

### **A Message from Mary Egan, Your General Manager.**

Another year is almost over, and it has been another year of change and challenges at NSW Stoma.

In the last 12 months we have packaged nearly 50,000 orders, claiming from Medicare over \$17 million in products on behalf of our members. While the logistics of processing and supplying your orders is just part of what we do, it is an essential service for all our members. We work hard to process your orders as efficiently and as timely as we can within the confines of the Stoma Appliance Scheme (SAS).

We saw some big changes to the scheme this year. Support pants were dropped from the scheme altogether in October. Your feedback tells us that this has adversely affected many of you. Women in particular find their body shape is not suited to the support belts which ride up and prove ineffective.

The other big change to the scheme was making cleanser wipes a restricted product, requiring all members to provide an authorisation form from their stoma nurse or doctor. While this put a huge administrative burden on us, as your association, it put a lot of pressure and additional workload on stoma nurses and really upset a lot of our members. We appreciate the stress it added to many members lives just to access a product many of you have used for years and also having to renew that authorisation every 6 months, means that stress and additional work will continue.

These decisions are made by the Department of Health through the Stoma Appliance Scheme (SAS) and the Stoma Product Assessment Panel and products. You can contact them by emailing [stoma@health.gov.au](mailto:stoma@health.gov.au).

Other changes at NSW Stoma included totally changing our warehousing and order processing system. This change was driven by our desire to access a new member ordering system. Our backend software links to our new online member portal. If you aren't already using this portal, I urge you to give a try. The portal shows you all your past orders, allows you to place a new order and gives you up to date information on the status of your order. You can make payments in the portal and the portal also lets you know when you need to pay us. Once you submit your order, a member of our team will assess it to ensure compliance with the SAS and if all is well this is automatically entered into our backend system. If we need to make changes to your order (for compliance reasons) you will be notified by email. You can then track the progress of your order through our system and will receive notification by email once it has been dispatched. You can find lots more information about the portal on our website, including how to register.

Our website also contains lots of resources and information to assist our members to manage their stoma. We also provide access to a stomal therapy nurse in our weekly onsite clinic. Anne Marie Lyons is also available by phone and email to ensure all our members have access to this free service.

Our monthly member zoom meetings continue to grow in popularity with more of you joining us each month. Meetings are hosted by Anne Marie Lyons (our stomal therapy nurse with decades of experience), Carol Quast, NSW Stoma Director and Ostomate and me as NSW Stoma Ltd manager. Between the 3 of us we cover the clinical, patient, SAS and association information. Meetings take



place on the first Wednesday of every month at 6pm. You need to register for each meeting you want to attend.

A big thank you to all our members and supporters who have donated to us over the last year. Without this support we would not be able to offer the additional support services we do. I also want to thank our volunteers who make a big difference whether they work in the warehouse packing your orders or at our front counter greeting our members when you collect your order. Our volunteer ranks continue to grow and we are looking for more. If you would like to join us as a volunteer please complete the application form on our website.

We have other volunteers assisting us in the background with social media. A big thank you to Lesley Frendo and Renee Constantin for that, and to Paula Garrod, the brilliant graphic designer who puts together our magazine on a completely volunteer basis.

The other volunteers who need thanking are our incredibly hard-working board. All volunteers and ostomates, who keep this organisation running, ensuring our governance standards are above reproach and making sure we stay financially viable.

Warm regards,

Mary Egan

General Manager, NSW Stoma Ltd