

Chairperson's Report for the Financial Year Ended 20 June 2025

The Financial Year Ended 30 June 2025 was another successful year for QSA with 5,076 unique ostomates for whom we provided support. This includes all members claiming under the Stoma Appliance Scheme plus others we support through our NDIS program and our after-hours support program. 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.

Support Activities

Our mission is to assist persons who have had ostomy surgery take control of their own stoma care and their 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 2024/25 year under the Stoma Appliance Scheme (the SAS). This year a total of 27,811 members orders were processed, which were assembled from a range of over 4,000 ostomy products available through the SAS. The work in registering these orders, receiving the items requested from 22 different national supply companies, allocating the supplies to members parcels and dispatching them each month 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 \$1,028,305 and this is the first time our expenditure has exceeded one million dollars. Most 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 \$322,795, whereas our members collectively paid a total co-contribution of \$338,735. The balance of our Scheme operating costs was funded by subsidisations from our other association activities.

The government has been aware of this underfunding for over 20 years, when this was highlighted in their own internal review in 2002. 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 continues 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 the emergency number, any ostomate

that resides in Queensland can arrange for 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 five 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 from 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, 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 it is the best method of ordering compared to post.

The benefits of the Portal have been recognised Australia wide to the extent that its use has been adopted by three other associations with several more planning to implement their Portal next Financial Year. 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 Bryan Storey who, together with extensive input from our experienced staff developed the Portal to a level which provides an outstanding member ordering standard and is now receiving Australia wide acclaim and adoption. 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.

Discontinuation of STN clinic

This year saw the retirement of our Stoma Nurse Helleen Purdy after 9 years of loyal service. Her retirement provided us an opportunity to review the availability of community based STN support services in Queensland and it was determined that there is now a sufficient number of services available for members to access on either a free basis (hospitals, supplier STN's) or paid basis (community nursing services that offer stoma support services). We have therefore decided not to replace Helleen but have developed a Stoma Nurse referral pathway process instead.

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 McGrory our manager has 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', with a stylized, cursive script.

David Munro

Chairperson

Queensland Stoma Association Ltd