

## **CEO Report – AGM 2021**

2020 was a devastating year for many. We saw many more lives shattered through loss of life, loss of businesses and loss of livelihoods throughout the once in 100-year pandemic that was and is COVID.

At this time last year, the Association was preparing for a significant hit and a setback in some of the great work that had been built through the merger process. To the Association leadership's credit our focus turned to what we could do to minimise the impact on members, many of whom were facing the uncertainty and potential decimation of their practises.

The Association moved quickly and cancelled three planned conferences in Queensland, Victoria and the offshore Bali event targeted at our WA members, and all other face to face CPD was likewise postponed or cancelled. What was expected to be a three-month hiatus, has become a far greater disruption than any of the pundits could have predicted.

All Association staff were quickly working from home and the organisation had transitioned from an office-based workplace to a remote workplace.

Whilst many members' practices were affected, health and healthcare was largely dealt with initially as an essential service and many members continued treatment as usual as possible.

It was however 2020 that highlighted the value of our Association and many of the decisions made in the years leading to the crisis that was COVID. The sole focus of the Association was supporting the members and the profession.

Apart from reorienting many of the face-to-face service offerings such as CPD, the Association became a critical source of accurate, reliable information for the membership and many of the broader profession at a time when the profession was looking for certainty and clarity.

Member fees were reduced by 25% in recognition of the need to provide relief. This came with an increase in services including more regular communication, discounted online and

hybrid CPD, the renegotiation of member professional indemnity and public liability insurance that saw a 40% reduction in premiums, a rebrand to a more contemporary APodA brand that has been very well received and access to an industry-first member assistance program which enabled any member to access counselling free of charge, no questions asked. Couple this with increased access to our member HR Service, and the members responded. We had an increase of membership in the 2020/21 year of over 22%, which now sits at 3233 including about 600 students and new graduates. This is more members than ever. We saw record numbers at our online events and an extremely positive response to many of the communications and messaging. In all, the membership and the Association made the best of what was shaping up to be a very grim year.

I'm very proud of what the Association has achieved throughout 2020. This includes our advocacy, our CPD, our member services, our conferences, through to our marketing, to our publications, to our administration and financial management. It is abundantly obvious to me that we serve the membership and the profession with passion and pride to ultimately deliver excellent value. I'm grateful that the membership continue to vote with their feet through not only joining, but engaging in APodA activities in ever increasing numbers.

I'd like to thank my fabulous team who deserve every accolade for their skill, their willingness and the collaboration in the interest of serving the members. They deserve enormous credit for grasping the challenges that have been put before them. They're truly a very dedicated and committed group and I want them to know they are very appreciated.

In finishing I'd also like to also convey my thanks to the board of the directors for their continued support and their unwavering leadership of the Association. They are a remarkably positive, committed and supportive group of people who work exceedingly hard, in addition to their demanding roles outside of the Association, to ensure the stability of the Association and the best for the profession.

And finally, thanks to you the membership for your ongoing commitment and support of the Association in the advancement of the podiatry profession. I look forward to continuing to serve you in the years to come.