



Annual Report

**National Asthma Council Australia
Annual Report 2009/10**

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 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 Act and other relevant legislation.

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Chairman's Message



What has always been important for me, and for those of us who work with the National Asthma Council Australia (NAC), is the impact of our work which is a joint collaborative effort of many health professionals across the country. It is important for us to remind people of what we actually do and to promote those

activities but we always have to consider if we are improving the asthma management practices of health professionals and the health outcomes of people with asthma.

In the 2009-2010 period we have been able to benefit from the external evaluation of the second four year period of our major educational program (A-Teams and spirometry workshops), funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, the GP and Allied Health Professionals Asthma Education Program, which concluded in late 2009. Some of the evaluation results are:

For A- Teams:

- The program met a continuing need for asthma education expressed by primary care health professionals
- 96% of six month post-workshop participants indicated increased practical skills immediately post workshop
- 77% of six month post-workshop participants indicated retained practical skills
- 73% of six month post-workshop participants indicated that practice change in at least one area had taken place and been sustained
- Practical skill acquisition may be marginally higher in remote/very remote areas

For spirometry workshops:

- 97% of six month post-workshop participants indicated retention of practical skills in at least one of the nine learning objective areas (e.g. perform high quality spirometry, identify clinical indications for spirometry and limitations etc.)
- 76% of six month post-workshop participants reported improved practices in at least one of the nine target areas with a higher proportion of GPs reporting practice change than nurses.
- 65% of six month post-workshop GP participants reported increased use of spirometry
- Practical skill acquisition may be marginally higher in remote/very remote areas

This gives a snapshot of some of the evaluation results of a program we could evaluate so thoroughly,

a rewarding experience. From that same evaluation, came recommendations which we have considered for incorporation in the next four year period of the program, now underway.

Where we cannot formally evaluate our programs we rely on stakeholder input and process evaluation. We encourage feedback and, as the NAC is committed to thorough distribution of its resources, there is ample opportunity for us to receive comments. We usually aim to deliver our resources nationally to all GPs, pharmacists, asthma educators, respiratory physicians, allergists, the Asthma Foundations and other relevant parties, so usually over 35,000 individuals and organisations are reached.

The NAC is committed to evaluating its programs where possible and, importantly, to challenging itself so that it is always a developing organisation with programs changing and adapting, based on evaluation and feedback.

Earlier this year, we conducted a national survey of health professionals to get their views on the Asthma Management Handbook to prepare for the next edition now underway. We sought their views online on content, format and other issues. We are grateful for the co-operation of the Royal Australian College of GPs in particular for making this possible but also the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, the Australian Practice Nurses Association and the Australian Asthma and Respiratory Health Educators Association for their assistance with this survey.

We value the relationships with our member bodies, stakeholders and sponsors and the opportunity to work collaboratively. In the last year especially, we have seen the development of a strong relationship with Asthma Foundations Australia, an organisation with similar objectives and interests to ours.

I would like to thank my fellow directors, our member bodies, our Committees – the GP Asthma Group, the Pharmacists' Asthma Group, the Finance Committee, the Product Advisory Panel, the Guidelines Committee, our ad hoc Expert Panels and the many experts across Australia who contribute to our important work. From our evaluations, we can see that we are making some impact in this complicated field of health professionals and patients. And last, but not least, I must thank our Chief Executive Officer and our dedicated staff.

Associate Professor Noela Whitby AM
MBBS (Qld), DPD, Grad Dip Hum Nut, FRACGP, FAICD

Chief Executive Officer's Message



The National Asthma Council Australia (NAC) has continued its usual busy program with a range of international and national programs. We started the financial year with the exciting challenge of delivering our first Asia-Pacific Airways Schools, pioneering them on request in Melbourne as a precursor to then

delivering them in Asia-Pacific countries. Our plan of delivering carefully spaced programs was thrown into the air as we quickly had to respond to the availability of the doctors wishing to attend. We rose to the challenge and delivered three courses in quick succession to doctors from Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan and Vietnam. Most participants were GPs or GP equivalents except for one course largely attended by junior respiratory physicians. Each course was based on small group learning and designed to be as interactive as possible. Preparing the course content, developing the workbooks and determining the evaluation processes along with the logistics of the travel, accommodation and course venues involved everyone in the office. We also received terrific support from our presenters who were all well received. The evaluation results were favourable and we were able to anticipate delivering the courses in other countries.

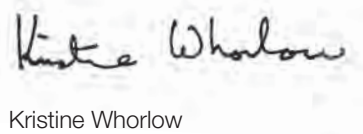
Another exciting international development was the roll out of the NAC's awareness package on the transition to CFC-free inhalers for use in developing countries, developed at the request of the United Nations Environment Programme office in Bangkok. Based on the Australian transition process at the beginning of this century and the knowledge gained from workshops I have presented at in a number of developing countries, we were able to put together a comprehensive package of useful resources with the assistance of an advisory committee of national and international experts. This was followed by consultation with many international experts involved in the Montreal Protocol phase-out. The resources were designed for adaptation in whichever country decided to take them up. The package was launched at an important Montreal Protocol meeting in Geneva in July 2009 and then distributed to many developing countries round the world. A short time later I attended the 'Inauguration of CFC MDI Phase-out Transition Strategy Implementation' launch in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and was able to hear the radio commercial from the package being broadcast in Bangla.

What the NAC particularly likes about these international collaborations is the opportunity to share resources for adaptation. It is exciting and challenging to use our experience and develop it for easy adaptation to other cultures, health systems and beliefs and to produce unambiguous copy suitable for translation.

During the year in review we also produced a number of resources for use by Australian health professionals and patients – the Asthma Life Balance Tool online check, Pain relievers and asthma – pharmacy guide, a handy online guide to finding the medical entry requirements for the Australian Defence Force and Emergency Services around Australia, the Kids Inhaler Use Video to add to our library of videos. We also continued to add asthma action plans to the library of action plans on our website, an initiative suggested by Associate Professor Helen Reddel.

Like all not for profits, like all small businesses, we face the ongoing challenge of funding our resources, educational programs and our company itself, and, in the financial year in question we have been successful. We have three main funding sources – pharmaceutical company sponsorships, our Sensitive Choice blue butterfly program and Government program funding. We are grateful to all our financial supporters who help us continue our work. The funding we receive from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) enables us to conduct workshops for GPs, practice nurses, pharmacists, asthma educators and others in Divisions/Networks of General Practice across Australia. It is rewarding to be able to do this even in remote and rural Divisions/Networks so that those health professionals for once do not have to travel vast distances to attend educational workshops. We can go to them. We are watching the development of Medicare Locals with interest and will work with DoHA to adapt our program as Divisions/Networks reduce in number and become Medicare Locals.

Each year there are many people to thank and we are very appreciative of the many busy people across Australia who are so willing to work with us.



Kristine Whorlow
Chief Executive Officer

Special Features



NAC 21st anniversary

The National Asthma Council Australia recently celebrated its 21st anniversary. In 1989, a group of individuals and organisations concerned about asthma were brought together to consider what should be done about the alarming number of deaths from asthma, almost 1000 annually. The NH&MRC commissioned a report into *Asthma Associated Deaths* which indicated that there was not collaboration between the organisations responsible for asthma care. These developments led to the commitment by the early National Asthma Campaign (NAC) as it was then, to form a coalition of the Royal Australian College of GPs, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand and the Asthma Foundations, supported by the expertise of people in public health, epidemiology, advertising and marketing. The Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy was to join later. The agreed principles for the new organisation were collaboration, coordination and communication.

The NAC embarked on a carefully deliberated program of activities, based on the known evidence about social marketing campaigns. One of its earliest activities was its first national multi-media campaign, *Could it be asthma?* involving two TV commercials supported by print advertising and public relations activities. The results were carefully evaluated and published in a peer reviewed journal. The Thoracic Society, at this time, published the first national treatment guidelines for asthma, *The Asthma Management Plan*, which later became the well known *Asthma Management Handbook*. So, Australia had two world firsts – a national social marketing campaign for asthma and national treatment guidelines for asthma.

The inspirational people involved in the beginnings of the NAC also developed a business plan to lead the new organisation forward. From these early days, the NAC set its role in guideline development, dissemination and implementation, health professional education and resource production and the conducting of national awareness campaigns. Advocacy and lobbying was an obvious addition to these roles as the NAC gained experience.

There is much to look back on over these first 21 years, especially the generous contribution of so many health professional volunteers to the NAC's brainstormings, educational programs, ongoing media campaigns and resource development. A formal celebration will be held in the near future.



World Asthma Day. The Hon. Mark Butler MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Health

World Asthma Day 2010

The NAC joined with Asthma Foundations Australia on 4 May 2010 to mark World Asthma Day, an event first established by the Global Initiative for Asthma in 1998, by highlighting the need for ongoing care and vigilance in managing asthma.

With the theme for 2010 'You can control your asthma', one of the major events in Australia was the launch of the Australian Government's Asthma Management Program by the Honourable Mark Butler MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Health.

Under the Program, the NAC's activities give primary care health professionals the opportunity to update their skills in asthma, allergy and COPD (with the help of the Australian Lung Foundation), and in this way implement the treatment guidelines. This complements the work of the eight Asthma Foundations under the *Asthma Management Program*, which enables them to reach the community through schools, aged care facilities and childcare centres.

Ms Kristine Whorlow, NAC CEO, spoke at the launch of the Program about some of the NAC's ongoing educational activities conducted across Australia through more than 100 general practice networks and divisions. She also mentioned their important links to the community work of Asthma Foundations Australia.

As part of World Asthma Day, the Global Initiative for Asthma launched a campaign to reduce asthma hospitalisations worldwide by 50% over the next five years. The goal of this Asthma Control Challenge is to improve asthma control for the largest possible group of patients, so that serious attacks are unlikely to occur and hospitalisations are unnecessary.

Airways School Asia Pacific

The NAC developed a short course on asthma and COPD for doctors from the Asia-Pacific region, in conjunction with the GP Asia-Pacific Respiratory Board and GlaxoSmithKline Asia Pacific. Known as the Airways School Asia Pacific (ASAP), the course was created in two versions: one designed for GPs and one for junior pulmonologists.

ASAP is an interactive and dynamic education activity. The program includes one day each on asthma, COPD, and gold standard practice (e.g. pulmonary rehabilitation, spirometry, clinic visit). It then finishes with a final half-day of case studies and assessment.



Asthma Management Program Advisory Group. Front row 2nd from right: CEO Kristine Whorlow

Three ASAP workshops were held in Melbourne in 2009:

- July 6–9, GP course for 15 doctors from Korea, with GP facilitator A/Prof Ron Tomlins
- Aug 10–13, GP course for 10 doctors from Malaysia and 7 from The Philippines, with GP facilitator A/Prof Noela Whitby AM
- Aug 24–27, Pulmonologist course for 18 doctors, comprising 9 from Thailand, 4 from Taiwan, 3 from Malaysia and 2 from Vietnam

Highlights included the sessions on paediatric asthma by Dr Andrew Tai (paediatric respiratory physician), COPD best-practice by Dr Christopher Worsnop or Dr Christine McDonald (adult respiratory physicians), inhaler devices by Ms Judi Wicking (asthma educator) and pulmonary rehabilitation by Ms Prue Munro (physiotherapist).

Feedback from the participants and sponsors was very positive, and the NAC is looking forward to running in-country courses later in 2010 using the knowledge gained in these workshops.

GP & Allied Health Professional Asthma Education Program 2006–2009

The National Asthma Council Australia's GP and Allied Health Professional Asthma Education Program (GPAHPAEP) provided education and training for primary care health professionals managing asthma. It was part of the Australian Government's Asthma Management Program 2006–2009 and was funded by the Department of Health and Ageing.

GPAHPAEP was originally scheduled to run from July 2006 to June 2009. However, the NAC was granted extra funds to extend the program until end October 2009.

Activities conducted under GPAHPAEP were:

- A-Team® Asthma Education Program – continuation of 2-hour best-practice update workshops for primary care health professionals
- Spirometry Training Course – a new 6-hour course providing comprehensive training in the application, measurement and interpretation of spirometry for GPs & practice nurses
- Practice Nurse Seminar Pilot – development and piloting of a new 4-hour workshop delivering role-specific education to practice nurses
- Satellite broadcast programs – a series of four expert panel discussions developed with the Rural Health Education Foundation (RHEF)

Workshops were presented by members of our dedicated team of health professional experts and delivered in conjunction with host GP networks/divisions across Australia. All presentation material was provided by the NAC to ensure the information was consistent, complete and up-to-date whenever the workshop was held.

Attendance was free for all program activities. Participants were eligible for continuing professional development recognition from their professional association.

Independent evaluation of the program was conducted by HealthConsult. The NAC also conducted our own analysis and review of the program activities.

A-Team® Asthma Education Program

As the cornerstone of GPAHPAEP, the NAC's A-Team® Asthma Education Program continued to deliver up-to-date asthma education workshops with GP networks/divisions across Australia. The workshops were open to all health professionals managing asthma, including GPs, practice nurses, asthma educators, pharmacists and Indigenous health workers.

Each 2-hour workshop comprised a mandatory session on the Asthma Cycle of Care (best-practice asthma management), and then 3–4 topics chosen by the host GP network/division from 12 elective modules, which included paediatric asthma, device use, spirometry and emergency management.

More than 2000 health professionals attended the 107 workshops held across Australia in 2007–2009, with 61% held in rural or remote areas. Almost half of the participants were practice nurses, more than one-quarter were GPs, one-tenth were pharmacists, and the remainder were other health professionals such as asthma educators, registrars and Indigenous health workers.

The NAC comfortably met our extended contractual commitments of 97 workshops held over the 3-year period, and our target of more than 50% of workshops in rural or remote areas.

Evaluation and feedback from participants, presenters and host GP networks/divisions was all extremely positive.

'The A-Team workshops were effective in providing GPs and allied health professionals with the skills and knowledge to improve practices for managing patients with asthma... The impact was significant across all areas, but measurably greater for participants from rural and remote areas.'

HealthConsult, independent evaluator

National Spirometry Training Course

The Spirometry Training Course was the result of an extensive consultation and development process involving members of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Respiratory Science (ANZSRS) and the NAC's GP Asthma Group.

The course was an ANZSRS accredited spirometry training course for GPs and an RACGP category 1 continuing professional development activity. It was Australia's first truly national spirometry training course for GPs and practice nurses.

Following our A-Team model, the 6-hour Spirometry workshops were delivered to GPs and practice nurses across Australia through GP networks/divisions. Each workshop included a hands-on session to allow participants to apply their new knowledge in a practical setting.

Just over 1000 health professionals attended the 74 workshops held around Australia in 2007–2009, with 70% held in rural or remote areas. Of the participants, approximately 40% were GPs or registrars and 60% were practice nurses.

The NAC comfortably met our extended contractual commitments of 66 workshops held over the 3-year period, and our target of more than 50% of workshops in rural or remote areas.

Evaluation and feedback was again extremely positive.

'The workshops were effective in increasing the use of spirometry to improve practices for managing patients with asthma...Analysis of the evaluation data indicates a considerable gain in knowledge about spirometry and a greater propensity to use it.'

HealthConsult, independent evaluator

Practice Nurse Seminar Pilot

Following feedback from participants and presenters at the A-Team workshops, a pilot Asthma Update Seminar specifically for practice nurses was developed in early 2009.

This 4-hour seminar was again delivered via GP networks/divisions. Nine pilot workshops were held around Australia during 2009 through extra funding from the Department of Health and Ageing.

NAC analysis of the pilot indicated that this new activity clearly fulfilled an unmet need, with most seminars booking out well in advance and more than 30 GP networks/divisions joining a waiting list to hold a seminar in future.

Our evaluation found much positive and useful feedback from hosts and participants to help develop this seminar for full implementation under the new program iteration.

'The Mackay Division of General Practice would like to thank you for your enthusiastic and informative presentation...It was our sincere pleasure to be able to facilitate this important educational event and we are extremely happy with the outcome.'

Mackay Division of General Practice, host

Satellite broadcast programs

The NAC developed four satellite broadcast programs with the RHEF. The target audience for the broadcasts were rural and remote health professionals managing asthma.

Each 1-hour program was a facilitated multidisciplinary panel discussion chaired by Dr Norman Swan, ABC Radio National health reporter.

The programs were:

- 'Asthma and Allergic Rhinitis' covering the clinical interrelationship between the conditions, and diagnosis and management of allergic rhinitis in people with asthma
- 'Taking a Breather: Asthma Management for Indigenous Australians' covering the cultural and medical issues surrounding effective asthma management for Indigenous Australians
- 'Breathlessness in the Older Adult: Is it Asthma?' covering the differential diagnosis and management of asthma in breathless older adults, with related discussion of COPD
- 'A is for Asthma: Managing Asthma in Primary School Kids' covering the latest in best-practice asthma management for children aged 4–12 years

RHEF estimates each program reached up to 5,000 health professionals. According to RHEF, the outcomes from all programs were excellent. The viewer responses suggested that the level of interest and the quality of the programs were extremely high.

Future activities

The NAC is delighted to have received funding for continuation of our activities from the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing within the new Asthma Management Program. This is the third consecutive 4-year period for which we have received funding for our health professional education programs.

Our activities under Australian Government's Asthma Management Program 2009–2013 are described elsewhere in this Report under the new title of 'GP and Allied Health Professional Asthma and Respiratory Education Program'.

Ongoing Activities



GPAHPAREP – Asthma & Respiratory Education Program 2009–2013

The NAC's GP and Allied Health Professional Asthma & Respiratory Education Program (GPAHPAREP) provides education and training for primary healthcare practitioners to increase best practice management of asthma and linked chronic respiratory conditions. It is a continuation of similar education programs that the NAC has been conducting for the past decade.

GPAHPAREP is part of the Australian Government's Asthma Management Program, funded by the Department of Health and Ageing for 2009–2013. A feature of the new program is the inclusion of linkages between asthma and other linked respiratory conditions, including allergic rhinitis, COPD and bronchiectasis.

Other activities funded under the Asthma Management Program include those of Asthma Foundations Australia (the Asthma Child and Adolescent Program and the Community Support Program) and the Australian Centre for Asthma Monitoring.

Workshop range

The NAC's key GPAHPAREP activities follow our successful and well-established Primary Care Asthma Update [A-Team] workshop model. These face-to-face workshops are run by our team of experienced health professional presenters using standardised material adapted for local needs and are conducted with a local host organisation (such as GP networks/divisions). Workshops are available across Australia, reflecting our commitment to reach regional and remote health professionals.

The workshops include:

- Primary Care Asthma Update [A-Team®] (2hrs) – continuation of best-practice asthma and respiratory management workshops for primary care health professionals, including GPs, asthma educators, practice nurses, pharmacists and Indigenous health workers
- Asthma and Respiratory Management Seminar for Practice Nurses (6hrs) – implementation of best-practice seminars tailored to the specific needs of practice nurses, piloted under the previous Asthma Education Program

- Spirometry Training Course (6hrs) – continuation of comprehensive, hands-on spirometry training for GPs, asthma educators and practice nurses
- Spirometry Training Update (2hrs) – a new brief spirometry update/recap for previously trained GPs, asthma educators and practice nurses
- Indigenous Health Worker Asthma Education (2–3hrs) – a new best-practice activity tailored to the specific needs of Indigenous health workers

Attendance is free and participants are eligible for continuing professional development recognition from their professional association.

We are grateful to the expert members of the GPAHPAREP Curriculum Review Panels for their invaluable assistance in reviewing and updating the course content for each workshop, a process led by Ms Judi Wicking, NAC project manager and asthma educator.

Program evaluation

The Centre for Health Service Development, University of Wollongong, has been appointed by the Department of Health and Ageing as the national evaluator of the Asthma Management Program. The role of the Centre is to evaluate the program as a whole as well as to provide support and assistance to each of the funded initiatives within the program, including GPAHPAREP.

As part of the evaluation, the NAC and Asthma Foundations Australia will be running a coordinated series of asthma education activities in two locations. This project, known as the Collaborative Asthma Management Initiative, will be implemented in Victor Harbor, South Australia, and Colac, Victoria, in the first half of 2011.

Media relations

When it comes to media discussion and debate, the NAC plays a central role providing expert advice to consumer and health industry media.

Our proactive media relations program has consistently provided journalists with access to respiratory physicians, GPs, pharmacists and asthma educators. This media commentary program helps both the media and general public to better understand asthma management, and provides local insights into new research findings published in peer review journals from around the world.

This year, the program has also worked to highlight seasonal issues associated with asthma such as the back to school spike, asthma death statistics, and the FDA's review into the safety of long-acting beta agonists to treat asthma.

Extensive national TV, radio and newspaper coverage was also achieved thanks to our continued work with partner organisations. A particularly successful partner initiative was the release of new consumer research statistics highlighting laughter as an asthma trigger to help launch the Asthma Life Balance Check – an online self assessment questionnaire to measure asthma control.

Throughout 2009/10, public relations was also used to raise awareness of a number of NAC initiatives – from the launch

of a new pharmacy guide on pain relievers and asthma, to a new online inhaler usage video for children.

We also reinstated the National Asthma Council Australia Media Awards to acknowledge the significant role the Australian media play in the fight against asthma. It is expected the 2009/10 Awards will attract a wide range of entries, and the awards will also coincide with celebrations for the NAC's 21st anniversary – a significant milestone.

Proactive media releases were issued approximately once a month during the year by our public relations consultancy, Ward Communications/Ogilvy Public Relations. This regular proactive media relations strategy is fundamental in keeping asthma management on the public agenda and will continue into the next financial year.

Online presence

The NAC website (www.nationalasthma.org.au) supports health professionals, people with asthma and their carers by providing information and practical tools to improve asthma management.

Over the past year the NAC website recorded a 6% increase in unique visits, reflecting the continued popularity of the website among Australian and international users. Our range of evidence-based resources provided as online brochures, information papers and instructional videos underpin the website daily page views at just over 10,500, almost double the previous year's views.

The most popular resources include:

- The *Asthma Management Handbook 2006*, which continues to build on its user base with strong growth in both web pages viewed and PDFs downloaded (up 30% from last year).
- *Spirometry: The Measurement and Interpretation of Ventilatory Function in Clinical Practice*, which showed a strong growth in PDF downloads of 43%
- The Written Asthma Action Plans and Written Asthma Action Plan Templates pages, which both appear consistently among the top ten entry pages for the website. During the year the 13,600 PDF downloads of the NAC Asthma Action Plans in colour and mono versions occurred – an increase of 36% over the previous year.

An area of the website that exhibited solid growth was the NAC's inhaler device instructional videos. The latest addition to the range, *Using your inhaler – MDI (puffer) and spacer for kids*, has already received more than 2,000 views. Overall the inhaler videos have collected almost 20,000 views at a growth of 186% over the previous year. The value of these films is recognised in feedback received via the website.

Tonight my daughter has to use Ventolin and a spacer for the very first time. The doctor showed us what to do but by the time we got home I completely forgot! Thank you so much for including the video footage on your website showing us what to do – it was very VERY helpful!

Mother of child with asthma, VIC

The videos on how to use puffers are fantastic
Pharmacy student, QLD

The NAC website features strongly in all major search engines with Google delivering more than 170,000 referrals for the year. The website has Google sitelinks (links to a site's interior pages), which Google generates automatically for popular sites based on webpage usage.

In February 2010, *Australian Doctor* reviewed local websites on asthma. The NAC's two websites both received glowing recommendations, with the NAC main website called 'the premier website for professionals'.

The Kids with Asthma site (www.kidswithasthma.com.au) was described as 'wicked' with wonderful graphics and an easy-to-understand format, and was recommended as 'another one to add to your favourites'.

Sensitive Choice

Launched in May 2006, the Sensitive Choice® program was developed by the NAC to provide Australians and New Zealanders with a guide to products and services that could be helpful in managing asthma and allergy.

Our Sensitive Choice® program now includes over 100 approved products and services featuring the blue butterfly. The success of the program is largely due to the close partnerships that the NAC enjoys with the Partners who manufacture these approved products. These relationships provide us with a unique avenue to promote good asthma management messages, while the income from product sponsorship fees supports the NAC's ongoing educational activities and future planning.

We are grateful to the expert members of the Sensitive Choice® Product Advisory Panel, who volunteer their time to consider product applications.



Promotional activities

The NAC is committed to increasing awareness of the blue butterfly, and we have undertaken a range of activities around Australia to this end.

A major highlight in 2009 was the development of a 30 second TV commercial about Sensitive Choice®. This promotion continues to air free nationally thanks to support from metro and regional television networks.

Our 'Guide to Living with Asthma & Allergies' latest edition appeared as a 6-page feature in the September 2009 issue of the *Australian Women's Weekly* magazine, which has an audience of over 2 million readers. These annual guides are packed with asthma and allergy management advice and tips, plus information about some of our Sensitive Choice® products and services.



'A guide to living with Asthma and Allergy' 2009

Public relations initiatives by the NAC – alone and in conjunction with individual Partners – remain a key component of our integrated marketing support program for Sensitive Choice®. As a result, we enjoyed widespread and effective media coverage of the program throughout the year.

Our annual Partner Forum once again encouraged Partners to make the most of the blue butterfly and their involvement in the program, and we were all enthused by the novel ideas and innovative strategies discussed.

Similar meetings and promotional activities have been undertaken across the Tasman to support the Sensitive Choice® Partners and products in New Zealand.

Website redevelopment

The Sensitive Choice® website underwent a major redesign and relaunch in June 2010 (www.sensitivechoice.com.au). The fresh and dynamic new look highlights the increased consumer focus and improved functionality of the site.

New features include a streamlined product search function, a range of healthy living factsheets, and shortcuts for sharing and bookmarking pages via social media.

We have received very positive feedback about the new site and look forward to seeing visitor numbers continue to grow as consumer awareness of the Sensitive Choice® program increases.



The newly re-designed Sensitive Choice website

Activity Highlights



Education resources

Asthma Life Balance Check online tool

To help people with asthma find out the level of lifestyle restrictions they impose on themselves, in August 2009 the NAC launched the Asthma Life Balance Check, a fast and easy online assessment tool which aims to have people with asthma better understand how well they are managing their condition. The simple questionnaire takes only a few minutes to complete and respondents are encouraged to print out and discuss the results with their GP.

The Asthma Life Balance Check online tool is hosted on the NAC website. It was developed by AstraZeneca in partnership with leading respiratory clinicians and in conjunction with the NAC and the Asthma Foundations Australia.

Pain relievers and asthma – pharmacy guide

A new pharmacy resource was launched by the NAC in October 2009. The 'Pain relievers and asthma: quick reference guide' was developed to aid pharmacists and pharmacy assistants in recommending and dispensing analgesics to people with asthma, and reduce the confusion associated with aspirin/NSAIDs and asthma.

The Quick Reference Guide has been developed as an adjunct to normal quality care protocols, and should be used as part of a pharmacy's usual best-practice care approach.

It features an easy to follow flowchart of the essential questions for pharmacy assistants to ask every person requesting pain reliever medication, escalating to the pharmacist for advice where needed. The reverse side summarises current evidence about aspirin/NSAID-intolerant asthma, and includes key practice points for community pharmacy.

The new guide was developed in consultation with Dr Jenny Gowan, pharmacist, and Associate Professor Frank Thien, respiratory physician. Mr Marcus Weidinger, NAC Pharmacists' Asthma Group member, also provided helpful feedback. Development was supported by an unrestricted educational grant from Reckitt Benckiser. The NAC maintained editorial control.

Copies of the guide were mailed to all retail pharmacies around Australia and it can also be downloaded from the NAC website.



Pain relievers and asthma pharmacy guide

Defence entry requirements

A handy online guide to finding the medical entry requirements for the Australian Defence Force and Emergency Services around Australia was published on the NAC website in February 2010.

With good medical management, an up-to-date asthma action plan and regular health check-ups, many people with asthma are now able to realise their ambition of joining these services.

People with asthma may have an opportunity to serve the community as members of the state and federal police, metropolitan and rural fire services, and state ambulance services, as well as through the Australian Defence Force.

Developed in response to a suggestion from NAC's GP Asthma Group, the guide is designed to help both health professionals and potential applicants, and includes links to detailed information about the medical requirements and application process for each service.

Child inhaler video

A simple online video to demonstrate correct inhaler usage for children using a puffer and spacer was launched on the NAC website in April 2010.

The video shows NAC asthma educator, Judi Wicking, overseeing a young girl as she uses her medication, with clear subtitles on screen providing step-by-step instructions.

Developed to improve inhaler technique in children, the new online video is an extension of a series of videos designed to improve inhaler use amongst adults. The original series, which is also available on the NAC website, demonstrates correct usage of all six main types of asthma and COPD inhalers currently available in Australia.

The video was funded by the NAC.

Conferences

TSANZ Annual Scientific Meeting 2010

Prof. Colin Robertson and Prof John Wilson presented the Asthma and Allergy Special Interest Group/NAC breakfast session at the TSANZ Annual Scientific Meeting in March 2010. Titled 'Does asthma develop into CAL?', the seminar



Child inhaler video 'Using your MDI (puffer) and spacer for kids'

explored the relationship between paediatric asthma and chronic airway limitation.

IPCRG 5th World Conference 2010

The 5th International Primary Care Respiratory Group (IPCRG) World Conference was held from June 2–5, 2010 in Toronto, Canada. The conference was for all primary care health professionals with an interest in respiratory health.

The NAC has had a long relationship with IPCRG, having hosted the 2nd world conference in Melbourne in 2004, and presented and published an abstract on the A-Team asthma education program at the 2008 Conference in Seville.

Our successful education program for health professionals was again recognised at the 2010 Conference where Ms Judi Wicking, NAC project manager and asthma educator, presented an abstract explaining the NAC's pilot Asthma and Respiratory Management Seminar for Practice Nurses.

The abstract was again selected for publication in the *Primary Care Respiratory Journal* – Wicking J, Gordon M, Brophy S, Cleveland R, Bell M, Whorlow K. Up-skilling general practice nurses to improve asthma management in primary care. *Prim Care Respir J* 2010; 19(2): A17.

GPCE Sydney 2010

The Sydney GP Conference and Exhibition (GPCE) was held in May 2010 and the NAC, with support from Schering-Plough (MSD), conducted a seminar.

Dr Simon Young, GP, presented a 1-hour interactive seminar 'Asthma and allergic rhinitis – what are you missing?' covering tips on identifying asthma patients with allergic rhinitis, and how to manage the concurrent conditions.

The presentation was very well received by the 60–70 GPs in attendance.

GPCE Melbourne 2009

The NAC's seminar at the Melbourne GPCE in November was on 'Paediatric asthma and allergic rhinitis'.

The seminar, presented by Dr Simon Young GP, highlighted both practical and diagnostic management of concurrent asthma and allergic rhinitis in children, as well as the latest information in the treatment of this condition.

The seminar was well received, once again.

Asthma awards

NAC 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.

The winner of the 2009 ASCIA and NAC Asthma Research Award was Dr Peter Vuillermin, from Geelong Hospital, Australia. His winning presentation was: 'Parent-initiated oral prednisolone for episodes of acute asthma in children aged 5-13 years.'

The winner of the 2009 RACGP and NAC Asthma Research Award was Dr James Turton from the Australian National University for his presentation: 'Can the inhaled mannitol challenge test be successfully used to improve asthma management in the general practice setting?'

The winner of the 2010 TSANZ and NAC Asthma Prize was Dr Lisa Wood from the University of Newcastle for her presentation 'Dietary fat enhances airway inflammation in asthma'.

NAC Travel Awards

The NAC was pleased to sponsor three awards at the recent 2009 Bangladesh Lung Foundation Conference, Pulmonocon, on Total Lung Health. The NAC Travel Awards were presented to the top three abstracts on research in the asthma/respiratory area to enable the winners to attend the 15th Asia Pacific Society of Respiriology Conference in Manila in 2010.

First prize: Dr Farzana Yesmin, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, Dhaka, Bangladesh, for: 'Bangladesh effects of nutritional modification on anthropometry and lung functions of COPD patients.'

Second prize: Dr Md. Ferdous Wahid, National Institute of Diseases of Chest & Hospital, Dhaka, Bangladesh, for: 'Burden of obstructive lung disease in Bangladesh (BOLD BD)- Findings of first national COPD prevalence study.'

Third prize: Dr Md. Abdullahel Kafee, National Institute of Diseases of Chest & Hospital, Dhaka, Bangladesh, for: 'Probing into the risk factors of development of asthma – Bangladesh perspective.'

International activities

GP Asia-Pacific Respiratory Board

The GP Asia-Pacific Respiratory Board (GPAPRB) consists of GPs/primary care physicians from 9 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including A/Prof Ron Tomlins, chair, who represents Australia. GPAPRB was established by the NAC in early 2008 at the instigation of GSK Asia-Pacific, who asked the NAC to form the Board and facilitate its development.

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.

The NAC organised meetings in September 2009 in Kuala Lumpur, November 2009 in Korea and in April 2010 in Manila. GPs/primary care physicians from Bangladesh, Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam are working on a number of activities. In this period the GPAPRB concluded its survey on GP management of asthma and COPD in most of the members' countries for presentation at the 2010 IPCRG Conference in Toronto.

In early July 2010, the GPAPRB website will be launched in Singapore to improve the diagnosis and management of people with chronic respiratory diseases across the region. The website is designed to be simple but effective and hosts resources developed by GPAPRB to support GPs. It also provides useful links to relevant guidelines and key organisations in the Asia-Pacific and around the world. The website is at: <http://www.nationalasthma.org.au/gpaprb>

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).

Bangladesh

In October the CEO spoke at the 'Inauguration of CFC MDI Phase-out Transition Strategy Implementation' launch in Dhaka, Bangladesh attended by the President of Bangladesh, and took part in a high level UNEP Montreal Protocol mission to the Ministry of Environment in Bangladesh.

China

Our CEO attended the UNEP Medical Technical Options Committee annual meeting in Shanghai in March as one of the two Australian Government representatives on this international committee. The five day meeting indicated a great advance in the phase-out of CFC use in metered dose inhalers globally.

She then presented at the Inhalation Drug Delivery Conference in Yangzhou organised by Chinese Government agencies.



*The UNEP Medical Technical Options Committee (MTOC)
Middle row, Centre: NAC CEO Kristine Whorlow*

India

The CEO presented at the Workshop on CFC MDI Phase-out Transition Strategy Implementation in Delhi in October, and had meetings with the Drug Controller of India, the Ministry of the Environment and other agencies concerned with phase-out.

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.

- Assoc. Prof. Noela Whitby AM, Chairman
General practitioner
The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners representative
- Mr Max Franchitto
President, Asthma Foundation of South Australia
Asthma Foundations Australia representative (to November 2009)
- Mr Ian Adams
President, Asthma Foundations Australia
Asthma Foundations Australia representative (from January 2010)
- 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

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
- Mr Alasdair Norton
Business consultant, VIC
- Mr Robert Yeo
Chartered accountant, VIC



NAC General Practitioners' Asthma Group (GPAG). 2nd from right: Chairman Noela Whitby

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
- Assoc. Prof. Sanjiva Wijesinha, VIC
- 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.

- Australia – Assoc. Prof. Ron Tomlins (Chair)
- Bangladesh – Dr GM Monsur Habib
- Hong Kong – Dr Wai Sing (Daniel) Chu (to March 2010)
- Hong Kong – Dr Tsan (Augustine) Lam (to March 2010)
- Korea – Dr Ki-Don Han (to May 2010)
- Malaysia – Dr George Gomez
- Philippines – Dr Annie Francisco
- Singapore – Dr Tze Lee Tan
- Thailand – Dr Kraisorn Voradithi
- 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 (to November 2009)
- Mr Kevin Morgan, TAS
- Ms Toni Riley, VIC
- Dr Bandana Saini, NSW
- Mr Marcus Weidinger, WA
- Mr Chris Flood (ex-officio)
- Ms Kylie Woolcock (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

GPAHPAREP Curriculum Review Panels

Primary Care Asthma Update (A-Team) and Seminar for Practice Nurses

- Ms Marg Gordon, practice nurse
- Dr Jenny Gowan, pharmacist
- Dr Kerry Hancock, GP
- Dr Victoria Smith, GP
- Dr Andrew Tai, paediatric respiratory physician
- Dr Chris Worsnop, respiratory physician
- Dr Simon Young, GP
- Ms Judi Wicking, asthma educator

Spirometry Training Course & Update

- Assoc. Prof. Amanda Barnard, GP
- Ms Brigitte Borg, respiratory scientist
- Dr Debbie Burton, respiratory scientist
- Dr Kevin Gain, respiratory scientist
- Dr Kerry Hancock, GP
- Assoc. Prof. David P. Johns, respiratory scientist
- Mr Jeff Pretto, respiratory scientist
- Assoc. Prof. Noela Whitby AM, GP
- Ms Judi Wicking, asthma educator

Personnel

Staff

- Ms Kristine Whorlow
Chief Executive Officer
- Ms Rhonda Cleveland
Operations Manager
- Ms Siobhan Brophy
Communications Manager
- Ms Judi Wicking
Project Manager
- Ms Melissa Bell
Senior Program Coordinator
- Ms Leanne Koster
Project Officer (from December 2009)
- Ms Alison Coalby
Executive Assistant
- Ms Elizabeth Brown
Administration Officer (to February 2010)
- Ms Sarah McKendrick
Administration Officer (from March 2010)

Consultants

- Catalyst International Pty Ltd
Mr John Skinner
Ms Janice Shadbolt
- HealthConsult Pty Ltd
Mr Joe Scuteri
Ms Lisa Fodero
- Impagination
Mr Jeff Grainger
Ms Suzanne Grainger
- Meducation
Ms Jenni Harman
- Red Edge Solutions Pty Ltd
Ms Jo Burrows
- 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 and Respiratory Education Program (GPAHPAREP) under the Department's Asthma Management Program 2009–2013.

We thank the Department for granting us these funds for a third successive 4-year period. We look forward to fully implementing the GPAHPAREP activities over the coming years.

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

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

Finally, we extend our thanks to the many tireless health professionals who help us in all facets of our work. We couldn't do it without you!

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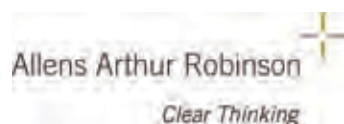
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Is your nose making your asthma worse?



An itchy, runny or blocked nose due to allergies can make your asthma harder to control.

If this sounds like you, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

Development of this resource was supported by an unrestricted educational grant from MSD.

The background is a solid blue color. There are stylized clouds in the corners: a blue cloud in the top right, a white cloud in the top left, and a white cloud in the bottom right. A horizontal orange bar is located in the lower right quadrant.

www.NationalAsthma.org.au