



## Patron's Message

### The Changing Face (and Physiology) of Quality Management

Those attending QUALCON over the past several years will have noticed a consistent theme in my message as Patron. In a word the theme has been *change*, and more specifically the need for all of us to ask: Have the changes that reshaped society since the 1980s (when quality management was first fully developed) impacted quality management? My argument, which is really stating the obvious, is that the answer to that question is an emphatic Yes! That is not to say, as one author has put it, that "TQM is as dead as a pet rock", it is to say, however, that if quality management is to be a credible (and useful) management aid for the contemporary organization it must (at very least) be re-examined in the light 21<sup>st</sup> century reality.

Since the mid 1990s quality management has been undergoing such a re-examination with the result that it has taken a new form and entered the third stage in its development. The first stage commenced in the 1930s with the work of Walter Shewhart. The second stage, which spanned the period of the late 1970s to the mid-1990s, is most associated with US consultants, Crosby, Deming and Juran.

What is perhaps most striking about third generation quality management is that has been developed by management scholars rather than consultants. The positive effect of that feature is that quality management now has an *explicit* theory, has rigor and is being accompanied by empirical research. An explicit theory urges a distinction between quality as an organization strategy and the methodology and tools of quality management and prevents quality management being whatever the consultant/user chooses it to be -recall the three very different interpretations Crosby, Deming and Juran were able to give quality management. The downside of the reshaping being done by scholars is its very slow dissemination to organizations – scholars are less interested in application (for which they receive no financial reward) than they are in publication and dissemination of their ideas among fellow scholars.

A principal focus of QUALCON 2010 will be an examination of third generation quality management. If we accept that quality management has indeed shifted into a new form our task must be to identify how AOQ can better understand that change and communicate the new quality management to Australian industry and government.

I look forward to participating in a critical, and long overdue, 21<sup>st</sup> century look at quality management.

Kevin Foley

Patron