



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

The financial year ended 30 June 2023 has again been a most successful one for QSA with effective management and strong financial outcomes. Our staff and volunteers have excelled in providing an exceptional level of support to all members and particularly to those who have encountered personal difficulties in their stoma management. The number of ostomates for whom we provided support during the 2022/23 financial year was 4,927 which included all members claiming under the Stoma Appliance Scheme plus others we supported through our NDIS program, our afterhours support program for all Queensland ostomates and non members who purchased appliances.

Support Activities

The most important aspect of our support work is the supply of stoma products to our members. This is our major undertaking and the extent of these activities is shown by the number of orders we processed for our members during the 2022/23 year under the Stoma Appliance Scheme (the SAS). A total of 27,808 member orders were processed, involving the supply of 340,859 ostomy product packs which contained 4,445,609 individual stoma items. These orders were assembled from a range of over 4,000 ostomy products available through the SAS. The work in receiving member orders, obtaining the items needed from 22 different national supply companies, allocating the supplies to member parcels and dispatching them on a monthly basis requires an efficient and cost-effective operation. The work must be done in a timely manner to ensure all members have their essential supplies available when they need them. This requires skilled staff, extensive warehousing and dispatch facilities, and comprehensive computer management systems. The success of our operations is a tribute to the high level of skill displayed by our staff and the assistance provided by our dedicated volunteers.

This year QSA has increased the staffing of our inquiry area by establishing a new position of Ostomate Support Administrator to ensure that the highest level of service is provided to member inquiries received by email, phone and in person. We have also continued to provide additional support to new and existing members who need extra help in dealing with their ostomy problems and in ordering their ostomy supplies. Responsibility for this service is provided by staff who are experienced in the more complex requirements of ostomates who need this special assistance.

The expenditure incurred in the running of QSA this year was \$900,465 and we expect that this expenditure will approach a million dollars a year going forward. As shown in the notes to the Annual Accounts when the value of volunteers used in the operations is included, the real cost of operations was \$1,138,676. About 85% of this cost, or \$967,874, was for the service QSA provides to the Commonwealth Government to enable it to meet its statutory Medicare obligations in the supply of appliances under the Stoma Appliance Scheme. This partnership

with the government provides world class ostomy supplies which are a credit to the Scheme. Unfortunately, the government does not pay a fair and reasonable share of the operating costs, having last year contributed only \$310,378 or just 32.1% of the cost we incurred in providing this service. Members collectively paid a total co-contribution of \$289,331 (29.9%). Part of the resultant shortfall was funded by the use of volunteers who provided an equivalent labour value for the operation of the Scheme on behalf of QSA of \$238,211 (24.6%). The balance of our Scheme operating costs of \$129,954 (13.4%) was funded by cross subsidization from our other association activities.

The government was first made aware of the underfunding of the SAS as far back as 2002 when the issue was raised in a report by their own consultant. The underfunding has steadily increased and since 2019, through our national association, we have been asking for the government to meet a fair share of the costs so that we do not have to subsidize operations and we can use our volunteers to provide wider and more comprehensive member support. Sadly, the government has refused to do so, taking advantage of the contribution by our hard-working volunteers and the financial subsidy which we provide.

The Queensland Wide Ostomate Support Program

Our ongoing, innovative and effective program sponsored by QSA and undertaken in partnership with the Queensland Department of Health provides a Queensland wide out-of-hours emergency assistance to all ostomates living in Queensland including members of other Queensland associations. This program provides support when ostomates have urgent problems outside of their usual association's business hours. All ostomates can contact an emergency number after hours to arrange emergency stoma supplies or other assistance with their stoma management. Arrangements can be made for urgently needed supplies to be collected from our after-hours access boxes located on the side of our premises at Chermiside. Where pick-up is not possible an urgent supply of appliances is sent free of charge by express post to any ostomate in difficulty. The service also provides support, advice and assistance including phone consultation with a Stoma Therapy Nurse if needed. This support is provided by a team of experienced staff who operate independently from QSA. Ostomates using the service are advised to contact their normal association on the next opening day for follow up assistance.

The service provides a way for all Queensland ostomates to obtain emergency help seven days a week, generally overcoming the need for them to attend hospital emergency departments. There has been an overwhelming increase in the use of this service as it has become more widely advertised.

The benefits flowing from our QSA Member Ordering Portal

The QSA Member Portal is now being used by the majority of QSA members to facilitate the lodgement and progress tracking of orders. This facility can be accessed via the QSA Portal on our website and provides many benefits over non-portal ordering, including faster and more accurate order processing and the ability for members to track the progress of their order. All QSA members are encouraged to order via the Portal unless they do not have computer access. At this time over 60% of members are using the Portal and have expressed a high level of satisfaction with the benefits it provides. Members are being advised of these benefits and are being encouraged switch to the Portal as the best method of ordering compared to email or

post. The benefits of the Portal have been recognized Australia wide to the extent that arrangements have now been made with our national association for the Portal to be made available to all associations and it has already been adopted by three other associations nationally. I would like to acknowledge the work of our former QSA staff member and IT specialist Kevin Barry, our manager Kylie McGrory and our assistant IT staff member Bryan Storey who, together with extensive input from our experienced staff, developed the Portal to a level which provides an outstanding member ordering standard which is now receiving Australian wide acclaim and adoption. QSA's contribution to ostomates nationally by making the Portal we developed available for use by all associations is a source of pride in our achievements. Our contribution to the welfare of ostomates nationally has been further provided in that we have facilitated both our IT specialist to be released to ACSA as its IT specialists so the Portal and the national SAMS Computer Management Program can be developed to a more effective standard.

Appreciation of the contribution of staff and volunteers

I again wish to acknowledge that the success achieved by QSA is only possible because of the contributions made by our staff, voluntary officials and volunteer helpers. The QSA Board members and Kylie our manager have worked together with our staff and volunteers to provide the planning and direction which form the basis of our successful operation. On behalf of the QSA Board I would like to thank our staff and our volunteers for their work. I would like to add my personal thanks for the assistance our Board Members, staff and volunteers have provided to me personally.

In conclusion I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to all our members for the support they have given to Queensland Stoma Association Ltd over the past year.

Gerald Barry AM

Chairman, Queensland Stoma Association Ltd
23 September 2023