

A Message from Mary Egan, Your General Manager.

2021 has been another challenging year as we continue to deal with the pandemic. With the vaccine roll out, we are now transitioning back to pre-covid conditions. At NSW Stoma we continue to take a very cautious approach. Even though our staff and on-site volunteers are fully vaccinated, Covid-19 is transmissible and it can shut us down. Our emphasis will continue to be on the continuation of our operations and supply of essential supplies to all our members. Our Pick-Up service has resumed and in 2022 we look forward to opening our doors and offering face to face services.

Apart from a few months in the 1st half of the year, our on-site clinic has remained closed. Anne Marie Lyons, our fabulous stomal therapy nurse, has continued this vital service via phone and email. While this has given many more of you access to this service, we acknowledge it can't take the place of a face-to-face service. We intend to reintroduce this as soon as we feel it is safe to do so, while continuing to offer the phone and email service. All NSW Stoma members have free access to this clinic.

We have really missed delivering our regional education/information days over the last 2 years and we now look forward to resuming these in March 2022. Keep an eye on our website for details about this and all our services. We initiated our monthly zoom meetings this year, with a focus on new members, and these will continue in 2022. Everyone is welcome to join us on the 1st Wednesday of every month (except January). To register, just email customer.service@nswstoma.org.au. If you have suggestions for topics you would like us to cover, we'd love to hear from you.

We were really proud to initiate and take part in the World Ostomy Day event on 2nd October over zoom. It was wonderful to work with all the other associations, particularly Ostomy NSW, to bring this event to ostomates all across Australia. See the full report from Carol Quast, NSW Stoma director, later in this issue.

During the last 12 months we have finished upgrading our internal software systems, giving us much greater stock control and automated purchasing. We upgraded our website and added online ordering and payments. While the new website has provided us the ability to make changes and update our communications quickly and easily, there is so much more we want to do. In 2022 we hope to add a much more interactive experience for our members, with the ability for members to securely log in and retrieve their order history, repeat orders, place new orders, as well as view and update account balances. For those of you who prefer to deal with us by post, phone and email, we will continue to offer those channels in their current format. We understand that many of our members do not own or have access to computers and we will always accommodate alternative modes of communication and ordering.

We received a huge lift in donations this year with so many of you prepared to help support your fellow ostomates. What a wonderful community we have. The pandemic has also meant a big increase in the number of members requiring our support with membership and postage fees. It is so rewarding to be able to assist those who really need it right now. Your donation allows us to do so much more than distribute products. It funds our stomal therapy service, our information & education meetings, financial support for Support groups, our website and now our Stomal Therapy Nurse Scholarship. We know how vital it is that all our members have access to an experienced Stomal Therapy Nurse and we recognise the growing need for services across NSW. We now offer a scholarship to registered nurses wanting to complete their Stomal Therapy training. It costs approx. \$12,000 (of their own funds) for a qualified nurse to complete the additional training required. Their services are essential to us as an association and to all our members individually. In order to

encourage as many nurses as possible to undertake the required training we can alleviate some of their financial burden by offering this scholarship.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our volunteers who give so much of their time to assist us deliver our services. Eugene Tomczyk continues to give up his Fridays to assist with member pick-ups and other office duties. Eugene also sits on our board. Paula Garrod generously gives her own time and skills to pull together our journal twice every year and also assisted us on World Ostomy Day with our flyer to advertise that event. Su Wun Harris has also made a huge contribution assisting with our pick-up service. I also need to thank our wonderful volunteer board of directors. Without them NSW Stoma would be a very different place. We are so lucky to have so many talented and hard-working board members. Allen Nash, our Chair, gives so much time, energy and thoughtfulness to our governance. Carol Quast, looks after member communications and participates in our zoom meetings, regional education days and was the driving force behind our World Ostomy Day event. Ken Batten takes on any role asked of him and in the last year has served as treasurer and secretary and sometimes both at once. Renee Constantin is tireless in her efforts to improve the lives of all ostomates. She is the founder and convenor of Ostomingle, has now taken on the role of Secretary with us, and became a mother this year! The list of accomplishments of all our board are too numerous to mention but I want to thank all our directors for all they do.

We also farewelled Andrea Cross from our board. Andrea made such an impact on our governance and made a real contribution to many of our board policies. You will find a special tribute and thank you to Andrea in this issue. We were fortunate enough to welcome Shona Gawel to our board. Shona brings a wealth of communications experience. You can read more about her later in this issue too. We also have a new volunteer treasurer. Ian Niccol, a chartered accountant with many years' experience, has volunteered to fill the role of treasurer. Ian has very generously given us his ostomy journey and we bring that to you in this issue as well.

If you are interested in volunteering we would love to hear from you. Find more information about this on our website here: <https://www.nswstoma.org.au/volunteers/>

I wish you all the joy of the season and a very happy, Covid-free 2022!

Warm Regards,

Mary Egan
General Manager