

2020 NEWSLETTER

EDITORIAL COMMENT

Dear TSANZ Members,

Haere mai tangata whenua.

In the spirit of reconciliation, the TSANZ acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their elders past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.



I am pleased to welcome you to this year's edition of the Society newsletter. This year brings the abbreviated version, thanks to COVID-19.

Well, I think we can all agree it's been a year to remember, and not necessarily the way we wanted. 2020 seemed promising enough with an exciting Adelaide-based ASM planned in conjunction with the Transplant Nurses' Association, a liver transplant meeting, and the inaugural Machine Perfusion Workshop. I remember the first few days of January, struck down by a non-specific viral illness (thank you, childcare) and reading about a cluster of infections arising from Wuhan which was reported in Scientific American online. As the pandemic unfolded in China and then proceeded apace throughout parts of Europe, TSANZ Council made the difficult decision to postpone the ASM, and Australia marched into lockdown.

We have all watched as the world descended into contagion, but New Zealand's exemplary decision-making made it really the first country to emerge safely from containment. We stood helplessly by as our Victorian colleagues went

back into a strict lockdown lasting 138 days, and just wished the pandemic was over. Meetings across the globe went virtual, with varying degrees of success and a burden of zoom fatigue. The TSANZ COVID taskforce kept us updated and although transplantation was halted for only 6 weeks, solid organ donation have yet to recover from this downturn in activity.

We hope that 2021 will provide some

Annual Newsletter 2020

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semblance of normal, and with several efficacious vaccines emerging, this seems possible although not certain. Council meetings

have continued in an abridged fashion, via Zoom of course. These were usually held in the glamorous Qantas meeting room at a domestic airport, and I have missed the good-natured discussions and lukewarm coffee. The 2020 ASM, convened by Philip Clayton and Eu-Ling Neo, is being transformed into a virtual meeting for next year that we hope will be more accessible to members and flexible for international and domestic speakers.

On behalf of Council, I would also like to acknowledge the hard work, long hours and dedication of Nieves Piaggio, Kim Rawson, and Roslyn Davies. The list of tasks they have worked through from renegotiating office space for TSANZ to sourcing virtual platforms to reimagine next year's ASM has been extensive.

I look forward to seeing you all, in person, and soon.

Associate Professor Natasha Rogers

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Membership,

I think it is fair to say that 2020 transplantation in Australia and New Zealand can be summed up by Charles Dickens in a "Tale of Two Cities", whom begins with "it was the best of times, it was the worst of times". Certainly, for Australia and our response to the COVID-19 pandemic we can all be extremely pleased with the low rate of transplant patient infection and the excellent institutional responses to protecting transplant patients and dialysis patients in our Country. However, obviously it can certainly be perceived as the worst of times in terms of the impact of the pandemic on the scientific activities and the other functions of the Transplantation Society of Australia and New Zealand (TSANZ). Concentrating on the former however, as President of the TSANZ, much



excellent work and good outcomes have been achieved during the calendar year of 2020.

major initiative... was the combined TSANZ/TLRG COVID-19 Rapid Response Taskforce

An extremely positive initiative of the TSANZ supported by the Australian Federal Government has been the National Indigenous Kidney Transplant Taskforce (NIKTT) which has been Chaired by Prof Stephen McDonald and Co-chaired by A/Prof Jaqui Hughes from the Menzies Institute. This initiative through the TSANZ has identified areas of disparity with access for first nation people to transplantation services across the Country. An innovative program addressing the issues of systemic bias and hoping to improve the patient journey through engagement with indigenous people has been spearheaded across the Country by the NIKTT. Whilst COVID-19 has slowed the progression of this innovative program, valuable steps towards addressing the disparity between access for transplant for our first nation people has been made. There will be further updates from the Taskforce in the next twelve months and this puts us in a very positive position for moving towards greater access and success in Indigenous Kidney Transplant.

The second major initiative that has marked the year of 2020 was the combined TSANZ / TLRG COVID-19 Rapid Response Taskforce. This Committee which combined membership from the Heads of the advisory committees of the TSANZ in lung, liver, cardiac, kidney and pancreas with specialists from the donation sector headed by A/Prof Helen Opdam and representation from Infectious Diseases Team has met initially weekly and then fortnightly to provide a response to the rapidly changing COVID-19 pandemic in Australia. Highlights of this Committee Co-chaired by myself and Prof Steven Chadban (TLRG Chair) was the coordinated response to stop kidney

transplantation initially in the first wave of the pandemic and then successfully restarted approximately six weeks to two months after the beginning of the pandemic. The Taskforce was informed by data from the Organ and Tissue Authority (OTA) and continues to meet to monitor the progress of the pandemic and its impact upon the transplant populations. Pleasingly a very low number of transplant patients have contracted COVID-19 and outcomes have been extremely good unlike the rest of the world. The Taskforce now is turning its attention to a vaccination strategy for our most vulnerable patients. The Taskforce is indebted to Prof Jeremy Chapman and Prof Tony Cunningham for their work in developing a strategy for transplant patients. TSANZ has proposed a ring vaccination strategy whereby transplant patients and dialysis patients (both highly vulnerable groups) should receive early access to the vaccine in Australia with the novel addition of a policy to vaccinate members of their families as the spread of COVID-19 is known to be greatest within the home. TSANZ has used its position of advocacy as the peak body representing transplantation to form a coalition with the Australian & New Zealand Society of Nephrology (ANZSN), Kidney Health Australia (KHA) and the TSANZ to get our vulnerable patients on to the vaccination agenda in the hope that we will be able to protect them in this manner.

Sadly, as you all know we were unable to hold the Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) as planned in Adelaide this year. Likewise, the Council had to make the difficult decision to cancel a face-to-face meeting for 2021 moving to the preferred format of the virtual meeting. There has been an outstanding effort put forward by our Scientific Program and Education Committee (SPEC) Chaired by Dr Lucy Sullivan and A/Prof Wai Lim. In combination with the local organisers in Adelaide A/Prof Phil Clayton and Dr Eu Ling Neo a truly outstanding and an innovative program has been developed. I strongly urge you all to register for this meeting as a number of novel sessions will be tried for

the first time not least of which is the trivia night which will be an opening welcome event which will be hosted by our extraordinary quiz master Prof Shane Grey from the Garvan Institute. This promises to be a hilarious evening with fantastic prizes to be won. In addition, all of our overseas speakers for the 2020 Meeting have agreed to present in 2021. This of course will be done virtually and learning from other society meetings the TSANZ hopes to provide a truly up to date basic and translational science meeting for our members. The opportunity to ask questions in real time will be preserved. In addition, of course our young members are our highest priority and the President's Prize will be run in 2021 which is undeniably our premier award and provides wonderful value for our outstanding new talent as it comes through.

*I strongly urge you all to register for
this meeting*

Despite the difficult nature of 2020 the Society is served by three outstanding administrative officers. Nieves Piaggio, our Executive Officer, has provided outstanding leadership and taken every opportunity to protect the Society by applying for Job Keeper and a variety of other Government Subsidies to keep the organisation running. As a consequence of this the financial position of the Society which could have been drastically affected by the global pandemic has been preserved and indeed our wonderful sponsors with the majority not withdrawing their sponsorship and so the financial position is much better than one would have anticipated at the beginning of the year. The whole Society owes it gratitude to Nieves for her outstanding work in preserving our finances. The three amazing administrative staff members have worked very efficiently from home. We maintain offices in the College of Physicians Building on Macquarie Street and during this year the office accommodation has been significantly improved. The Council remains in active discussion with the Royal Australian College of Physicians about facilities and the

rent. Kim Rawson is our wonderful project officer, who is truly the servant of many masters with the OTA projects, NIKTT, the Taskforce and Advisory Committees. Everyone who interacts with her is impressed by amazing work ethic and knowledge. Roslyn Davies has done amazingly on the new website (check it out) and supporting Nieves and Kim.

TSANZ also maintains an important position advancing the cause of organ allocation. Australia has been fortunate to have the new organ match electronic program. This will revolutionise the ability to officially allocate organs and hopefully become the repository of clinical laboratory data that can be easily searched through the clinical portal. All of these functions are under the jurisdiction of the Organ Match Strategic Governance Committee which has significant TSANZ representation and is chaired by the TSANZ President.

Everybody gives their time freely to promote transplantation research and the care of our patients...it is a wonderful organisation to be a part of

The next major challenge in clinical transplantation continues to be the implementation of virtual crossmatching. On behalf of the Council, I would particularly like to thank Dr Ross Francis and A/Prof Rob Carroll for their work in educating the transplant communities regarding virtual cross match and its interpretation in transplantation. The combination of organ match and virtual cross matching with the implementation of selected flow cytometric cross matching will give Australia a world class immunological assessment with sensitised patients receiving organ transplants in Australia. The work of the Society could not be undertaken without the dedication of all of the members of the Council, our SPEC and all of our Advisory Committees. Everybody gives their time freely to promote transplantation research and the

care of our patients and as such it is a wonderful organisation to be a part of.

I look forward to seeing you all virtually, but of course even more face to face when we can.

Professor Toby Coates

President, TSANZ

SECRETARY'S REPORT

This will be my last letter to you as Secretary. My term expires in March 2021, as does that of Bronwyn Levvey (Treasurer), Kelli MacDonald, Nick Cross, Christine Russell and Andrew Jabbour. Toby Coates and Helen Pilmore as President and President-Elect respectively have led the TSANZ throughout 2020, and Helen will assume the mantle at the ASM. Council is completed by Kate Wyburn, Phil Clayton and Fiona Mackie who continue their term of office.

Council is seeking to replace everyone who is departing - women, basic scientists, everyone, please consider nominating yourself. I have enjoyed my time on Council immensely.

We have 535 current members with an equal gender split. TSANZ had over 700 members nearly a decade ago and it is not clear why the numbers have waned significantly since then. Affiliate membership continues to lag behind full membership - please encourage allied health professionals, trainees and students (in particular) to join as they can take advantage of reduced membership fees and incentives such as early investigator awards. These awards remain an important focus of the society to encourage research and maintain opportunities for junior members. There are a number of awards available at the 2021 ASM and I encourage all eligible members to apply.

Associate Professor Natasha Rogers

Honorary Secretary, TSANZ

The current financial position of TSANZ actually remains relatively stable, despite the COVID-19 pandemic providing financial challenges for our organisation in 2020. Total assets currently sit around \$1.4 million, similar to 2019. The majority of funds are held in 4 equal term deposits of \$2.5K across the 4 major banks (Westpac, ANZ, NAB, CWB), renewed quarterly. Unfortunately, interest rates on term deposits have reduced dramatically and sit between 0.35-0.50%. However, the TSANZ council was reluctant to make any major changes in investment strategy until there is more stability in the local and international financial markets.



Most financial challenges occurred following the council and SPEC team making the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) which was scheduled for Adelaide in March this year, and rescheduling it to a virtual meeting in March 2021. Not surprisingly, our accounts show a significant reduction in the 2020 ASM registration numbers and associated revenue (72K compared to \$162K raised in 2019). Fortunately, most of the 2020 ASM registrants agreed to carry over their registration payments for the 2021 meeting, with only a few requesting a refund, minimizing the financial impact for this year. 2020 ASM sponsorship of \$283K was just shy of the \$265K sponsorship from 2019. We are extremely grateful that most of our sponsors agreed that these funds could be held over for the 2021 meeting.

In June 2019, the Federal Government provided \$2.3M for a National Indigenous Kidney Transplantation Taskforce (NIKTT). To date approximately \$2.0M of these funds have been allocated and used for specified budgeted NIKTT activities, which the NIKTT Expert Advisory Committee and Operations Committee have had oversight of, and the TSANZ has continued to manage the funds for these important national projects.



TSANZ/NIKTT wrote to the Dept. of Health seeking an extension to 30 June 2022 and additional funding to resource the extension of operations, following delays due to COVID-19. The extension was approved but the additional funding was declined due to funding not being available.

most of the 2020 ASM registrants agreed to carry over their registration payments for the 2021 meeting

Despite the obvious impact of COVID-19 on the usual educational and other services provided by TSANZ to our members, there has actually been an increase in membership revenue of \$128K in 2020 (compared to \$94K in 2019). The TSANZ Executive & Administration team were successful in applying for government funding support (via Cash Boost COVID-19, Job Keeper allowance and a NSW Small business grant) which provided valuable funds to cover salary costs and business running costs. I wish to sincerely thank the executive and admin team of Nieves, Roslyn and Kim for their diligence, hard work and lateral thinking which has ensured that the TSANZ has remained in a stable financial position moving into 2021.

Associate Professor Bronwyn Levvey,
Honorary Treasurer, TSANZ

ADVISORY COMMITTEES & WORKING GROUPS REPORT

With the majority of the last 12 months being affected by COVID-19, and causing some deadlines being extended, there continued to be considerable amounts of work accomplished by the organ specific Advisory Committee's and Working Groups, including the following projects; National Review of Paediatric Kidney Transplant recipients; Review of Renal Allocation; Review

of Non-renal Allocation, Machine Perfusion; Review and Update of the Clinical Guidelines (including malignancy guidance), Virtual Crossmatch and the continuation of the National Indigenous Kidney Transplantation Taskforce (NIKTT) with the aim to improve access and outcomes to kidney transplantation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

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The Renal Allocation Working Group (RAWG) is reviewing the renal organ allocation systems in Australia with the aim to optimise transplantation outcomes for patients and ensuring fairness and equity. The RAWG have reviewed the tiers in the allocation algorithm (including state balancing) and reviewed the allocation process for sensitisation and for HLA matching. The working group has an agreed algorithm which has been provided to the OrganMatch team so that simulations and analysis can be undertaken. The group will be providing a post simulation report in early 2021.

The NIKTT received approval for an extension of the funding agreement between TSANZ and the Department of Health from 30 June 2021 to 30 June 2022 following delays caused by COVID-19. There are five working groups within NIKTT that focus on the following; Data, Community Engagement, Patient Mentors, Pre-Transplant Care Coordination and Review of Cultural Bias Initiatives.

The following equity and access sponsorships have been delayed due to COVID-19 and have requested an extension of the deadline for their final report;

- Top End Health Service, Northern Territory
- Purple House - Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku

Aboriginal Corporation, Northern Territory

- Royal Perth Hospital (in collaboration with Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service and Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital), Western Australia
- Fiona Stanley Hospital, Western Australia
- Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service, Queensland
- Flinders and Upper North Local Health Network, South Australia
- Princess Alexandra Hospital, Queensland

The equity and access sponsorship for Pika Wiya Health Service Aboriginal Corporation, South Australia, have continued within the original timeframes as they were not impacted as heavily by COVID-19.

The Virtual Crossmatch (VXM) Working Group are providing clinical expertise in the development of a national histocompatibility and immunogenetics process to enable safe and equitable transplant outcomes for patients. This is a very complex process and is linked to various other working groups, such as the non-real allocation working group and the renal allocation working group. Draft recommendations have been generated and the organ offer processes are being mapped. Education materials and a communication strategy is also under development. There is a VXM Education Page live on the Australian Red Cross Lifeblood site. There are some underlying business processes that are being reviewed to streamline the transition.

The contribution of all of the working groups to the ongoing business of Australian transplantation is gratefully acknowledged.

Associate Professor Helen Pilmore

President Elect, TSANZ

Chair, TSANZ Advisory Committees & Working Groups

Well... 2020 what a year!! The impact of the COVID 19 pandemic has been catastrophic worldwide and has necessitated a



complete cessation of international and interstate travel. This has led to the cancellation of most conferences and unfortunately, our 2020 ASM was in this category, which was scheduled for March in Adelaide. This was extremely disappointing as it also necessitated the cancellation of several satellite events, including the liver meeting, a machine perfusion workshop, the transplant nurse's meeting and the transplant coordinators meeting.

However, we are considering this a postponement rather than a cancellation, and Phil Clayton and Eu-Ling Neo have been reappointed convenors of the 2021 ASM, which will be a virtual meeting in March 2021. Andrea Viecelli and Chien-Li Holmes-Liew will be organising the PGC and Tracey Ying and Sanda Stankovic will be running the Masterclass program. The international speakers scheduled to talk at the 2020 meeting have agreed to present in 2021 so we are looking forward to a showcase of excellent science online in March 2021. There will be plans for exciting new initiatives and virtual social networking, which will ensure the "fun" aspect of the conference is maintained.

We have introduced TSANZ "Transplant Grand Rounds"

Like many other societies, we have sought ways to maintain member engagement in this unprecedented time. We have introduced TSANZ "Transplant Grand Rounds", where we have special guest speakers' present cutting-edge research in a virtual format. The invitations to attend these virtual grand rounds were extended to non-TSANZ members, which will further enhance the society's profile and promote collaboration and engagement from other

specialties. Our first presentation was from our very own president, Professor Toby Coates, in a talk entitled "Atypical Antibodies in Transplantation". There was a fantastic turnout for our first event, with 133 people attending online. Toby delivered a fabulous and engaging talk which resulted in robust discussion. It was wonderful to see so many people attend and engage on a really important topic. In our next session which took place on December 10, 2020, our incoming president, Associate Professor Helen Pilmore, presented her talk "Cardiac screening for renal transplantation". We heard more about this important patient-relevant topic in transplantation and had 113 in attendance. In 2021 we are anticipating more engaging and well-attended sessions.

We would love to hear members' thoughts and suggestions




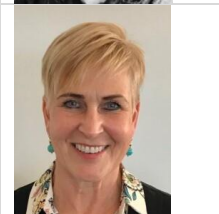

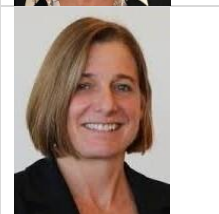

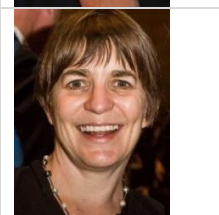




I think we can all agree that 2020 has been an incredibly challenging year. The ability to quickly adapt to what this year has thrown at us has been made a lot easier through the support of a fabulous bunch of people in SPEC and TSANZ's Council. Our society is strong and will survive these challenges and perhaps even embrace new and improved ways of delivering educational programs as a result. We are especially grateful to the team behind the scenes in TSANZ's administration, Nieves Piaggio, TSANZ Executive Officer and Roslyn Davies, TSANZ's Administration Officer who kept us moving in the right direction. A special shout out to Nieves and Roslyn who flawlessly delivered our first TSANZ Grand Round by Zoom Webinar despite being a little out of their comfort zone! We definitely could not do this without both of you!!

We would love to hear members' thoughts and suggestions on these endeavours, and we are looking forward to seeing you all online for our TSANZ "Grand Rounds" and our ASM in March 2021!!








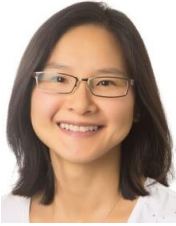



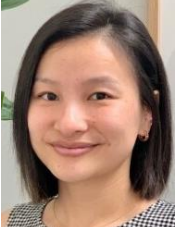
Dr Lucy Sullivan and Associate Professor Wai Lim

Co-Chairs of SPEC

TSANZ COUNCIL

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ADVISORY COMMITTEES	
Cardiac	Dr Robert LARBALESTIER ATCA Rep: Jo Maddicks-Law
Donor Surgeons & Co-ordinators	Professor Henry Pleass (Co-Chair) Ms Shona Haigh (Co-Chair) & ATCA Rep
Liver & Intestinal	Professor Robert Jones ATCA Rep: Libby John
Lung	Professor Greg Snell
Paediatric Transplant	Dr Joshua Kausman
Pancreas & Islet	Dr David Goodman ATCA Rep: Paul Robertson
Renal	A/Professor Kate Wyburn ATCA Rep: Luke Datson
Vascular Composite Allograft	Dr Sharon Ford

WORKING GROUPS	
Immunology Tolerance (ITWG)	Professor Frank Ierino
Machine Perfusion (MPWG)	Professor Henry Pleass
Non-Renal Allocation (NRAWG)	Professor Michael Fink
Paediatric (PDWG)	Dr Joshua Kausman
Renal Allocation (RAWG)	Dr Kate Wyburn
Virtual Crossmatch (VXMWG)	A/Professor Ross Francis
Xenotransplantation (XTWG)	Professor Peter Cowan

TRAVEL REPORTS

Although physical travel to international meetings was not possible in 2020, we have two reports that weren't included in the 2019 newsletter. Hence, we are pleased to be able to provide them now.

ISODP 2019 - 14-16 NOVEMBER 2019, DUBAI, UAE

I received the generous support of a TSANZ travel grant to attend the ISODP congress in 2019. This conference considers the challenges in increasing organ donation internationally, which is of course required for us to give transplant opportunities to as many patients in need.

This was a great opportunity for me to showcase my research, and I presented two abstracts from population-based data from New South Wales. The first examined whether the next of kin of people born overseas and speaking languages other than English were medically suitable, approached for consent, and gave consent differently than other potential donors. The second examined the challenges assessment of blood-borne virus risk in potential organ donors, looking at both missed opportunities for donation and transmissions from actual donors.

Both studies were well received and came in the context of other relevant talks. The challenges of organ donation among culturally and linguistically diverse populations was a prominent feature given the talk's location, as the UAE has been recently expanding its deceased organ donation program according to international principles. The joy of in person conferences of course included lunch-time discussions with a mix of people from around the globe, with varying perspectives. Differences in donation protocols around the world were fascinating to see at different talks. The preceding one-day Transplant Infectious Diseases conference was also invaluable for me, for the thorough update on viral hepatitis

in transplantation, highly relevant to my research.

My many thanks to the TSANZ for this opportunity which was thoroughly enjoyable and educational.

Karen Waller

ATC 2019 - 1-5 JUNE, 2019, BOSTON USA

Thank you to TSANZ for sponsorship to attend the American Transplant Congress which was held in Boston in June 2019. As an early career researcher, I greatly appreciate the opportunity to present my research on an international stage. I was fortunate enough to give an oral presentation on work I have been doing with Professor Angela Webster (and others) on cardiac mortality in kidney transplant patients as well as present a poster on pilot work I have done with Professor Steve Chadban and A/Professor Kate Wyburn which explores the cost of transplantation in a contemporary Australian transplant setting.

This was the first time I had attended the American Transplant Congress and it was impressive to witness the degree of global research prowess that is brought to bear on problems that we all face in transplantation regardless of the site, state or even country we practice in. These were impressive seminars and plenaries on managing the failing graft, the role of frailty in our ever-aging recipient population, how to best care for our highly sensitised patients, and the future of immunosuppression and hints of what personalised immunosuppression may look like.

Boston itself was lovely. In between sessions I had time to explore the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, walk around the Boston Public Garden and soak up the atmosphere of Newbury Street with fellow conference attendees. It was in summary; a tremendous educational experience and I am so grateful to TSANZ for their support.

Melanie Wyld