



# asa board committee news

Australasian Sleep Association February 2019

## President's report



Peter Eastwood

*Sleep is the third pillar of good health, together with a healthy diet and moderate exercise.*

This is the message that the ASA, SHF and other stakeholders have been driving home to our political leaders. This message, along with presentation of robust data highlighting the magnitude of health issues related to poor sleep and sleep disorders, and the marked individual, economic and social benefits associated with their effective treatment, has convinced the Federal Government to call a National Parliamentary Inquiry into Sleep Health Awareness. Over 120 submissions have been received and public hearings are held around the country in January and February. Submissions and the Inquiry's terms of reference can be viewed at [www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/House/Health\\_Aged\\_Care\\_and\\_Sport/SleepHealthAwareness/Submissions](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Health_Aged_Care_and_Sport/SleepHealthAwareness/Submissions). The Inquiry is part of a broader long term strategy of the ASA and SHF to bring the importance of sleep to the forefront of the Australian community, healthcare providers, be they public or private, and to the Government and its administrative branches.

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*Sleep is the critical third pillar in achieving maximum wellness.*

According to the Federal Government, the MBS Review Taskforce occurred in order to update all item numbers, in line with the practice of modern medicine. Sleep study items, as part of the Thoracic Medicine Clinical Committee process, were one of the first areas to go under the microscope because of the huge growth in billing for sleep item numbers. The ASA did not initiate this process but worked very hard to protect sleep physicians' autonomy and discretion in deciding on the most appropriate test and management to ensure best outcomes for their patients. Throughout the MBS review and planned implementation of the new item numbers, the ASA continued to express concern that patient access may be affected by the changes and was able to have a substantial influence on the eventual recommendations to the Taskforce. The ASA was also able to expedite the approval of new item numbers for vigilance testing, which ensured that sleep physicians still had access to this important test when the November 1, 2018 schedule came out. The ASA continues to actively work with the Department of Health, advocating for best patient care and outcomes.

The new Private Health Insurance reforms—with laboratory-based sleep studies potentially requiring gold tier status—will make vigilance testing inaccessible for many patients in need of them. Further, in-lab sleep studies will become inaccessible to many patients who would have previously had their tests in private sleep facilities. These changes will have a negative effect on the private sleep health industry and result in an increased burden on public sleep services, neither of which are desirable. You will be aware that the ASA was 'blindsided' by this decision. Despite this, the Association is working hard towards trying to change these reforms, has recently met with senior advisors to the Federal Health Minister about this issue and will continue to advocate that these recommendations be reversed, in liaison with both sides of politics. At the

same time the ASA is liaising with PHI companies to try and ensure that, even though it is not mandated, they keep sleep studies on all levels of cover.

The Professional Service Review (PSR) process plays a role in ensuring that both Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme deliver quality, cost-effective health services and pharmaceuticals to the Australian community. The PSR utilises a peer review process and relies on the support of health practitioners and their representative registration bodies to perform its statutory function. Several ASA members have raised concerns about aspects of this process. As a result the ASA has initiated communications with the PSR to better understand their review processes and has offered to provide expert advice to facilitate what should be an accurate, contemporary and transparent process.

Public health services provide a large amount of sleep medical care to the community – but often have unacceptably long waiting lists. A challenge to Directors of Public sleep laboratories is their inability to easily or quickly expand their services due to severe budgetary constraints. To expand public health services many things are needed which are unfortunately beyond the capacity of the ASA to influence e.g. space, equipment and ongoing funding support from the hospital and the multiple levels of approval required.

The ASA is primarily a volunteer organisation, without the current ability to mount large-scale campaigns on behalf of the disparate areas of sleep medicine in Australia. However the ASA continues to be supportive and active in trying to ensure state based access to sleep testing. For example, the ASA has recently provided strong support for a sleep laboratory to be constructed in the new Royal Adelaide Hospital facilities. The ASA has also written letters of support for members across the country with regard to a number of confidential issues they have faced and it continues to advocate for better access to sleep services nationally, including for patients in rural and remote areas. The ASA will continue to make statements in support of increased access and expansion of services, in an active and persistent fashion. Again, through the Parliamentary Sleep Health Awareness Inquiry, the ASA is working to raise the level of understanding of the importance of good sleep and actively promoting solutions to some of these issues. This will shine a spotlight on areas of need, to ensure access and equity in the provision of sleep medicine services.

I am sure that you will all agree that the recent Annual

Scientific Meeting (Sleep Down Under) held in Brisbane was a huge success, with a record number of presentations and strong input from international guests. Andrew Gikas is already working hard on next year's meeting, which will be held in Sydney from 16-19 October. Please note that we will be back in Brisbane in 2020 for the Sleep Down Under conference (22-24 October), which will be held jointly with the International Paediatric Sleep Association. It's never too early to pencil both of these events into your calendars! Please also note that there will strong Australian content in this year's World Sleep conference to be held 20-25 September 2019 in Vancouver, as many Australians have been invited to attend as keynote speakers.

Sleep in Aotearoa (SiA) will be held in Christchurch from May 2-4, 2019. The ASA Board will attend this meeting, supported by an unrestricted grant from Fisher & Paykel. As well as holding a face-to-face board meeting, members of the board will be invited to participate in the meeting as speakers. I am also pleased to announce that a Memorandum of Understanding has been created to formalise the collegial and supportive partnership that will exist between the Sleep Health Foundation of New Zealand (SHFNZ), the SHF and the ASA. The Mission of the SHFNZ is 'to promote sleep health across the lifespan', and its Visions are to (1) be the leading national advocate for Sleep Health in New Zealand and (2) have a New Zealand community that recognises and values the importance of good sleep health as a route to personal wellbeing, safety, productivity, and quality of life.

A new industry-sponsored research grant will be added to the ASA Awards portfolio – more information on this will be provided soon. 2019 will also see the development and institution of a new and improved website for the ASA.

I would like to acknowledge the enormous contribution of Matt Naughton to our field as he is retiring as "respiratory" editor of the Internal Medicine Journal, a position he has held for the past 18 years. During this time Matt reviewed respiratory papers and an increasing number of sleep papers. In Matt's words, *"this journal provides a great opportunity to get 'sleep' papers into the scientific field. The journal is really set up to accept papers that just 'fall between the cracks' of the big players and the journal looks favourably on articles that involve junior clinicians trying to get a start in the academic field"*. The ASA would like to congratulate Nigel McArdle for his recent appointment to the Internal Medical Journal as its Sleep Medicine Editor.

**Peter Eastwood**  
President

## Clinical Committee



**Sutapa Mukherjee**

### MBS review and item numbers

On November 1st 2018 the new item numbers for sleep studies and vigilance testing were introduced. Most sleep services have established new processes around these item numbers and overall the process has been implemented fairly smoothly.

Many sleep physicians asked for clarification about the administration of the questionnaires for items 12203 and 12250. DOH has communicated to us that it is acceptable for the respiratory/sleep medicine practitioner (or their practice staff) to administer the screening questionnaires when an incomplete referral is received from the referring doctor (i.e. when screening questionnaires have not been performed). If the patient meets the appropriate screening questionnaire criteria the patient can proceed directly to the home based (12250) or laboratory based diagnostic sleep study (12203) without the need for prior professional attendance by the respiratory/sleep medicine practitioner.

This has simplified the referral process significantly. The MBS Online website ([www.mbsonline.gov.au](http://www.mbsonline.gov.au)) and the MBS explanatory notes have been updated.

We continue to communicate regularly with Department of Health (DOH) staff about the changes and would welcome your feedback as these changes take effect. You may also communicate directly with DOH via the email address ([surgicalservices@health.gov.au](mailto:surgicalservices@health.gov.au))

### Quota for sleep studies

Several members have asked whether there is a quota for the number of ambulatory versus laboratory studies in light of the MBS item number changes. We have asked the DOH specifically about this. The decision on whether a patient requires a laboratory or ambulatory

sleep study should be based on clinical need and is at the discretion of the sleep physician. It is suggested that the decision and reasoning should be documented in the patient's case notes by the sleep physician.

**The Department of Health response is below.**

*"We are not aware of a 'target ratio' for home versus laboratory sleep studies as a result of the changes. As with all changes to the MBS (which have cost implications and involve a Budget process), the department assesses the changes and predicts how they may impact future MBS service volumes and expenditure. For the purposes of the proposed 6 month and 2 year review, the actual utilisation of the items will probably be compared to what was predicted to occur. There is no ratio that we need to meet or are aiming for.*

*Overall, it was anticipated there would be an increase in services for home-based studies (due to the new triage arrangements). It should be noted that any modelling undertaken by the department is intended to reflect best clinical practice in the context of the changes on 1 November 2018. The decision on whether a patient should receive a laboratory-based study versus a home-based study should be based on clinical need".*

## Private Health Insurance reforms

The reform of Private Health Insurance mandates the inclusion of funding for laboratory-based sleep studies only for gold tier policies. Laboratory-based sleep studies are the clinical 'gold standard' for diagnosing a range of sleep disorders. The ASA recently briefed Sam Develin, advisor to the Federal Health Minister, Hon Greg Hunt M.P., about our concerns that there may be unintended consequences of these reforms which plan to simplify private health insurance in Australia. We were able to emphasize that we project significant impact on access to paediatric sleep studies (which can only be performed in a sleep laboratory) and in access

and management of non-respiratory sleep disorders such as narcolepsy, idiopathic hypersomnia, parasomnias, periodic leg movements of sleep, circadian rhythm disorders, and insomnia. This lack of access in the private system will put added pressure on the public health system which is overwhelmed and struggling to manage supply and demand already. It was clear from the meeting that the Health minister has no plans to change the current system due for implementation on April 1st 2019.

Further correspondence from the Health Minister after our meeting suggests that it is anticipated that 40% of current individuals with private health insurance would be classified into the "Gold" tier. We have also initiated meetings with Private Health Australia and BUPA, the largest health fund in Australia, and will continue to advocate for continued and improved access to laboratory-based polysomnography. We will monitor wait times for sleep studies in the public system prior to and after April 1st to determine if there is an increase in waiting time after these reforms are introduced. If there are unintended consequences of this major change the private health insurance ombudsman would be the person to contact.

## MSAC application for overnight oximetry

It was decided recently that a joint ASA/TSANZ MSAC application for overnight oximetry will be submitted. A subcommittee of TSANZ and ASA members will be convened to draft the submission which will focus on an evidence based literature review on the utility of overnight oximetry, specific clinical indications and pathways where overnight oximetry could be used, staffing, equipment and reporting guidelines.

**Sutapa Mukherjee**

Clinical Chair

# Conference Committee



**Andrew Gikas**

Thank you to all the attendees, presenters, course co-ordinators, session chairs, sponsors, committee members, abstract submitters and volunteers who helped make the 30th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Australasian Sleep Association (ASA) and the Australasian Sleep Technologists Association (ASTA) in Brisbane a success.

Without your support Sleep DownUnder would not be possible, so again, a big thank you from all of us.

At their first meeting in mid-December the Conference Committee had the opportunity to review the evaluation results for the meeting and we were delighted that 88% of the responders rated the SDU 2018 meeting as very good to excellent and 92% of the responders likely to attend SDU in the next two years. The meeting continues to grow and thank you to the members not only for attending but also for providing valuable feedback which will be used to shape next year's meeting and beyond.

The meeting saw a total of 259 abstracts submitted and 897 attendees, including our valued speakers and sponsors. The meeting not only offered an opportunity to learn, network and meet up with friends and peers it created a platform to raise awareness and promote education which was supported by a comprehensive public relations campaign. During the week we saw 91 news items reach an audience of over 2 million, via TV, radio, online news and in print.

At the Gala Dinner on the Saturday night we had the opportunity to celebrate our award winners and an opportunity to thank Sarah Biggs for the wonderful work she has done over the last four years as Chair of the Conference Committee. Sarah's contribution has helped shaped the Annual Scientific Meeting into the successful meeting it is today, and her heart felt speech sums up the fantastic association that is the ASA and that this hard work couldn't be achieved without the input of a talented, passionate and committed Conference Committee.

Planning for this year's meeting in Sydney on October 16-19 is well under way, be sure to stay up to date with all the information on the meeting via our website: [www.sleepdownunder.com](http://www.sleepdownunder.com)

Our two international guest speakers are confirmed as:

- **Associate Professor John Axelsson**  
Department of Clinical Neuroscience.  
Karolinska Institute, Stockholm, Sweden
- **Professor Frances Chung**  
Department of Anesthesiology and Pain Medicine.  
University of Toronto, Canada

It has been some time since we hosted a meeting in Sydney with the last meeting held there back in 2011. With a refurbished International Convention Centre and a continued drive to make this the premier event in the region. The Conference Committee has set its sights on another successful year and the significant task ahead.

Each year the ASA's Councils are asked to nominate their volunteers who will act as their representatives on the conference committee, your representatives this year are:

- *Angela Anniss, ASTA Representative*
- *Maree Barnes, Dental Sleep Medicine Council*
- *YuSun Bin, Insomnia and Sleep Health Council*
- *Jasneek Chawla, Paediatric Council*
- *Chin Moi Chow, Insomnia and Sleep Health Council*
- *Scott Coussens, Neuroscience Council and ASTA*
- *David Cunnington, Sleep Physicians Council*
- *Barbara Galland, Paediatric Council*
- *Andrew Gikas, Conference Committee Chair*
- *Luke Katahanas, Primary Care Council*
- *Rachelle Love, Surgery Council*
- *Colette Navin, ASTA Representative*
- *Gemma Paech, Occupational Health, Safety and Performance Council*
- *Teanau Roebach, ASTA Representative*
- *Sameh Samuel, Respiratory Council*
- *Charli Sargent, Chronobiology Council*
- *Belinda Suthers, Respiratory Council*

Symposia, Short Course and Abstract submission open on the 1st of March 2019, so please feel free to start planning and provide suggestions or feedback via your council representatives.

I look forward to seeing you in Sydney.

**Andrew Gikas**  
Conference Chair

# Education Committee



**Ching Li Chai-Coetzer**

## Webinars 2018

In 2018 we hosted four webinars, three of which were presented jointly with the RACP:

1. Brief CBTi for Insomnia (Prof Sean Drummond & Hailey Meaklim);
2. Adolescent Sleep (Prof Sarah Blunden);
3. Shift Work and Sleep (Prof Sally Ferguson);

4. Upper Airway Surgery for OSA (Prof Stuart Mackay)

We have received a number of proposal submissions from ASA Councils for Webinar topics in 2019 and these will be reviewed by the Education Committee shortly.

## Education Sub-Committees

The sub-committees of the Education Committee were all very busy during 2018 and are set for another productive year in 2019.

### GP Education Subcommittee

- HealthEd talks on topic of “Adolescent Sleep in the Digital Age” will have been completed in major Australian capital cities.
- Alan Young & Peter Eastwood recently met with RACGP President Dr Harry Nespolon to discuss how Sleep Medicine education can best be delivered to general practitioners.

### GP Models of Care Working Group (chaired by Alan Young)

- Has been established to develop an ASA-recommended model of care for OSA management for GPs, in line with new MBS item numbers that were released by Medicare in November 2018.

### Nursing Education Subcommittee

- Launched the Sleep Medicine Nursing Workforce Survey at the 2018 Sleep DownUnder ASM and have

encouraged all nurses working in the field of Sleep Medicine to complete the survey.

To date, total of 100 responses have been received.

Catherine Buchan has submitted 2 Abstracts on behalf of the ASA (including results of the Sleep Medicine Nursing Workforce Survey) for presentation at the Australian Practice Nurses Association 2019 conference.

### Behavioural Management of Sleep Disorders (BMSD) Education Subcommittee

- Amy Reynolds and Kurt Lushington have recently met with the President of the Australian Psychological Society (APS) to strengthen their relationship and ensure ongoing collaboration between the two societies.
- Have developed a targeted strategy for engaging with APS colleges, including submissions at upcoming conferences.
- Have been invited by both the APS Clinical College and Health Psychologists College to run courses on Sleep at upcoming college congresses.

### Pharmacy Education Subcommittee

- Continuing to work with the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia on plans to run the face-to-face component of the joint PSA/ASA course.

### Dental Sleep Medicine Course

- Over 60 attendees registered for the 3 day Dental Sleep Medicine course that was run concurrently with the 2018 Sleep DownUnder conference in Brisbane
- Planning a half day course in May 2019, prior to the Australian Dental Congress

### DSM Accreditation Working Group

- Continuing to work towards the development of a program for accreditation of dentists working in the field of sleep medicine in Australia.

### Indigenous Working Group Party (chaired by Sarah Blunden)

- Have recently completed a draft Report on Indigenous Sleep Health which will be reviewed by the Education Committee.

**Ching Li Chai-Coetzer**  
Education Chair

# Finance Committee



**Nathaniel Marshall**

I foolishly told our previous Finance Chair, Marcus McMahon, that back in the dark ages I managed to stumble over the finishing line of an accountancy degree before discovering sleep science. He's taken that opportunity to move into a strategic role and as Drs Barnes, Eastwood and McMahon have all curiously and independently stated to me they have 'handballed'

this one to me (cf. being shanghaied). In that weird AFL sport I believe that means they've passed it deliberately to me. Of course I'm a rugby fanatic New Zealander and that means they've knocked it on and we're due for a scrum. There is a curse that's falsely been attributed to a non-existent Chinese proverb named "May you live in interesting times" which may be the widely anticipated worldwide financial scrum.

Nevertheless the association remain in robust financial health with enough liquid assets to meet our expenses.

Our investment portfolio is valued at \$877,000 as at 30 Nov 2018. There appears to be volatile financial times coming up. Our portfolio has been built and continues to be shaped by our advisors at JB Were in conjunction with the very valuable advice of Robert Estcourt to be income generating whilst also protecting our capital value. This investment of 30 years of small retained surpluses may help over the long term to fund core functions sustainably but also makes sure that our grants and prizes remain funded. But we have a vision to grow these for you.

Philanthropy will continue to become more important as government funding for research becomes ever more competitive. As Danny has pointed out in a previous report, it's been increasingly difficult for sleep researchers to get NHMRC funding. One way you can meaningfully help arrest this slide is through donations to the association which support seed funding and skills development in our junior members, in particular. This way they stand a chance in an NHMRC round but are also empowered so that they actually feel it's worth applying.

In the next year or two we are hoping to introduce a way to make it easier for you to financially support the future of our association through our grants and prizes programme. Because the association is now a registered charity that means that any amount you give will be tax deductible and if you renew your membership and donate at the same time in June you can immediately apply that against your tax bill. It's an attractive option when you want to support your association and the careers of your junior colleagues and mentees.

Australians and New Zealanders haven't traditionally had a strong culture of philanthropy in the way that Americans seem to in, for instance, the Sleep Research Society or any of their Universities. But analyses of the sectors in Australia and New Zealand show that we all like to give to causes we find worthy and most people do in fact donate to a number of causes throughout the year. We know you want to give—many of you give huge amounts of your time to the ASA, for instance.

But we also know that not everybody can afford to give substantial sums or to give every year. We like to give but we're not used to being directly asked for financial support—we can find it very confronting. But we are going to start trying to build this sort of culture, with your support. So the next time you renew your membership you may find that we have started asking for donations to support sleep research. There will of course be an opt-out option for people as this is not an exercise in coercion and everybody's circumstances differ from year to year.

I myself am a long term supporter of the Helen Bearpark award. I never had the privilege of meeting Helen myself but she left behind her a considerable legacy that I and others have benefited from—namely this association. In my own particular circumstances she also left behind the Busselton Sleep Study. My personal scientific career is substantially built on these and I want to support with my time and some money this association to foster future scientists and clinicians to enjoy the sort of career that I'm enjoying right now.

One of the ways I try to pay Helen's favours forward is by donating in her memory. Many of the other members of the association have also donated and continue to donate in the memory of Profs Nick Antic & Rob Pierce too. We want to make that sort of contribution easier for you to do to those particular funds or to support Australasian sleep research in general. This is a worthwhile exercise and I always read with interest the skills that our awardees have developed through their Helen Bearpark travel award.

For those of you who want to start early please give me a ring or an email if you have something in particular you would like to support:

[nathaniel.marshall@sydney.edu.au](mailto:nathaniel.marshall@sydney.edu.au) or if you would like to directly support either the Helen Bearpark, Nick Antic or Rob Pierce awards visit the web portal [www.sleep.org.au/donations/donations](http://www.sleep.org.au/donations/donations)

**Nathaniel Marshall**  
Finance Chair

## Membership Committee

### State Based Meetings



**Kristina Kairaitis**

As a consequence of great energy from a number of enthusiastic ASA members, ASA State Based meetings are planned for 2019 in NSW, SA, QLD and Perth, in addition to the long standing meetings already in existence in Victoria. I would like to acknowledge the work that is being done by Dr Roo Killick (NSW) and Dr Kath Maddison (WA) for being the champions for

these meetings as well as Dr Amy Reynolds who is planning a South Australian Sleep Science in the Pub (Somewhat SASSy), and Dr Daniel Judge who is currently working to incorporate sleep into some of the existing scientific meetings in Queensland. These exciting meetings will complement the ongoing hard work of Professor Matt Naughton who continues to be the champion for the Victorian Meetings. Keep an eye out for the dates of these meetings, and I hope that you are able to attend what will be excellent networking and educational opportunities.

### A New Website

The ASA is finally getting a new website, one which will better meet our strategic needs and improve many functions of the ASA, including access to information and knowledge, and make registration and donations

for scholarships simpler. This new website will begin implementation early February and should be ready for launch in a few months.

### ASA Working Group for Sleep in Pregnancy and Postpartum

At the last Sleep DownUnder meeting in Brisbane, a number of ASA members met to convene a working group with a focus on sleep pre and post partum. This group is convened by Dr Yu Sun Bin, with a focus on translating sleep research into clinical outcomes in women during and after pregnancy, through education of health and research professionals and the public. If you are interested in this area please contact YuSunBin, through the ASA Secretariat.

### ASA Facebook

Finally, I would encourage all members of the ASA to consider joining the Facebook forum and using this forum to share news and discoveries with other members.

**Kristina Kairaitis**  
Membership Chair

## Research Committee



**Danny Eckert**

### Awards Announced at the ASA meeting

Congratulations to the recipients of the ASA awards announced at Sleep DownUnder in Brisbane. The quality of the applications and the science presented at the meeting was truly outstanding. Winners include:

#### Young Investigator Award:

Laura Gell - *"Investigating the physiological mechanisms underlying airflow recovery following obstruction in obstructive sleep apnoea"*

### Helen Bearpark Memorial Scholarship:

Michelle Olaithe - *"Predicting OSA onset: A collaboration with the Wisconsin Sleep Cohort"*

### Rob Pierce Award supported by Philips/Respironics:

Grace Vincent - *"Fighting fires and fatigue: piloting a sleep hygiene intervention for firefighters"*

### ASA/Chinese Sleep Research Society Career Development Award supported by ResMed:

**ASA winner:** Kathleen Maddison - *"Collapsibility of the Human Upper Airway: Influence of State, Posture and Instrumentation"*

**CSRS winner:** Yun Li - *"The clinical utility of subjective vs. objective tests of excessive daytime sleepiness in the assessment of patients with sleep apnoea"*

### ASA International Travel Awards supported by Queensland Sleep Partners:

Kate Sutherland for her two presentations – *"Craniofacial photography for assessment of Obstructive Sleep Apnoea risk in an Icelandic general population sample"* and *"Imaging of Obstructive Sleep Apnoea anatomic risk factors after bariatric surgery weight loss: a pilot study"*.

Kate presented her work at both the European Sleep Research Society Congress, in Basel Switzerland and at the Sleep Apnoea Global Interdisciplinary Consortium (SAGIC) – Annual face-to-face strategic planning meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland

### Nick Antic Career Development Award:

This award recognises outstanding contributions to the ASA, service to the field and future leadership potential. The award was presented to **Melinda Jackson** by Nick's daughter Holly.

### ASA / Sleep Research Society (SRS) Collaborative Mentor-Mentee Award:

This inaugural award that facilitates travel and training of an ASA member with a SRS host was awarded to Cele Richardson (Mentor: Allison Harvey, University of California, Berkeley)

### Distinguished Achievement Award:

Peter Cistulli

### President's Award:

Garun Hamilton

### Improvements to the ASA award application process

This year the research committee will be working on new standardised templates for all ASA awards to make the application and scoring process easier and more efficient.

### Award Recipient Feature on the Website

This year we plan to create a feature on the ASA website to promote Award Recipients and what they achieved as a result of receiving their award/scholarship. Where relevant this will involve a brief report from the recipients and a link to published works.

### Mentor Program

The ASA Mentorship program is now in its sixth year. Research Committee member Jen Walsh is currently leading this program with assistance from Brad Edwards. Please contact either Jen or Brad if you have any questions. A survey to seek feedback from past mentees will be administered this year so that we can incorporate feedback to continue to improve this successful program.

### Advocacy efforts - Parliamentary inquiry into sleep health

As part of the joint ASA/SHF advocacy efforts to raise the profile of sleep health as a priority for the nation we were very pleased when the government announced a national Inquiry into Sleep Health Awareness in Australia. The hearings will be taking place in Perth, Sydney and Melbourne in January and February. One of the terms of reference is to investigate the Current national research and investment into sleep health and sleeping disorders. We submitted a detailed assessment on this issue and Danny Eckert will be speaking on this topic as a witness to the inquiry in Sydney in early February. We are calling for a significant investment from government to address this important health issue for our community.

### NHMRC project grant funding outcomes for 2019 round

Congratulations to the following individuals and teams who collectively were awarded over \$3.2m in project grant funding for their sleep-related applications (see Table below for details)

Lead Investigator	Project Title	Institution	Funding awarded
Dr Matthew Pase	Effects of Poor Sleep on Alzheimer’s Disease Pathogenesis: Extending the Glymphatic Flow Hypothesis	Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health	<b>\$1,161,911</b>
Prof Elizabeth Coulson	Mechanisms and consequences of cholinergic neuron degeneration in sleep apnea	University of Queensland	<b>\$932,284</b>
A/Pr Simon Smith	Reducing Crash Risk For Young Drivers: A Randomized Control Trial To Improve Sleep	University of Queensland	<b>\$706,535</b>
A/Pr Bruno van Swinderen	Bridging the gap between electrical and molecular sleep functions in the brain	University of Queensland	<b>\$435,793</b>

**Danny Eckert**  
Research Chair

## New Zealand Branch



**Kenneth Whyte**

nominees will be circulated in February. To keep up to date with the latest information visit the Sleep in Aotearoa page on the ASA website: [www.sleep.org.au/nz-branch/sleep-in-aotearoa](http://www.sleep.org.au/nz-branch/sleep-in-aotearoa)

### Sleep in Aotearoa

Planning continues for Sleep in Aotearoa at Otago School of Medicine in Christchurch 2-3 May 2019. The Organising committee have an outline programme and are in the process of populating it with speakers. Details and information such as registration fee, call for abstracts and young investigators award

### Pharmac & Stimulant Therapy for Central Orders of Hypersomnolence

Due to commercial reasons a tender for the supply of Modafinil was not awarded last year, which is disappointing as the lower the price the more likely we can get traction to widen access to this medication. However, apparently it is under consideration as part of a multi-product package proposal negotiation that would lead to a possible price decrease; though clearly we have no insight as to the commercial details and just what sort of price decrease they may obtain for Modavigil.

Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee’s (PTAC) current stated position is that use of modafinil as first line therapy: as there is no evidence it has improved effectiveness over methylphenidate it would not be considered unless it was cost neutral with methylphenidate. As a result since it’s clearly not cost neutral our hands are currently tied unless new studies emerge, which is unlikely.

PTAC stated that as idiopathic hypersomnolence is "difficult to diagnose" and that there could be up to 450 cases in NZ, (although I’m not sure where they obtained that figure from) or even more and that extending access to stimulant medication would need a funding application.

NZ Branch Executive Committee will discuss whether a working party could be put together to action this application. We have to be realistic that with essentially no cost effectiveness data in the area of Idiopathic hypersomnolence and far from clear cut proven diagnostic criteria, that it would be a major uphill battle.

## Pharmac Provision of Medical Devices in Sleep Arena

We have had no new feedback from Pharmac regarding their proposals to supervise provision of medical devices in the area of OSA and Respiratory Failure (Non-invasive ventilation).

### Kenneth Whyte

New Zealand Branch President

## Strategic Planning and Innovation



### Marcus McMahon

The Innovation and Strategy portfolio is a newly created portfolio within the ASA. My role as the inaugural Chair of Innovation and Strategy is to assist the Board in defining its goals and strategies in the years ahead.

The ASA is a small organisation which represents a broad group of people including physicians, psychologists, scientists, researchers, neurologists, surgeons, GPs and nurses. As the Chair of Innovation and Strategy, it is my hope that the ASA will be able to help foster the aims and objectives of the ASA with the development of a clear vision that will help elevate the ASA to being the best professional sleep organisation in the world. To do that, the ASA needs to have a clear understanding of who their membership is and what the needs of the membership are. The ASA also needs to have an idea of what the world's 'best' professional sleep society might look like, and I welcome your suggestions.

The ASA has invested in professional development

activities for members of the Board and other ASA members. Through these activities, we are helping our members build the skills they need to lead and help grow the organisation. The ASA aims to be dynamic and responsive to the needs of its members. One hurdle that we have faced in that regard has been ageing and outdated IT infrastructure, including our website and membership database. Board members including myself, Nat Marshall and Kristina Kairaitis have investigated a range of programs that will enable us to better manage our membership database and website and we are hoping to have a new, more functional website and database in the coming months. We have also recognised that for the ASA to be able to serve its membership more effectively, we need adequate staffing within the ASA office with the appropriate skill sets to be able to support our membership and the Board.

Financial hurdles are common for many professional organisations and the ASA is no exception. As Chair of Innovation and Strategy I will be working with the Board and executive to identify opportunities for growth and potential funding sources that will enable us to deliver exceptional services to our members. The ASA is well positioned to be the leading professional scientific organisation in Australia and New Zealand to advise government on all things related to sleep health. The Board, in conjunction with the Sleep Health Foundation, continues to develop relationships with government to help ensure that sleep health remains a priority at all levels of government. The ASA also believes that research and education remain fundamental to our role. Supporting our members in their research endeavours remains critical and we will continue to try identify opportunities that will help us support emerging and established researchers within the field. Education is also a pivotal role of the ASA and we continue to explore opportunities to develop educational material and resources for our members. As part of my role, I will also continue to liaise with members of the various committees and councils to help identify opportunities to better serve our membership. I am interested in knowing what our members want from the ASA, both now, and in the years ahead. I am also interested in better understanding what obstacles we might be facing as a profession both now, but also in the future. I welcome any feedback or suggestions that members have. Please feel free to contact me:

[marcus.mcmahon@deltamed.com.au](mailto:marcus.mcmahon@deltamed.com.au)

### Marcus McMahon

Strategic Planning & Innovation Chair

## Dates for the diary

### 25th Annual advances in diagnosis & treatment of sleep apnea and snoring

Date: 15-17 February 2019

Venue: Disney's Grand Floridian Resort & Spa Lake Buena Vista, Florida

For more information:

<https://upenn.irisregistration.com/Home/Site?code=25thSleepApnea>

### Sleep DownUnder 2019 - Call for symposia, plenary & short courses

Date: Friday 1 March 2019

This year's Call for symposia, plenary and short Courses will open on 1 March 2019.

Deadline: 15 April 2019.

For more information: [www.sleepdownunder.com](http://www.sleepdownunder.com)

### Sleep Expo Middle East

Date: 11-13 April 2019

Venue: Festival Arena in Dubai, UAE

For more information: <https://sleepexpome.com>

### Australian Dental Association Congress

Date: 1-4 May 2019

Venue: Adelaide Convention Centre

For more information:

[www.ada.org.au/congress-2019-website/home](http://www.ada.org.au/congress-2019-website/home)

### Sleep in Aotearoa

Date: 2-3 May 2019

Venue: Christchurch New Zealand

For more information:

[www.sleep.org.au/nz-branch/sleep-in-aotearoa](http://www.sleep.org.au/nz-branch/sleep-in-aotearoa)

### RACP Congress 2019

Date: 6-8 May 2019

Venue: Aotea Centre, Auckland New Zealand

For more information:

<https://racpcongress.com.au>

### Activity Based Funding Conference 2019

Date: 13-15 May 2019

Venue: Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre

For more information:

<https://abfconference.com.au>

### Sleep DownUnder Future Dates

Sleep DownUnder 2019

Sydney, 17-19 October 2019

Sleep DownUnder 2020

Brisbane, 22-25 October 2020

In conjunction with the International Pediatric Sleep Association (IPSA), Pediatric Sleep Congress

