

President's Report: ANZAHPE AGM 2020

Chinthaka Balasooriya – ANZAHPE President

This report is written at an extraordinary time, with unprecedented global events unfolding around us. COVID-19 has impacted on all aspects of our lives and ANZAHPE has had to bear its fair share of the burden. Activities in 2020 have been significantly impacted by COVID-19 and the pandemic response, and this is in stark contrast to the significant progress made in 2019. This report aims to capture the progress made in 2019 and 2020, noting the key changes that occurred in 2020, with a final reflection on our overall position.

Highlights

The year 2019 was an incredibly productive year for ANZAHPE. We set an ambitious agenda for ourselves and made significant progress, building on a strategic planning process that commenced in 2018. This gave us a structure to undertake some strategic initiatives, with the primary aim of enhancing health professional education. These initiatives were underpinned by the enduring values of ANZAHPE. These key initiatives are summarised below:

1. The ANZAHPE research grant scheme was further enhanced and the funding pool was progressively increased to \$18,000 in 2019 and \$25,000 in 2020. There has been a resultant increase in the number and quality of applications.
2. The ANZAHPE Fellowship scheme continues to go from strength to strength. Our numbers have now grown to include 26 Fellows and 28 Associate Fellows. The wonderful work done by Gary Rogers and the fellowship committee deserves special mention, while also noting the Julie Ash has taken over as the new chair since May 2020.
3. Early in 2019 an agreement was reached with the 'Securing Interprofessional Futures' (SIF) project to set up an IPE knowledge repository, to host IPE resources relevant to Australia and New Zealand. An editorial board (led by Margo Brewer) was established, to review resources that are submitted to this repository. The repository is now live and can be accessed at: <https://nexusipe.org/informing/resource-center/anzahpe>
4. In 2020, we entered into an agreement to extend this agreement, with additional funding of \$39,800
5. The ANZAHPE website was revamped using a platform offering much enhanced functionality for networking amongst members and includes an updated member management system.
6. A CoM portfolio to focus on professional development was established. This was a timely initiative, as the portfolio has played a key role in the ANZAHPE response to the cancellation of our 2020 conference. Joy Rudland led the PD team to design a series of monthly professional development activities for ANZAHPE members, and the program was launched on the 12th of July 2020, with preliminary feedback indicating that it has been very well received.
7. Links with key international associations have been strengthened. Close links have been established with AMEE and IAMSE, and discussions are underway to explore reciprocal benefits for members. AMEE has already made a generous offer to ANZAHPE members, with discounted registration at the AMEE 2020 virtual conference.

Challenges

The key challenges that ANZAHPE faced in 2020, related to the need to cancel the 2020 conference due to the pandemic response. The conference is a significant source of revenue for ANZAHPE, along with sponsorship revenue that aligns with the event. The cancellation of the conference will result in a loss of a significant component of this revenue, with some limited sponsorship likely to continue. An additional loss relates to forward payments that have been made in relation to the conference. We are continuing to pursue all avenues available to minimise our losses and maximise benefits, via the finance subcommittee that has been set up. An additional challenge is posed by the renewal of membership that is often linked to conference registration. We are anticipating a drop in membership numbers in the absence of the conference and are in contact with the membership to encourage continuation of membership. A key strategy for 2020 is to ensure that we provide enhanced membership benefits to promote a spirit of generosity during these difficult times and highlight the value of ANZAHPE membership. The newly launched professional development program, the IPE knowledge repository and the reciprocal benefits that are being negotiated with AMEE and IAMSE, are examples of how we intend to add value to ANZAHPE membership.

The global situation continues to be uncertain. While Australia and New Zealand appear to be fairing better than most countries, recent events demonstrate that situations continue to be very volatile. This makes forward planning quite challenging and places some pressure on how we might prepare for the future conferences. The uncertainties around international travel and the severe restrictions on travel budgets, create many uncertainties around the feasibility of face-to-face conferences in the future.

Strategies to address challenges

ANZAHPE CoM are considering the above issues and have prepared a draft working plan: 'Preparing for a new reality'. This plan draws on the 2018-2019 strategic plan but sets out a course to address priority areas through a renewed structure. The structure includes the setting up of subcommittees to address the critical issues around finances and professional development, with the ANZAHPE executive group tasked with managing the conference related matters, along with the newly appointed conference liaison office, Ben Canny. This structure recognises how the finance and PD activities intersect with the conference planning activities. The subcommittee structure is working well and will be expanded to drive other strategic priorities forward.

Reflections on overall position

In summary, ANZAHPE continues to be in a viable position even within the context of global upheaval, due to the healthy financial position and strong base that was built over recent years. The losses in 2020 are significant, but they are inevitable in light of the pandemic, and are in line with the losses being experienced by other organisations nationally and internationally. Cost reduction measures are being implemented wherever possible and significant effort is being directed to minimise losses. The subcommittee structure is working well and is producing good results. The launch of the professional development program and the IPE knowledge repository are key initiatives, and the revamped website is offering enhanced connectivity to members. The strengthened relationships with AMEE and IAMSE offer many new and exciting opportunities.

I assure you that the ANZAHPE Committee of Management remains committed to serving the association to the best of its ability during these uncertain times.