

## President's update June 2018



The ASA's Board, Committees, Councils and Secretariat continue to focus their efforts on the Association's Vision: ... *a community that recognises the importance of good sleep to health, public safety, productivity and quality of life.*

To this end the ASA has been working closely with the Sleep Health Foundation (SHF) on advocacy activities directed towards achieving this vision. The ASA and SHF submitted a pre-budget submission on 15 December 2017 to the Federal government seeking financial support for four major projects: a national community education campaign; professional education; a universal sleep study request form; and a national sleep data repository. Unfortunately we were unsuccessful with the four major projects we applied for, but we will continue to lobby for a favourable outcome moving forward.

All of us working in the field of sleep understand the importance and wide-reaching health consequences of inadequate sleep. It is now time to place 'sleep health' on the national health agenda and thereby raise awareness of the enormous social, physical, mental and economic implications of inadequate sleep and sleep disorders for all Australians. For this reason, representatives from the ASA and SHF have been meeting with Federal parliamentarians to seek support for a Government-led Parliamentary Inquiry into Sleep Health.



A Sleep Health Summit, led by the ASA and SHF, was held at NeuRA, NSW on 14 April. The purpose of the summit was to ensure that any Parliamentary Inquiry receives a range of well-informed submissions from as many stakeholders as possible. Attendees at the summit included health professionals (medical practitioners, dentists, pharmacists, nurses), patient groups, educationalists, occupational drivers, safety experts and business leaders. At the end of the day a communique was developed, supported by all attendees. This is currently being finalised for circulation to the media and politicians. We will keep the membership well informed of the progress of all our advocacy efforts.

On behalf of the ASA membership, we have also been in contact with the Federal Government with regard to the MBS Review and Sleep Item Numbers. The recommendations from the review were included in the May 2018 budget, with implementation in November 2018. We have also been in touch with Government regarding the compliance issues raised and the detailed response is available in the Clinical Committee Report

It is important that the ASA be widely recognised as the 'go to' organisation representing all health professionals working in the field of sleep. The Advocacy activities and our regular positive communications with the Federal Department of Health are working towards this goal. The ASA is also raising its national profile in this regard by providing submissions to Government enquiries that

impact our field. In the past few months the ASA has provided submissions on: Patient Safety & Quality – improvement in primary care; Proposed regulatory changes related to personalised and 3D printed medical devices, Therapeutic Goods Amendment (2017 Measures No.1 Bill 2017) and TMCC Item number descriptors. Darren Mansfield has also made a submission on behalf of ASA and SHF to the National Road Safety Strategy Enquiry.

The ASA has also written to the Dental Board, in collaboration with the Australian Dental Association, to voice its concerns about the growth in providers offering sleep apnoea devices and other 'do it yourself' dental appliances. I would like to acknowledge and thank those members who have provided their time, expertise and critical input to these submissions.

While the focus of this report has been on the ASA's National advocacy activities, our Association also has an important role to play on the international stage, particularly in the Asian Pacific region. I recently attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> Congress of the Asian Association of Sleep Medicine (AASM), which was held in South Korea. The meeting was attended by 1,000 delegates from over 30 countries and was outstanding in terms of its organisation and quality of scientific presentations. The president elect of the AASM is Professor Fang Han from China, a good friend of the ASA, an invited speaker at our last meeting in Auckland, and the host of the AASM Congress in Beijing in 2 years' time. It was clear from my conversations that Australian Sleep Science and Sleep Medicine are well respected by our Asian Colleagues and we have a lot to offer them. However, based on what I saw at the Congress it is equally clear that the Asian Sleep clinical and research community have much to offer us in Australia and New Zealand. I attended the AASM Board meeting and note that they are keen to engage more with the ASA. How to do this is an active topic of discussion at the ASA board level and I encourage any ASA member to feel free to contact me directly if they have any suggestions on how we as a profession can better engage with our Asian colleagues.

**Peter Eastwood**

President