



NZ Branch AGM 11 July 2024

President's report

Tēnā koutou katoa,

Once again, a packed schedule at the recent scientific meeting in Ōtepoti Dunedin left little room for an in-person AGM. However, as the COVID-19 era has shifted the world towards virtual meetings, this is becoming the norm for accommodating meeting representatives who are geographically separated.

THE LAST 12 MONTHS

World Sleep Day 2024

The NZ branch was pleased once again to host a webinar on World Sleep Day (March 15th), open to all, not just ASA members, though prior registration was required. Aligning with the 2024 theme "Sleep Equity for Global Sleep Health," featuring Dr Rachelle Love, of Ngāpuhi and Te Arawa descent, an otolaryngology, head and neck surgeon from Ōtautahi Christchurch, and Chair of the NZ Medical Council. In her presentation, Dr Love discussed health disparities and the frameworks to understand them, examined sleep inequity and its causes, and explored current trends and future research and resource opportunities. If you missed the presentation, it can be viewed on the learning centre under "Health Equity for Sleep."

Sleep in Aotearoa (SIA) 2024



For a second year in a row, this annual scientific conference was held in Ōtepoti Dunedin at the University of Otago on June 20 and 21. Final delegate numbers were 90 including 15 industry attendees, and 6 Australian attendees. The programme featured New Investigator Awards, free abstract presentations (18 in total) and symposia. The keynote address was given by psychiatrist and sleep specialist Dr Tony Fernando on the topic of Sleep and Mental Health and was well received with lots of interesting takeaways especially on the issue of sleep anxiety. ASA President Prof Garun Hamilton and ANZSSA committee representative Jane Douglas travelled across the Tasman to attend our meeting and provide updates concerning their respective organisations. There were trade displays from a record 8 industries (5 Sponsors and exhibitors: Apex Medical, Fisher & Paykel Healthcare, ResMed, Compumedics, ResMed and Open Airway Dental Solutions; and 3 additional exhibitors: B Medical, Excellcare and Active Healthcare). The conference dinner at the University Staff Club was attended by many delegates creating a great atmosphere on the night. A link to a video of the conference highlights will be on the ASA website shortly.

For the second time, the conference included **symposia**. These symposia addressed topical issues in the sleep world: an invited symposium on sleep and smoking/vaping, shift work and workplace fatigue, and a novel research focus on dreaming and exceptional experiences. All three symposia were exceptionally well-received and provided significant educational value.



Dr Sonia Cherian led a session with invited presenters from Waka Kotahi on the **Medical Aspects of Fitness to Drive guidelines**. Past concerns about the difficulties sleep physicians have assessing patients with severe sleep apnoea and/or severe sleepiness under the current guidelines was raised and discussed at SIA_2023. A working party was formed after the 2023 meeting with 9 NZ branch members and recommendations were developed and discussed with Waka Kotahi. The recommendations were presented in the driver safety guidelines session and are now open for written feedback. This feedback will be reviewed by the working party and further discussed with Waka Kotahi.

In preparing for the conference, the NZ branch committee members and ASA event's organisers met regularly to oversee the programme planning and assess submissions and award nominations. The branch committee are grateful for the invaluable assistance of ASA Sponsorship and Events Manager, Asha Mohabir –especially for securing the sponsors and exhibitors, and to Cassie Real (Executive & Team Support) and CEO Marcia Balzer.

Congratulations to the winners of the various awards

- New Investigator Award (NIA). Shay-Ruby Wickham (University of Otago, Dunedin) for her presentation entitled "Streaming rather than dreaming: does screen use before bed really impair adolescent sleep?" The award includes registration to Sleep DownUnder 2024 on the Gold Coast and \$1000 towards travel sponsored by Apex Medical.
- Sleep Apnoea Association of New Zealand (SAANZ) Emerging Researcher Award went to Dr Margo van den Berg (Massey University) for research excellence and her contribution to fatigue science in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- SAANZ Distinguished Service Award went to Dr Alister Neill (University of Otago, Wellington) for outstanding clinical practice, research, and service to the field of sleep over many years, with significant contributions made locally, nationally, and internationally.

Thank you to the industry sponsors: Apex Medical for donating \$1000 towards travel expenses for the NIA award, to Fisher and Paykel Healthcare for sponsoring the Friday lunch, Compumedics for sponsoring the conference dinner, and to Open Airway Dental Solutions and ResMed for sponsoring abstract sessions.

ASA & ANZSSA Committee memberships – NZ reps

We encourage all members to look out for vacancies on the ASA and ANZSSA committees to ensure we have NZ representation on each and every one of them. The committees and their key functions can be found here.

At SIA_2024 vacancies for the following were highlighted:

- NZ member to join the ASA Clinical Committee –please contact Clinical Committee Chair, Dr David Cunningham david@drdavidcunnington.com.au
- NZ member on the ANZSSA Conference and Grants Committee. The closing date for this has been extended to the 19th July. Please contact Dr Angela D'Rozario angela.drozario@mq.edu.au



Raising the profile of the NZ Branch activities

This is a recurring agenda item on the monthly NZ Branch Committee meetings, focusing on activities within Aotearoa New Zealand and this year achieving more coverage on X and a stronger presence on the ASA website in 2024. While there have been numerous media presentations by individuals in their professional roles (documented on the website), media coverage of SIA_2024 was limited, with only one radio interview being picked up from a press release sent to several key media outlets. This underscores the need to enhance our media engagement in 2024/25, possibly through the formation of a subcommittee dedicated to this task. Ideas on this would be welcome.

Finally...

...thanks to the NZ Branch committee for their continuing work in ensuring sleep health research is given the attention it deserves and clinical services continue to be advocated for. A personal thank you to treasurer Dr Karyn O'Keeffe whose work on the committee and support of my role and the conference organisation has, once again, been outstanding. Thanks also to ASA President, Prof Garun Hamilton, and the ASA Board Directors who continue to fully support and encourage the activities of our NZ branch.

Plans for next 12 months are to continue to work towards our strategic goals which include advocating for good sleep health, equity in access to sleep medicine services and promoting standards for sleep services, and raising our profile across Aotearoa.

Ngā mihi

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "B.C. Galland".

Barbara Galland, NZ Branch President

2023-2024 Committee

Karyn O'Keeffe
Bronwyn Sweeney
Sonia Cherian
Rosie Gibson
Michael Hlavac
Angela Campbell
Patryk Szulakowski