

A Message from Mary Egan, your General Manager

Another year has flown by! In the last financial year we supplied 7,883 individual members through the Stoma Appliance Scheme (SAS). We signed up 1,641 new ostomates to the SAS and prepared 51,227 orders with Medicare paying us \$17,846,987 (plus 2.75% handling fee). An average order is valued at approximately \$348 each--that's a lot of statistics and a lot of money. I hope every one of you feel you received value from both the Stoma Appliance Scheme and NSW Stoma. Our staff and volunteers work hard to give you the best possible service and process your orders as quickly and as accurately as we can. While the 2.75% from Medicare doesn't come close to covering the cost of getting those products to you, your membership fees and postage fees help make up the shortfall.

The generous donations we receive allow us to offer all the other services we couldn't otherwise provide. These include our in-person education days, our stomal therapy clinic with the fabulous Anne Marie Lyons, our STN Scholarship (with special thanks to the Penn Foundation), monthly Zoom meetings, information and resources on our website and of course--our journal. We have also seen a big increase in the number of members needing financial assistance. The last few years have been difficult for many but because of the generosity of those who can, we are able to offer subsidies to those who can't afford it so that all ostomates have access to the vital supplies they need. Thank you!

Last October we introduced our online member portal which many of you are now using to place your orders. The portal allows you to see your past orders and products you've previously used, and you can pay your postage and membership fees there too. The feedback is very positive: order anywhere, anytime. In September more than 35% of our orders came through the portal and we hope to increase this by adding more features while keeping it simple and user-friendly. If you haven't tried it, I highly recommend it--you can register using your email address, surname and member number. The portal is for your convenience, but it also helps us streamline the ordering process. Once we approve your portal order it is automatically entered to our warehouse management system without any extra keying. This means less errors and a faster turnaround for your orders. For those who prefer not to use online ordering, we'll continue to take your orders in whatever format is most convenient for you. Please be aware that due to Medicare regulations we do need to receive your orders in writing.

In partnership with Ostomy NSW (our sister organization), we conducted 3 Ostomy Information and Education Days in 2024. We went to Ballina in June and Orange in September. As I write this we are planning our day in Penrith on 22nd November. These days are made possible with the support of our major suppliers and our local Stomal Therapy Nurses. The days also include talks by ostomates, telling their personal stories with humour and grace and they never fail to inspire us.

This year we also said farewell to two long-term staff members, Diane Habib and Greg Spencer. Greg worked in our warehouse for 13 years and his smiling face is certainly missed by all of us. Diane worked in both our warehouse and administrative team for over 20 years and we saw her become a mother—now she's a grandmother! I'm thankful to have such passionate & dedicated staff and hope they are both having a wonderful retirement.

While we're on the topic of our hard-working team I can't forget to acknowledge the wonderful work of our volunteers. If you've ever collected an order from our Stanmore office you might know these friendly and familiar faces! As a member-led organisation, having volunteers who are also ostomates is a key principle of NSW Stoma. We're endlessly thankful for the volunteers who donate their time and energy and keep this organization running. We couldn't do it without you. That includes our hard-working board of directors and the wonderful & clever Paula Garrod who puts this magazine together. Thank You!

Mary Egan

General Manager