



SSA President's Report – Annual General Meeting 2020

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

President Report

I am honoured to present the President's report in my first year as the President of the SSA. And what an extraordinary year we have in 2020. Since the first reports of COVID-19 cases in December 2019 in China, the global cases have exceeded 25 million at the time of the writing of this report. In Australia, more than 25,000 COVID-19 cases have been recorded. From the vantage point of stroke care, significant disruptions to clinical services have persisted since March 2020. For those working actively in the care of stroke patients, you have witnessed emergency departments being repurposed into hot zones for suspected COVID-19 patients. And you have witnessed acute stroke patients being diverted to geographically disjointed clinical areas. In addition, you have witnessed stroke units being subsumed into other medical specialties, disruptions in rehabilitation, discharge planning and outpatient delivery of allied health services. In response, SSA in April issued a statement on the impact on stroke care during the COVID-19 pandemic. I am delighted to have received feedback from SSA members who have used the SSA statement in their continuing dialogue with hospital management to advocate for the care of stroke patients. Here I would like to acknowledge the great efforts of clinicians from all craft groups (medical, nursing and allied health) who continue to dedicate their efforts to looking after stroke patients during the pandemic and the myriad travel restrictions and late night curfews imposed by government. I can attest that I have also been stopped a few times by curfew patrol on the way to the hospital to perform endovascular thrombectomy. I find that the best way to avoid delays in these situations is to wave the hospital ID badge frantically to dispel suspicions of a late night joy ride.



Stroke Education Webinar 2020 (in place of the SSA Annual Scientific Meeting)

The original Perth 2020 meeting is rescheduled to 2021. In place of the Perth meeting, Professor Geoff Cloud is appointed chair of the Special Stroke Education Webinar and has organized, together with assistance from Professor Tim Kleinig and members of the organizing committee, a series of educational webinars from the 8th to 10th September 2020. The program has been put together efficiently and we are delighted to have several well-known speakers to cover various hot topics. The webinars are also designed to be interactive which I am sure you will find useful. I am pleased to report that we have 210 registrants for the webinar series as of 7th September 2020 and the preliminary financial review is that SSA is likely to make a profit. I would like to thank Professor Geoff Cloud for his great efforts in organizing the Stroke Education Webinar.

Annual Scientific Meeting 2021 Perth

The original plan was to co-host a joint SSA and Asia Pacific Stroke Organization (APSO) Conference in Melbourne in 2021. On the basis that the 2020 Perth SSA ASM was adjourned to 2021, the committee decided that it was untenable to have both a joint SSA-APSO Conference and an SSA Conference in Perth to be held in the same year. This decision was formally communicated to the executive committee of the APSO.

SSA Annual Scientific Meeting in Perth is now planned to be held at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre from 27th to 30th July 2021. The organizing committee is chaired by Dr. Darshan Ghia. Discussions will continue regarding the exact format (face to face, virtual or hybrid) of the meeting in light of possible continuing travel restrictions imposed by COVID-19.

Annual Scientific Meeting 2022 Christchurch, New Zealand

I am pleased to report that the 2022 meeting will be co-chaired by SSA treasurer A/Professor Anna Ranta and Dr. Teddy Wu. It is agreed that Christchurch will host the meeting and we look forwards to having the meeting once again in New Zealand.



Annual Scientific Meeting 2023 Melbourne

The annual scientific meeting will return to Melbourne 2023. There is an ongoing discussion to launch a bid to co-host the Melbourne meeting with APSO. The delegates to APSO from SSA are Dr. Ben Clissold and Professor Geoffrey Cloud and no doubt we will hear more from Ben and Geoffrey.

SSA Members

In spite of disruptions brought on by COVID-19, we have 323 financial members to date. We have also received updates from the secretariat that 30 new members have joined SSA via the 2020 Webinar registration system. This represents an increase of 10% of SSA members!

SSA Website

We are grateful to the indefatigable Dr. Darshan Ghia, in addition to his role as chair of organizing committee of the 2021 Perth meeting, for his efforts in redesigning our SSA website. The new SSA website is more user friendly and has several new features providing more streamlined presentation of updated news. The website is scheduled to go live this month and we hope that you will find it useful.

SSA Newsletter and Editor

The SSA newsletter is a key communication channel for circulation of the latest news in research, clinical services and controversies. We are very grateful to Ms. Bronwyn Coulton for her amazing efforts as the newsletter editor. Bronwyn has announced her wish to retire from the editor's role after two years and we are in the process of finding a replacement. Thank you again Bronwyn!



Australian Stroke Coalition

The Coalition is a great vehicle to promote collaborative efforts between SSA and the Stroke Foundation. SSA co-funds the Coalition Executive Officer position and we are delighted to have Ms. Prema Thavandeswaran in this role. We are grateful to Seana Gall and Andrew Wong for representing SSA to the Coalition. We are also grateful to Ms. Sharon McGowan, CEO of Stroke Foundation, for her continuing efforts to promote collaboration with SSA.

Executive Committee and Committee

I would like to thank my Vice President Tim Kleinig, Treasurer Anna Ranta and Honorary Secretary Dominique Cadilhac for their support. Special thanks to Professor Tim Kleinig who is possibly the hardest working Vice President I have ever come across.

I would also like to thank the Committee Members (elected and co-opted) for their continuing contributions to the organization. Special thanks to the outgoing committee members: Helen Dewey, Ex-president, Bronwyn Coulton, Editor of Newsletter and Andrew Wesseldine. We will formally welcome the newly elected committee members and the co-opted members at the Annual General Meeting.

And finally, our gratitude is to go to Ms. Sarah Peters and Ms. Alison Forton for the superb secretariat services.

Bernard Yan
7th September 2020