



Australasian Sleep Association

Strategy 2024-2027

Vision

A community with healthy sleep practices, supported by best-practice sleep science and sleep medicine

Mission

Lead and promote sleep health and sleep science, provide professional development for members, foster research and establish clinical standards.

August 2024

Strategic context

Securing and implementing two large Commonwealth grant programs over the last two years has been a milestone experience for the ASA. As a result of these programs, we have made substantial progress towards realising the ASA's aspiration of being a connector or catalyst between the sleep community, researchers, health professionals, the public, industry and government.

These grants have seen strong partnerships developed with large organisations representing GPs, nurses, psychologists and pharmacists, and these partnerships have facilitated significant progress in education and training of these primary healthcare workforces in sleep health.

The grant programs have also facilitated organisational growth and development of the ASA through:

- funding support for advocacy and member communication activities
- increased professional staff numbers and capacity, including those with sleep expertise
- increased awareness and profile of the association and sleep health generally with key Health Department officials and the federal Health Minister.

However, these grant programs will end on 30 June 2025 and 15 August 2025. A key priority for the first year of the strategy is to find a pathway that builds on the achievements of the grant programs after those end dates and retains the benefits that the grants have delivered to the organisation.

Other contextual trends relevant to our strategy include changing patterns of conference attendance and restrictions on travel and conference attendance from some universities and other employers. Rising costs are affecting viability of key activities such as conferences and other educational activities. Developments in diagnostics and therapeutics of sleep disorders are ongoing as the field continues to expand, fuelled by increasing awareness of the importance of sleep health among primary healthcare practitioners and the general public.

The increasing importance of health equity, diversity and inclusion, and the patient or consumer voice is recognised by our members. These concerns will likely continue to grow in importance during this strategy, offering both challenges and opportunities to the ASA.

As the sleep field grows and expands, the ASA's core strategic task is to increase engagement with current members while also attracting and retaining participation from new audiences. The implementation of a new five-year membership strategy provides an operational blueprint for this work.

We will seek to continue building foundations of diversity, community and belonging among members, find innovative and meaningful ways to include the voice of lived experience, and strengthen our organisation's long-term financial sustainability.

We aspire to do all this while reflecting the values of courage, confidence, creativity, adaptability and collaboration.

Community

Member numbers achieved the expected growth over the previous two-year strategy period with a 6.6% increase for 2023 and an additional increase of 1.2% to 2024 – a total of 8% growth over two years.

The organisation's first comprehensive membership strategy is a five-year blueprint for increasing member acquisition, engagement, retention and satisfaction. Key projects included in the membership strategy also a framework for investing in new high-value member benefits and services such as a public-facing member directory and upgrading the current Learning Centre platform to improve user experience and functionality.

Key goals

The key goal is to implement the five-year membership strategy, which includes:

- Continue investing in the Fellow of Dental Sleep Medicine program and increase the number of dentist members by at least 4% each year
- Review membership categories and the current subscription model
- Scope a new public-facing member directory
- Upgrade the Learning Centre to improve user experience and increase access by 7% each year
- Test member onboarding communications to increase retention of new members in their second year of membership to 75% by 2027
- Increase total members by 3.5% each year.

Education

The ASA education strategy articulates the main craft groups, career stages and other member segments that our education activities need to cater for. Ensuring these diverse groups are considered in educational programming is an important responsibility for both the Education Committee and the Conference Committee. During this strategy period, there will be a strong focus on closer collaboration between the Education Committee and the Conference Committee to offer the right selection of topics and opportunities to cater for the main member groups.

The education sub-committees will continue to have an important role in continuing education and training with key primary care and other external organisations such as the RACP. To help stay in touch with the education needs and preferences of members, the Education Committee surveys members every two years. The upgrade of the Learning Centre platform will enhance useability and attract more active engagement from members.

Key goals

- Ensure the success and impact of the grant programs helping primary healthcare practitioners increase their capacity to deliver sleep health services in their clinical practice
- Source, pursue and secure opportunities to continue and build on the achievements of the grant programs after they end in mid-2025, including considering changes to education sub-committees if required.
- Strategically develop the on-demand education resources in the ASA Learning Centre and increase access by 7% each year
- Gather data every two years on member preferences for education and implement key findings
- Ensure Sleep DownUnder remains a vibrant, innovative, relevant and successful opportunity for members to meet, learn, and share research findings.

Advocacy

The ASA works in close partnership with the Sleep Health Foundation to raise awareness and profile for sleep health within the Australian national policy agenda. Our joint submissions and lobbying efforts resulted in a long-awaited government response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Sleep Health Awareness in Australia and the Minister for Health and Aged Care opening Sleep DownUnder in 2023. With sleep health now embedded in the preventive health policy space, opportunities are opening up to expand understanding of the pervasive importance of sleep health on many aspects of physical and mental health, safety, and injury prevention.

ASA also regularly responds to government consultations, regulatory issues in relation to the TGA, PBS and MBS, and other requests for advice and expertise. The publication of position and opinion papers in scientific journals also contributes to our advocacy work. The grant programs have substantially enhanced our capacity to provide expert advice to governments and other stakeholder organisations.

Key goals

- Seek out and pursue opportunities to promote the sleep health policy agenda across health and other ministerial portfolios, highlighting the need for a 10-year national sleep health strategy
- Respond to key government consultations and requests for expert advice
- Meet our Commonwealth grant obligations in relation to providing advice to government and communicating and consulting with members
- Achieve MBS funding for Level 2 paediatric home sleep studies
- Progress the accessibility and availability of digital cognitive behavioural therapy for insomnia
- Pursue opportunities to support better outcomes for people living with central disorders of hypersomnolence, including better medications and therapeutic options.

Clinical

The Clinical Committee has a steady flow of ongoing work responding to requests for information and input on clinical topics, while also overseeing the ASA/NATA Sleep Disorders Service accreditation scheme, the Medicines Sub-Committee, writing groups developing position statements and guidelines for publication, and other working groups.

Key goals

- Complete and publish a collaborative insomnia position statement in partnership with primary care organisations
- Complete and publish a restless legs practice parameter paper
- Respond to requests for expert clinical advice and support advocacy goals in relation to clinical and regulatory issues
- Support advocacy goals to achieve better outcomes for people with central disorders of hypersomnolence.

Research

The Research Committee has an ongoing program of work managing the ASA's awards and prizes program, supporting early career researchers, supporting members' research grant applications when requested, and responding to government consultations on national research grant programs.

The ASA launched the Sleep Research Future Fund in November 2023 to help ensure longer-term sustainability for the research grants program through a significant increase in funds invested to generate income in perpetuity.

Key goals

- Raise significant funds for the Sleep Research Future Fund each year
- Ensure written and video reports from grant recipients are communicated to ASA members
- Establish a research promotion and dissemination plan for projects where ASA is a formal partner.

Finance

Large projects such as Sleep DownUnder and the Commonwealth grant projects have presented challenges to the organisation's financial risk management and cash flow management processes. There are also significant challenges emerging from rising costs across all association activities. These will need to continue to be managed proactively to achieve positive financial outcomes, viability and sustainability.

A key long-term goal is to fund additional staff resources to support an expanded, sustainable research and award program.



The Finance Committee will continue to monitor the performance of the investment portfolio, and ensure profitability of ASA's income-generating programs.

Key goals

- Ensure revenue streams keep pace with cost increases for all association activities
- Achieve operational surpluses each year and add funds to the investment portfolio
- Raise significant funds for the Sleep Research Future Fund each year
- Ensure unsponsored research awards are funded through the income from investments
- Position the ASA to recruit additional staff resources to support the expansion of the research award program.