Hopefully our next InterComm news will include introducing the newest member of our fantastic SAHS team!

## CAIRNS

- JCU student Teagan Harris finishes this week after a 7 week placement. It's been great having her onboard. Teagan provided an inservice to the local PSWs on Energy Conservation for people with a SCI;
- Several trips were conducted to the Atherton Tablelands and Mossman/Port Douglas;
- Both Mouse & Teagan attended the JCU clinic where Mouse provide nursing assistance;
- Mouse did a presentation for the local OT professional group.

# PSW update

PAULINE DAVIS, GENERAL MANAGER, PERSONAL SUPPORT AND HOME CARE SERVICES

Hello to all our staff and especially to our Personal Support Workers. I hope everyone is well. I guess some of you are gearing up for the coming school holidays. Also, Christmas is just around the corner so this is an especially busy time of year for many of you. We appreciate the added stress on everyone at this time of year and send a big thanks to all PSWs for the great service throughout the year.

The end of year PSW get togethers are being organised and you will see information about the dates and venues on page 5 of the InterComm. You will also find that information on the PSW website.

Just on the website, work has commenced on updating it and making it more relevant and useful and interesting for you. The new look website is now available at [www.psp.spinal.com.au](http://www.psp.spinal.com.au). A big thank you to CSO Nereis Long and Administration Officer, Desley Petersen, for the work they have done to update the website.

The analysis and results from the Staff Survey will soon be available. We will let you know how this information is to be sent out to you. We will also talk about how we can be addressing any of the areas that you have suggested we can improve on. Again, we will use the PSW Reference Group to monitor this activity and provide feedback to us.

We held the quarterly GM/PSW Reference Group on Tuesday, 26 November here at the office. We will send out the minutes to all of you so you can keep abreast of what is being discussed. If you want to suggest any agenda items for the next meeting which will be in February, you will have an opportunity to do that. You can send in suggestions at any time and we will keep a record for inclusion at the next meeting.

You will all have received a letter from me with your most recent payslip. This letter advises of a change in timeframes for claiming reimbursement of travel costs. Please make sure you read this letter so you are aware of the timeframe around submitting Travel Allowance Claim forms. These forms now

have to be submitted to the payroll officer preferably within the fortnight pay period that the travel occurred or no later than the next fortnight's pay period. Unfortunately, travel claims received later than the second fortnight (14 days after the original pay period) will not be reimbursable. Commencement date for these arrangements is the pay period beginning 11 January 2014. I also advised that in the new year, I will be reviewing the travel reimbursement policy. I have discussed both these issues at the recent PSW Reference Group meeting.

Well, I think I mentioned the first storm of the season in my last column but since then we have certainly had our share of wild weather and lots of good rain for the gardens and the water tanks. I hope you all got through the first part of the storm season without any drama and continue to do so over the coming summer months. Remember, our policy in relation to natural disasters reads:

If clients require additional support from a PSW (in their home or where they have been evacuated to) prior to or following a natural disaster, they should contact the relevant Association office to make the request. PSWs will attend where possible but only where it is safe to do so. And, staff are responsible to ensure that their own safety and the safety of their family is a priority.

Staff are only required to attend a client's home to provide support (or location to which the client may have been evacuated) if the PSW is safe to travel there and back, prior to, or following, a natural disaster.

Our new Operations Manager, Greg Murphy, commenced on 25 November. Greg will be managing the Team Leaders and this will free up some of my time to focus on things like communication with clients and PSWs, preparing for the NDIS, progressing our self-directed pilot, marketing our services to a wider audience and general service improvement initiatives.

As always, thanks to everyone for the great work that you do on behalf of the Association. Keep up the good work. You are welcome to provide good news/feedback as well as issues of concern to me at any time.

Cheers, Pauline.



## PSW Website now revamped - Nereis Long CSO

The new-look PSW website is now fully operational. We have added up to date Forms as well as Policies and Procedures for PSW's to stay abreast of what is relevant and current.

New inclusions are:

Meet the Staff – A family tree of PSP ... Soon to include photographs.

WHS - What to do if you suffer an injury at work.

Which Form and How to – An overview of the different incident reporting requirements for different situations as well as instructions for the forms for reimbursement for travel and phone.

News – PSW Christmas Party Information, Upcoming Skills Days, First Aid and CPR as well as other training opportunities.

InterComm – Access to the latest issues of our newsletter.

We will be updating the site every month with the current information.

To access the site go to [www.psp.spinal.com.au](http://www.psp.spinal.com.au)

All PSWs should have been given access to the site and sent an email with your user name and password when you joined the Spinal Injuries Association.

If you cannot access, please call and we will set you up.



# PSW update

PERSONAL SUPPORT AND HOME CARE SERVICES



The PS&HCS Team would like to extend a massive HAPPY CHRISTMAS to all PSWs and say a big thank you for all of your hard work during 2013. We hope you have a fantastic festive season and here's to a healthy, happy and prosperous 2014.

## Advice for managing stress over Christmas

### CHRISTMAS CHEER AND CRAZINESS

We are hurtling into the holiday season and many of us have put a little more into the year than we had in the tank and are showing – or at least feeling - signs of “running on empty”.

There is much to love about the festivities that are almost upon us, and we all have our favourites. I love the arrival of our fresh tree each year and adorning it with the decorations we have collected over years, many of which have special significance or memories for my family. There are plenty of other traditions and rituals that make our Christmas meaningful to us. I find myself again this year trying to find the balance of doing the things I enjoy without leaving myself in need of a holiday to recover from the holiday. I know I'm not alone in my struggle to manage this stress.

As well as the practical considerations that this time of year brings, we face the social pressure to be happy and festive when we may be dealing with quite different feelings. Anniversaries of painful experiences can also be felt more

acutely over the holidays. Many people find that this time of year brings a sense of loneliness or disappointment that is sharper than at other times. Or, much as we love our families, they may drive us a little crazier during the season of good cheer than is usual.

I encourage you to reflect on what has made you happiest about this time of year in the past, and on what has been least satisfying or most challenging for you. This will help you to plan how best to use your energy to enjoy the holiday and take the time needed to restore yourself for 2014. It is wise too, to consider your supports and figure out who you would feel comfortable calling on for help should you struggle with painful emotions or feel overwhelmed. The chances are good you'll find you're not alone.

I wish you a safe and peaceful Holiday Season and all that you hope for in the New Year.

Caroline Binns, Psychologist

## PSW CHRISTMAS PARTY INFO



- Gold Coast – 11/12/2013 @ Southbank Sharks Club 12pm – RSVP to Karina Boss
- North Side – 12/12/2013/@ Club Pine Rivers, Bray Park 12.30pm – RSVP to Laura Vincent
- Sunshine Coast – 13/12/2013 @ Dicky Beach Surf Club 12.30pm – RSVP to Laura Vincent
- Brisbane, Redlands & Logan – 16/12/2013 @ Spinal Injuries Association 12.30pm – RSVP to Sandee Leslie
- Toowoomba – 18/12 @ Mill street Tavern, Toowoomba 12pm – RSVP to Ted Caldwell
- Bundaberg – 18/12/2013 @ Bundaberg RSL 1pm – RSVP to Fiona Sherry
- NQ & surrounding areas – Please contact Townsville office for details



# PSW update

PERSONAL SUPPORT AND HOME CARE SERVICES

## SHIFT FILL CHAMPIONS

PSW Deepaul Dassanayake – due to reliability, professional support, positive attitude and has received multiple compliments from clients who don't usually expect a male support person and has now been placed on their preference list.

PSW Mel Short - in appreciation of her shift filling efforts in High Support.

## Staff Members of the Month

One of our clients would like to recognise PSW Cecilia Talbot for her performance as a PSW. He said that she is brilliant, she always goes above and beyond and will help him out at the drop of a hat.

PSW Teresa Riddles - High support worker: On many occasions Teresa has been asked to stay longer on a shift due to illness within the client's team and she does this willingly despite personal plans and commitments which she may have. We appreciate the commitment to the client Teresa has and look forward to a time when such situations become less frequent.

Sincere thanks for all those brilliant PSWs who take the trouble to find cover for their shifts during periods of leave, for example Jo Nase who submitted her leave forms with all shifts covering during her Christmas leave.

Five minutes with...



John Kerlin

**How long have you been a support worker with the Spinal Injuries Association?** 16 years

**What do you like most about PSW work?** It fulfils a basic need to help people

**What question do you wish you had asked before you started work as a PSW?** How much do I get paid?

**What piece of advice would you give someone thinking about becoming a PSW?** You get out what you put in

**Name five people (living or deceased) you would invite to dinner:**

1. Jesus Christ
2. Roy Orbison
3. Vladimir Putin
4. J.F.K
5. Debbie Harry

**Describe your perfect Sunday:** An early morning motorcycle ride with my wife to the Gold Coast followed by a swim at Southport, then brunch at Sea World Nara Resort, and lastly dinner at Broadbeach.

**How do you keep a good work-life balance?** Don't do too much of anything, but a little bit of everything.

## Congratulations!

CSO Laura Vincent has just celebrated five years' service with the Spinal Injuries Association.



## Induction on the 26/11/2013

Back row left to right:  
Stephanie Scouler, Mark Freeman, Catherine Fulton, Nicole Ogilvie, Teena Edwards, Taafuli Conroy, James Brydges.

Front row left to right:  
Sarah Gavranich, Taylah Oliver, Natalie Wong, Sian Corporaal, Leah-Joy Cusi, Shona McKenzie, Musu Yango.

# Community Development update

## State Inclusive Community Champions

Brisbane City Council is the 2013 Inclusive Community State Champion. The Governor of Queensland presented the award to the Council for the 'Changing Places' facility at the Wynnum Wading Pool and the newly renovated Brisbane City Hall.

At the Wynnum Wading Pool, a 'Changing Places' change room and toilet was installed that caters to people who have high physical support needs and includes a track mounted ceiling hoist, a powered adjustable height changing table and bed, and a mounted toilet pan with safety rails. A recent structural upgrade to Brisbane City Hall allowed for large-scale renovations, including stage platform lifts, a Changing Places toilet facility, a mobility centre, Braille and tactile way-finding signs located in critical areas, as well as a ramp and platform lift to the tea rooms from Adelaide Street.

The other State Finalist awards on the day went to Decision Easy – a Cairns-based architecture firm that produced a guide to the Access and Mobility Building

Standards in an easy-to-read, three-dimensional format; Rama Balasekeran – who championed the cause of accessible and inclusive rail travel on a state and national level to ensure

all members of the community can access the rail network; and the Sunshine Coast Council Parks and Gardens Unit's Open Space Landscape Infrastructure Manual – a design guide that includes design principles, legislative requirements, 'access sketches' and 'positioning drawings' to provide guidance for designers to build accessible open spaces which consider the needs of people with a wide variety of abilities.



## Member Networks

Post Polio members attended World Polio Day on October 23. Dr Wilbur Chan, a noted rehabilitative and pain management specialist, gave an informative presentation and provided excellent feedback to members questions. Members were invited to place leaves on the Polio Family Tree to raise awareness about the need for improved services and support.

### **Individual Advocacy**

Initiating an Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland complaint was enough to convince a shopping centre on Brisbane's Northside to remove a rubbish bin, bike rack and sandwich board signs obstructing its disability parking spaces.

Merry  
Christmas



# Peer Support

COL MACKERETH, PETER HARRE & KATIE FRANZ



At 2:00 PM on the first Tuesday in November the nation stops to watch the greatest horse race in the world, the Melbourne Cup. That includes the spinal unit at the PA hospital and every year they hold a race meeting of their own (with a difference).

Doctors, nurses, physios, OTs, Patients, families, friends, domestics and the peer Support team all don their racing attire for the unit's social event of the year.

The track (deck) is manicured to perfection (hosed off), finely tuned thoroughbreds (wheelchairs with cardboard cut outs) assemble for some of the most competitive (cheating) racing.

The rivalries between Medical staff verses Allied health is intense. It's surprising to see just how serious and to what lengths certain staff will go to win this prestigious event. There used to be an actual cup but we believe that last year's winner refused to return it.

This is also a great chance for patients to take the day off from their rehabilitation and just have some fun. Are you kidding? There's a race to be won and everyone wants the glory of being the winner.

After a series of closely fought heats, Katie managed to support Tony (patient) past the winning post in front of the staff members in the final.



## Workplace Giving

Spinal Injuries Association employees, like their colleagues in the private and not-for-profit sector, are increasingly interested in finding ways to make a difference in their communities. Supporting charities and philanthropic causes through regular Workplace Giving deductions is one way you can support your chosen charities.

The Spinal Injuries Association makes it easy for you to participate. Our Workplace Giving program offers six charities for you to choose to support through regular donations which are automatically made through payroll.

1. Royal Flying Doctors Association (RFDS)
2. Red Cross
3. Spinal Injuries Association

4. Surf Life Savers Association (QLD)
5. Sands
6. Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals QLD (RSPCA)

Workplace Giving is a flexible, easy and convenient way for you to make small, regular donations to your chosen charity. Your donation is tax deductible and is taken from pre-tax dollars (similar to a salary sacrifice arrangement).

To become involved in Workplace Giving, please contact payroll on payroll@spinal.com.au and let them know which charity you would like to support, and the fortnightly amount. They will process this request, and your support will begin with your next fortnightly pay.



# L&D update

ERICA VALADARES, ADVISOR **LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

## Training Dates:

### BRISBANE

#### First Aid

3 February

12 March

#### Skills Day

13 January

7 February

### GOLD COAST

#### Skills Day

27 March

#### First Aid

7 February

### TOOWOOMBA

#### Skills Day

7 March

#### First Aid

6 May

### SUNSHINE COAST

#### Skills Day

17 June

#### First Aid

1 May

### 'Tis the Season to be Jolly

This year has definitely been spectacular, we are delighted to have been able to support so many staff through accredited and non-accredited training. We look forward to sourcing new funding opportunities and working on many more projects and initiatives come 2014. With this in mind, some of the projects/initiatives being worked on are:

- Certificate III Disability courses in alignment with government funding
- Increasing professional development opportunities
- Improvement to monitoring of training renewals
- Introduction of e-learning

The Learning & Development Team would like to wish you and your families a safe and merry Christmas and we look forward to a prosperous 2014.

A big congratulations to the following employees who have recently completed their placement to obtain a Certificate III or IV Disability. Obtaining this qualification is a significant and rewarding step in their professional development and the Association is delighted to have been able to support them through this achievement.

#### CHC40312 Certificate IV Disability

Jo-Anne Porter  
Connor Waite  
Michelle Poing-Destre  
Alison Bliesner  
Jessica Burrows  
Dessmeir Harvey  
Regina Pandurovic  
Natalie Mason  
Therese Halburd  
Nichole Winton  
Debra Darcy  
Kathryn Mollet  
Carolyn O'Callaghan  
Sabine Olsen  
Penelope Pryor  
Ann Scott-Lusins  
Melanie Short  
Renee Smith

#### CHC40308 Certificate IV Disability

Tracy Meyer  
Adela Wegener  
Leonie Harris  
Tina Lee  
Caitlin Kent  
Shirley Bell  
Dea-Ann Kerr  
Maria Heap  
Suzanne Shelton  
Kimball Glover  
Christine Wegener  
Annie Huang  
Francine Lee  
Michele Jameson  
Sherraine De Silva



Townsville Induction with Jaime Chambers - new Clinical Facilitator NQ

# Workplace Health & Safety

With the Christmas and New Year period, many of you will be travelling on the roads and spending more time outdoors. The Queensland Government's 'Join the Drive to Save Lives' campaign is underway and is a timely reminder to us all that we need to be safe on the roads. As part of this campaign, film crews are travelling around the state to interview Queenslanders about how we as individuals can improve safety on our roads. Some of our team members have already been interviewed for the campaign to represent a range of different viewpoints – these people are Belinda Kropp, Rebecca Hutton, Sheila Andrews and SEAT presenter John Morgan. The footage will possibly be aired on television and radio in the coming weeks! Members of the community have also been asked to share their own personal video, photo or written message about road safety on the Join the Drive to Save Lives website ([www.qld.gov.au/jointhedrive](http://www.qld.gov.au/jointhedrive)) and on social media.

As most of you already know, the main causes of traumatic spinal cord injuries are road trauma, falls/crashes and water related accidents. During the festive season, please remember to avoid the Fatal Five: speeding, drink driving, failure to wear a seatbelt and driving while fatigued, as well as distraction and inattention. There are also risks associated with domestic chores (even hanging Christmas lights), which can lead to falls. In addition, this time of year means more time outdoors and in the water. It's particularly important to remember to check the depth of the water before diving in, to prevent injuries.

As mentioned in previous InterComm articles, the most important reason to stay safe at work is our family and friends. We also ask you to consider your client – they value your support and rely on you staying fit and healthy. Please take care and encourage your loved ones to do the same.

## Your Questions

**Q:** Exactly what is bleach and why is it so bad?

**A:** Bleach is one of the most corrosive and deadly chemicals and still it can be found at every supermarket in the country. With such broad household use, it's important to remember the risk it poses to children (especially because small amounts will affect them more than adults) or anyone unaware of its effects. Chlorine & caustic soda are the main ingredients of bleach.

The burn you feel when using bleach products or the coughing you may experience is a sign of the corrosive properties of bleach in your body. And that slippery feeling of bleach on your skin? That's actually caused by the lye (caustic soda) reacting to the fats and oils on your skin.

**The Risks:** When mixed with ammonia, it creates a deadly gas. Remember that urine contains ammonia, so using the products in the toilet increase the risk of creating a toxic gas that can actually stop lung function. It increases asthma and allergy symptoms because of the likelihood of inhalation. When using bleach, if it makes you cough, it is causing harm!

**The Alternatives:** The Association discourages the use of bleach. For cleaning and disinfecting, using diluted white vinegar and tea tree oil in your cleaning products is an effective disinfectant and completely natural. For tough spots, stains, food or dirt, combining baking soda and vinegar clean effectively without corrosion. Hot, boiling water is also a disinfectant, as is the sun. For stains, hanging whites in the sun 'bleaches' out discoloration. Hydrogen peroxide also acts as a stain lifter and removes discoloration.

*Do you have a question? Each month in InterComm we will answer and publish your safety questions. To submit a question, please email [jmcinnes@spinal.com.au](mailto:jmcinnes@spinal.com.au). Please note: the information will be treated as confidential.*

