



Annual Report

**National Asthma Council Australia
Annual Report 2015/16**

We are the national authority for asthma knowledge, setting the standard for asthma care

The National Asthma Council Australia is a not-for-profit organisation and is a collaboration of four member bodies:

- Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy
- Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association
- The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia
- The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

Our purpose

To reduce the health, social and economic impacts of asthma.

Our actions

As a leading organisation for asthma, we:

- write the national treatment guidelines for asthma
- educate and support health professionals to deliver best-practice asthma diagnosis and management
- develop and disseminate evidence-based tools and resources for health professionals
- promote best-practice care to people with asthma and their families
- work to address the impacts of asthma through advocacy and collaboration with policy makers and stakeholders.

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Chairman's Message



In asthma, we live in exciting times! Along with all our usual work of updating the guidelines, producing information papers and consumer brochures, conducting our national education workshops for primary care health professionals, advocacy and media work, we are in a completely new field of endeavour, working with Australia's eight other asthma organisations- Asthma Australia and the seven Asthma Foundations, (Queensland and New South Wales having already merged) to create one national merged organisation. Personally, I find this a challenging and engrossing project, having, as Chairman of the Medical Defence Association of Victoria, led its merger with United Medical Protection, a Sydney based medical defence organisation, to create Avant as the largest national medical indemnity company. Also, in 2003, as the then President of the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand, I wrote in my final message that consideration should be given to bringing Australia's various respiratory organisations under one hat to avoid duplication and overlap. The National Asthma Council Australia drafted a memorandum of understanding for a proposed merger in 2001, so for us, it is professionally and personally rewarding to see the developments which are occurring now with the asthma organisations. If we are successful in launching the new Asthma Council Australia next year, this may lead in future to discussions with other of our respiratory organisations.

Our merger plans are based on a number of significant successes in asthma which include globally and nationally recognised and used treatment guidelines, the recognition of asthma as a national health priority, Government program funding, successful consumer education and information programs, popular national primary care health professional education workshops along with unique jurisdictional emphases and priorities. All of these and other successful elements have to be preserved and built on. The new single asthma entity will commence with many strengths. We are also undertaking careful due diligence of each organisation so we move forward with a clear understanding, not only of our strengths but also how we must overcome any weaknesses. The National Asthma Council Australia has always followed the principles of consultation, communication and collaboration and these are very evident as we work with our asthma colleagues around the country. Our Board has had many interesting discussions about the advantages and disadvantages of the merger but we all agree that our primary concern is to serve the needs of the ten per cent of our population with asthma in the best way possible. This national merger is the opportunity for all of us in asthma to use our financial and human resources (staff, volunteers and expert advisors) in the most effective and efficient way possible. I congratulate our colleagues at Asthma Australia, led by their President, Mr Terry Evans, and

the CEO, Mr Mark Brooke, on their dedication to making the merger effective. They are more than supported by their colleagues in the State and Territory Asthma Foundations. We are all committed to launching the new organisation, Asthma Council Australia, in 2017 and particularly to ensuring that it will endure.

However, business has also been continuing as usual with our highly skilled Board keeping a careful overview on our finances, aided by the Finance Committee. These are challenging times for charities so we must keep to budget whilst attracting Government funding and sponsorships for our primary care health professional resources and workshops, and our patient resources and activities.

A not for profit organisation like ours, relies on the contribution of many organisations and individuals - our Sensitive Choice partners, the pharmaceutical companies in asthma which provide sponsorships and also expert advice, the Australian Government Department of Health for its program funding, and the many health professional advisers who contribute so much time and expertise to developing our resources, especially the Australian Asthma Handbook.

The Board and I wish to recognise and congratulate our CEO, Kristine Whorlow on her appointment as a Member of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday Honours list this year. This is a thoroughly deserved award and recognises Kristine's contribution to asthma and advocacy. Her citation reads "For significant service to the community through executive leadership and advocacy for improving health outcomes for those with asthma".

None of our activities would be possible without the support of our staff and consultants, led by the CEO, Kristine Whorlow, who are unfailingly efficient, helpful and dedicated to the organisation and its work. On behalf of the Board and myself, I extend to them our sincere thanks for all their hard work over the past twelve months. To Kristine, I extend my particular thanks as the merger activities over the past eighteen months have added considerably to her work load.

All of us at the National Asthma Council Australia, working together, are and will continue to make headway in helping people with asthma manage their asthma better, treated by health professionals who have access to our many resources and educational workshops.

Dr Jonathan Burdon AM
MBBS, MD, M Hlth and Med Law, FRACP, FCCP,
FACLM, FAICD, Chairman

Chief Executive Officer's Message



Much has been achieved in asthma over the last few decades - greatly reduced mortality, especially in children and young people: fewer hospital admissions and emergency department attendances; a substantial increase in the ownership of written asthma action plans,

especially in children and even reduced prevalence of asthma. The latter is not easily explicable but the other points may well be attributed to a collective effort consisting of many programs for health professionals and patients, matched with practical, accessible and well-designed resources, better medicines, good scientific research and behavioural evaluation, collaboration of health professionals, researchers and the asthma organisations, government recognition and funding, pharmaceutical industry engagement and support, and the dedication of individuals - lay and health professionals as well as professional societies determined to improve the asthma problem. Everyone in the asthma field has been and is guided by the Australian treatment guidelines for asthma, the Australian Asthma Handbook, the responsibility of the National Asthma Council Australia since 1990.

We can, and have, monitored our progress in many areas of asthma, but we still have to confront some challenging issues: Can we find a cure for asthma? When will we determine its complex interaction of causes? How can we design effective adherence interventions to keep people taking their long term prescribed preventer medications? We have very good, accessible and well known asthma guidelines with their own state-of-the-art website, but how can we really assist time poor primary care health professionals to follow these guidelines? What is the research which will answer some of these questions and how can it be funded? We are facing the hard yards in asthma, despite so much progress. But significant developments are underway.

The Chairman's Message outlines the merger organisation process of the National Asthma Council Australia, Asthma Australia and the seven Asthma Foundations. This is happening against the background of the development of the fifth National Asthma Strategy, a joint project of the National Asthma Council Australia and Asthma Australia, with funding from the Australian Government Department of Health. The Strategy is on hold at the moment, to allow for the completion of the Government's National Strategic Framework for Chronic Conditions, into which the National Asthma Strategy and other chronic disease strategies will fit. A wide range of asthma stakeholders has contributed and commented, too many to mention, but including the jurisdictions, people with asthma, specific experts in areas like the environment, occupational health, and the pharmaceutical industry.

The National Asthma Strategy and the National Strategic Framework for Chronic Conditions are themselves set against a period of significant health reform and development; the Healthier Medicare Initiative, the

National Medical Training Advisory Network, the Review of Pharmacy Remuneration and Regulation, the Medicare Benefits Review, and the formation of the Primary Care Health Networks to name a few. These new developments will need to be used as opportunities for asthma and we are participating as fully as possible.

The National Asthma Council Australia, always has, as its focus, the person with asthma, and the need to improve asthma management. We produce many resources for people with asthma on many topics and in many ways; on our website with videos and online brochures, significant distribution of printed material (still much in demand), through online and traditional media as well as the medical media, and, with coverage of, and commentary on, any breaking stories on asthma. A great deal of thought and strategic advice goes into our national media presence so that we are communicating regularly and accurately, based on the scientific evidence, to as many members of the community as possible.

We rely on our colleagues at Asthma Australia and the Asthma Foundations to deliver programs directly to consumers, whilst we conduct our complementary national asthma management and spirometry education workshops for primary care health professionals, Asthma Best Practice, in Primary Care Health Networks and other organisations across Australia. The work of all the asthma organisations is based on the Australian Asthma Handbook and there is considerable collaboration to ensure accuracy of messaging. The Australian Government Department of Health provides program funding for these major consumer and health professional activities which are a great achievement and have greatly contributed to the improvements in asthma management over the last fifteen years or so.

I really cannot thank our Board enough for its guidance and wisdom, and also our fantastic staff who are so helpful and supportive to me, and so committed to their work. We are surrounded by our volunteers, the many experts who advise us individually, or on ad hoc expert panels, the Guidelines Committee, the GP Asthma Group, the Pharmacists Asthma Group and the Product Advisory Panel.

We have completed another financially healthy year and must really thank our Finance Committee who keep a watching brief on all matters financial, and never ceasing to ask hard questions which we really appreciate.

As we move into the new financial year, we will be concentrating on really taking asthma forward' not only organisationally with the merger, but also in trying to make great achievements in asthma management, overcoming those "hard yards".



Kristine Whorlow AM
Chief Executive Officer

Special Features



Inhaler technique paper

In an effort to counteract research showing 90% of patients were incorrectly using their inhalers, we revised our 'Inhaler technique for people with asthma or COPD' health professional information paper. We also expanded on our series of inhaler technique 'how-to' videos featuring new devices available as well as step-by-step instructions on using the latest allergic rhinitis intranasal spray.

The inhaler technique information paper has been an extremely popular resource since it was first published in 2008. The updated version not only summarises the latest evidence on the prevalence and impact of incorrect technique, but also includes checklists for using the new respiratory devices that are now available.

Asthma educator Judi Wicking featured in the 'how-to' videos and was campaign spokesperson, urging health professionals to check their patients' inhaler technique and then provide one-on-one training to ensure that proper technique is used.

The following multidisciplinary panel members contributed to developing the information paper:

- Associate Professor Sinthia Bosnic-Anticevich, pharmacist
- Dr Tim Foo, general practitioner
- Clinical Associate Professor Helen Reddel, respiratory physician
- Ms Judi Wicking, asthma and respiratory educator

The expanded series of 'how-to' videos were supported by AstraZeneca, Boehringer-Ingelheim, GSK Australia, Mundipharma and Novartis plus Meda Pharmaceuticals.



COPD Athlete completes the New York marathon

Russell Winwood, aka COPD Athlete, is a guest blogger with an inspiring story. Having had asthma since a child, Russell was quite unexpectedly diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) in 2011, at age 42. Never one to be deterred, Russell decided to fight back against the disease by competing in triathlon events with the support of his medical team. We were proud to support Russell to fulfil his long-held dream of running in the New York Marathon in November 2015. Russell completed the marathon in 6 hours and 5 mins, setting a new world record by becoming the first stage IV COPD patient to finish the endurance event.

Russell's story inspired many, including former Olympic marathon runner Steve Moneghetti who was happy to offer Russell some training advice during a visit to his home town of Ballarat. Their meeting gained national media attention with reports on National Nine News and ABC's radio national. We are extremely proud to have supported Russell's campaign to compete in the marathon. We continue to be inspired by his regular guest blog pieces published on our website.



Russell Winwood, COPD Athlete



Steve Moneghetti (left) with Russell Winwood prior to New York Marathon

CEO awarded AM in Queen's Birthday Honours List

Our Chief Executive Officer, Ms Kristine Whorlow, was awarded an AM (General Division, Order of Australia) in the 2016 Queen's Birthday Honours List. Kristine's award recognises her many years of significant service to improving outcomes and advocating for people with asthma, nationally and internationally. All of the NAC community congratulate Kristine on her well-deserved honour.



Kristine Whorlow AM with Her Excellency the Honourable Linda Dessau AM Governor of Victoria

Vale Peter van Asperen



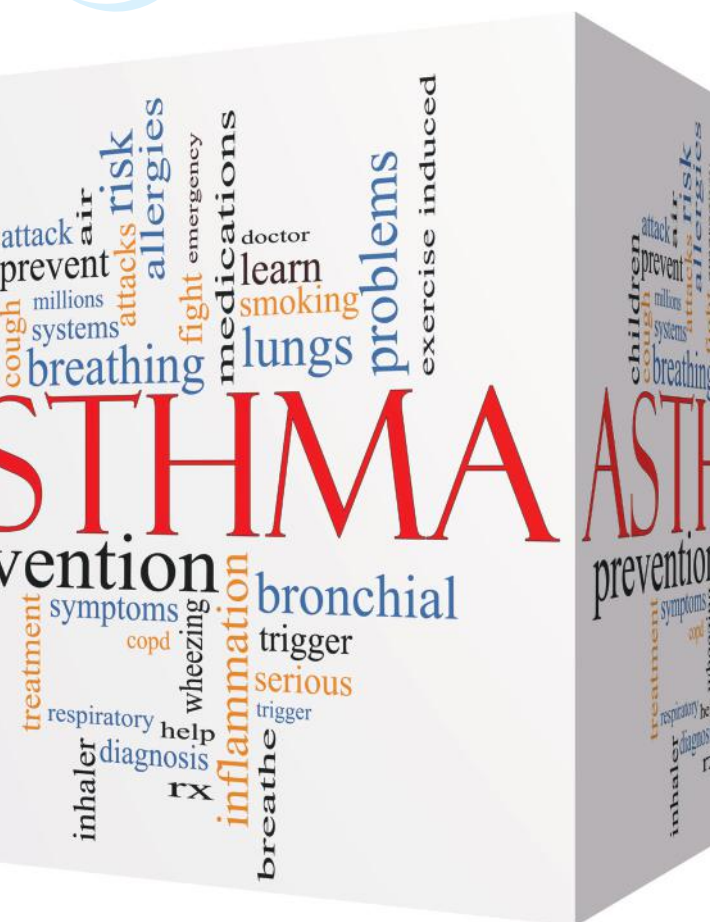
We were greatly saddened in December 2015 by the passing of Professor Peter van Asperen, a highly respected paediatric respiratory physician.

Peter had a long relationship with our organisation as a trusted colleague and advisor for more than 20 years.

More recently, he was the lead paediatric contributor to the Australian Asthma Handbook as a member of the overarching Guidelines Committee and co-chair of the paediatric working group.

Alongside his clinical acumen, Peter's kindness and generosity will be long remembered, as well as his commitment to education, mentoring and good medicine. Indeed, he insisted on being involved in the development of version 1.1 of the Handbook update, despite his own health situation. We will miss him very much.

Ongoing Activities



Asthma & Respiratory Education Program

Our Asthma Best Practice for Health Professionals (ABP), now in its fourth iteration, provides education and training for primary healthcare practitioners to increase best-practice management of asthma and linked chronic respiratory conditions. The program is part of the Department of Health's wider Asthma Management Program, funded by the Department of Health. The program was originally funded from July 2013 to June 2016. Due to the high demand and the overall success of the program, we successfully applied for extension of funding until June 2017.

The workshops are primarily hosted by Primary Health Networks with requests from other primary health care organisations occasionally received. More than 100 expert presenters are involved in developing and presenting our workshops. Without their commitment and availability, the reach of the education provided would be limited and the gratitude of participants, particularly those in rural and remote areas, is so often mentioned and appreciated. We thank them all for their ongoing enthusiasm and support.



Demonstration at Spirometry Training Course

Workshop Types

Under this program we offer seven workshop types which are delivered face-to-face by our team of experienced health professional presenters using standardised material adapted for local needs.

Primary Care Asthma Update (2.5 hrs) – best-practice essentials for all primary care health professionals

Asthma and Respiratory Management Seminar for Practice Nurses (6 hrs) – role-specific education for practice nurses, now with an optional extra module on nurse-led clinics

Spirometry Training Course (6 hrs) – comprehensive, hands-on spirometry training for GPs and practice nurses

Spirometry Training Update (2.5hrs) – refresher spirometry training for previously trained GPs and practice nurses

Asthma and Spirometry Update for Aboriginal Health Workers and Practitioners (4 hrs) – role-specific education for Aboriginal health workers and Aboriginal health practitioners

Asthma Update for Pharmacists (2.5 hrs) – an overview of best-practice asthma management tailored for pharmacists, including a practical session on device use

Practitioner Asthma Communication and Education (PACE) (6 hrs) – an interactive seminar for general practitioners on effective communication and management of asthma patients.

“Great presentation, very informative and the presenter has a wealth of knowledge”

Spirometry Training Course, GP, NSW

Implementation Update

The schedule of training activities were rolled-out as planned. The workshop were hosted by the newly developed Primary Health Networks, some primary health care providers, peak professional bodies and Aboriginal Medical/Health Services.

From July 2015 to the end of June 2016 we trained more than 1,500 health professionals in 110 workshops, with more than 50% of the workshops being conducted in rural and remote areas. Workshop targets were reached and exceeded across all workshop types.

With the confirmation of additional funding for another year, we set new targets until June 2017. Requests continue to come in for all workshop types with the most popular being the Spirometry Training Course.

Professional development recognition

Our workshops have received professional development recognition from a range of relevant professional associations including:

- Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
- Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine
- Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association
- Australian Pharmacy Council (via the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia and the Pharmacy Guild of Australia)

“The most educational course, raised awareness of all aspects of asthma and will strive to improve my practice”

Asthma & Respiratory Management for Practice Nurses, Nurse, QLD



Judi Wicking (left) presenting at a Spirometry Training Course



Bernadette Flanagan, Asthma Educator, presenting at APNA's Annual conference, Melbourne.

Websites and apps



NAC website

We recently launched our revamped NAC website (nationalasthma.org.au) with key features including mobile optimisation, enhanced navigation, improvements to search engine optimisation (SEO) and social media share controls, as well as a fresh new look and feel.

Our website continued to provide reliable, useful information for people with asthma and health professionals, both in Australia and overseas. We had over 360,000 unique users to the site from more than 220 countries around the world, an increase in 17% compared with last year. The most popular pages continue to be the asthma action plan library, the First Aid chart and the How-to Video library showing correct inhaler technique. We also saw an increase in the popularity of our Healthy Living Factsheets, up 69% on last year. This increase was most likely due to the increased activity on social media platforms, highlighting key factsheets to these communities.

As well as being available for download from our site, a selection of our most popular resources are also available in print versions and can be ordered via our new Shopify online store. The addition of this new platform has made it easy for health professionals to view and order their resources. As a result, orders have increased substantially since launch of the new system. All our printed publications are free of charge for standard postal delivery within Australia.

Mobile technology

The number of people accessing online information via mobile devices including phones and tablets has risen across all of our websites, now averaging just over 40% of all visitors. The most significant rise was seen on our Australian Asthma Handbook site, with an increase of over 200% in mobile users. As a result of these changes, we will continue to make sure that mobile optimisation stays a priority in the coming year.



The Asthma Experts campaign

The Asthma Experts campaign and social hub for parents and kids with asthma and allergy was launched in September 2015 to coincide with National Asthma Week.

The campaign was developed to increase education and engagement of parents and carers of children with asthma through the publication of accessible content via our website and social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter. These platforms were also designed to provide these families with an online forum and community whereby they could share their experiences with others.

During the initial campaign period of 4 weeks, our Facebook page attracted over 3,000 likes and reached more than 230,000 unique users. As a result of the success of this campaign, Asthma Experts messaging became an integral part of our ongoing communication and engagement of this community and continues to grow. The campaign was funded by an unrestricted educational grant from GSK.

Asthma Buddy

Asthma Buddy, our free asthma management app, is based on our latest evidence-based written asthma action plan template. An update to the app was required but the increased cost of implementing such changes, along with budget restrictions required us to review its viability. As a result, we are currently exploring more cost effective ways to provide users with these valuable tools.

e-Newsletters

We continued to distribute two email newsletters – one for people with asthma and allergies and the other for health professionals. Both mailing lists continue to grow steadily and reach many thousands of people each month. The significant number of people opening our email to read it or to follow our links for related information is above industry standards, particularly for our health professional newsletter and shows that level of ongoing interest in the content we are providing.



Social media

During this period the communications team worked on implementing a refined social media strategy, which resulted in a targeted approach. Our social media activities are guided by our overall strategic objectives to promote the NAC as the leading authority and standards setter for asthma in Australia. Our National Asthma Council Facebook page was closed in favour of elevating Twitter as our social media platform to engage with health professionals and stakeholders (such as health journalists, Primary Healthcare Networks and health professional organisations).

Our Facebook page “The Asthma Experts”, has developed into our consumer ‘hub’, where we provide a mix of general advice based on our own content, curating and sharing relevant news and research and engaging with our followers on topical issues. Throughout the year we made very effective use of our social media presences to support a number of media campaigns and major activities, including the “Hidden Cost of Asthma” Deloitte report, our annual release of the latest asthma mortality statistics and National Asthma Week.

The strategy for our Sensitive Choice Facebook page has a more commercial and product focus, the goal being to support and promote our partner’s products and activities. We also use Sensitive Choice to educate the community on allergies and what they can do to make better choices.

There was consistent growth in both numbers and engagement, including increased interaction and wider sharing of our content from health professionals and health-focused organisations both in Australia and overseas. This is evidence of our objective to maintain and develop our presence as the leading authority for asthma in Australia.



Asthma blog

The NAC asthma blog continued to involve regular posts from the NAC team as well as external bloggers, leading to some great and varied weekly posts. We heard from our own asthma mum Natalie on how the prep school year is going for her young son as well as interviewing Patti about what it’s like living with adult-onset asthma. We were thrilled to share a blog post from our friends at Asthma UK about a very talented teen living with asthma.

Media relations

Over the past year we continued to educate Australians about the prevention and management of asthma and allergies through extensive coverage in the news media, including an ever-growing number of online channels reporting on health and wellness.

We issued 12 news releases, including three for the Sensitive Choice program. In addition, we met regular media interview requests either with expert spokespeople or with asthma-related information. These requests came from health professional publications, daily newspapers, women's magazines, radio and television news and specialist websites and blogs.

Where appropriate, news releases were also targeted to specific consumer segments such as families, young parents and older Australians thereby extending the media coverage opportunities available as well as providing targeted information of specific interest to these audiences. An increasing number of parenting websites, such as Kidspot and Motherpedia, sought comment from us and placed educational articles on asthma and children on their sites.

While seasonal asthma and allergy-related topics remained popular with the media, especially back to school asthma warnings, a highlight of the year was the high profile coverage received on Radio National and the Nine Network for our support of Russell Winwood, an athlete with asthma and COPD, to run the New York Marathon. This human-interest story sparked wide interest from national media.

Media relations activity continued to build stronger ties with health media thought leaders by following and engaging with them on twitter.



AUSTRALIAN ASTHMA HANDBOOK

The **Australian Asthma Handbook** is the national treatment guidelines for asthma

- sets the standard for asthma care
- provides practical, evidence-based guidance for primary care
- is an innovative, easy-to-use and searchable website.

astmahandbook.org.au

National Asthma Council Australia

Australian Asthma Handbook v1.2

Fulfilling its commitment to remain at the forefront of asthma guidance in Australia by becoming a more readily updated online resource, development of Version 1.2 of the Australian Asthma Handbook is underway. Publication is planned for October 2016, which will be 18 months since the previous update.

Like its predecessor, Version 1.2 constitutes a minor update of the Australian Asthma Handbook Version 1.0. The scope of the review is taking into account user feedback, the release of new asthma medicines and indications, and identification of key messages that require further emphasis and clarification.

Development continues to be overseen by the Guidelines Committee with amendments to existing recommendations and the development of new recommendations being subjected to the same rigorous standards as the original version.

The Australian Asthma Handbook continues to be endorsed by:

- The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
- The Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association
- The Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand

Development of Version 1.2 of the Handbook is supported by unrestricted educational grants from AstraZeneca Australia, Mundipharma Australia and Novartis Australia.

Website statistics

The Handbook attracted nearly 130,000 unique visitors from over 200 countries over this period, an increase of over 88% from previous year. The number of page views increased by over 21% to 590,000, indicating strong and ongoing engagement with our health professional audience.

The NAC website was the top referrer of visitors to the Handbook site, with over 64%. The Quick Reference Guide remained popular, with nearly 7,500 downloads of the updated PDF version 1.1. The interactive key figures and tables continued to be the most popular pages.

Activity Highlights



Asthma awareness and advocacy

World Asthma Day

We celebrated World Asthma Day on 3 May with the theme 'breathe better and feel better' with an emphasis on healthy living habits. By following a five-step healthy living plan, we encouraged Australians with asthma to exercise more, eat healthily and maintain a healthy bodyweight, manage the effects of anxiety and depression on asthma and stopping smoking. We urged people to take care of their asthma which includes regular asthma check-ups with their GP.

National Asthma Week

During National Asthma Week (1–7 September) our message to Australians with asthma was to 'put yourself in charge, not your asthma', which included regular asthma reviews with a GP, understanding what triggers your asthma, following an asthma action plan, taking a preventer each day (if prescribed) and checking on inhaler technique with a health care professional to ensure proper technique is achieved. We also promoted the use of our how-to videos to encourage better awareness of proper inhaler technique.

It was also a timely opportunity to launch 'The Asthma Experts' campaign and social media hub, aimed at parents and kids with asthma and allergy.

Mortality statistics

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) released in March 2016 revealed that more than half of all asthma deaths occurred in people aged 75 and over.

In total, 419 deaths were recorded in 2014, affecting 277 females and 142 males. The overall figure was up slightly from the previous year, probably in line with the ageing population.

Our media messages encouraged women over 75 years to be vigilant as this data also found that women in this age group were almost three times more likely to die from asthma compared to their male counterparts.

National Asthma Strategy

Throughout this period we continued to coordinate the development of the National Asthma Strategy 2016–2020, in partnership with Asthma Australia and with funding from the Australian Government Department of Health.

The Strategy is our national plan for reducing the impact of asthma on individuals, the community and the economy – taking Australia to the next stage of improvement in asthma health outcomes and research endeavours.

A wide range of people and organisations were involved in the consultation process, including people with asthma, key respiratory organisations, health professional bodies, other relevant organisations and the Federal, State and Territory Governments. The Asthma Foundations of each state and territory are involved individually as well as through their national coordinating body, Asthma Australia.

With a first draft of the Strategy completed following wider stakeholder consultation, public consultation was sought in August 2015 with feedback from almost 100 individuals and organisations with an interest in how Australia faces the challenges of asthma. On the whole, the draft Strategy was supported by those who responded.

In response to the public consultation feedback, the draft strategy was reviewed and revised with the Advisory Group in September. The document was then circulated to the Department of Health to facilitate the next stage of development.

We are currently working with the Department of Health to fine-tune the Strategy to take into account the latest developments in related chronic disease reforms and initiatives. This has necessitated a pause in the Strategy development while awaiting finalisation of the forthcoming National Strategic Framework for Chronic Conditions, with which the Strategy aligns.

Hidden Cost of Asthma

We worked in partnership with Asthma Australia to commission a new report on the economic cost of asthma to show its far-reaching financial impacts in the government, community and people with asthma and their families. The report was part of broader ongoing consultations to develop the National Asthma Strategy 2016–2020.

Prepared by Deloitte Access Economics, the Report detailed the financial burden of asthma which included direct healthcare costs of \$1.2bn and \$24.7bn attributed to disability and premature death. It also provided an overview of the epidemiology of asthma, a discussion of prevalence and mortality and a list of recommendations for future asthma funding and research.

Education resources

Online Learning Difficult Asthma

We developed two online learning modules for GPs and primary health care nurses on troubleshooting difficult asthma in adults. We developed the content of these training modules independently with publication supported by an untied grant from Novartis.

The two modules are located on the ThinkGP education website and are promoted regularly to their substantial database of health professionals as part of our annual hosting and management agreement. These modules have been accredited and participants are eligible for CPD points. To date, we have received positive feedback from many of the more than 1,200 who have completed the modules with an average of 80% reporting that their learning needs were met or exceeded.

The online learning modules were prepared with the assistance of Dr Justin Coleman, medical writer and GP, and in consultation with the following health professionals:

- Dr Peter Piazza, GP
- Professor Connie Katelaris, Allergist
- Ms Judi Wicking, asthma & respiratory educator and NAC staff

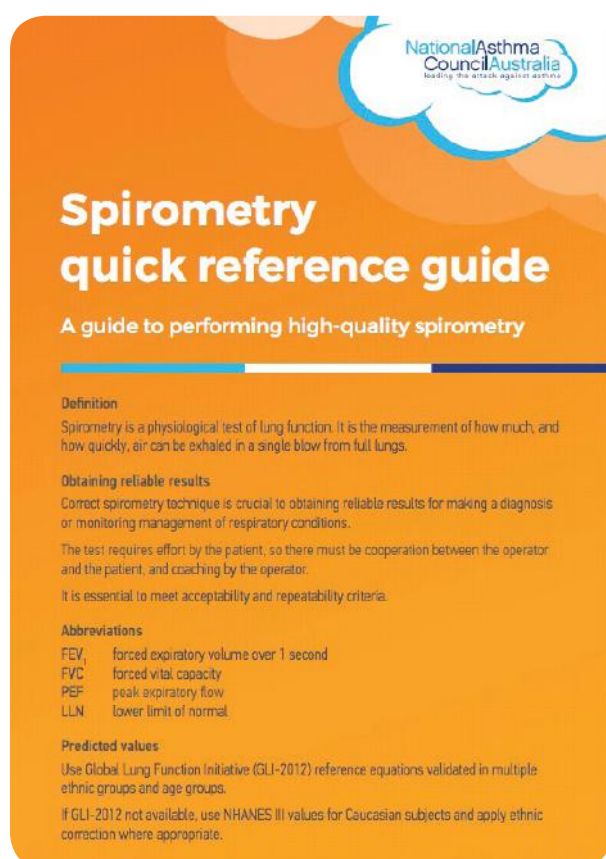
Spirometry Quick Reference Guide

We developed and launched the Spirometry Quick Reference Guide, a practical new resource for primary care health professionals who perform spirometry.

The new guide highlights the key steps for obtaining high-quality spirometry results, including acceptability and repeatability criteria, alongside a simple algorithm for interpreting results. The 10-page printed guide was made with a practical ring-clip design for easy attachment to a spirometer, providing quick access during lung function testing.

The Guide was prepared in consultation with the following health professionals:

- Mr Trevor Borgas, respiratory scientist
- Ms Marg Gordon, asthma educator
- Ms Judi Wicking, asthma educator



Conferences

GPCE

We continued our regular presence at the General Practitioners Conference and Exhibition (GPCE) and the Practice Nurses Clinical Education (PNCE) events presenting at each conference. The conferences were held in Perth - July 2015, Brisbane - September 2015, Melbourne - November 2015 and Sydney- May 2016.

At each GPCE and PNCE in 2015, the NAC presented a series of 1 hour workshops titled 'Using your inhaler – correct technique in Asthma & COPD Medications' sponsored by Boehringer-Ingelheim. The workshop discussed medications available for asthma and COPD, including new medications, and included a demonstration of correct inhaler technique. Presenters included Dr Alan Wright and Charlotte Allen in Perth, Dr Helen Petsky and Judi Wicking in Brisbane and Bernadette Flanagan, Marg Gordon and Juana Ford in Melbourne.

At the Brisbane and Melbourne GPCE, we presented a series of 1 hour workshops titled 'Troubleshooting Difficult Asthma – Help is at Hand', sponsored by Novartis. The workshop took participants through the National Asthma Council Australia's online learning modules covering how to diagnose and manage severe asthma in general practice, including options for referral. Presenters included Dr Gary Kilov in Brisbane and Dr Timothy Foo in Melbourne.

At the Brisbane GPCE, we presented a series of 1 hour workshops titled 'Spirometry: a guide to getting the best results and interpretation'. The workshop covered a brief overview of spirometry, highlighting the important key steps required to obtain reliable and accurate results and how to interpret these results. Presenters included respiratory scientists Alison Boynton, Mark Davis and Leanne Rodwell.

At the Melbourne GPCE, we presented a 1 hour seminar titled 'Diet, obesity & Asthma: Evidence-based advice on healthy eating for asthma', sponsored by Dairy Australia. The seminar covered the latest evidence on good dietary habits for asthma, presented by Dr Lisa Wood.

At the Sydney GPCE, we presented a series of 1 hour workshops titled 'Does this child really have asthma'. The workshop gave an overview of how to assess a child presenting with symptoms, diagnosis and management. The other series of workshops presented was titled 'So many inhaled medications! What to use and when for Adults with Asthma'. This workshop aimed to clarify the appropriate use of inhaled medications for adults with asthma and reinforcing accurate diagnosis, including management. Presenters included Judi Wicking and Alanna Hoyer.

APNA

Our partnership with Australian Primary Healthcare Nurses Association (APNA) continues to flourish. Our joint activities included an 'Asthma Management in General Practice' webinar in June 2015 presented by Marg Gordon and Judi Wicking, both experienced asthma educators working in general practice. A 1-hour online learning module on asthma management fundamentals was developed for practice nurses as part of APNA's series funded by the Australian Government Department of Health. Both APNA's modules are hosted on their online platform and are also accessible from the NAC website.

The NAC was invited to present at the APNA National Conference, held on the Gold Coast in May 2015. We presented a full-day Spirometry Training Course which provided comprehensive training in application, measurement and interpretation.

We also presented at APNA's continuing Education Workshops during 2015 in Melbourne, Perth, Hobart, Adelaide, Brisbane, Townsville and Shepparton. The NAC presented a 1.5hr seminar titled 'Asthma Management – What's New?' which provided an overview of what is meant by 'good asthma', medications and devices used for asthma, written asthma action plans and emergency management of asthma.

TSANZ Annual Scientific Meeting 2016

As a long-standing partner of The Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand (TSANZ), we have regular involvement with the TSANZ Annual Scientific Meeting. The 2016 meeting was held in Perth in March. We presented a 1.5-hour workshop titled 'Unravelling the inhaler maze. A hands-on workshop about implementation of correct device use in airways disease'. The workshop was chaired by Judi Wicking and included a series of presentations:

- 'Implementing solutions – how to incorporate inhaler technique into your clinical setting'. Presented by Prof Helen Reddel, Woolcock Institute of Medical Research, NSW
- 'Understanding the needs – new data about inhaler technique in different patient populations'. Presented by Assoc Prof Sinthia Bosnic-Anticevich, Woolcock Institute of Medical Research, NSW
- 'Practical Session: Highlighting the correct use of each type of device and potential common mistakes'. Presented by Ms Judi Wicking, asthma educator, NAC

Each participant who attended also received their own kit of all placebo devices available and a spacer. This was a very popular and well received workshop.

Other conferences

We have an active presence at many other professional conferences around Australia and internationally. Recent involvement included:

- Pharmaceutical Society of Australia conference, PSA 15 held in Sydney, August 2015. Satchel insert, Asthma & COPD Medications Chart
- Australian College of Nurses Practitioners conference, held in Melbourne, September 2015. Satchel insert, Asthma & COPD Medications Chart
- General Practice Registrars Australia, held in Brisbane, April 2016 – Primary Care Asthma Update presented by Rhona Macdonald
- Pharmaceutical Society of Australia conference, Victorian Conference, April 2016. Satchel insert, Asthma & COPD Medications Chart and Organisational brochure

Asthma awards

We fund annual awards to encourage research into asthma. Offered via our stakeholder bodies, the awards focus on asthma research presented at each organisation's annual/biennial scientific meeting or conference.

In April 2016, at the Annual Scientific Meeting of the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand (TSANZ) in Perth, we presented the TSANZ award to Ms Esther Cheah, from the University of Western Australia, for her presentation "A Novel Ex Vivo Perfusion System for Investigating Mucous Metaplasia in Mouse Airways".



Judi Wicking (left) presenting Esther Cheah (University of Western Australia) with her award

Asthma and Airways Career Development Fellowship 2015

For the third consecutive year, the NAC joined with TSANZ to support the Asthma and Airways Career Development Fellowship. The aim of this PhD Fellowship is to enable mid-career investigators to establish themselves as independent, self-directed researchers and foster the development of research in respiratory medicine in Australia and New Zealand. The fellowship is to the value of \$60,000 for one year. The 2016 recipient was Dr Miranda Ween, of the University of Adelaide, for her research into how e-cigarettes can cause damage to airway cells and cause airway macrophage dysfunction.

We are pleased to support respiratory research in this way and to assist with the career development of an emerging respiratory expert. This is a small but significant way in which the NAC can acknowledge the ongoing assistance of the many experts who provide ongoing advice and expertise to us in the development of our resources and educational programs for primary care health professionals and people with asthma.



Judi Wicking (left) presenting Dr Miranda Ween (University of Adelaide) with her award.

Pulmocon 2015 Award

We supported the Poster Award at Pulmocon 2015, the 4th International Conference on Lung Health that was held in November in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Awards were given in each of five categories. The winners were:

- Dr.Mst. Shamima Akter: A Comparative Study To Evaluate The Performance Of APACHE II, SAPS II & SOFA Scoring Systems For Assessment Of Severity And Outcome Of Critically Ill Patients In Nidch, Dhaka (Clinical Pulmonology)
- Dr. Mohammad Nesar Uddin Ahmed: Effects of pulmonary rehabilitation on exercise tolerance in patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (Basic Respiriology)
- Dr. Nazmul Islam: Chemical Pleurodesis for Secondary Spontaneous Pneumothorax – A Comparative Study between Tale Pleurodesis and Tetracycline Pleurodesis (Thoracic Surgery)
- Dr. Shamim Jobayer: Influence of health care provider's advice and anti-smoking advertisement on attitude towards quitting (Lung Health)
- Dr. Jalal Mohsin Uddin: A Big Bite At The Back - Atypical presentation of Tuberculosis (Chest Disease Cases)

International activities

In July 2015, the CEO attended the annual meeting of the Global Alliance against Respiratory Disease in Lisbon at which she presented on “Developing a National Asthma Strategy”. This meeting was attended by representatives of some 30 low, middle and high income countries, mostly the leading professional respiratory bodies along with WHO and the IPCRG. The CEO was elected to the GARD Planning Committee.

Our CEO attended and spoke at several meetings during the course of this year:

- Kyrgyz National Congress of Respiratory and Allergic Diseases (October 2015).
- Pulmocon, the biennial conference of the Bangladesh Lung Foundation (November 2015)
- UNEP Medical, Chemical and Technical Options Committee (March 2016)
- American College of Chest Physicians” Phillipine Delegation Annual Convention (April 2016)
- 8th IPCRG World Conference (May 2016)
- 3rd Asia Leadership Forum (June 2016)

Asthma Tips

5 STEPS BREATHE EASIER

GET MOVING

Don't let your asthma stop you being physically active



HEALTHY BODYWEIGHT

Losing weight can help you feel better and breathe easier



EAT WELL

A healthy diet is good for your lungs and your waistline



GO SMOKE FREE

Smoking and asthma are a dangerous combination



SPEAK UP

If your asthma is getting you down, speak to your doctor

TAKE CARE OF YOUR ASTHMA

See your doctor for regular asthma check-ups
Follow an up-to-date written asthma action plan, prepared with your doctor
Take your preventer medicines regularly, as prescribed
Check your inhaler technique with your pharmacist or practice nurse
Understand what triggers your asthma and how to manage this



nationalasthma.org.au



[theasthmaexperts](https://www.facebook.com/theasthmaexperts)

Our People



Board

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- Dr Jonathan Burdon AM
Respiratory Physician

Directors

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Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association
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- Professor Robert Heddle
Pathologist
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Allergy representative
- Mr Stephen Hughes
Community pharmacist
Pharmaceutical Society of Australia representative
- Dr Bastian Seidel
Clinical Professor and general practitioner
The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
representative
- Dr Joanna Wriedt
Lawyer
Independent Director

Finance Committee

- Mr Stephen Hughes
- Mr Peter Norman
- Mr Alasdair Norton
- Mr Robert Yeo

Asthma Handbook Guidelines Committee

The Asthma Handbook Guidelines Committee steers development of the Handbook.

- Prof. Amanda Barnard
general practitioner (Chair)
- Ms Naomi Fenton
nurse practitioner
- Dr Jenny Gowan
pharmacist
- Professor Adam Jaffé
paediatric respiratory physician
- Dr Gary Kilov
general practitioner
- Prof. Helen Reddel
respiratory physician
- Assoc. Prof. Janet Rimmer
respiratory physician and allergist
- Assoc. Prof. Peter Wark
respiratory physician

General Practitioners' Asthma Group

The General Practitioners' Asthma Group works to coordinate the expertise, enthusiasm and skills of general practitioners who have a special interest in the management of asthma.

- Dr Kerry Hancock (Chair)
- Prof. Amanda Barnard
- Dr David Batt
- Assoc. Prof. Ian Charlton
- Assoc. Prof. H. John Fardy
- Dr Steven Rudolph
- Dr Victoria Smith
- Assoc. Prof. Noela Whitby AM
- Assoc. Prof. Sanjiva Wijesinha
- Dr Russell Wiseman

Pharmacists' Asthma Group

The Pharmacists' Asthma Group works to coordinate the expertise, enthusiasm and skills of community and hospital pharmacists who have a special interest in the management of asthma.

- Mr Marcus Weidinger (Chair)
- Mr Simon Appel OAM
- Prof. Carol Armour
- Mr Kingsley Coulthard
- Mr Mark Feldschuh
- Mr Peter Holder
- Mr Stephen Hughes
- Ms Karalyn Huxhagen
- Mr Grant Kardachi
- Mr Kevin Morgan
- Ms Toni Riley
- Dr Bandana Saini
- Mr Kevin De Vries (ex-officio)
- Ms Anna Ezzy (ex-officio)

Sensitive Choice Product Advisory Panel

The Sensitive Choice Product Advisory Panel considers products and services for acceptance into the Sensitive Choice program. It is supported by Mr John Wills, Chief Executive, Asthma Foundation (NZ), and Ms Kristine Whorlow AM, Chief Executive Officer, NAC.

The Panel consists of the following experts:

- Engineer (Chair)
- Respiratory Physician
- Allergist
- General Practitioner
- Pharmacist

Staff

- Ms Kristine Whorlow AM, Chief Executive Officer
- Ms Siobhan Brophy, Strategy & Communications Manager
- Ms Rhonda Cleveland, Operations Manager
- Mr Adam Trumble, Partnerships Manager
- Ms Judi Wicking, Program Manager
- Ms Natalie Bourne, Administration Officer
- Ms Leanne Koster, Online Communications Officer
- Ms Milena Mijas, Project Officer
- Mr Mark Olszewski, Communications Project Officer
- Ms Jennifer Norbury, Communications Project Officer
- Ms Rebecca Percoco, Administration Officer
- Ms Lisa Sayer, Executive Assistant

Supporters



Acknowledgements

The NAC is able to carry out our important work thanks to the generosity of our sponsors and supporters. The Australian Government Department of Health continues to provide invaluable backing for our Asthma and Respiratory Education Program under the Department's Asthma Management Program 2013–2016.

We thank the Department for their ongoing support of the NAC and asthma management more widely.

Our sponsors from the pharmaceutical and spirometry industry are important allies in spreading the best-practice respiratory management message. We were able to develop many of our latest resources as a result of unrestricted educational grants from these companies and we look forward to their continued support.

We are also grateful to our many Sensitive Choice® Partners who continue to raise awareness of asthma in the community and support our important educational activities.

Finally, we extend our thanks to the many tireless health professionals who help us in all facets of our work. You truly are the cornerstone of the NAC.

National Asthma Council Supporters

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DEATHS DUE TO ASTHMA

Older women are most at risk of dying from asthma



Most deaths from asthma are in older people. Of people aged over 75 who die from asthma, almost 3 out of 4 are women.

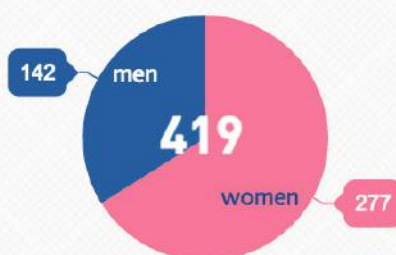


YOUR STATE

Asthma affects all Australians, regardless of where you live.

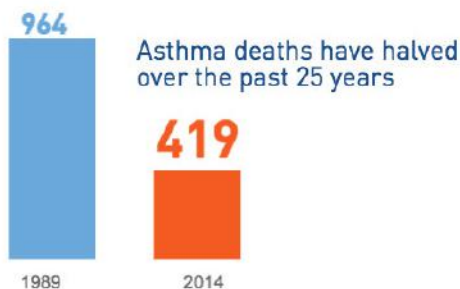
* total of 26 deaths for NT, ACT and Tasmania

Asthma-related deaths in 2014



CONTINUING THE ATTACK AGAINST ASTHMA

MAKING PROGRESS



EDUCATION
RESEARCH
ADVICE
MEDICINES

TAKE ACTION

- ✓ Don't ignore or dismiss breathing problems
- ✓ See your doctor for regular asthma check-ups
- ✓ Follow an up-to-date asthma action plan
- ✓ Ask your pharmacist to show you exactly how to use your inhaler correctly
- ✓ Tell your doctor and pharmacist about other medicines you are taking
- ✓ Get your flu shot (it's free for people over 65)
- ✓ Quit smoking and avoid other people's tobacco smoke



www.NationalAsthma.org.au