



Annual Report

**National Asthma Council Australia
Annual Report 2008/09**

The National Asthma Council Australia (NAC), a not-for-profit organisation, is a collaboration of:

- The Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand
- The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
- The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia
- Asthma Foundations of Australia
- Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy

Vision

A community that recognises the impact of asthma as a social, economic and health issue, whose members share responsibility for the elimination of asthma and minimising the risk of asthma.

Mission

To improve the quality of life and health outcomes of people with asthma and associated conditions by enabling health professionals through education opportunities and the production of resources on best practice, driving asthma management through health promotion and advocacy to government, and setting the standards for asthma care by developing and disseminating the treatment guidelines for asthma.

Corporate Goals

The NAC is the leading authoritative national body for asthma. Its corporate goals are to:

- Maintain asthma on the public and political agenda
- Play a leading role in advocacy for asthma, collaborating and communicating with stakeholders in order to facilitate change in asthma management to improve health outcomes
- Provide state-of-the-art evidence-based resources and educational opportunities for health professionals, particularly GPs, pharmacists, asthma educators, practice nurses, allergists, and respiratory, general and paediatric physicians
- Conduct health promotion activities directed at improving asthma health outcomes
- Employ staff and engage experts who have the capacity to carry out the NAC's work
- Ensure financial viability of the organisation
- Ensure the NAC holds to corporate governance practices in accordance with the Corporations Law and other relevant legislation.

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Chairman's Message



My first 9 months as Chairman have flown by, and I am happy to report that 2008/09 has been a very successful year for the National Asthma Council Australia (NAC). I joined the Board as the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) representative in 2005, and have seen the NAC grow during that period. I had been familiar with the NAC for some time, having been a member of its GP Asthma Group since 1990.

I have always had a strong interest in asthma not only as a GP with a strong interest in respiratory medicine but as someone with asthma and as a mother of children with asthma. I have also had a commitment during my professional life in seeing that the role of the general practitioner (GP) in the treatment of asthma was fully recognised and that GPs are kept fully informed about the latest evidence on the management of asthma.

The NAC with its structure of five stakeholder members, and its ability to involve other stakeholders, has been able to move the management of asthma forward significantly. At the time I became Chairman, I was working with other members of the GP Asthma Group and respiratory scientists to develop an accredited course for GPs in spirometry. Funding from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) has made it possible for us to roll this course out, so for the first time GPs have had access to a course, accredited by the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand (TSANZ) and the Australia and New Zealand Society of Respiratory Science, and made available across Australia.

By the end of June 2009, we had completed just under 60 workshops with more than 50% in rural areas including Katherine and Alice Springs. More than 800 GPs and practice nurses were trained. We are grateful for the support of the respiratory scientists and other clinicians who are our presenters. The logistics of each course can be tricky as a ratio of five participants to one demonstrator is necessary. As the role of practice nurses in spirometry is increasing, we need now to consider working towards a special course for nurses.

Our program of A-Teams, open to all health professionals managing asthma, including GPs, practice nurses, pharmacists and Indigenous health workers, has also continued very well, and some increased funding from the DoHA enabled us to conduct 30 workshops on a range of asthma issues with more than 50% held in rural and remote areas. This meant that we were able to complete our revised contractual target of 97 workshops over the three year period.

As we move forward into the next financial year, I am pleased to be able to report that the Australian Government's support for asthma and our work in this area will continue for another four year period. We will be working more closely with the Australian Lung Foundation and Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy as the DoHA's Asthma Management Program will now have a focus on "asthma and linked chronic respiratory conditions", reflecting the need to consider issues such as differential diagnosis of asthma and COPD, cough and allergic rhinitis.

We have continued to support the TSANZ's initiative to have the respiratory organisations work more closely together, and on the NAC's behalf, I have attended a number of meetings involving the TSANZ, Australian Lung Foundation, Asthma Foundations Australia and the Australian Respiratory Council, and we intend to involve other respiratory organisations as well. I would hope that there will be future projects on which the organisations can work together and think that the increased collaboration brought about by the DoHA's Asthma Management Program is one step towards this.

The Sensitive Choice program celebrated its third birthday recently, conducted in partnership with the Asthma and Respiratory Foundation of New Zealand, and I am pleased to report that it has continued to grow with many companies demonstrating their interest in developing and marketing products relevant to asthma and allergy trigger avoidance. We are also able to use these partnerships to deliver messages about asthma management and trigger avoidance to consumers via their brochures and promotional campaigns.

The NAC continues to develop resources for health professionals and for people with asthma, often in response to requests and/or obvious gaps in available information. We devote much effort to effective distribution and accessibility for the users of our material. All resources go on to our large and much visited website but hard copy is still needed for much information. We are cognisant of the fact that many rural and remote Australians, for example, still have limited broadband access.

One of the great strengths of the NAC is its team of committed directors and staff, not to mention all the health professionals across Australia who help us with so many facets of our work – A-Team and spirometry workshops, media response, publications and expert advice. I would like to thank you all.

Assoc. Prof. Noela Whitby AM
MBBS (Qld), DPD, Grad Dip Hum Nut, FRACGP, FAICD

Chief Executive Officer's Message



The National Asthma Council Australia (NAC), or National Asthma Campaign as it was then, began conducting its first workshops for GPs, pharmacists and nurses in 1990. For many years after that, the NAC used every strategic opportunity possible to conduct asthma management workshops

for primary care practitioners, usually as part of the annual national conferences of GPs and pharmacists, and at any other relevant national meeting, and sometimes at large State ones as well.

Accompanying these educational activities was the ongoing production of useful resources produced for, and with, primary care practitioners, and much care was given to regular national distributions. Shortly after the commencement of the Rural Health Education Foundation's satellite broadcasts, the NAC became a regular partner, seeing this as an excellent means of reaching health professionals through an interactive educational program which was directed especially at rural and remote practitioners. The NAC also pioneered a few webcasts of its own and continues to monitor the effectiveness of webcasts with great interest.

It was only when asthma became a National Health Priority that the NAC could run a sustained and systematic series of workshops for primary care (A-Team®) across Australia with funding from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA). We have been able to do this since about 2001 and are now entering the next four-year period of funding. This development is a logical extension of the earlier activities and one which would not have been possible without the Australian Government's commitment to asthma.

When the NAC was coordinating the development of the first National Asthma Strategy, the possibility of delivering such education to remote, rural and urban Australia was a very distant possibility indeed. The delivery of national spirometry education to urban and regional GPs seemed even more improbable as we completed that first Strategy in the late 1990s, yet now we are able to do that as well. External evaluation of our A-Team and Spirometry activities is demonstrating their effectiveness, and we are looking forward to developing and extending this program during the next four-year period.

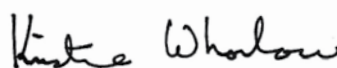
In addition to our workshops, we have continued to monitor the need for resources for health professionals and patients. We have added some innovative resources to our website – most recently, videos on the correct use of the major types of metered dose inhalers – and developed a special website for kids with asthma.

We have continued to promote the name and work of the NAC to GPs, pharmacists and allied health professionals throughout Australia and overseas. For instance, our promotional materials were distributed as satchel inserts at health professional conferences, provided to attendees at A-Team and spirometry workshops, and displayed as posters in general practice staff rooms. In the majority of cases, we have secured this promotion for no fee or at a greatly reduced rate.

Each year, we have many people and organizations to thank; every one of our projects is advised on and supported by knowledgeable but extremely busy health professionals around Australia. Our five member bodies, Asthma Foundations Australia, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand, Australasian Society of Clinical Immunologists and Allergists and the Royal Australian College of GPs all assist as well, as do important health stakeholders like the Pharmacy Guild of Australia and the Asthma and Respiratory Foundation of New Zealand. Our relationship with the asthma team at DoHA continues to be productive and constructive.

We also value highly the support of our sponsors from the pharmaceutical and spirometry companies, and the partners in our Sensitive Choice program which continues to develop and communicate messages to people with asthma and allergies. We were very pleased to have a booklet on Asthma and Allergy in the Australian Women's Weekly in Spring 2008 which reached many people with important messages about asthma and allergy management, and promoted the work of our Sensitive Choice partners.

Our Financial Report for the year indicates an operating profit of \$399,955, which is an improvement on the previous year by \$250,000. Much of our success is due to the hard work of our directors, staff and consultants. I thank them all.



Kristine Whorlow
Chief Executive Officer

Special Features



Spotlight on Dr Chris Brown MB BS, FRACGP



Dr Chris Brown is one of the early stalwarts of the National Asthma Council Australia. After studying medicine at the University of Queensland, Chris has devoted much of his working life to general practice.

When Chris was Chair of the Queensland Faculty Board of the RACGP, he decided that GPs needed a publication dealing with the treatment of asthma. With respiratory physicians Dr Paul Zimmerman and Dr Alan Isles, he produced the 20-page booklet, *Management of Asthma* in 1988. This first edition was funded by the Asthma Foundation of Queensland for distribution to GPs in Queensland. At about the same time, the first meeting of the organisation which was to become the NAC (then National Asthma Campaign) was being held. The organiser of these meetings heard of Chris' publication and a second edition was funded by the incipient NAC for distribution to GPs nationally.

National asthma guidelines were published in the *Medical Journal of Australia* in 1989 by the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand, which then asked the NAC to take on their implementation. In 1990, the NAC published the guidelines in a user friendly manner and distributed them to GPs around Australia.

Chris continued to play a major role in our *Asthma Management Handbook* as it became, and well remembers the various launches of the subsequent editions – 1993 at Royal North Shore Hospital, 1996 at the former Melbourne Fairfield Hospital (coinciding with the launch of the NAC's website), 1998 in Canberra, 2002 at the Melbourne Museum and 2006 at the Port Melbourne Yacht Club. Somewhat to his alarm, he has seen the Handbook grow to some 130 pages, reflecting the growth in evidence-based knowledge and the number of issues that GPs and other health professionals want covered.

Throughout his professional life, Chris has been a determined champion for GPs and an advocate for the importance of GP-specific treatment guidelines. He played a large part in the collaborative committee process which led to the writing of the Red Book, the RACGP's *Guidelines for Preventive Activities in General Practice*. He also served as chairman of the NAC's Education Committee from 1993 until it was disbanded in 2003.

Chris presided over many major campaigns and activities of the NAC and helped develop many of its information papers for health professionals and consumer brochures. He and the CEO remember, somewhat ruefully, how proficient they became at quickly checking and turning around material. Chris is also the person who introduced our Chairman, Dr Noela Whitby, to the Asthma Foundation Queensland and to the early NAC.

Still a friend and helper to the NAC, Chris has interests other than respiratory medicine, namely his extensive library and his large jazz and classical music collection.

Our new look

We launched a brand new logo in May 2009 to take the National Asthma Council Australia forward well into the next decade. This is only the third image upgrade for the NAC since it was established 21 years ago, originally as the National Asthma Campaign.

The new logo uses two blue tones to emphasise the name of the organisation, reinforcing our role as Australia's national peak asthma body, and it continues to feature a stylised cloud graphic to convey the important concept of breathing fresh air. Our new look provides a clean, modern image for the NAC that works equally well on traditional mediums, such as printed brochures, and with the latest electronic and online formats.

Many of our resources have already been updated to feature the new logo, including the revamped website which was launched in April 2009. Other popular publications, such as the *Asthma Management Handbook*, will be re-branded when a reprint is necessitated.

So, next time you're looking for the most up-to-date asthma management information and advice, just look for the clouds!

NAC online

www.NationalAsthma.org.au

Reliable, evidence-based information about asthma management is available from the NAC website for health professionals and people with asthma. Constantly improving web technologies enable easy access to our extensive range of resources, including information papers, practice tools and instructional videos.

Over the past year the NAC website had more than 200,000 unique visitors, an improvement of 7% over the previous year. Many people visited the site regularly, bringing overall visits to nearly 650,000. The true number of users will be even higher as this figure does not include multiple people accessing our website from the one IP address, e.g. through a university library.

More than 2 million pages were shown for the year with the number of pages accessed increasing by 30% over the previous year, indicating that while the overall visits stabilised, each visitor accessed a significantly greater amount of material.

The *Asthma Management Handbook 2006* regained its position as our leading online resource from *Spirometry: The Measurement and Interpretation of Ventilatory Function in Clinical Practice*. Together these publications represent one out of every seven pages accessed. In addition, almost 130,000 PDFs were downloaded from the website at an increase of 12% over last year.

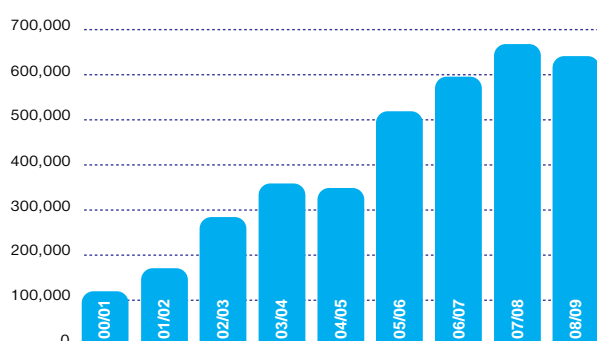
Search engines are responsible for delivering up to half of our visitors. The NAC website features strongly in Google with more than 160,000 referrals for the year. Our pages are listed swiftly in all the major search engines, with the inhaler device information paper and instructional videos appearing in Google within a few hours of online launch. Since the launch in November 2008, there have been nearly 7,000 viewings of the videos that demonstrate correct use of the five main types of asthma and COPD inhaler devices.

Written asthma action plans are one of the most effective asthma interventions available. Our library of asthma action plan templates and supporting evidence page have rapidly become key resources on the NAC website. In the past three years, access to this area has quadrupled to reach almost 38,000 views in 2008/09.

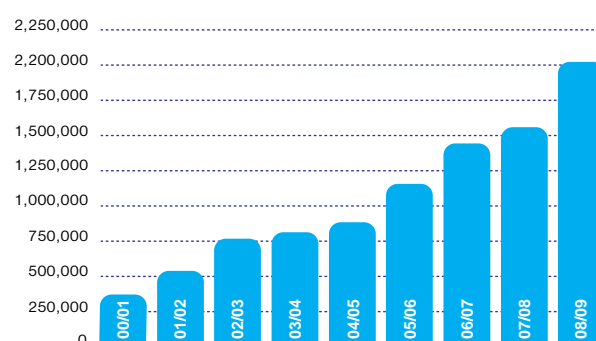
Other areas of our website also enjoyed substantial growth, including the Newsletter and First Aid for Asthma pages, while access to the Media pages doubled.

In April 2009, the NAC website underwent a facelift as part of a 'behind the scenes' upgrade to a new content management system. We simplified some of the website menus and information structure, while maintaining the look and feel of the website. These changes have already made a positive impact on web performance and we look forward to even greater improvements in future as we exploit the new system's capabilities.

Annual visitors



Annual pages viewed



Sensitive Choice

Sensitive Choice®, the NAC's cause-related marketing program, was launched in May 2006 to help consumers make informed lifestyle choices that may improve health outcomes for people with asthma and allergy.

The Sensitive Choice program is important for a number of reasons:

- It is the only formal guide for Australians who are seeking products that may benefit their asthma and/or allergies.
- The income from product sponsorships fees strongly supports the NAC's educational activities and allows us to plan ahead confidently.
- Approved products offer manufacturers a unique selling point for consumers.

Growth of the blue butterfly

The Sensitive Choice program's blue butterfly is now well established in Australia and New Zealand. With well over one hundred approved products carrying the blue butterfly, you could be using a Sensitive Choice approved product or service from the moment you wake up in the morning right up to and including when you go to bed at night.

Despite the global financial crisis, the number of manufacturers seeking product approval continued to increase.

It was pleasing to hear from the Sensitive Choice partners during this period who reported sound growth and shared their survival strategies. In these rocky times, a program like Sensitive Choice was viewed as a crucial point of difference for their products.

Our Product Advisory Panel meets regularly to consider product applications. As the program develops, the Panel has held serious discussions on "how and why" products are approved. Although the time taken to prepare applications that meet the strict criteria may have been frustrating for some applicants, the Panel has confirmed the high standards required by the approval process.

New products and partners

We welcomed the following new Sensitive Choice partners during the 2008/09 year:

- Heat Recovery Ventilation (Cristal Air International Ltd)
- Interface Australia Pty Ltd (InterfaceFLOR)
- BriTex Carpet Care Pty Ltd
- Texicote – A Division of Lilly Industries (Aust) Pty Ltd

Some partners joined only the New Zealand program:

- ENJO New Zealand Ltd
- New Zealand Steel Ltd
- Warmup New Zealand Ltd

Several existing partners also expanded their range of approved products or services. More than 100 approved products now carry the blue butterfly.



Sensitive Choice in the news

Promotion of the Sensitive Choice program by the NAC and individual partners continued during 2008/09, ensuring that more and more Australians are being exposed to the Sensitive Choice brand and the blue butterfly logo.

At the beginning of the financial year, we announced the expansion of the Sensitive Choice register, achieving good exposure in regional and suburban grassroots newspapers. We closed the financial year with exposure on Channel Nine's popular 'What's Good For Me' website.

Total circulation achieved for newspaper coverage alone exceeded 2 million readers.

The support PR push will be maintained during 2009/10 as a key component of our integrated marketing support program for Sensitive Choice, and we will continue to provide communications support to the partner companies.

Promotion to the public

We are committed to raising the profile and awareness of Sensitive Choice. The primary audience for the program is women aged 25–50 and there was a mass media program to reach this group.

'Living with Asthma and Allergy' second edition was published in the November 2008 edition of *Australian Women's Weekly*, which has an audience of more than 2 million readers. The colourful A5 pull-out guide was packed with tips and advice on managing asthma and allergy during spring. The booklet also showcased a range of Sensitive Choice approved products.

Other activities included development of a 30 second TV commercial, which will run on stations nationally for the next 2 years, a review of the Sensitive Choice website with revisions planned for early 2010 and continued PR support of partners.

Sensitive Choice in New Zealand

Many of the Sensitive Choice partners distribute products into Australia and New Zealand. Through a partnership with the Asthma & Respiratory Foundation of New Zealand, we are able to offer partners Sensitive Choice exposure in New Zealand. There are now 25 approved products in New Zealand.

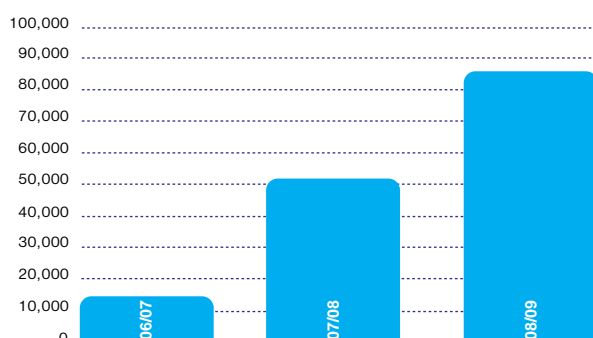
The Asthma & Respiratory Foundation hosted their first partner forum in March 2009 and supported the New Zealand based partners with cooperative advertising.

Sensitive Choice online

Visitors to the Sensitive Choice website now exceed 85,000 annually, a 65% growth over the previous year. The second edition of the publication of *Living with Asthma and Allergy* provided a significant and sustained boost to pages accessed on the Sensitive Choice website, helping to more than double the pages accessed to nearly 240,000 for the year.

Sensitive Choice developed solid positioning in search engines including Google, increasing referrals by 76% for the year.

Annual Visitors



Media relations report

The National Asthma Council Australia continues to be the first port of call for consumer and health industry media seeking input on all asthma-related angles.

The 2008/09 financial year saw our expert bank of media spokespeople kept busy providing commentary on a wide range of high profile, topical news stories – from air quality in Beijing and the impact it could have on the Australian Olympic team to practical advice on coping with bushfire smoke.

We also took the lead in raising awareness of the heightened risks associated with swine flu for people with asthma.

Extensive national exposure was achieved for a number of NAC driven initiatives, such as the launch of the new Kids With Asthma website, release of the updated asthma death toll statistics and both World Asthma Day in May and National Asthma Week in September.

We also worked closely with a number of partner organisations during the year to add context and credibility to third party story angles as well as spokespeople for media interviews including many high profile appearances on prime time metropolitan radio and television news services.

A total of 22 proactive media releases were issued during the year by our public relations consultancy, Ward Communications. Our media partnership approach and proactive media relations program will continue to be a priority promotional vehicle for the NAC during 2009/10.

Activity Highlights



GP and Allied Health Professional Asthma Education Program

Our GP and Allied Health Professional Asthma Education Program (GPAHPAEP) provides education and training for health professionals managing asthma. It is part of the Australian Government's Asthma Management Program 2006–2009 and is funded by the Department of Health and Ageing.

We are conducting three main activities under GPAHPAEP: the ongoing A-Team® Asthma Education Program, a national spirometry training course and a series of satellite broadcast programs. A new seminar for practice nurses is also being piloted.

Development and delivery of these important educational activities would not be possible without the tireless efforts of the dedicated health professionals involved. We are in their debt.

GPAHPAEP was originally scheduled to finish at the end of June 2009. However, we are delighted to have been granted extra funds to extend the program until end October 2009. The final independent evaluation report of the entire program is due late in 2009.

A-Team® Asthma Education Program

As the cornerstone of GPAHPAEP, the NAC's A-Team® Asthma Education Program has continued to deliver up-to-date asthma education workshops with General Practice Networks and Divisions across Australia. The workshops are open to all health professionals managing asthma, including GPs, practice nurses, pharmacists and Indigenous health workers.

More than 30 workshops were held in 2008/09, reaching more than 650 health professionals. Highlights include a series of workshops held at Thursday Island and nearby Bamaga on the mainland. Practice nurses and Indigenous health workers converged from remote islands throughout the Torres Strait to learn about asthma management in a region with little or no GP availability.

We have now comfortably met our revised contractual commitment of 97 workshops held over the 3-year period with more than 50% in rural or remote areas.



Workshop evaluations from participants, presenters and host divisions continue to be very positive. The evaluator's initial analysis of 80 workshops held over 2006–2009 includes:

- 96% of participants reported increased knowledge of evidence-based best practice in asthma care
- 94% of participants reported increased practical skills to support the application of evidence-based best practice in asthma care
- 96% of participants reported their asthma practices will improve on returning to the workplace as a result of participating in the workshop

Follow-up telephone interviews were conducted with self-nominated participants 6 months after their workshop. According to the evaluator, data from these interviews...

"... show significant retention of knowledge and skills by the workshop participants."

Overall, the evaluator states,

"These results demonstrate that the A-Team workshops have a lasting impact on participants in terms of knowledge retention, confidence in practising skills and effecting practice change in the key areas associated with the Asthma Cycle of Care [best-practice asthma management]."

National spirometry training course

Following the model of our A-Team program, the Spirometry Training Course is available to GPs and practice nurses across Australia through GP Networks/Divisions.

Run as a 6-hour interactive workshop, the course is designed to provide participants with comprehensive training in the application, measurement and interpretation of expiratory spirometry. Highly experienced respiratory scientists and clinicians present the course, with a maximum ratio of participants to educators of 5:1 during the practical components.

The course is an RACGP Category 1 CPD activity and an ANZSRS accredited spirometry training course for GPs. Practice nurses can also attend.

Almost 60 workshops were held in 2008/09, training more than 800 GPs and practice nurses around Australia. Highlights include workshops held in Katherine and Alice Springs following the TSANZ annual scientific meeting in Darwin. As part of the Northern Territory road trip, the presenters also held A-Team workshops in Katherine and nearby Wurli Wurlijang Aboriginal Health Service.

We have comfortably met our revised contractual commitment of 61 workshops held over the 3-year period with more than 50% held in rural or remote areas.

Practice nurse seminar pilot

Following feedback from attendees at the A-Team workshops, a pilot Asthma Update Seminar specifically for practice nurses was developed in early 2009. Nine pilot seminars (at least one in each State/Territory) are being held during the year through extra funding from the Department of Health and Ageing.

Roll-out and evaluation of the pilot seminars is still in progress. However, preliminary analysis indicates that this new activity is clearly fulfilling an unmet need. There are currently 30 GP networks/divisions on the waiting list for a seminar, and feedback from the pilots held so far has been extremely positive.

Satellite broadcast programs

The NAC developed four satellite broadcast programs with the Rural Health Education Foundation (RHEF) under GPAHPAEP. The target audience for the broadcasts are rural and remote GPs, pharmacists, practice nurses, asthma educators and Aboriginal health workers. RHEF estimates each program reached up to 5,000 health professionals through the initial satellite broadcast and subsequent viewing on the RHEF website. Two programs were broadcast in 2008/09.

Breathlessness in the older adult: Is it asthma? was broadcast on 9 September 2008. The program covered the differential diagnosis and management of asthma in older adults with breathlessness, with interrelated discussion of COPD.



The program was a facilitated expert panel discussion chaired by Dr Norman Swan, ABC Radio National health reporter. The panellists were:

- Assoc. Prof. Christine McDonald, adult respiratory physician, Melbourne
- Dr Gary Kilov, general practitioner, Melbourne
- Ms Toni Riley, community pharmacist, Bendigo
- Ms Vanessa McDonald, respiratory clinical nurse consultant, Newcastle

Our final program, *A is for Asthma: Managing asthma in primary school kids*, was broadcast on 27 January 2009. The program covered the latest in best-practice asthma management for children aged 4–12 years.

The program was again a facilitated expert panel discussion chaired by Dr Norman Swan, ABC Radio National health reporter. The panellists were:

- Assoc. Prof. Adam Jaffé, paediatric respiratory physician
- Dr Kerry Hancock, general practitioner and chair, NAC GP Asthma Group
- Ms Toni Riley, community pharmacist and member, NAC Pharmacists Asthma Group
- Ms Tracey Marshall, clinical nurse consultant (paediatric asthma)
- Mr Tony Healy, national coordinator, Asthma Friendly Schools

Discussion centred on accurate diagnosis and assessment, recommended indications and treatment regimens for medications, optimum review periods and medication adjustment, and appropriate self-management strategies.

According to RHEF, the outcomes from both programs were excellent. The viewer responses suggest that the level of interest and the quality of the programs were extremely high.

Education resources

GP Review

We continued to explore asthma issues in depth with our regular expert contributions to *GP Review*, a bimonthly magazine published by the RACGP for its members. Each article focuses on a hot topic for GPs managing asthma and is written by an expert in the relevant area, with themes chosen to coincide with topical issues or NAC activities.

All articles from March 2007 onwards are now available on the NAC website as well, so more health professionals can keep up to date with the latest asthma issues.

Our thanks go to the authors of articles published *GP Review* in 2008/09, which were:

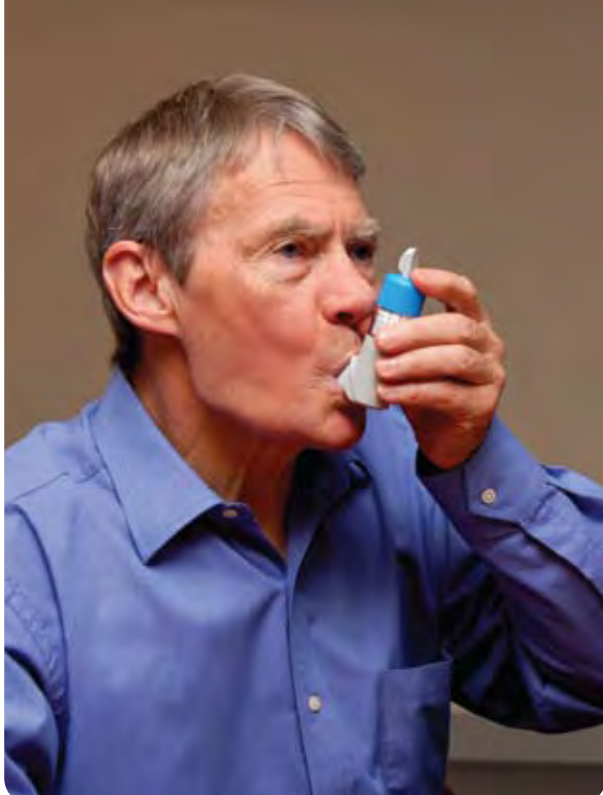
- **More than just old age:** Asthma in older adults presents challenges in diagnosis, treatment and self management – Dr Steven Rudolph, Member, NAC GP Asthma Group
- **Asthma education comes to you:** The NAC is taking two of its most popular general practice education programs to GPs around the country – Siobhan Brophy, NAC Communications Manager
- **Wheeze, sneeze and disease:** After 100 years of research into sneezing in spring, is there anything new to report? – Assoc. Prof. Ian Charlton, Member, NAC GP Asthma Group
- **Preventing puffer problems:** Improving patient inhaler technique improves health outcomes – Siobhan Brophy, NAC Communications Manager
- **Fighting the flu season:** Colds and flu can be serious for children with asthma – Dr Kerry Hancock, Chair, NAC GP Asthma Group

Dairy and asthma factsheet update

One of the most accessed consumer resources on our website was updated in April 2009. The factsheet 'Good health tips: Dairy and asthma', which is published by Dairy Australia, was revised by the NAC in consultation with Dr Victoria Smith, NAC GP Asthma Group member.

The 'milk myth' – the notion that milk makes mucous or that dairy triggers asthma – has now been debunked by several studies. Yet this misconception is widespread, and has led to some people with asthma (or their carers) limiting dairy intake, which can have significant health and nutrition consequences. Most people with asthma can regularly include dairy in their diet, unless an allergy to cow's milk is proven.

The updated fact sheet is available on the NAC website and through Dairy Australia.



Inhaler education campaign for veterans

A national education campaign: *“Prevent Puffer Problems”*, was launched in November 2008 by the Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, the Hon. Alan Griffin, to help improve older Australians’ inhaler technique.

The Department of Veterans’ Affairs collaborated with the NAC and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia to develop a range of easy to understand resources designed to improve inhaler use. Other campaign partners included the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, The Australian Lung Foundation and the Australian General Practice Network.

Our two key education resources were an information paper for health professionals and a series of short instructional videos for patients. Both are published on the NAC website.

Inhaler device information paper

The information paper for health professionals focuses on the prevalence of poor inhaler technique, improvements in health outcomes seen with improved inhaler technique and ways to implement and maintain correct technique. It also features the common errors for each inhaler type and how they can be prevented.



A medical writer, Ms Jenni Harman of Meducation, prepared the information paper under the guidance of an ad hoc expert panel. The panellists were:

- Assoc. Prof. Helen Reddel, respiratory physician
- Dr Gary Kilov, general practitioner and NAC A-Team member
- Dr Iman Basheti, research pharmacist
- Dr Jenny Gowan, consultant pharmacist
- Ms Naomi Fenton, asthma educator and NAC A-Team member



Inhaler device instructional videos

A series of short web-based videos were developed to demonstrate correct device use with the five main types of asthma and COPD inhaler in the Australian market. Each separate 2-minute video shows the correct technique for one inhaler: standard MDI with and without spacer, Accuhaler, Turbuhaler, Autohaler and Handihaler.

Each video shows an expert asthma educator, Judi Wicking, explaining and demonstrating the technique to a patient, an older man or older woman, who then uses the inhaler correctly. The videos include subtitles to aid comprehension and reinforce the key points.

Supporting text on the website features the common errors for each inhaler type and tips on how they can be prevented, adapted from the information paper.

The videos have rapidly become one of the most popular resources on the NAC website, with more than 3000 views each month.





Kids with Asthma website

We launched a new interactive, kid-friendly website – www.kidswithasthma.com.au – in March 2009 to give kids with asthma and their parents clear and reliable information on all things asthma-related, including basic facts, diagnosis, medications and management.

Specifically designed to be fun and informative, the site uses simple facts and an interactive asthma-themed Game Zone to appeal to younger patients, backing up the messages with more detailed information on key topics for their parents and carers.

Seasonal information is posted on the site quarterly to ensure it remains relevant and up to date. Detailed clinical information on each of the seasonal topics is also available to health professionals via an email update written by an appropriate asthma expert.

The Kids With Asthma website content was developed with Professor Peter van Asperen, paediatric respiratory physician, and with feedback from other experts including Assoc. Prof. Chris Hogan, GP; Ms Maree Brown, paediatric asthma educator; Ms Luisa Hogan, community pharmacist; Mr Garry Irving, Asthma Foundations' representative; and Ms Lorraine Murton, a parent of a child with asthma.

It was developed with the support of an unrestricted educational grant from Merck, Sharp and Dohme. The NAC retained editorial control.

Conferences

Australian Asthma Conference 2008

The biennial Australian Asthma Conference 'Advancing Asthma Where?' was held in October 2008 in Sydney, hosted by the Asthma Foundation NSW. Ms Kristine Whorlow, NAC CEO, represented the NAC on the Conference Program Committee.

Ms Judi Wicking, A-Team® project manager, presented an abstract titled 'The A-Team®: A national asthma education program' at the conference. Her presentation highlighted the innovative format and successful outcomes of our A-Team® asthma education program.

GPCE Melbourne 2008 and Sydney 2009

The NAC is a long-standing contributor to the education program of the General Practitioner Conference and Exhibition (GPCE) held each year in Melbourne and Sydney. Our seminar '*Asthma and Allergy: practical strategies for related conditions*' was one of the most popular sessions at GPCE Melbourne in November 2008. The 1-hour seminar was hosted by the NAC with support from Schering-Plough.

Assoc. Prof. Jo Douglass, leading allergist and respiratory physician, presented a dynamic session covering differential diagnosis and practical strategies for management of concurrent asthma and allergy, using a series of intriguing case studies to illustrate the key points.

Our seminar at GPCE Sydney in May 2009 considered similar issues from a paediatric perspective. The 1-hour seminar, '*Paediatric asthma and allergic rhinitis*', was also presented with support from Schering-Plough.

Dr Simon Young, GP, presented the interactive seminar covering the latest in immunotherapy and prevention, as well as differential diagnosis and practical management for children with concurrent asthma and allergic rhinitis. It was very well received by the 60–70 GPs in attendance.

TSANZ Annual Scientific Meeting 2009

Assoc. Prof. Phil Bardin presented the NAC breakfast session at the TSANZ Annual Scientific Meeting in Darwin in April 2009. Titled '*Asthma behaving badly*', the presentation covered the latest in managing difficult-to-treat asthma.

The session was well attended by a captivated audience of respiratory physicians and nurses.

Asthma Research Awards

The NAC funds annual awards to encourage research into asthma. Offered via our individual member bodies, the awards focus on asthma research presented at each organisation's annual/biennial scientific meeting or conference.

Ms Georgina Paterson, from the Women's and Children's Hospital, Adelaide won the 2008 AFA and NAC Asthma Research Award for her presentation, '*Empowering parents and carers of asthmatic children with the use of IT and digital media through a collaborative model of care*'.

Ms Kate Campbell from the Woolcock Institute of Medical Research, Sydney, won the 2008 ASCIA and NAC Asthma Research Award for her presentation, '*Local and systemic effects of multiple nasal allergen challenges with dust mite extract*'.

Dr Douglas Cowan from University of Otago, Dunedin, won the 2009 TSANZ and NAC Asthma Prize for his presentation, '*Steroid responsiveness in relation to histological phenotype in asthma*'.



International activities

GP Asia Pacific Respiratory Board

The GP Asia-Pacific Respiratory Board (GPAPRB) consists of GPs/primary care physicians from 10 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including Assoc. Prof. Ron Tomlins, chair, who represents Australia. GPAPRB was established by the NAC in early 2008 and has met quarterly since then with support from GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) Asia-Pacific.

Members are working to develop the role of the GP or GP equivalent in Asia Pacific and to improve the management of asthma and linked chronic respiratory conditions such as allergic rhinitis and COPD.

GPAPRB has spent substantial time discussing resources available to GPs in Asia-Pacific countries and the general needs of GPs, including the time limits for the typical consultation. GPAPRB is developing practical resources to assist Asia-Pacific GPs in response.

United Nations Environment Programme

Our CEO is an Australian Government nominee to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Medical Technical Options Committee, which focuses on the phase-out of CFC-containing metered dose inhalers (MDIs). She attended the annual meeting of the Committee in Montreal in March 2009.

Ms Kristine Whorlow also represented the NAC at the following meetings:

- Nepal, CFC MDI Phase-Out Awareness Workshop, October 2008
- Iran, The First CFC MDI Phase-Out Awareness Workshop, March 2009
- Pakistan, International Awareness and Information Exchange Workshop on the Transition Strategy for CFC-Metered Dose Inhalers, March 2009

Our CEO is pictured at the Iran workshop with Mr Atul Bagai, Regional Coordinator (Networking), South Asia Network Compliance Assistance Programme, UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

CFC-free transition awareness package

Following a request from the UNEP, we developed an awareness package on the transition to CFC-free inhalers in developing countries.

This Awareness Package aims to assist National Ozone Units (NOUs) in developing countries to develop materials to ensure the seamless transition to CFC-free inhalers in each country.

The Awareness Package consists of:

- Information statement for health professionals: *Prescribing CFC-free lung medicines*
- Consumer brochure for patients: *Using CFC-free lung medicines*
- PowerPoint presentation for health industry: *CFCs in inhalers for asthma and COPD*
- Draft communiqués for specific groups, such as national or regional authorities, stakeholder groups, media outlets and the general public

The Awareness Package will be launched on 18 July 2009 at the Twenty-ninth meeting of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG-29) of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. The meeting will be held in Geneva, Switzerland, and over 450 delegates are expected to attend representing governments, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations, and industry interests.

The resources in the Awareness Package were developed with the expectation that National Ozone Units, in cooperation with health sector stakeholders, will be able to adapt, translate and distribute them within their country.

Copies of the Awareness Package will be distributed to the five manufacturing countries in Asia and the Pacific region: Bangladesh, China, India, Iran and Pakistan. The Awareness Package will also be distributed to 38 individual NOUs in Asia and the Pacific region, and to regional networks of NOUs throughout the rest of the world.



Committees



Board

The Board defines policies and sets goals and objectives, is responsible for corporate governance and regularly reviews progress towards achieving the stated goals.

- Prof. John Wilson, Chairman (to November 2008)
Respiratory physician
The Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand representative (to November 2008)
- Assoc. Prof. Noela Whitby AM, Chairman (from November 2008)
General practitioner
The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners representative
- Mr Max Franchitto
President, Asthma Foundation of South Australia
Asthma Foundations of Australia representative
- Mr Peter Holder
Community pharmacist
Pharmaceutical Society of Australia representative
- Dr Janet Rimmer
Respiratory physician and allergist
Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy representative
- Assoc. Prof. Peter Wark
Respiratory physician
The Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand representative (from November 2008)

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee supervises budgets, authorises and monitors expenditure, and advises on the acquisition of income.

- Mr Peter Holder (Chairman), NAC Director
Community pharmacist, ACT
- Mr Peter Norman
Accountant, VIC (from March 2009)
- Mr Alasdair Norton
Business consultant, VIC
- Mr Robert Yeo
Chartered accountant, VIC



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, SA (Chair)
- Assoc. Prof. Amanda Barnard, ACT
- Dr David Batt, SA
- Assoc. Prof. Ian Charlton, NSW
- Dr H. John Fardy, NSW
- Assoc. Prof. Chris Hogan, VIC
- Dr Steven Rudolph, QLD
- Dr Victoria Smith, TAS
- Assoc. Prof. Noela Whitby AM, QLD
- Dr Russell Wiseman, QLD

General Practitioners Asia-Pacific Respiratory Board

The General Practitioners Asia-Pacific Respiratory Board members are working to develop the role of the GP or GP equivalent in Asia Pacific and to improve the management of COPD and asthma in the region. (Pictured above).

- Australia – Assoc. Prof. Ron Tomlins (Chair)
- Bangladesh – Dr GM Monsur Habib
- Hong Kong – Dr Wai Sing (Daniel) Chu
- Hong Kong – Dr Tsan (Augustine) Lam
- Korea – Dr Ki-Don Han
- Malaysia – Dr George Gomez
- Philippines – Dr Annie Francisco
- Singapore – Dr Tze Lee Tan
- Thailand – Dr Kraisorn Voradithi
- Vietnam – Dr Tien Le Dung
- Vietnam – Dr Vinh Nguyen

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 Simon Appel OAM, VIC (Chair)
- Prof. Carol Armour, NSW
- Mr Mark Feldschuh, VIC
- Mr Peter Holder, ACT
- Mr Stephen Hughes, NSW
- Mrs Karalyn Huxhagen, QLD
- Mr Grant Kardachi, SA
- Ms Gina McLachlan, VIC
- Mr Kevin Morgan, TAS
- Ms Toni Riley, VIC
- Dr Bandana Saini, NSW
- Mr Marcus Weidinger, WA
- Mr David Pearson (ex-officio)
- Mr Matt Ryan (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 Ms Jane Patterson, executive director Asthma and Respiratory Foundation New Zealand, and Ms Kristine Whorlow, chief executive officer, NAC.

The Panel consists of the following experts:

- Adult respiratory physician (Chair)
- Allergist
- Community pharmacist
- General practitioner
- Industrial chemist

GPAHPAEP Steering Committee

The GP and Allied Health Professional Asthma Education Program (GPAHPAEP) Steering Committee provides strategic direction, national quality standards, and a national evaluation and quality improvement strategy for the Program.

- Dr Jonathan Burdon, Independent chair
- Assoc. Prof. Ron Tomlins, NAC representative
- Ms Dianne Fraser and Mr Stan Piperoglou, Department of Health and Ageing representatives
- Ms Naomi Fenton, Australian Asthma and Respiratory Educators Association nominee
- Assoc. Prof. Ian Charlton, previously National Asthma Reference Group nominee
- Dr Antonio Cocchiari AM, Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia nominee
- National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation nominee
- Mr Robin Ould, Asthma Foundations of Australia nominee
- Ms Denise Hine, Australian General Practice Network nominee
- Mr Matt Ryan, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia nominee
- Ms Ann Salmons, Australian Practice Nurses Association nominee
- Assoc. Prof. Noela Whitby AM, Royal Australian College of General Practitioners nominee

Spirometry Training Course Working Group

The NAC Spirometry Training Course was developed in consultation with the Australia and New Zealand Society of Respiratory Science (ANZSRS) and the NAC's GP Asthma Group.

On behalf of ANZSRS:

- Assoc. Prof. Alan J. Crockett, University of Adelaide, SA
- Assoc. Prof. David P. Johns, Menzies Research Institute, University of Tasmania, TAS
- Dr Debbie Burton, Charles Sturt University, NSW
- Dr Kevin Gain, Royal Perth Hospital, WA
- Ms Eleonora Del Colle, Pulmetrics Pty Ltd and Box Hill Hospital, VIC

On behalf of NAC's GP Asthma Group:

- Assoc. Prof. Amanda Barnard, Australian National University, ACT
- Dr H. John Fardy, Gerringong Family Medical Practice, NSW
- Dr Kerry Hancock, Chandlers Hill Surgery, SA
- Assoc. Prof. Noela Whitby AM, Garindale Medical Clinic, QLD

Personnel

Staff

- Ms Kristine Whorlow, Chief Executive Officer
- Ms Rhonda Cleveland, Operations Manager
- Ms Siobhan Brophy, Communications Manager
- Ms Judi Wicking, Project Manager
- Ms Alison Coalby, Executive Assistant
- Ms Elizabeth Brown, Administration Officer
- Ms Siobhan Rawlin, Project Support Officer (to April 2009)

Consultants

- Ms Jo Burrows
- Catalyst International Pty Ltd
Mr John Skinner
Ms Janice Shadbolt
- Davidson Consulting
Ms Maree Davidson
- HealthConsult Pty Ltd
Mr Joe Scuteri
Ms Lisa Fodero
- Impagination
Mr Jeff Grainger
Ms Suzanne Grainger
- Meducation
Ms Jenni Harman
- Ward Communications
Ms Kelly Ward

Supporters



Acknowledgments

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 and Ageing continues to provide invaluable support for our GP and Allied Health Professional Asthma Education Program (GPAHPAEP) under the Department's Asthma Management Program 2006–2009.

The GPAHPAEP is proving very successful, and we thank the Department for granting us extra funds to extend the program until end October 2009. We look forward to the future development of our education activities with the Department under the next 4-year Asthma Management Program.

Collaboration with the Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs on inhaler use has resulted in a unique series of instructional videos for patients and matching evidence-based resource for health professionals. We thank them for their support.

We extended our international outreach with our CFC-free transition package for National Ozone Units in developing countries around the world. The resources were developed with the United Nations Environment Programme, supported by the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol.

We value highly the support of our sponsors from the pharmaceutical industry. We were able to develop many of our latest resources as a result of unrestricted educational grants from these companies and 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.

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International Agencies

Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the
Montreal Protocol
United Nations Environment Programme

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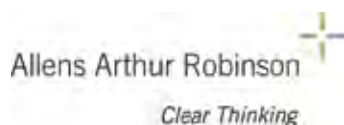
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Help your patients with asthma enjoy their summer holidays:

- ✓ Check their asthma action plan is up to date
- ✓ Remind them to keep a copy handy

For more information about asthma management or to access a wide range of asthma action plan templates, visit the National Asthma Council Australia website.

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asthma patients
forget their
action plans
this summer**

www.NationalAsthma.org.au

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