From the president.

The 19th ASA annual scientific meeting in Perth is now behind us, and preparations are in earnest for a much larger 20th ASM to be held in conjunction with the World Federation of Sleep Research and Sleep Medicine Societies quadrennial meeting in Cairns, September 2007. The meeting, expected to attract upwards of 2000 national and international registrants, is a wonderful opportunity to showcase Australasian scientific talent and network with international experts in a social and relaxing environment for which North Queensland is famous. Smaller satellite meetings are also planned. Ron Grunstein and John Wheatley and their committee are tirelessly working to make this a bumper meeting.

The Perth ASA ASM was a huge success on every front. Registrant numbers were up, industry sponsorship was very generous, scientific presentations were exceptional and original scientific research comparable with any international meeting. The theme “Sleep across time and age” was well supported by the ASA guest speakers, namely Mary Carskadon, Mary Morrell, Ian Colrain and Colin Espie supplemented by the ASTA guest speakers Pamela Minkley and Bonnie Roberston. Fifteen travel grants were awarded. 4 scientific prizes were awarded and the Helen Bearpark Award was awarded to Dr David Berlowitz. The New Investigator was won by Sarah Jay for her work titled “Differential recovery of sleepiness and waking functions following sleep deprivation”. The pre-conference post-graduate courses were well attended and included a general practitioner educational symposium organised by Darren Mansfield and his education committee. The ASA meeting also saw the introduction of the Australian Sleep Trials Network. Craig Hukins, Kim Ward, Stephanie Blower and the organising committee need congratulating once again for their marvellous efforts which allowed for a seamless combined ASA ASTA conference.

This is an opportune time for me to thank Peter Cistulli, outgoing immediate past president, and Philippa Gander, outgoing chair of the research committee, for both their insight, persistence, professionalism and capacity to make the ASA move in a positive direction. I am most pleased to have David Hillman and Naomi Rogers join the ASA executive as President elect and Chair of the research committee respectively. I extend your thanks to the remaining executive members, Delwyn Bartlett, Angela Campbell, Craig Hukins, Peter Eastwood, Darren Mansfield and Harry Teichtahl who have all contributed constructively (and will continue to do so) in many directions to make our ASA a more robust society.

In keeping with the ASA mission statement (paraphrased “to lead, coordinate and enable the educational, research, and social activities of healthcare professionals in the sleep medicine field...to promote... good sleep and thereby promote better health, public safety and quality of life”) a recent Medicare Australia ruling is wonderful news. This ruling allows for the reimbursement of clinical psychology treatment visits. Challenges ahead for the ASA executive include further development of sleep diagnostic tests and ensuring adequate reimbursement for the management of sleep disorders. Co-operation, hard work and imagination will be required and a unified approach for this area to proceed.

Developments have been abundant with our website thanks to ASA honorary secretary Delwyn Bartlett. We now have several executive documents on display as well as a Members Only section. Please take time to read the website and provide Delwyn with constructive comments.

At the last ASA executive, it was decided to instigate a new award (and eventually several awards) to recognize ASA members who have made a significant contribution to the field of sleep medicine. Suggestions are being sought and should be directed to the research chair, Naomi Rogers, or myself. Watch this space.

As the year draws to a close, I hope all ASA members have a safe and happy break during the quiet holiday months and extend the ASA executive’s best wishes for the New Year.

Matthew Naughton
President

Wishing all ASA members a Very Sleepy Christmas and a very lively 2007
From the Honorary Secretary

We now have five Special Interest Groups up and running which is great and the first “get togethers” for Neurology and Respiratory SIG’s took place at our Annual Scientific Meeting in Perth. It will be good to read about the progress of the SIG’s and in time we may have other special interest groups to further represent our growing membership.

Website
We are slowly setting up the website for members only (access with membership number) and for the public. Andrew Thornton has been working closely with Sleep Disorders Australia and has kindly offered the pamphlets that he has worked on to be available on the ASA website which is much appreciated and very useful. Some SIG chairs and co-chairs have made some amendments depending on specialty areas. We now have a few papers available on insomnia on both the members only and the public website to encourage GP’s to use this facility. We would welcome further suggestions of specific and relevant sleep papers.

Membership Committee
We are very keen to have as many ASA members attend worldsleep07 in Cairns in 2007. Consequently we would like to raise the membership profile and encourage new membership from a number of other health related areas such as neurology and psychology. The Membership Committee put a proposal to the Executive Meeting which was agreed on at the last meeting to offer a reduced introductory membership ($40.00 ordinary members and $10.00 student members) or just one year with renewal subscriptions to be sent to members in September. Only members of other associations would be offered at this reduced rate and it would not entitle the holder to apply for any travel grants etc that would only be available to ordinary or student members. This opportunity will be promoted in the Newsletters of the various societies.

Thank you and may you all have a special Christmas with some rest and lots of healthy sleep

Delwyn Bartlett
Chair, Membership Committee

From the Clinical Chair

The committee will be busy in 2007 with a number of new initiatives. Clinical Indicators will be trialed by 10 sleep services. The inter laboratory quality assurance program is currently being trialed in a number of laboratories. Peter Rochford and Andrew Thornton will report to the committee with the results of this trial. The clinical chair will be one of the members of a Working Party which will be established by the TSANZ and ASA to address the issue of Medicare Australia sleep item numbers. The Pfizer sleep report will be reviewed by the committee and the ASA executive in February/March 2007 prior to distribution to members.

The committee has been entrusted with providing responses to the RACP with regard to draft documents of the College – “Principles for Delegation of Medical Tasks” and “Training& workforce: flexibility versus prescription -- time for firm guidance”. The clinical committee invites the membership to comment on these draft documents. The ASA executive has asked the committee to obtain information from Health Insurance Companies regarding their reimbursement for devices for management of sleep apnea.

We wish all members a Merry Christmas and a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Harry Teichtahl,
Chair, Clinical Committee

From the Research Chair

At the recent ASA AGM, held in Perth during the Annual Scientific Meeting, the preliminary findings from the ASA Research Questionnaire were presented. To summarise our preliminary findings:

- we had a 42.6% response rate from the membership for this web-based questionnaire;
- clinical research is a major research area for 44% of respondents, and a secondary area for 10%;
- the majority of research is conducted in workplaces, patients homes or sleep laboratories;
- the most researched areas were circadian disruption, sleep disordered breathing and sleep medicine;
- respondents identified treatment of sleep disorders, consequences of sleep disorders and consequences of sleep loss as important future research priorities;
- other priorities listed by respondents included: more research funding; longitudinal studies; Australasian epidemiological and public health studies, better sleep health with age; and making a difference to sleep health of the community.
Together with information from a database we have compiled of Australasian sleep- and circadian-related publications between 1999 and 2005, the information from the Research Questionnaire will be used in the writing of the Sleep and Circadian research Green paper, as requested by the AS Executive Committee, and in a manuscript on the current state and future directions of sleep and circadian research in Australasia for submission to Medical Journal of Australia in 2007.

Thank you to all of the membership who responded to the questionnaire, and a big thank you to Philippa Gander and Allison Clark for their work so far on the questionnaire analysis.

**Naomi Rogers**  
*Chair, Research Committee*

**Paediatric SIG**

The Paediatric SIG had a great conference in Perth. Mary Carskadon led lively discussion in the Paediatric SIG Symposium, and we enjoyed three poster sessions full of interesting research. Margot Davey resigned as the Chair of the Paediatric SIG and Gillian Nixon was elected as the new Chair. The whole SIG expressed huge thanks to Margot for her considerable work as the Chair for the last four years, and in particular in promoting the profile of the paediatric group within the ASA.

A sub-group of the SIG is working to update the 1994 TSANZ Guidelines for Respiratory Sleep Studies in Children. Another group has drafted a guideline for management of children on home ventilation in Australasia which is currently in circulation. Andrew Wilson is the paediatric sleep medicine representative on the Thoracic and Sleep SAC and is leading work on a draft document regarding accreditation requirements for training sites. Members have contributed to these initiatives via email and through the regular monthly video conferences.

At the Paediatric SIG Business Meeting in Perth it was agreed that all sites work towards being able to contribute to multi-centre studies. This will initially involve establishing consensus on scoring criteria for respiratory events, and then assessing concordance for both sleep staging and event scoring.

Thanks to everyone who submitted symposia proposals for World Sleep 07 in Cairns next year. We look forward to a full and exciting paediatric programme.

**Gillian Nixon**  
*Chair, Paediatric SIG*

**Orofacial SIG**

The Orofacial SIG has had a busy year culminating in the symposium held at the ASA meeting in Perth. Special thanks go to Peter Cistulli, Richard Lewis and Greg Reynolds who presented contemporary research in oral appliance therapy and surgical options.

In attempts to reach and attract a wider audience to the ASA a flyer was placed in the ADA (WA) newsletter. This resulted in increased membership from dentists who have a special interest in sleep medicine; however it was pointed out that a similar production sent via the Federal ADA email would have had a greater impact.

Welcome to new members who joined as a result of this membership drive!

At last the Website is up and running. Several links have been placed on this, with a list of good reference text books. Anyone who wishes to contribute to this website is encouraged to do so, by emailing either chairperson.

The yearly business meeting, also held in Perth, concentrated on the website and addressing proposed topics for worldsleep07, in September 2007. Many good ideas were put forward. Of note was the ability for public access to the Orofacial SIG website, as at present the above information can only be accessed by the ‘members only’ page. This year’s effort will be directed to expanding this aspect of the site. Again, all contributions are appreciated.

Finally, and most importantly, worldsleep07. A proposal has been forwarded to the organising committee to offer a series of Orofacial symposia over a 3 day period. This initial proposal includes a host of prominent local and overseas speakers and will prove to be an exciting and ‘unmissable’ event.

Compliments of the season to all  
*From the Chair people! Chris Pantin & Andrew Ng.*
Insomnia Sleep Health SIG

The ASA conference in Perth provided an excellent showcase for the very good basic and applied research being conducted in the broader Insomnia, circadian rhythms and sleep health areas. The research of Prof. Mary Carskadon and Prof. Philippa Gander were highlights. The SIG symposium presented by Prof. Colin Espie, and the following panel session, reinforced the unique expertise of the ASA members working in this area, demonstrated a potential practice model, and was well received. The insomnia workshop led by Prof. Espie prior to the conference was also well attended, and we’d hope to continue similar workshops for non-specialists. Further progress toward improving clinical services for non-respiratory sleep disorders is stimulated by these pragmatic forums.

Shortly after the Perth conference, the Federal government announced details of the new Medicare rebates for psychologists. These rebates are limited to treatment in the mental health domain; however, sleep disorders are clearly noted under this category. There will be two levels of rebate, and referral from a GP or a psychiatrist is required. The Australian Psychological Society website provides useful information on how to access this rebate scheme. Hopefully this will make it easier for patients to access CBT for insomnia.

The insomnia and sleep health symposia proposals for worldsleep07 have been of very high quality, and the conference in Cairns should attract wide interest. Basic and clinical researchers are strongly encouraged to submit their scientific work to this conference.

Simon Smith and Tony Fernando
Co-chair Insomnia SIG

Respiratory SIG

The Respiratory SIG got off to a slow start with the first scheduled meeting at the ASM in Perth being very poorly attended. This may have been because of a change of date and clashes with other meetings. A number of people have registered an interest and a symposium on OSA and the metabolic syndrome has been proposed for worldsleep07.

At this stage the SIG is really looking for ideas to work on in 2007. One that has been suggested is the formulation of guidelines for CPAP supply, that is a set of basic requirements that should be met by someone or some service purporting to operate a CPAP service. The Austin and the Royal Adelaide Hospital have individually undertaken this task and it is highly likely that other centres have done the same. The Respiratory SIG may be able to draw together these documents and come up with some standards. This would seem to be a useful exercise for either setting up an in-house CPAP program or choosing an external CPAP provider. Thoughts about this or any other suggestions would be very welcome.

Andrew Thornton, aThornto@mail.rah.sa.gov.au
Christopher Worsnop, christopher.worsnop@austin.org.au
Co-chairs Respiratory SIG

NEUROLOGY SIG

During the recent meeting in Perth the first Neurology SIG meeting was held. It was agreed that members would keep in contact with each other via an email distribution list. There was some discussion and subsequent recommendations for symposia and educational sessions for the Cairns meeting. We agreed to write some content for the website on neurological sleep disorders. The Neurology SIG would welcome anyone wishing to become a member of the group. Please contact Phil King at pking9@bigpond.net.au if you would like to join and copy in Stephanie at the secretariat admin@sleep.org.au

Philip King (co-convenor) Neurology SIG

Book review

Teenage Sleep: Understanding and helping the sleep of 12-20 year olds
By Dorothy Bruck, School of Psychology, Victoria University. ISBN 1 86272667 1
An e-book e-published by the Wellness Promotion Unit, Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia.
Available at http://www.vu.edu.au/teenagesleep

This e-book is unusual in that it focuses solely on the sleep of teenagers.
It is written for parents, school counsellors, youth health workers, high school teachers and teenagers and discusses trouble falling asleep, problems staying asleep, night fears, wet dreams, scary dreams, sleep deprivation, snoring, and
needing too much sleep. Sleep walking, feelings of restless legs, sleep paralysis, midnight binge eating, the meaning of dreams, the relationship between sleep problems and depression, and many other things are covered as well.

The fact that it is an e-book means that it can be downloaded at no charge, which is wonderful for people and schools with limited resources. I understand that there have been 2,000 full downloads of the book in the first six weeks, which is impressive.

This e-book provides enough information to understand the key aspects of teenage sleep and enables readers to judge how seriously to take a sleep problem, what they can expect, and what to do about it. Some chapters and appendices include questionnaires to assess different aspects of sleep/wake behaviour.

The resources are not restricted to sleep but cover a wide range of issues that young people may experience while awake that can lead to problems with their sleep. The book is written clearly in simple, non-technical language, without compromising rigour, which is a huge plus. It might be useful if there had been an index (or a Google-type search function) – but the detailed Table of Contents makes up for this to some extent.

Overall, this e-book, written clearly and accessibly by an expert in the field, can be highly recommended.

Dr David Morawetz
Clinical and Counselling Psychologist
Author of the self-help program "Sleep Better Without Drugs"

In the journals

Psychosocial outcome of childhood narcolepsy and idiopathic hypersomnolence.

At least a third of people with narcolepsy experience symptoms before the age of 15 years. The diagnosis is frequently delayed, and symptoms can be misinterpreted, perhaps especially in children in whom excessive daytime sleepiness (EDS) may be the only presenting feature. Psychological problems have been consistently reported in adults with narcolepsy, but similar studies have not previously been carried out in children. This cross-sectional international survey carried out from Oxford recruited children from the UK, USA, Europe and Australia and aimed to describe the psychosocial profile of a large group of children aged 4-18 years with excessive daytime sleepiness compared with controls. Recruited children were separated into those who met conventional criteria for narcolepsy (n=42) and those whose primary complaint was EDS without definite additional features of narcolepsy (n=18). Both children with narcolepsy and those with EDS alone had significantly higher scores than controls (n=23), and above the normal reference ranges, for peer problems, hyperactivity, conduct problems, and emotional symptoms. Both clinical groups also scored significantly higher on the Child Depression Inventory than controls, and their quality of life was lower, but only for the mental health sub-scale. School absenteeism rates were not different from controls, but the clinical groups had higher educational difficulty scores as rated by teachers. In all these analyses, the narcolepsy group was not different from the EDS alone group. These findings confirm that the psychological problems described in adults with narcolepsy also affect children. The authors also conclude that the psychosocial problems identified in children with narcolepsy may be due to excessive sleepiness rather than factors more specific to narcolepsy, because of the similar profile of difficulties seen in the narcolepsy and EDS groups.

Gillian Nixon

Other announcements

Request for information. The Association regularly receives requests for information from the general public. Pictured here is a particularly delightful example of such a request, which the Honorary Secretary responded to.

Offers to help with this and other queries should be directed to Stephanie: admin@sleep.org.au

Dear Sir or Madam

My name is Rachel I am a grade one student.

I was wondering if you could help me with my passion project. It is sleeping and these are my questions. Why do people sleep? How many people sleep with teddy bears? Why do people dream? Why do people sneeze?

Thank-you Sincerely

Rachel
ASA Web Site

Updated information needed for ASA Website.

The ASA is updating the information that is on the Website, for both the “Members Only” pages and the “Public” pages. For the Public Pages the Membership Committee is keen that a list of Sleep Clinics is available for people seeking assistance. A request was sent out last week asking members to liaise with work colleagues and nominate one person from each lab to send the required information. State, City/Suburb, Name of Clinic, Name of Consultant(s), Number of Beds, Phone Number for Appointment, Public/Private, and Special Areas of Interest. While many services have responded, the list is far from complete, so can you please ensure that information has been sent from your clinic. Information should be sent to Stephanie admin@sleep.org.au.

ASM 2006

Awards: The following were the recipients of awards at ASM 2006

Helen Bearpark Memorial Scholarship: David Berlowitz

New Investigator Award: Sarah Jay

New Investigator Book Prizes: Philip Terrill, Lydia Makarie Rofail, Alison Noa, Mark Kohler, Sean Tolhurst

Poster Prizes: 1st: Michelle Ng, 2nd: Catherine Bolton, 3rd: Kelli Rixon

Travel Grants: Ahmad Afaghi, Andrew Chan, Johan Hellgren, Cassie Hilditch, Michi Imazu, Melinda Jackson, Sarah Jay, Richard Lee, Lydia Makarie Rofail, Helen Morgan, Collette Navin, Michelle Ng, Daniel Stadler, Phillip Terrill, Andrew Vakulin

Photographs of the conference Dinner are available for download in the members only section of the ASA Web Site. They are well worth a look when you have five minutes to spare.
The mission of the Australasian Sleep Trials Network is to conduct and facilitate clinical trials of national and international significance that will have a major impact on sleep health. It will achieve this mission principally through investigator driven trials, funded by government or industry. The ASTN is funded by an NHMRC Enabling grant held by the Chief Investigators: Professor Ron Grunstein, Professor Doug McEvoy, Professor Lyle Palmer, Associate Professor Naomi Rogers, Professor Rob Pierce and Associate Professor Guy Marks.

The first ASTN Open Forum was held in Perth on 4th October 2006, as part of the ASA Annual Scientific Meeting. The aim of the Open Forum was to let people know about the ASTN and to allow researchers from a variety of fields of sleep health to talk briefly about key research ideas and issues in their area. More details and individual speakers’ presentations are available in PDF format on the ASTN website.

The next Open Forum will be held on 25th March as part of the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand (TSANZ) Annual Scientific Meeting (Auckland, NZ: 27-29th March 2007). Sessions on research design and discussions on proposed multicentre studies are planned for the Auckland meeting, which is open to all interested researchers.

The Australasian Sleep Trials Network website at http://www.sleeptrials.net is updated regularly and provides information about current and future projects, committees and personnel involved, and will be a central resource for ASTN policy documents, application forms and downloadable versions of the ASTN newsletters. If you would like to learn more about the network, the Open Forum meeting in Auckland, or would like to be involved please check the website or contact Dr. Melanie Harris, ASTN National Project Officer, via email: Melanie.Harris@rgh.sa.gov.au.

Composition of review body for ASTN

Please find below details contained in a letter to the ASA from the ASTN. If you are able to assist them by being part of their proposed Advisory/Appeals Group, can you please contact Stephanie Blower (admin@sleep.org.au) in the first instance.

Dear Colleagues,

The Chief Investigators of the Australasian Sleep Trials Network thank the ASA for accommodating the Network’s first Open Forum and exhibition stand at the ASA annual meeting in Perth. Many researchers have now been informed about the Network, started thinking about possible projects utilising this new resource, and had the opportunity to comment on the structure of the Network. We are now putting a structure in place and wish to consult the ASA Executive on the composition of the review body for the Network. As part of a transparent governance structure, an Advisory/Appeals Group will be set up to review decision-making of the Sleep Trials Network Executive and to hear any formal appeals on decisions of the Research Committee. The Advisory/Appeals Group should be made up of independent expert figures, not aligned with particular Australian or New Zealand sleep research institutions and not actively involved in sleep research in the region. International experts could be included. The Sleep Trials Network Executive Committee invites the ASA, as the peak sleep research body for the region, to recommend a group of individuals who can be invited to serve on this Advisory/Appeals Group. We look forward to discussing this issue with you.

Professor Ron Grunstein
On behalf of Chief Investigators of the Australasian Sleep Trials Network:

Professor Ron Grunstein
Professor Rob Pierce
Professor Lyle Palmer

Professor Doug McEvoy
Associate Professor Naomi Rogers
Associate Professor Guy Marks
Symposium Submissions for worldsleep07 closed in early November, and the Organising Committee would like to thank all the ASA members for their hard work in putting some of these together. In all over 90 proposals were received from around the world, and the Programme Committee is now working hard to review these, and slot them into a fantastic programme.

Support for the Congress from industry has been very positive, and we are pleased to announce that four Platinum Sponsors have now been confirmed, Cephalon, Resmed, Respironics and Weinmann.

The Registration Brochure will be available in January 2007, and the call for abstracts will open in January and close on 30 March 2007, much earlier than usual, so if you haven’t already started I would urge you to be working on your abstracts for the Congress.

For those wishing to put some figures into budgets I can advise you that Early Bird Registration (before 1 June 2007) will be $850 for members and $1,050 for non members.

Trainee Registration will be offered to delegates enrolled in a higher degree (Masters or PhD or equivalent) or within two years of receiving a PhD (or equivalent) and still working predominantly in the area of health research. Trainee Registration will cost $500, including a Trainee Professional Development Workshop on Sunday 2 September 2007. A number of Merit based and Travel Awards will be available to support trainees who present papers at the Congress. Applications for these awards should be made on the registration form.

We hope to see you in Cairns next year.
All the best

John Wheatley and Ron Grunstein
Co-chairs – worldsleep07

Calendar of Events

2-6 September 2007 worldsleep07, Cairns Convention Centre, Cairns, Far North Queensland.
Contact: info@worldsleep07.com  Web Site: www.worldsleep07.com

Please also check our website for other meetings. http://www.sleep.org.au/meetings.html