

Chairperson's Report, NSW Stoma Limited, November 2020

2020 has been a very strange year for us all. I hope you have stayed safe during this topsy turvy year. We have weathered bushfires, floods, storms, ONL's fire and of course the major thing affecting all our lives is Covid19. As Chairperson, watching NSW Stoma function and deal with each problem in a positive, safe and careful way in supporting our members during this time, has been really reassuring and I thank all the staff and directors for their dedication and input during 2020. Mary Egan, our new General Manager over the last 12 months, has been exceptional in dealing with crisis after crisis, implementing plans and working with the board to make sure things run as smoothly as possible.

This year, the board has voted to increase the number of directors from eight to nine (within our constitution). Our two new directors' talents and experience in law and communications will add to our existing skill set, helping us support our members and oversee the direction of the organisation. We very much look forward to them joining us on the board.

We have installed a new, state of the art, software program. Our ICT and computers are now functioning more efficiently and the software has allowed us to analyse data and streamline systems. You may have noticed the new delivery dockets you receive with your orders. The extra information on it that has been helpful (e.g. informing us of our postage balance).

This year the board devised a new strategic plan; made sure we were compliant in legal processes; updated and added to our own education in governance as directors by attending the 2020 Better Boards conference, and we are in the process of writing, approving and implementing many policies. Once authorised they will be put on our website.

Our GM has also implemented monthly information notices inserted into your supplies. This information helps keep members up to date with any decisions or information that might be relevant. As you are aware we had to halt the pick-up of supplies due to the pandemic. This has been an inconvenience to some of you but the postal delivery system has generally worked well and the majority of supplies arrive in a reasonable time. Due to some of our members finding the deliveries difficult we have commenced a trial pick-up from our office on some Fridays in November. A Covid safe process was explained in your October delivery notice. One of our directors has volunteered his time to man these pick-ups.

We also have our twice yearly journal up and running again. We have had many members contact us to reinforce how important this publication is to them in sharing and learning information and keeping them up to date as to what has been happening.

In October 2020 we had just over 6,000 active members, nine directors (as from November 2020) and twelve paid employees (full and part time).

Thank you to those who filled out our survey. We are collating all the information and hope to inform you of the results shortly and to act upon the comments. That said, the anecdotal

feedback from you has been positive. It is good to know that you are generally very happy with our services to you, the members.

Unfortunately, this year, due to Covid, we had to suspend our regional and metropolitan education meetings that we co-ordinate with ONL. We know how valuable these days are to our members: to ask questions; to meet other ostomates and suppliers and to listen to clinicians' and member's presentations that are relevant and interesting to their own conditions. We hope that next year in 2021 we will be able to re-establish these days when it is safe to do so.

Also due to the pandemic, our Stoma nurse, Anne Marie, has had to suspend face to face surgeries at our offices in Stanmore. We are hoping to re-establish these when the timing is safe but meanwhile Anne Marie is actioning the Stomal Therapy Clinic for you through email and phone.

Following Covid19 secure procedures when we feel it is safe to open the office at Stanmore up to visitors, we are still hoping to re-organise a volunteer program. Do you have time or skills that might benefit us? Please contact us at info@nswstoma.com.au.

Thank you to those who sent donations with your membership renewal or order of supplies. These donations really help us help you and this money is dedicated to support our members.

The Department of Health released the results of their Stoma Appliance Scheme Consultation Outcomes. In order to address these results, a Request for Expression of Interest (REOI) has been released by the department and more details can be found at: <https://www1.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/Stoma+Appliance+Scheme-3>

We are so lucky to have the Stoma Appliance Scheme (SAS) in Australia. Your annual SAS fee (the amount set by the government) allows you to access many products free on the scheme to help improve your quality of life as an ostomate. In some countries this would cost you many hundreds of dollars each month. We are certainly fortunate to be able to access the SAS through our association.

Remember to keep an eye on our website www.nswstoma.org.au for any up to date news and information.

Once again, I wish to thank all our directors for their effort, time, skills and dedication to NSW Stoma Ltd and to all the staff for their untiring work and commitment in supporting our members.

Stay safe in 2021 and I wish you all the very best for the upcoming holiday season.

Carol Quast
Chairperson
November 2020