

ANNUAL REPORT 20 23

Who we are

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
- Pharmaceutical Society of Australia
- Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

Our purpose

To improve Australia's capabilities in helping people with asthma to breathe well.

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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Acknowledgment of Country

The National Asthma Council Australia acknowledges and pays respect to the past, present, and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and the continuation of cultural, spiritual, and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.





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Chair's Message

The National Asthma Council Australia (NAC) was established over 30 years ago with a clear role to reduce the impact of asthma experienced by the Australian community. It is pleasing to see that death rates from asthma have fallen over the last ten years and yet we still have unacceptably high rates of hospitalisations for asthma. There is still much to do to improve asthma management and care.

Recently our health system has been under significant pressure, and it is not surprising that in that context the management of asthma isn't necessarily considered a high priority for people and for some health professionals. This is a major concern and a challenge for the NAC and other organisations as we seek to re-focus attention on the health, social and economic impacts of asthma on the community.

The Minister for Health and Aged Care established the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce to provide recommendations for ways to improve our primary health care system. It's clear that we need more flexible, collaborative, and coordinated multidisciplinary models of care. The proposed changes to strengthen Medicare closely align with the mission of the NAC. We are an organisation with an established track record in setting and disseminating the standards of care through our evidence-based asthma management guidelines, practice tools and resources.

Furthermore, we have a renowned education program in place that assists primary care health professionals to obtain the knowledge to provide appropriate asthma care for people with asthma. We believe that with our specific focus on supporting primary care professionals that we will continue to make a significant contribution to improving the health of Australians living with asthma.

As Chair of the NAC Board, I am proud of our achievements over the last year. Our team of experienced health care professionals conducted educational workshops and discipline-specific webinars with over 1800 health care professionals actively engaged. These training programs were delivered in rural, remote, and urban areas and included training for GPs, primary health care nurses, community pharmacists, and asthma and respiratory educators.

As a Board it has been rewarding to be able to have the opportunity to return to having some of our Board and Committee meetings in person. A major focus has



been commencing revision of our strategic plan to ensure that we continue to have a clear purpose and a targeted and sustainable impact into the future. Once again, our directors have undertaken their duties in a highly professional manner, and they continue to make a significant contribution to the governance, oversight and direction of the NAC. I am indebted to them for their ongoing commitment and engagement with the NAC.

The NAC is fortunate to be able to engage with many of the country's leading asthma, respiratory and primary care experts, and researchers. I would especially like to thank our Australian Asthma Handbook Guidelines Committee Members and the Chair of the Committee Prof Nick Zwar. Also, our Finance Committee, Pharmacists, General Practitioners and Nurses Asthma Advisory Groups and the Sensitive Choice Advisory Panel have provided invaluable guidance over the year. Without their ongoing commitment we would not be able to continue to promote best-practice care for people with asthma and their families.

Finally, our talented staff, ably led by our CEO Ms Rhonda Cleveland, have worked cohesively and professionally throughout the year. I thank them for their expertise and their ongoing passion for delivering the important work of the NAC.

Mond war

Dr Joanna Wriedt

Chair of the Board of Directors

CEO's Message

Welcome to this year's annual report. The NAC had a productive and busy year as we focused on our asthma and respiratory education program, updated our health professional resources and delivered our highly regarded face-to-face workshops. In particular, the demand for our Spirometry Training Course remained very popular and we completed 46 workshops over the year. Our webinar series has continued to be highly rated by participants.

The NAC was part of the Victorian Government's Improving Childhood Asthma Management Program. This allowed us to develop a locally tailored education program to equip primary health care professionals with the knowledge and tools to enable them to provide high quality care to children in Melbourne's inner west. An important component was the development of an education program on identifying and managing asthma for children and adolescents in school or community sports settings as well as collaborating with other key stakeholders. Consequently, the NAC now has online educational resources and programs that can be adapted for use in other regions and jurisdictions.

Another highlight has been our increased media profile. The NAC particularly targets health professional media as well as a range of online platforms and consumer media outlets. There was keen interest in seasonal asthma, allergies, thunderstorm asthma and dangerous mould after the floods. We were also delighted to be able to participate in the Pregnancy Babies and Children's Expo along with the Melbourne Home Show which provides an excellent platform for providing information about allergies and asthma for families and carers.

I would like to thank our Chair Dr Joanna Wriedt and our Board of Directors for providing support, guidance and sound advice over the year. We are currently revising our strategic plan which we will commence implementing in 2024. This process has enabled us to re-engage with our committees and advisory panels and to have some thought-provoking discussions about the future of asthma management in Australia and ways in which the NAC can continue to play a leading role. I am very grateful for the ongoing support and contribution of the many experts who give their time in a voluntary capacity to assist us with our important work.

Finally, in my first year as CEO, I was keen to ensure that the NAC had the expertise and capacity to make a

significant contribution to the ongoing leadership of the organisation. Two new roles were developed – a Clinical Executive Lead and a Marketing and Communications Manager. These roles have already proven to be successful changes and we now have a small, highly professional and dedicated team. I thank the team for their support of me as CEO and for their commitment to the NAC. Also, they are just a great group of people to work with!

I'm feeling confident about the future of the NAC and excited by the challenges ahead.

Rhonda Cleveland

Chief Executive Officer

Year in Review



99
workshops & webinars held



1,849
health professionals attended workshops & webinars



11,000+
hard copy resources
distributed across
Australia



90,941
Australian Asthma
Handbook website
visitors
(7% increase)



523,866

Australian Asthma
Handbook website
page views



147,450
Australian Asthma
Handbook website
sessions



1.55M NAC website

page views



721,486NAC website visits



65,000

"How-to"
video views



17%

increase in NAC Facebook followers



89%

increase in NAC LinkedIn followers



81%

increase in Sensitive Choice® Instagram followers



49

new Sensitive Choice® products approved



97,800

Sensitive Choice® website visitors



192,966

Sensitive Choice® website page views



2,830

NAC earned media mentions



1,540

Sensitive Choice® earned media mentions



27

media releases



Setting the Standard

Australian Asthma Handbook

We work with leading healthcare experts, to continually develop the National Asthma Council Australia (NAC) flagship publication, the Australian Asthma Handbook, to ensure the best possible asthma care for every Australian impacted by asthma.

The NAC's Australian Asthma Handbook is the definitive guide for asthma management, and a pivotal resource that healthcare professionals across Australia routinely access. Our complimentary and publicly available guidelines offer tailored treatment recommendations, providing evidence-based, practical guidance for health professionals diagnosing and managing asthma in adults and children in primary care. Australian government departments and agencies regularly cite the Australian Asthma Handbook, reinforcing the NAC as a leading provider of evidence-based treatment guidelines.

Explore: asthmahandbook.org.au

Since its inception, the Australian Asthma Handbook has established the benchmark for optimal asthma management in Australia. Its extensive scope, usercentric design, and consistent emphasis on fostering a collaborative approach among primary healthcare professionals underscore the vital role it plays in promoting comprehensive asthma care.

The Australian Asthma Handbook continued to be updated throughout 2022-23 ensuring that health professionals had access to the latest information. One key update was the latest recommendations for 'Infection Control when Performing Spirometry in Primary Care'. We continued to receive copyright requests for references to the handbook and promote the handbook in media and communications activities where relevant. This aligns with the NAC's dedication to providing information for primary healthcare practitioners, empowering them to deliver optimum care to people with asthma.

The Australian Asthma Handbook continues to be endorsed by peak bodies including:

- · Australasian College for Emergency Medicine
- · Australian Primary Health Care Nurses Association
- · Pharmaceutical Society of Australia
- · Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
- · Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia.

Thank you to the dedicated Guidelines Committee members, led by Prof Nick Zwar (Chair), who have worked unstintingly to provide health professionals in Australia with relevant, up to date and practical asthma guidelines.

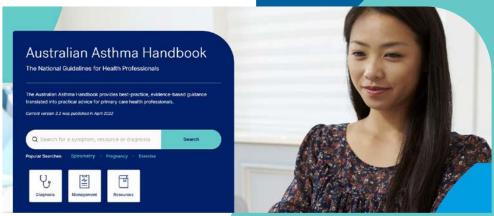
Website statistics - asthmahandbook.org.au

The Australian Asthma Handbook attracted 90,941 total visitors in the 2022-23 period: an increase of over 7% from the previous year. The main audience accessing the handbook were aged 25-34 years. 61% of all users were female compared to 39% male.

There were 523,866 page views and 147,450 website sessions indicating continued engagement with our health professional audience.

TOP 5 POPULAR WEBPAGES VIEWED

- 1. Management
- 2. Management/adults
- 3. Management/children
- 4. Acute asthma/clinical
- 5. Diagnosis





Setting the Standard

Education and Training

The Asthma and Lung Health Education Best Practice for Professionals Program (ALEP) is the NAC's asthma and respiratory education program. Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, ALEP provided education, resources, and peer-led training for primary care health practitioners. The program's goal is to enhance the adoption of best-practice strategies in managing asthma and associated chronic respiratory conditions.

Explore: nationalasthma.org.au/health-professionals/education-training

Throughout 2022-23, as Australia adapted to the new norms shaped by the impact of COVID-19, the NAC effectively responded to the needs of primary health networks (PHNs) to resume in-person training. This was achieved through face-to-face workshops alongside our ongoing online webinar series. Our team of expert healthcare professionals successfully conducted educational workshops across various locations in Australia. Their consistent dedication to advancing

asthma management education, in alignment with the asthma treatment guidelines in primary care as outlined in our Australian Asthma Handbook, is deeply appreciated.

Over 1,800 healthcare professionals actively engaged in our comprehensive workshops and discipline-specific webinars. Training programs were delivered in rural, remote, and urban areas and included training for general practitioners (GPs), primary health care nurses, community pharmacists, and asthma and respiratory educators.

Workshops

We were delighted to finally commence the long-awaited return to workshops. Following the restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, we were inundated with requests for our Spirometry Training Course due to the effectiveness of the face-to-face workshop delivery, providing hands-on experience within infection control guidelines.

We delivered 46 Spirometry Training Course workshops, double our target and an increase of 84% from the previous financial year.

The evaluation of workshops and webinars highlighted that a significant majority (97%) of workshop attendees strongly agreed that their educational requirements were fully addressed. Furthermore, 91- 100% of participants conveyed that their learning needs were completely fulfilled across all three workshops: Practice Nurses Seminar, the Spirometry Training Course, and the Asthma Update for Aboriginal Health Workers and Practitioners.

Webinars

Even with renewed access to face-to-face learning, our webinar sessions continued to be a popular method of training delivery and support to health care professionals in urban, rural, and remote settings. We exceeded our webinar delivery target by 20%. The one-hour sessions were recognised by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) as CPD activities.

"I have been to many spirometry training courses over the years, but the NAC one is by far the best I have ever seen. It's worthwhile attending just to take home the workbook with the presentation, asthma handbook and resources."

- WA Attendee

Workshops/webinars held across Australia



46
Spirometry

Training Course

Fractice Nurse Seminar

Aboriginal Health
Worker Update



Adult Asthma Management - What's New?

Little Lungs - A Paediatric Asthma Update

Take a Breath
- Asthma/COPD
Medications &
Devices

Asthma & COPD - They Do Overlap

Asthma in Spring
- Allergies &
Thunderstorms

We exceeded our projected target number of workshops and webinars by 16% for the year.

Improving Childhood Asthma Management Program

In 2022-23, the NAC was part of the Victorian Government's Improving Childhood Asthma Management (ICAM) – Inner West Program. ICAM aimed to deliver rapid and targeted projects to improve key aspects of the local asthma care system that would improve the health and wellbeing for children with asthma in the inner west.

The program took an innovative and collaborative 'system thinking' approach, initiating meaningful and local improvements in a limited timeframe.

As part of the program the NAC created and delivered three education packages to inner west asthma care providers. The content was locally tailored and based on best-practice asthma care, derived from the NAC's Australian Asthma Handbook.

Face-to-face workshop

In collaboration with venue host, North Western Melbourne PHN, the NAC conducted the face-to-face Childhood Asthma Diagnosis and Management in Inner West Melbourne workshop in May 2023. This was aimed at primary health care professionals: general practitioners, practice nurses, pharmacists, and allied health practitioners.

The workshop was a big success with 20 health professionals in attendance.

Participant evaluation was overwhelmingly positive:

- 100% of respondents reported the program 'entirely met':
 - understanding the steps involved in diagnosing paediatric and adolescent asthma, identifying asthma triggers, particularly those important to the inner west.
 - managing asthma in the inner west across the various age groups of childhood and adolescence.

"100% of respondents reported that the content was current, contemporary, evidence-based, and relevant to general practice."

- 92% of respondents reported the program 'entirely met':
 - summarising the important information to be included in a written asthma action plan.
 - understanding the steps in managing acute asthma in primary care.
- 100% of respondents reported that the content was 'current, contemporary, evidence-based, and relevant to general practice' and one respondent reported, 'It opened my eyes that the inner west has the highest population with asthma'.

Childhood asthma diagnosis and management in Inner West Melbourne (Primary Health Care)

This locally tailored education package was developed to ensure primary health care professionals are equipped with the knowledge and tools they require, enabling them to provide high quality asthma care to children in Melbourne's inner west. It details the latest guidelines for infant wheeze, paediatric and adolescent asthma from 1-5 years, 6-11 years, and 12-19 years. Topics include asthma pathophysiology, triggers, diagnosis, and management, medications, written asthma action plans, management of acute asthma in primary care and asthma first aid.

Childhood Asthma Guide for Inner West Melbourne (Schools and Sports Clubs)

This education package focuses on identifying and managing asthma in children within a school or sports setting for children and adolescents 5-19 years old. The package is aimed at asthma care providers in local education settings and sports clubs including school staff and sports club staff. Participants learn how to identify symptoms and triggers of asthma, including those common to Melbourne's inner west; utilise written asthma action plans, provide effective asthma management and asthma first aid.

The ICAM program was promoted via NAC channels such as the website, health professional 'National Asthma News' mailing list and social media. It was also disseminated by:

- 130 inner west GP clinics
- 103 inner west schools
- 3 inner west local government councils
- 5 state government organisations
- 2 hospitals

The NAC is part of the ICAM Sustained phase led by Safer Care Victoria, where current networks will continue to facilitate ongoing improvement work in the inner west Melbourne suburbs.

This work will be evaluated as part of a research project with the Murdoch Children's Research Institute with expected completion in December 2026.





Explore: nationalasthma.org.au/living-with-asthma/resources/health-professionals

The online education packages specifically created for clinical and non-clinical health care providers based in the inner western suburbs, received 700 views on the NAC website and unprecedented engagement via the NAC eNews for health professionals. The June 2023 eNews, which announced the online packages, achieved record 51% open and 13% click rates. This is double the industry average open rate in the education and training sector (23%) and not-for-profit sector (25%), and more than four times the average click rate (3%) in above mentioned industries.



700
pageviews ICAM program
webpages

Performing spirometry during the COVID-19 pandemic for primary care

In 2022, Murray PHN in Bendigo, Victoria, commissioned the NAC to create a video as part of

a project that also included the development of the Murray PHN Infection Prevention Helpline, which provided advice on infection prevention and control to Victorian general practices, community pharmacists and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations to help them continue to keep their staff and patients safe. In the video, Narelle Williamson NAC Senior Clinical Consultant (ARE) presented the latest information about performing spirometry for primary care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Breathing Easy: Asthma Virtual Locum webinar

In June 2023, the NAC hosted the 'Breathing Easy: Asthma Virtual Locum' webinar as part of the Inside Practice series. NAC Director and respiratory physician, Prof Peter Wark, presented alongside NAC's Clinical Executive Lead, Debbie Rigby, with A/Prof Ralph Audehm as chair.

The webinar explored the clinical presentation of a patient with asthma, illustrating the diagnostic progress of asthma, the need for medication and the importance of an asthma action plan. The real-life unscripted example of best practice asthma management received 719 registrations for the live event and 339 views of the subsequent webinar recording.

Setting the Standard

Health Professional Resources

The NAC provides a suite of evidence-based resources, based on our Australian Asthma Handbook, for primary care health professionals, patients, and their carers. These are available free of charge and available to order or download from the NAC website.

Explore: nationalasthma.org.au/living-with-asthma/resources/health-professionals

Over 11,000 print copies of our resources were disseminated across Australia, including:

- · Written asthma action plans
- Selecting and Adjusting Medications for Adults & Adolescents charts
- Asthma and COPD Medications charts
- Allergic Rhinitis Treatments charts

How-to videos

Our 'how-to' video library on the NAC website is an extensive compilation of instructional videos covering techniques for utilising asthma, COPD, and allergy medication devices. The videos showcase the proper methods for employing each device.

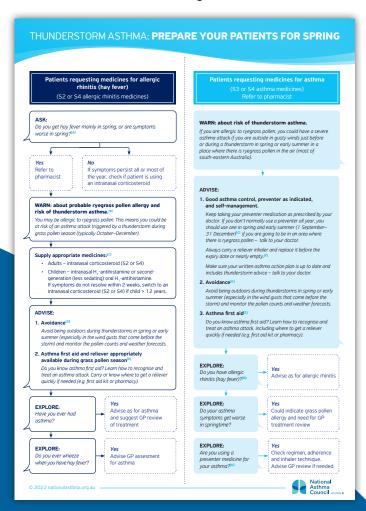
Videos are updated regularly through active collaboration with our extensive network of health professionals. New videos produced in 2022-23 were:

- How to use Fess Nasal and Sinus Wash
- How to use Fess Saline Spray
- How to use Children's Saline Nasal Spray.



Thunderstorm asthma - Prepare your patients for spring

This resource for pharmacists was designed as a handy tool to identify and advise at-risk patients on thunderstorm asthma. Certain types of thunderstorms in spring or early summer in regions with high grass pollen concentrations in the air can cause life-threatening allergic asthma flare-ups in sensitised individuals, even if they have not previously had asthma. The flowchart for the pharmacy provides evidence-based guidance on identifying and advising patients who are requesting medicines for asthma and allergic rhinitis.



Explore: nationalasthma.org.au/health-professionals/how-to-videos



Thunderstorm asthma - Information paper

This information paper provides evidence-based guidance on identifying and managing patients at risk of thunderstorm asthma for GPs, asthma educators, primary care nurses and pharmacists.

First Aid for Asthma charts

The updated First Aid for Asthma (FAFA) charts were designed to be used by people with training in first aid. Last revised in 2011, the FAFA charts include the use of options for new inhalers and preparations as well as budesonide/formoterol as needed. The 2022 update includes an improved design and layout for ease of use that could help to prevent an asthma attack from becoming an asthma emergency.

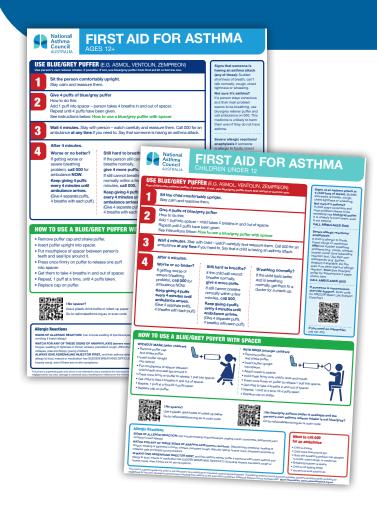
First Aid for Asthma chart tailored to combination inhalers

The new First Aid for Asthma (FAFA) chart is based on combination inhalers with Formoterol (Symbicort, Fostair, DuoResp, BiResp) and outlines how to use one of these inhalers if this is the person's usual reliever. It's designed for patients using a combination preventer and reliever medication that uses formoterol as the reliever.

"The video library website landing page received over 65,000 views and was the fourth most popular page on the NAC website. The most popular video was 'Using your turbuhaler' with 49,818 views, followed by 'How to use a standard MDI and spacer' with 37,818 views."

TOP 5 NAC WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS

Asthma COPD medications chart	134,882
Asthma action plans	93,557
Asthma action plan library	70,874
How to videos	65,528
How to videos – using your turbubalor	/0 212



Setting the Standard Sensitive Choice®

Sensitive Choice® helps people live better with asthma and allergies. The NAC created the program to identify products and services that are asthma and allergy-aware, through the trusted blue butterfly.

Products and services bearing the blue butterfly symbol have undergone evaluation and approval by a panel of experts who assess their potential advantages for individuals dealing with asthma or allergies.

Explore: sensitivechoice.com

Sensitive Choice® makes a difference to the lives of countless individuals dealing with asthma and allergies. It assists them in identifying products and services that are considerate of asthma and allergy concerns.

Sensitive Choice® is a global program with trademarks in over 60 countries, so people with asthma and allergies can look out for the reassuring blue butterfly around the world.

This program has played a crucial role in educating people on effective asthma and allergy management. It empowers them to recognise products and services that are not only asthma and allergy-conscious but also environmentally friendly, benefiting both themselves and their families.

The recognisable Sensitive Choice® blue butterfly symbol can now be spotted on a wide array of products globally – ranging from bedding and construction materials to cleaning agents, carpets, air purifiers, vacuum cleaners, paints, and even baby products.

Over the past year, the Sensitive Choice® initiative has continued its expansion, broadening its impact by collaborating with new partners and incorporating new products.

The program welcomed 49 new products into its approved range of products and services, along with the introduction of 5 new partner brands.

Digital engagement

During 2022-23 the Sensitive Choice® website had over 97,800 visitors and 192,966 total page views.

Social media channels performed well with substantial increases particularly across Facebook and Instagram.

Email communications engagement grew due to a 16% increase in Sensitive Choice eNews subscribers.





new partners joined the program



49
new products approved



67
products rejected, or further information requested

MOST POPULAR WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS

Resource – indoor humidity levels	16,785
Resource – pollen and hay fever	15,675
Products and services	5,023
News – Melbourne pollen partner	4,288
Products – Air treatment	3,634

8,074
Facebook followers (6% increase)



1,295
Instagram followers
(81% increase)



Activity Highlights

Pregnancy, Babies and Children's Expo

Sensitive Choice® participated in the Pregnancy Babies & Children's Expo, Australia's trusted early parenting event, in October 2022. The Sensitive Choice® team was kept busy with over 10,000 attendees across the three expo days. One thousand showbags were given away early on the first day, giving the impression of a sea of blue butterflies floating through the show.

The Sensitive Choice® competition offered over \$3,248 worth of prizes, with six prizes given away thanks to partners, Breville, Numu, De'Longhi, Bambi, Ecostore and Koh. A mailing list sign up secured 631 new subscribers and daily prizes were given away by partners. Protect-a-Bed.

Sensitive Choice® partnered with De'Longhi and Numu on the stand, and both were extremely happy with the resulting exposure and business opportunities. In addition to stand partners, Sensitive Choice® showcased Koh, Ecostore, Protect-a-Bed, Bambi, Dunlop flooring and Breville at the show. The range of partners showcased on the stand attracted a constant crowd of show attendees asking questions and requesting further information.





attendees



(RRP) major prizes + daily prizes

new subscribers (18% increase)



Melbourne Home Show

The Sensitive Choice® stand at the Melbourne Home Show in April 2023 was a great success. The show attracted an impressive attendance of 35,000 and featured hundreds of innovative home products. exclusive show specials, seminars, expert advice, and renovation businesses.

Building or renovating projects can seem daunting due to the risk of exposure to dust mites, mould and hidden chemicals leading to nose, eye and skin irritation. coughing, sneezing, or wheezing and even severe reactions in some people. It was very valuable to be there to assist show attendees with their renovating and building related allergy and asthma enquiries.

The Sensitive Choice® stand was supported by several partners including Taubman's, Dunlop Flooring and Vitrality, who all commented that the show was a success and that they'd like to participate again in the future.

During the show, 238 additional subscribers were signed up to the Sensitive Choice® mailing list. Over 1,300 Sensitive Choice® showbags were given away; all of which disappeared within two to three hours of the show opening each day. Giveaways included \$2,999 worth of prizes in the major prize draw, along with daily prizes from Koh and Protect-a-Bed, which drew a large crowd.

Sensitive Choice® Program Manager, Adele Taylor, presented a masterclass on the main stage about building and renovating with asthma and allergies, to a very engaged audience on both days. The Sensitive Choice® presentation was so well attended that the show organisers plan to schedule more time slots in future shows to cater to larger audiences.

The success of the Melbourne Home Show underscores the positive impact and relevance of the Sensitive Choice® program, while demonstrating our commitment to providing vital information and resources to individuals navigating home construction and renovation projects in the presence of respiratory sensitivities.



(RRP) major prizes

+ daily prizes



increase in subscribers

Leadership and Advocacy

Campaigns and Initiatives

World Asthma Day 2023

The Sensitive Choice® theme for World Asthma Day 2023 was 'What do 1 in 10 Aussies/1 in 8 Kiwis live with?' A Sensitive Choice® social media campaign highlighted that 1 out of 10 Australians, 1 out of 8 in New Zealand and 262 million people worldwide live with asthma. Sensitive Choice® partners were provided with digital asset kits to promote World Asthma Day on their own social media platforms.

This led to:

- 2,600 impressions on Sensitive Choice® social media
- 77 engagements on Sensitive Choice® posts
- 1,737 likes on partner social media content.

It was a valuable opportunity to shine a spotlight on product(s) or service(s) offered by Sensitive Choice partners as being asthma and allergy aware, as part of our ongoing commitment to consumer education about living better with asthma and allergies.



National Asthma Week 2022 – Sensitive Choice® 'Healthy Homes' initiative

During National Asthma Week (1-7 September), we created a Sensitive Choice® online 'asthma checklist' which focused on creating a healthy home for people with asthma and allergies. A media kit was sent to all partners to help them promote the week on their own channels. Over 50 partners in Australia over 10 internationally shared the content on their digital platforms. The tips focused on key areas of the home including living room, bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, laundry, and garden, with a link to appropriate blue butterfly products and services.

Asthma and Airways Career Development Fellowship 2023

Dr Bronwyn Brew was the recipient of the 2023 Asthma and Airways Career Development Fellowship, jointly funded by the NAC and Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand (TSANZ).

The fellowship enables 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 for one year to the value of \$60,000. NAC was pleased to contribute to Dr Brew's research and proud to assist with the career development of an emerging respiratory expert.

Changes to vaping regulation in Australia

The NAC welcomed the federal government's regulatory changes aimed at stopping the importation of non-prescription vapes and banning single use disposable vaping devices, along with the announcement of a \$234 million boost in the Budget. The NAC is committed to providing practical advice for primary health care practitioners to support them in providing the best possible care for people with asthma and congratulates The Hon Mark Butler MP, Minister for Health and Aged Care and the federal government on the biggest smoking reforms in a decade.



Fluticasone propionate restrictions reversed

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) made changes to the access and prescribing of fluticasone propionate 50mcg/actuation metered dose inhaler (Flixotide Junior, Axotide Junior), that came into effect on 1 April 2023.

The NAC prepared its own submission to government and joined a collaborative submission with other peak health organisations to voice concerns about initial authority prescription being required by a respiratory physician or paediatrician for patients aged under six and fluticasone propionate 50mcg no longer being PBS-subsidised for children aged six years and older.

The PBS changes would have caused significant access, cost, health outcome and equity issues particularly for socially disadvantaged and vulnerable populations, who have the highest rates of asthma, however the decision was reversed following a strong advocacy campaign.

The environment, inhalers, and patient preference

In the late 1990s, the NAC began working on the transition to CFC free asthma inhalers, specifically pressurised metered dose inhalers (pMDIs), taking advice from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The NAC formed the national stakeholder working group of the regulatory, pricing, health professional, pharmaceutical and health organisations to plan the transition to pMDIs with CFC-free propellants. Patient safety and preferences were always the main emphasis of the transition, both globally and nationally. In early 2001, CFC free short acting beta agonists (SABA), the most used pMDIs, listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. The NAC undertook a comprehensive communications and educational campaign for GPs, asthma educators and pharmacists to prepare them for the transition, followed by consumer campaigns.

Over the next few years, all pMDIs with CFC-containing propellants were phased out. The NAC monitored patient response to the CFC-free pMDIs, as there was some difference in taste and feel. The then eight Asthma Foundations reported scant patient concern. Similarly, the NAC's health professional member bodies at the time (RACGP, PSA, TSANZ and ASCIA) reported few patient concerns.

As Australia was the first country in the world to phaseout CFC pMDIs, the UNEP office in Southeast Asia asked the NAC to present at workshops around the world on phase-out strategies. The UNEP also asked the NAC to develop a support kit of transition resources (draft press releases, radio commercial scripts, briefing papers etc. in consumer language for easy translation) which was distributed to developing countries globally.

This early involvement meant that the NAC has kept a watching brief being aware that the CFC-free propellants are greenhouse gases and would eventually need to be replaced. Through its membership of the Global Allergy and Airways Patient Platform (GAAPP), the NAC contributed to its submission to the European Commission (EC) expressing concern about the EC's proposal for greenhouse gas reduction as it related to pMDIs. The NAC continues to actively contribute to this issue through GAAPP. The EC's eventual decisions are unlikely to have much effect on Australia, but it is important to know what is occurring globally.

The transition to pMDIs with low carbon footprint (CF) is of concern to respiratory organisations around the world. The NAC attends and contributes to briefings through its membership of the International Primary Care Respiratory Group, Global Action Against Respiratory Disease and GAAPP as well as its own member bodies. The NAC has formed an internal working group to plan its initial actions, some of which have already commenced. Reducing the CP of pMDIs involves the complete pMDI life cycle-manufacture, distribution, effective use, and disposal. Following the example of the Global Initiative for Asthma, the NAC will include this forthcoming transition in the next edition of the Australian Asthma Handbook, develop resources for consumers and health professionals and is already working on the complex issue of low CP destruction of inhalers and collaborating with relevant stakeholders.

Patient safety and inhaler preference remains foremost in all planning. Dry powder inhalers and soft mist inhalers do not have propellants so are not involved this except for inhaler destruction.

In the Media

The NAC maintained its prominent position as the leading authority on asthma best practice within the media landscape. Throughout the period of 2022-23, our efforts to educate Australians about asthma and allergy prevention and management were steadfast, evident through our widespread presence in the news media.

The media continued to show keen interest in topics related to seasonal asthma and allergies, particularly focusing on thunderstorm asthma, and relying on the NAC for expert advice. A standout was the September 2022 thunderstorm asthma media release which generated huge media interest with a reach of over 93 million and over 350 stories generated.

Over this time, we distributed a total of 27 media releases highlighting NAC and the Sensitive Choice program news and announcements. Some of these proactive media activities are highlighted below.

Asthma drops but should be zero

Dr Jonathan Burdon was the NAC spokesperson for the annual asthma mortality data media release and featured in interviews across a wide range of media including ABC Radio and the Southern Cross radio network, and a syndicated online news story that reached an audience of over four million Australians.

Asthma friendly tips for building or renovating this Easter

Always a popular topic this story was picked up by the Australian Community Media group and featured in 90 publications across the country, such as the Canberra Times, Newcastle Herald, in the lead up to Easter.

Back-to-school asthma spike

Dr Louisa Owens was interviewed about advice on helping to get children with asthma ready for the school year. Dr Owens appeared on Weekend Sunrise, the WIN TV rural network, ABC radio, and in a story that was published in over 100 leading rural and regional newspapers and community-based websites.

Christmas tree syndrome

Prof Sheryl van Nunen was interviewed for the Sensitive Choice media release about 'Christmas Tree Syndrome'. This resulted in extensive media coverage across all media platforms including 9news.com.au, ABC news

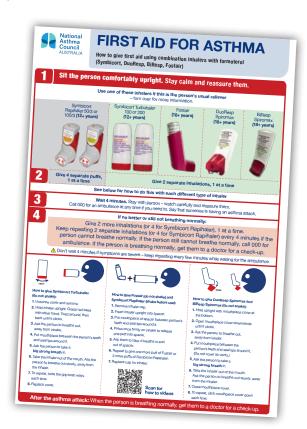
online, ABC Melbourne Afternoons with Jacinta Parsons, ABC Gippsland, Radio 6PR (Perth) and the ABC South East SA Breakfast program. Almost 50 radio stations ran the story as a news grab in their bulletins including Radio National, Virginia Trioli's Mornings program. A story also appeared the Chinese language paper, Melbourne Today.

Dangerous mould after floods

The NAC provided advice on how people with asthma and allergies could clean their homes and avoid dangerous mould following the devastating floods in Australia's southeast. Dr Joel Ten was interviewed across a range of media outlets including Yahoo News Aust, regional newspapers and 50 radio stations across metro and regional areas of NSW, QLD and Victoria. Dr Ten also did a lengthy interview on Victorian indigenous radio station, Radio 3KND.

'First aid for asthma' chart for combination inhalers with Formoterol

The launch of a first edition NAC chart on 'first aid for asthma advice for combination inhalers with Formoterol' was promoted to health professional publications in April. This resulted in stories published in newsGP, Hospital + Healthcare magazine, Retail Pharmacy and Medical Forum WA.



First Aid for Asthma (FAFA) charts (2022 editions)

The updated First Aid for Asthma (FAFA) charts were promoted to both health professional and consumer media targets. Prof Peter Wark was interviewed for stories in The Medical Republic and Retail Pharmacy magazine. He was also interviewed for a segment on the House of Wellness radio program, reaching consumer audiences in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide.

Heat maps identify asthma 'hot spots' in WA, NT and Tas

A Journal of Asthma paper (with NAC

director Prof Peter Wark as lead author) was promoted regarding the identification of WA and parts of NT and Tas as asthma 'hot spots' recording the highest numbers of people with difficult to treat asthma in Australia. Stories appeared in Hospital+Healthcare, The Canberra Times and 87 local community papers from the Australian Community Media Group including the South Coast Register (NSW), The Warrnambool Standard (Vic) and The Examiner (Tas). Radio interviews with Prof Wark were syndicated across NSW including ABC Newcastle/Mid North Coast/Central West/Upper Hunter/Coffs Coast and Riverina regions. He also appeared on Hot 100 FM and MIX 104.9 FM (Darwin).

"A standout was the September 2022 thunderstorm asthma media release which generated huge media interest with a reach of over 93 million and over 350 stories generated."



Tackling asthma in the west

23/05/2023

Like 0









Improving Childhood Asthma Management (ICAM) in inner west Melbourne

The NAC's ICAM online clinical education program was highlighted to health professional media, aimed at encouraging GPs, practice nurses, pharmacists and asthma and respiratory educators to undertake the free CPD program. Stories appeared in The Medical Republic, Pharmacy Daily and Retail Pharmacy. Stories with a consumer angle were also published in Brimbank North West Star Weekly and the Maribyrnong and Hobsons Bay Star Weekly.

National Asthma Council Australia applauds vaping crackdown

A media release was issued to health professional and consumer media outlets welcoming the federal government's regulatory changes aimed at stopping the importation of non-prescription vapes and banning single use disposable vaping devices. Prof Nick Zwar was quoted in media articles including the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) newsGP, Medical Forum and the Australian Journal of Pharmacy.

Ten top tips to eliminate mould this World Allergy Week

During World Allergy Week, Sensitive Choice Program Manager Adele Taylor provided top tips to help eradicate mould. This story featured in 86 newspapers nationally, as well as radio interviews, reaching an audience of over 3.5 million.

Thunderstorm asthma

In September 2022 we undertook proactive media activity to reinforce the NAC's thunderstorm asthma advice. Stories appeared quoting Jenny Gowan in Australian Pharmacist, Retail Pharmacy and Retail Pharmacy Assistants magazines. The consumer media release, with Prof Peter Wark as spokesperson, generated huge media interest on television, radio, print and online media resulting in an audience reach of over 93 million. Over 350 stories were generated: a significant increase to previous years.

Australian Associated Press syndicated the story to 150 news outlets across Australia including MSN Australia, Daily Mail Australia, and Yahoo News! Australia. Fairfax print and online media ran stories across the Sydney Morning Herald, The Age, The Brisbane Times and WA Today. Radio interviews with Prof Wark were syndicated across radio stations nationally including ABC Radio National news bulletins and an ABC NSW Statewide Mornings interview, the Radio 2SM Super Radio network (over 35 syndicated stations across NSW and QLD), Radio Southern Cross network (Triple M/Hit FM) and Radio 2CC Canberra. Channel Ten ran the story across several of its regional stations including Riverina. Gippsland, and Albury/Wodonga. Prof Wark appeared on SBS TV, online news and SBS Radio Punjabi, SBS Thai, SBS Lao and SBS Vietnamese programs. The Australian Community Newspaper Group published over 100 stories across local community and rural newspapers in key thunderstorm affected regions in QLD, NSW, and Victoria.

Explore: nationalasthma.org.au/news



Governance

Board Directors



Dr Joanna Wriedt (Chair) Lawyer, Independent Director



Ms Julianne Badenoch
Registered Nurse, Registered Midwife,
Australian Primary Health Care Nurses
Association, Nominee Director



Prof Amanda Barnard
General Practitioner, Royal Australian
College of General Practitioners,
Nominee Director



Associate Prof Sara Barnes Clinical Immunologist and Allergy Specialist, Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy, Nominee Director



Mr Robert FarrierPharmacist, Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, Nominee Director



Dr Stephen HughesPharmacist and Academic,
Independent Director



Prof Peter WarkAdult Respiratory Physician,
Independent Director

Board Sub-Committees

We would like to acknowledge the work of our two Board sub-committees: the Finance Committee, which oversees NAC's financial management and advises the Board, and the Governance Committee, which ensures the NAC's governance aligns with contemporary best practice.

Finance Committee

- Mr Robert Farrier (Chair)
- Dr Stephen Hughes
- Mr Peter Norman
- Mr Joe Tang
- Mr Ben Gargett
- Mr Robert Yeo (to Dec 2022)

Governance Committee

- Ms Julianne Badenoch (Chair)
- Mr Robert Farrier
- Prof Amanda Barnard

Committees, Advisory Bodies and Staff

Australian Asthma Handbook Guidelines Committee

The Australian Asthma Handbook Guidelines Committee steers the development of the Handbook.

Prof Nick Zwar

General Practitioner (Chair)

Ms Naomi Fenton

Nurse Practitioner

Dr Jenny Gowan

Pharmacist

Assoc Prof Gregory Katsoulotos

Respiratory Physician and Allergist

Dr Brett Montgomery

General Practitioner

Dr Louisa Owens

Paediatric Respiratory Physician

Prof Helen Reddel

Respiratory Physician

Prof Peter Wark

Respiratory Physician

General Practitioners Asthma Advisory Group

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

Prof Amanda Barnard

Dr David Batt

Dr Ian Charlton

Dr Joel Ten

Dr Sanjiva Wijesinha

Dr Russell Wiseman

Nurses Asthma Advisory Group

The Nurses Asthma Advisory Group works to coordinate the expertise, enthusiasm and skills of practice nurses who have a special interest in the management of asthma.

Ms Charlotte Allen

Ms Julianne Badenoch

Ms Lisa Collison

Ms Elisabeth Leahy

Ms Veronica Stevenson

Ms Narelle Williamson

Pharmacists Asthma Advisory Group

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

Prof Carol Armour

Ms Helen Bowden

Mr Kevin De Vries

Mr Robert Farrier

Mr Mark Feldschuch

Ms Katie Hayes

Dr Stephen Hughes

Ms Karalyn Huxhagen

Ms JiaMin Liau

Mr Joshua Perry

Ms Toni Riley

Prof Bandana Saini

Dr Kim Watkins

Committees, Advisory Bodies and Staff

Sensitive Choice Product Advisory Panel

The Sensitive Choice Product Advisory Panel considers products and services for acceptance into the Sensitive Choice program.

The Panel consists of the following experts:

- Allergist
- Chemist
- Engineer
- · General practitioner
- Immunologist
- Lawyer
- Pharmacist
- Respiratory physician

Lung Health Alliance

Our work was strengthened by collaboration with members of the Lung Health Alliance:

- The Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand
- · National Asthma Council Australia
- · Asthma Australia
- · Lung Foundation Australia
- Cystic Fibrosis Australia

Staff

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Debbie Rigby

Clinical Executive Lead

Julia Browne

Project Officer

Lesley Cain

Executive Assistant

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Sal Lokvancic

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Supporters

Our work is informed by the contributions of a tireless network of health professionals, whose expertise helps the National Asthma Council Australia continue to set the standard for asthma care. Thank you to all who contributed to our important work this year.

National Asthma Council Australia Supporters:

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Victorian Government Department of Health

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Andetech

Air Clean Filters

Asko Appliances

Ausclimate

Aware Environmental

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Beaulieu - Brease carpet

Bekaert

Breville

Britex

Care Pharmaceuticals - FESS

Clean Planet New Zealand

Colgate Palmolive – Cuddly

Comfort Group New Zealand

CP Group

CSR

Daikin

De'Longhi

Delos

Ductmasters

Dunlop Flooring

Dunlop Foams

Dyson Appliances

ecostore

Euroflex

Fujitsu New Zealand

Graphenstone

HRV NZ

Hydrokleen

InovaAir

Jaspa Herington

JBP

Jotun

King Living

Kleenex

koh Australia

MacMed

Made by Storey

Mypurmist

New Zealand Steel

Noirot Australia

Numu

Panasonic

Philips

PPG Industries Australia – Taubmans

ProClima New Zealand

Resene Paints New Zealand

Robert Bosch Australia

Samsung Electronics

Sebo Australia

SleepCorp - Protect-a-Bed

Snooza

Stiebel Eltron

Tambour

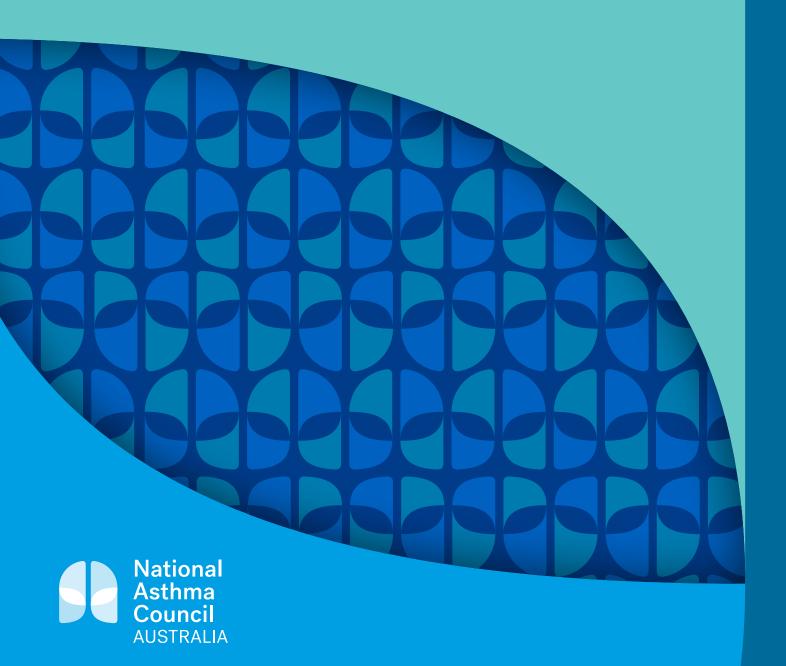
Tontine Group

The Mix – Kobold

TOA Paints Thailand

Waterco Ltd – Poppits

Zhejiang (Epitex Home)



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