

Chairperson's Report for the Financial Year Ended 30 June 2024

The Financial Year Ended 30 June 2024 saw QSA enter a new era with our long serving Chairperson Mr Gerry Barry AM standing down as chairperson after more than 50 years exemplary service in the role. We are grateful that, through his leadership, QSA is in a strong financial position and this year we continued to grow on this foundation. Thanks must be expressed to our staff and volunteers who have provided an exceptional level of support to all our members and particularly those who have experienced a difficult stoma journey. The number of ostomates for whom we provided Stoma Appliance Scheme support during 2023/24 financial year was 4,527. QSA also supports a number of people who choose to purchase products through their NDIS or aged care package, or are self funded.

Support Activities

Our mission is to support persons who have had ostomy surgery to take control of their own stoma care and return to wellbeing. 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 2023/24 year through the Stoma Appliance Scheme (the SAS) which was 26,940 orders. These orders were assembled from a range of over 3,500 ostomy products available through the SAS. The work in registering members orders, receiving the items requested from over 20 different national supply companies, allocating the supplies to member parcels and dispatching them on a monthly basis requires an efficient and cost-effective operation. This work must be done in a timely manner, ensuring 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.

The expenditure incurred in the running of QSA this year was \$982,171 and we expect that this will exceed one million dollars in the financial year moving 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 \$1,251,691. The majority of these costs were incurred in delivering services to the Commonwealth Government to enable it to meet its statutory Medicare obligations in the supply of appliances under the SAS. This partnership with the government provides world class ostomy supplies which are a credit to the scheme. Unfortunately, the government continues to undervalue the work undertaken by stoma associations and does not pay a fair and reasonable share of the operating costs, having last year contributed only \$319,307, which is less than 30% of the costs we incurred in providing this service. Members collectively paid a total co-contribution of \$331,861(31.2%). Part of the resultant shortfall was funded by the use of volunteers who provided an equivalent labour value for the scheme on behalf of QSA of \$269,520 (25.3%). The balance of our Scheme operating costs were funded by cross subsidisations from our other association activities.

The government has been aware of this underfunding since 2002, when this was highlighted in their own internal review. The underfunding has steadily increased and since 2019, through our national association, we have been asking for the government to deliver a fairer share of the costs so that we do not have to subsidise operations, and we can use our volunteers to provide wider and more comprehensive member support. Sadly the government has continued to ignore these requests, taking advantage of the contribution by our hard-working volunteers and the financial subsidy which we provide.

Queensland Emergency Ostomate Support Service

This innovative and effective program sponsored by QSA and undertaken in partnership with the Queensland Department of Health provides emergency out-of-hours 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 associations business hours. Between the hours of 8am and 7pm, using a dedicated emergency number, any ostomate that resides in Queensland can access a small quantity of emergency stoma supplies, sufficient to provide cover to an ostomate until they can contact their association or medical professional. These emergency supplies can either be collected from a Brisbane location or posted via Express Post satchel. 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 became more widely advertised. This service could not be delivered without funding provided by the Queensland Department of Health and they have recently renewed arrangements, ensuring that the service can be provided for the next 5 years.

QSA Member Ordering Portal

The QSA developed Member portal is being now used by the majority of QSA members to facilitate the lodgement and progress tracking of orders. This facility can be accessed via the Members 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 confirm the dispatch of their order. All QSA members, with computer access, are encouraged to order via the Portal. New and existing members are being advised of the benefits it provides and are encouraged to use the Portal as the best method of placing an order for SAS appliances.

The benefits of the Portal have been recognised Australia wide to the extent that arrangements have now been made with our national association for the Portal to be made available to all Australian ostomates and it has already been adopted by another three associations. The Portal is a QSA initiative and it is through the work of our former QSA staff member and IT specialist Kevin Barry, our Manager Kylie McGrory and our assistant IT staff member Brian Storey who, together with extensive input from our experienced staff developed the Portal to a level which provides an outstanding member ordering standard. QSA's contribution to ostomates nationally is a source of pride in our achievements.

Our contribution to the welfare of ostomates nationally has been further supported in that we continue to provide facilities for the national association's IT support team, ensuring that the national claims system (SAMS) and the Portal can continue to be developed, meeting the future needs of ostomates and the SAS.

Appreciation of the contribution of staff and volunteers

I 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 McGrory 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 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.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D Munro'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

David Munro
Chairperson, Queensland Stoma Association Ltd