



President's Report

The last 12 months has seen some radical changes at Ostomy Association of Melbourne. We have gone from keeping a full stock of appliances to the just in time system of stock control. This involved re-educating our members and the stomal therapy nurses who had come to expect their needs to be available immediately. I am delighted to report that within a couple of months the vast majority of our members and STNs were accepting of our new procedure for ordering. Just in time ordering resulted in a radical reduction in stock levels.

We also moved our mail requirements to eParcel with Australia Post. This required a few changes in our despatch area and a bit of training of our staff and volunteers to ensure that the correct addresses we inputted to the Australia Post system. The move to eParcel has meant that we have a much better knowledge of the movement of our deliveries and fewer 'lost' parcels.

For members who used to come in and place their order and receive their supplies over the counter, we have developed new notification system. When orders are ready for collection the information is given to reception to put a note on the member's file and we then send an SMS message telling the member that their supplies are ready for collection. This of course required the collection of mobile phone numbers, an exercise that took a couple of months. This system has dramatically reduced the number of incoming calls, most of which had been from members enquiring if their goods were ready for collection.

One of the major by-products of our new ordering system was the consequential reduction in stock levels and increase in our bank balance. As a result we have been able to pay off our mortgage and have sufficient to ensure that we can operate with appropriate staff levels. You might recall that last year we gained several new recruits to our committee. Peter Myers who has had extensive experience in the not for profit area. He is also an accountant and, as with Efrem, brings accounting knowledge to improve our operating procedures. Robert Jackson has assumed the role of honorary secretary to the committee. Robert has brought his not for profit experience in governance as well as an extensive knowledge of all things relating to human resources, from hiring to appropriate pay for staff and dealing with other staff issues. We also recruited Wendy Sansom who has joined us as an honorary member of the committee. She brings with her a history of involvement with stoma care, being one of the most experienced stomal therapists in Victoria. She has provided the link between OAM and the stomal therapy profession.

Our new treasurer, Efrem Goldhammer OAM is a well known tax accountant. He is also very well known for his experience in fundraising, especially for the Royal Childrens Hospital in Melbourne. He has provided new insights in fundraising which have encouraged our members to show their gratitude for the service that we provide by making tax deductible donations to OAM. Efrem has taken a fresh look at our stock levels as well as our staffing.

None of the achievements that have occurred at OAM could have been achieved without the wonderful staff and volunteers who work with and for us. In particular we are so fortunate to have the leadership of our manager Sue Read who has overseen the changes and the smooth running of OAM. Sue maintains a calmness that assures staff and members alike ensuring that no one leaves the association wanting for supplies even under the most trying of circumstances.

Sue is joined by her assistant manager, Hermione Agee, who also looks after our internal IT issues. Upstairs Sue is joined by Genevieve Slattery who has been a volunteer and staff member for 27 or more years. Lyn Rhodes works full time processing orders for us and has developed a rapport with many of our members. Always running and always accommodating of a grumpy old president!!! Cheryl Ferguson works part time processing and also sometimes assists downstairs in the warehouse. She has that peculiar calmness and purposefulness that comes with her background as a nurse.

Front of house at OAM is very capably looked after by Lindy McDonald, a new recruit to OAM. She has taken to her role like a duck to water.

Back of house we have Phillip Roberts supervising the warehouse. He brings from the commercial sphere great methods and abilities to supervise both staff and more than 50 volunteers. Phillip has the expert assistance of Jan Friend, George Ferguson and Liz Cahill. During busy times two students Alistair Read and Tim Richardson assist us, in the warehouse. Finally I must mention and thank our stomal therapy nurse Andrea Farrugia who works with us two days a week. She is well known and respected in the stomal therapy profession and has been with us for seven and a half years.

OAM would not be able to operate with the high standards without the assistance of our cohort of volunteers. They are a wonderful group.

The last twelve months has seen our assistant manager Hermione Agee focus her time getting the new computer programme SAMS up and running not only for us but also for ACSA, we being the first association to move to SAMS. She has worked methodically with the team at Innovent, the developers of SAMS as well as Geoff Rhodes on behalf of ACSA. It has been frustrating at times for Hermione and us as often one 'fix' produces different consequences. I hope we can switch over to SAMS in October or November.

Speaking of IT Efrem Goldhammer has through his son Benjamin's business, Gee Digital, become our webmaster. Our website, oam.org.au has been totally revamped with a new online ordering system.

Our support group led by a long time volunteer Ron Butler has been running smoothly during the year and I want to thank Ron for his work in this area. We have had a look at the support area and have decided to look at a programme developed by Phillip Roberts. I will ask him to explain it to you shortly.

You might remember that last year I reported on discussions that we were having with the two Block Arcade Associations with a view to amalgamation. I can now tell you that the discussions that might have led to the amalgamation of OAM, IAV and CAV have fallen over.

I want to thank the supplier companies that support us so well in many ways. I believe that we have formed excellent relationships with all of the companies, ensuring that we get treated very well. We will be looking forward to strengthening those relationships in the year to come with advertising and sponsorships. Some of these discussions have already taken place.

I also want to acknowledge the support provided by and received from the excellent stomal therapy nurses we have in Victoria.

None of the many achievements that have occurred in the last twelve months could have taken place without the leadership of our manager Sue Read. Sue's calmness in the face of the many challenges that occur on a day to day basis is an inspiration to us all. She is able to assist both staff and members alike with a professionalism and compassion that I believe comes from her background as a nurse.

Ian Samuel OAM

President

Ostomy Association of Melbourne Inc