

President's Report to SAANZ AGM 2019

The 2018 AGM saw new members added to the committee and we were all optimistic of a productive year. However as the year progressed we found that there was little progress made on the goals that we set. The new committee met face to face in Auckland in February and April to discuss what we saw as the primary objective for SAANZ into the future. A development plan was drafted and Carolyn Santiago was elected as Vice president with the role of leading the new development and completing the 2018 Charities Report in order for us to be in a sound position for further applications for funding. A critical family medical emergency meant that Carolyn has had to devote considerable time supporting family members in need and progress stalled. We have not managed to get communication or progress underway again.

An online committee meeting was held in July and it was at that juncture that the committee commenced a move to consider closure of SAANZ. Each committee member's opinions were sought and to date no resistance has been received to this stance. If we go down this track we need to put SAANZ into recess for a year before closure can occur.

In addition, the public inquiry through the website contact form, email and phone calls has slowed to a trickle, with several months passing between any inquiry. In this time there seems to be a speeding up of wait times to get diagnosis and treatment in the DHB and private sleep clinics. The NZ Sleep Health Foundation have held at least one public meeting in Wellington with politicians present, so they are more able to take on the advocacy role that SAANZ held in former years. The internet has a wealth of information on Sleep Apnoea, treatment, troubleshooting with CPAP etc., and it would seem more effective to place links to this information and support on our website.

David has explored options for revamping the website, but has also come up with the feeling that moving to the Facebook platform would be a better long term solution.

Rachel Lehen has indicated that she is happy to continue to develop the SAANZ Facebook page, and over the coming year this could be developed to be the link for gaining help and support with personal issues with sleep apnoea and CPAP use. new technologies are also coming on stream which should improve sleep apnoea treatment in the coming years. I am happy to continue supporting Rachel with the Facebook page and links will be put on the website so that inquiry traffic moves over to that platform and can also link to international OSA Facebook pages

Four newsletters have been sent to members and posted on the website. There are currently 179 subscribed members on the database with 22 members receiving their newsletter by hard copy. Of the 157 receiving via Mail Chimp only about 60% of these members open the newsletter and 10% click to read related articles. Rachel and I have contributed to the Facebook Page and I have had some queries from people as a result of this interaction. I am happy for my phone number to remain on the website for the next year so that there is still an avenue other than online for people to contact us when they need help.

Rod has again maintained the financial accounts for us over the past financial year. We still have sufficient funds for the recess period and will likely have some funds remaining at the 2020 AGM which we would donate probably to the NZ Sleep Health Foundation at closure. Thank you Rod for your work with the accounts.

I would like to thank all the committee for their continued interest in SAANZ over the past year and for those who will continue to maintain a role in the next year. Fisher & Paykel Healthcare have again supported SAANZ wonderfully over the past year. They attend our meetings, provide the venue for face to face meetings, and tonight they have also provided us with food. Jonathan and Sandra are always so positive of our organisation. Sandra has filled the temporary role of minute secretary at meetings when present. Thank you all at Fisher & Paykel Healthcare for your support.

Dr Alex Bartle, our honorary advisor, and Bryn Spark also from Sleep Well Clinic have also provided much support to the organisation, both in terms of responses to apnoea sufferer inquiries, and contribution to the committee discussions. Thank you Alex for this continuing support.

SAANZ has provided a much needed support service to apnoea sufferers over many years and it will be sad to see it passing if that is what the future holds. The next year will be the determinant of that.

Jill Hammonds
November 2019