



Presidents Update – November 2019

Welcome to this Presidents Update, my first since stepping into the role as President. There are many exciting opportunities and challenges ahead for the ASA over the next few years and I look forward to working diligently with our membership to make a significant contribution.

I would like to acknowledge Professor Peter Eastwood's incredible leadership as ASA President over the last two years. His clear vision, dedication and hard work has led to many successes including the handing down of the Parliamentary Inquiry into Sleep Health Awareness. I look forward to working closely with him as the ASA focuses on implementation of key recommendations from the Inquiry which provide a roadmap to the future of sleep health in Australia. I would also like to welcome two new Board members, Jennifer Walsh as Membership Chair and Denise O'Driscoll as Research Chair. We have a talented, dynamic Board that will play a major role in leading our Association. Last but not least, Stephanie Blower will be retiring from the ASA in June 2020 with her last day in the office in February. There was a fitting tribute to Stephanie at the Conference dinner in Sydney and there will be a final dinner with the Board and office staff prior to her departure. Stephanie has been the cornerstone of our Association for 20 years as executive officer and then CEO. We cannot thank her enough for her amazing contribution.

I would like to congratulate our Conference Chair Andrew Gikas and the Conference Committee for a wonderful Sleep Down Under meeting in Sydney. The meeting was a huge success with over 700 attendees and a great breadth and depth of diverse sleep research was presented. There was a lot of media focus on the meeting highlighting the huge public interest in sleep. Partnered with the recommendations from the Parliamentary Inquiry this puts sleep at the forefront of the national agenda.

During my first month we have worked in partnership with the Sleep Health Foundation and the advocacy group Executive Counsel Australia to request government funding for a behavioural change campaign and primary health care education program for sleep totalling \$29 million. We are making progress with having sleep recognised as a standalone specialty with listing for consideration at the next COAG Health Ministers meeting in early 2020. We are in the process of making a joint submission with SHF to the Royal Commission into Aging focusing on the impact of medications (Medicines Subcommittee led by Bandana Saini), the interaction between sleep problems and dementia (Sharon Naismith and Ron Grunstein) and Lighting to improve cognition, mood, sleep and health in aged care facilities (Shantha Rajaratnam and Steven Lockley)

The ASA Behavioural Management of Sleep Disorders Subcommittee (led by Amy Reynolds and Hailey Meaklim) made a submission to the Productivity Commission for the report on Mental Health in Australia with a number of presentations being made at public hearings around Australia to further promote the tight links between sleep and mental health. The ASA also submitted an application for the NHMRC targeted call for research on Indigenous Sleep Health led by Sarah Blunden and her team from the Indigenous Working Party supported by the ASA Research Chair. So there is a lot of important work being carried out on the behalf of the ASA by our passionate, hardworking members from a variety of Committees and Working Groups.

I will continue to communicate regularly with you to ensure we are meeting your needs as members and I encourage you to participate in one of our many Committees and Councils with over 10% of our membership actively involved currently.

Best wishes to all for the festive season and holidays ahead.

A/ Prof Alan Young, ASA President.