



Australasian Society of Clinical and Experimental Pharmacologists and Toxicologists

ASCEPT STRATEGIC PLAN 2016-2020

Towards the Next 50 Years

Message from the Board

The *Strategic Plan 2016-2020: Towards the Next 50 Years*, outlines the Board's vision and strategies to ensure ASCEPT remains relevant, maintains its status as the premier pharmacology and toxicology society in Australasia by retaining current members and providing opportunities for all levels of potential members while ensuring a sustainable Society.

In November 1966, the Steering Committee of Garth McQueen, Robert Whelan, Kevin Higgins, Ralph Howard, Bernard Lake and Neville Percy met to establish the Australasian Society of Clinical and Experimental Pharmacologists (ASCEP – Toxicologists were added in 1990), they could not have envisaged that it would evolve over 50 years into the premier toxicology and pharmacology society in the Asia-Pacific region. The first scientific meeting, with a total of 47 (basic pharmacology) papers delivered, was held in November 1967 at the University of Melbourne.

Fifty years on, the present members of ASCEPT continue to generate world class research and provide leadership of Departments of Pharmacology and Toxicology and Schools of Pharmacy around the globe. The Society has a strong relationship with both the pharmaceutical industry and government. Its members provide numerous representations to State and Commonwealth Departments of Health, the Therapeutic Goods Administration, and National Prescribing Service. Many national and international boards and (government) working parties benefit from having ASCEPT members providing expert input. ASCEPT has been a constituent and voting member of the International Unions of Pharmacology and Toxicology (IUPHAR and IUTOX, respectively) for many years, and maintains strong membership of key committees of both entities. This demonstrates that ASCEPT continues to be relevant to education, industry and government both nationally and globally.

The last decade has seen significant change for ASCEPT. In 2016, the membership approved the new constitution. The change of Council to Board means that although ASCEPT remains a learned society, it is now a Company, and Board Members are bound by company law to ensure the appropriate management. The Global Financial Crisis impacted heavily on the financial reserves of ASCEPT, resulting in the Board making the difficult decision to reduce incentives for members, in particular grants for travel and attendance at the flagship Annual Scientific Meeting. The Board is delighted to report that such measures and recent dividends from the Australian Medicines Handbook have stabilised our financial status.

Mission

ASCEPT seeks to advance health by promoting education and research in pharmacology and toxicology and the application of these two practices.

Our Values

The pursuit of knowledge and advancement of health, collegiality, cooperation and innovation within the disciplines of pharmacology and toxicology

Our Goals are to

1. promote the advancement of health, development and effective safe use of medicines through research and education.
2. position ASCEPT as the premier Society for research, education and training in the disciplines of pharmacology and toxicology.
3. build and maintain ASCEPT's profile as the key Society for advocacy of clinical and experimental pharmacologists and toxicologists in Australasia, and
4. position ASCEPT as a respected, authoritative and valued independent source of advice on (or contributor to) policy development in Australasia and globally in the disciplines of pharmacology and toxicology.

Strategic Plan Overview

In order to achieve its mission, ASCEPT's focus will include:-

1. Engagement
2. Research
3. Education
4. Advocacy
5. Sustainability

Engagement

Membership of ASCEPT is highly valued and is the most important part of the organisation. Member support and participation in ASCEPT initiatives and activities is crucial for the sustainability and success of ASCEPT. In turn, members of ASCEPT need to see and realise benefit for their contributions to ASCEPT. It is the role of the ASCEPT Board to seek and facilitate the activities of members to promote pharmacology and toxicology and ultimately the advancement of health. ASCEPT, its mission, values and goals have to be seen as relevant, beneficial and worthwhile for its members.

Objective

ASCEPT will deliver services to achieve its mission and goals

Strategies

1. Seek and facilitate strategic opportunities for ASCEPT members, including:

- communicate opportunities for members to actively participate in the organisation
 - communicate opportunities for members to actively participate in ASCEPT Annual Scientific Meetings (ASMs)
 - encourage members to nominate (including self-nominate) for awards both within and outside ASCEPT
 - encourage members to nominate (including self-nominate) ASCEPT Committees
 - nominate and endorse members of national and international Committees
2. Communicate effectively with the membership, including:
 - distribute, timely and relevant information
 - research and implement the optimal use of technology to meet changing members' needs and expectations, as well as increase the efficiency of the organisation.
 3. Ensure adequate resources for member initiatives
 - provide avenues for feedback on services from new, ongoing and exiting members.
 4. Maintain a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship that encourages development of new services, together with timely review of those services while attracting new members and allowing for retention of existing members

Key Performance Indicators

- Improved level of satisfaction ratings by members of ASCEPT in the services and benefits provided
- Increased numbers of members involved in ASCEPT activities
- Positive membership retention

Research

Key to the success of ASCEPT and its ability to contribute to the advancement of health is the ability of its members to carry out leading research in basic and clinical pharmacology and toxicology. It is important that our members have the opportunity to present their research findings in high profile formats including plenary and symposia presentations. In turn these will contribute to career development, recognition and funding opportunities. Our annual scientific meetings are the showcase of our Society for research. They are an important nurturing ground for early career researchers.

Objective

To promote excellence in research

Strategies

1. Organise scientific meetings, including the ASM that promote and showcase excellence in basic and clinical pharmacology and toxicology research
2. Provide opportunities for members to give plenary and symposia presentations
3. Nurture and promote early career researchers through opportunities and awards (particularly the Garth McQueen Prize and Denis Wade Johnson & Johnson New Investigators Award)
4. Nominate members to give high profile presentations at scientific meetings
5. Promote representation on pharmacology and toxicology funding policy committees (particularly National Competitive Grant and Fellowship Schemes), and

6. Recognise and promote (internally and externally) the research achievements of ASCEPT members

Key Performance Indicators

- Increased availability of plenary and symposium presentations for ASCEPT members at the ASM and other meetings
- Increased attendance at Annual Scientific Meetings
- Increased scientific meetings supported

Education

The nurturing of the 'next generation' of pharmacologists and toxicologists, the future of our Society, is a part of the society's culture. It is hoped that an increased influence of teaching and education of pharmacology and toxicology at undergraduate level should translate to increased numbers of postgraduate students and ultimately full members. 'Success' at postgraduate level increases the possibility of securing postdoctoral positions. The importance of Education was recognized in the strategic plan (2010-2015) resulting in the establishment of the Education Forum and appointment of the Chair of the Forum to the ASCEPT Board ex officio. The draft new Constitution records the existence of the Education Forum and appointment of the Chair as a Director of the Board. The Royal College of Physicians delegates the training of Clinical Pharmacologists to the Advanced Training Committee (ATC) which is a formal body of ASCEPT. The Chair of the ATC is an "ex officio" member of the ASCEPT Board and is recognised in the draft new Constitution.

Objectives

- promote pharmacology and toxicology education
- promote training of clinical pharmacologists

Recommendations

1. Promote the teaching of pharmacology and toxicology in Universities by pharmacologists and toxicologists
2. Advancing career progression of pharmacology and toxicology educators through endorsement and advocacy
3. Advocate for increased numbers of training positions for Clinical Pharmacologists.
4. Encourage ongoing involvement and influence in university program development.
5. Provide relevant, accessible and evidence-based learning opportunities that inspire members to excel and progress their teaching careers
6. Provide high quality learning opportunities, resources and education through events (including teaching- and curriculum-focussed workshops and symposia).
7. Support initiatives to develop translational training for pharmacologists and toxicologists, particularly in entrepreneurship and innovation.

Key Performance Indicators

- Increased attendance of students at Annual Scientific Meetings
- Increased Clinical Pharmacology training positions
- Increases in membership
- Development of position statements and clinical practice guidelines of value to members
- Active ongoing involvement and influence in university program development
- Increased number of position statements relating to curricula
- Establish translational training workshop component of ASM

Advocacy

ASCEPT is the leading society in Australasia for the representation of pharmacologists and toxicologists. ASCEPT is recognised by the Australian Academy of Sciences, international organisations (IUPHAR and IUTOX), and numerous government and other professional bodies. To maintain this position, ASCEPT needs to be proactive in advocating for its members to be appointed to these bodies as well as associated committees as representatives of ASCEPT. ASCEPT needs to ensure it has a 'voice' that speaks to issues of relevance and concern.

Objective

- to maintain and strengthen ASCEPTs position as the leading Society that represents pharmacologists and toxicologists through advocacy

Strategies

1. Proactively support and promote the discipline of pharmacology and toxicology
2. Support and endorse ASCEPT member participation on external committees
3. Provide evidence-based position statements relevant to pharmacology and toxicology (to government and industry)

Key Performance Indicators

- increased member participation on external committees and other bodies (particularly those related to research funding and medicines policy)
- increased number of evidence-based position statements in key areas of pharmacology and toxicology

Sustainability

The ability of ASCEPT to meet its objectives, to represent pharmacologists and toxicologists in Australasia, to provide services to members and the broader community, depends on continued financial stability. The strategic plan (2010-2015) recognised that expenditure was exceeding membership and investment income and accordingly made priority recommendations. Annual income steadily increased since 2010, due largely to increases in membership fees. Expenditure increased at an even greater rate, necessitating the selling of ASCEPT resources. The asset portfolio of ASCEPT was eroded by approximately 50% since 2009-2010. This trend the financial stability of ASCEPT and led the

board to make tough financial changes. The ASCEPT Board will need to continue to make financially responsible decisions to ensure the future of ASCEPT.

Objectives

- to return ASCEPT to a more secure financial position

Strategies

- separate ASCEPT ASM, other meetings and operational budgets
- budget ASMs and other meetings to run on a cost neutral basis
- suspend *ASCEPT sponsored* prize money associated with ASCEPT awards until the financial situation permits
- identify and reduce ASCEPT running costs
- continue to hold joint conferences with APSA and MPGPCR (which has resulted in cost neutral/profitable meetings over the last three years)
- seek multi-year sponsorship of both the Society and the ASM
- underwrite conference of international standing with a proven record of cost benefit to the society
- achieve charity status (allowing for additional return on AMH investments in the form of reduced franking costs)

Key Performance Indicators

- cost neutral/profitable annual scientific meetings
- return to a more financially stable position