



The Australian Council of Stoma Associations Inc.

Patron: His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd)
ABN 12 516 756 556

ASPOA Conference 2017

Australia's Country Report

Australian ostomates are blessed by having one of the best, if not the best, ostomy support schemes in the world. Through the Stoma Appliance Scheme the Australian Government provides a wide range of products ostomates can use to better manage their condition and allow greater participation in society and the workforce. These products are provided free of charge through 22 regional stoma associations across Australia.

Approximately 43,000 people with stomas access the scheme products through their local association each year. These 22 association collectively form the Australian Council of Stoma Associations (ACSA). As the national peak body, it is the role of ACSA to liaise with government departments, ostomy product suppliers and associated and related groups on behalf of all ostomy associations. It also provides an advocacy and information service to its 22 affiliated associations.

Great Comebacks program

The Great Comebacks program which originated in the USA over 30 years ago and has since spread to many other countries throughout the world has finally made it to Australia and New Zealand. The Great Comebacks program enables people living with Crohn's, ulcerative colitis, colorectal cancer or an ostomy to share their story to inspire others who are facing these diseases or transitioning to life after surgery. The program is coordinated by Convatec and support by the Australian Council of Stoma Associations, Federation of New Zealand Ostomy Societies, The Australian Association of Stomal Therapy Nurses, Bowel Cancer Australia and Mitrofanoff Support Australia.

A gala dinner was held in early March 2017 to present Erin Goodwin as the first Great Comebacks Australia and New Zealand recipient. Erin's story was judged to be the "greatest comeback" from the 31 inspiring stories submitted.

Proposed changes to the Stoma Appliance Scheme

2015 and 2016 were eventful years for the Australian Council of Stoma Associations because of the Australian Government's announcement that one of its 2015 budget saving initiatives was to establish a panel of suppliers for one piece colostomy & urostomy pouches. For a product to be available through this panel arrangement the suppliers of these one-piece products were required to participate in a competitive tender. This announcement raised considerable concern with not just within the ostomate community but with the suppliers themselves.

During the tender ACSA spend considerable time advising the Department of Health of the diverse stoma product needs of ostomates and the vital importance of retaining adequate product choice. Because of this dialog the tender was modified considerably from its original form and ultimately the government decided that the existing supply arrangements would continue, effectively cancelling the tender. This was an incredible win for ACSA on behalf of Australian ostomates.

Australia Fund

For over 15 years the Australian Council of Stoma Associations through **The Australia Fund** has been providing assistance to ostomates in countries where they have serious difficulties or hardships in obtaining or affording basic ostomy supplies.

The fund seeks to provide effective practical assistance to disadvantaged ostomates anywhere in the world by donating basic ostomy appliances, training stoma therapy nurses and other medical professionals in stoma care and fostering development of local self-help facilities.

In the last 12 months, the Australia Fund has continued to provide ongoing assistance to:

- Indonesia (2 locations)
- Philippines (3 locations)
- Papua New Guinea
- Fiji
- Malaysia
- Mongolia
- East Timor
- Kenya (5 locations)

These existing projects which are being actively supported by association coordinators are progressing well however some of the above destinations have lost their local coordinator and delays have occurred in getting details of replacements and ensuring they are familiar with Australia Fund procedures.

David Munro

Vice President

Australian Council of Stoma Associations Inc.