

## President's Report for Annual General Meeting 2021

Phyllis Lau

This past year was an exceptionally difficult year for everyone. COVID-19 has threatened our health, our community, and caused disruptions in every aspect of our lives. Despite this, AAAPC continues to champion our vision for a multidisciplinary PHC-oriented health care system founded in patient-centred and primary care principles and developed through evidence and education. I want to say a big thank you to all our members who have stood alongside us over this past year and contributed to the work of AAAPC, particularly those in the subcommittees. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the Executive Committee members.

In 2020/2021, we focused on:

### Advocating for an Australian national network of practice-based research networks

Towards the end of 2020, we conducted a roundtable of stakeholders to brainstorm approaches to address the lack of funding to sustain PBRNs. This resulted in a call in March 2021 to the Melbourne Research Future Funds (MRFF) for targeted national funding to establish an effective and sustainable national network of PBRNs. The 37 signatories represent 18 PBRNs, 19 University Departments of General Practice or Primary Care, 7 member centres of the Australian Health Research Alliance, 1 research translational centre and 5 professional organisations and colleges. Since signing, another member centre of AHRA joined the group. This alliance is unprecedented and shows a unity across the key players in PC research because we recognise that a fundamental approach to transforming Australia's health and medical research requires an effective and sustainable national network. In this process, we have also worked closely with Australian Clinical Trial Alliance and are grateful for their support. A smaller core group is now formed and sits within the Academic Policy and Advocacy Subcommittee to develop governance principles and structures and financial models for the proposed national network.

AAAPC has met and will continue to meet with the relevant teams at the Department of Health – the Health and Medical Research Office, the Primary Health Care Reform Taskforce, the Allied Health and Service Integration Branch and the Health Workforce Division. **AAAPC is fully committed to advocating and enabling the development of a national network of PBRNs.**

### Participating in national policy consultations

The Executive Committee has worked hard this year to represent the interest of our members and the wider primary care academic community through active response to government's policy consultations. This year, AAAPC made valuable contribution to the Consultation Paper for the National Preventive Health Strategy 2020, the Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) Priorities 2020-2022 Consultation, the MRFF Management Review 2021 and the most recent consultation round to the Primary Health Reform Steering Group Draft Recommendations. **AAAPC continues to and will always regard advocacy for primary care research as our key role.**

### Developing policy statements

We continue to actively respond to emerging issues to keep AAAPC grounded and standing firm. This year, we have produced three AAAPC position statements on Support for Practice-Based Research Networks in Primary Health Care Research Funding, Policy for Endorsement and Distribution of Academic Initiatives, and National Support for Primary Health Care Practice-Based Research Networks. Recently hot off the press, we have produced a AAAPC policy brief on the Value of Primary Health Care Research and AAAPC's Preferred Options for Development and Investment. **AAAPC is committed to promoting a strong stance in all matters of concern to academic primary care.**

### Organising the Annual Research Conference 2021

This year's conference is only the third AAAPC conference and the second year we are doing this online, once again proving our resilience and tenacity. We have Professor Danielle Mazza, winner of 2020 Charles Bridges-Webb Medal, and Associate Professor Matire Harwood from the University of Auckland as our distinguished keynote speakers. We have oral presentations, posters, workshops and social programs. We have scholarships and prizes. **AAAPC is committed to hosting the best research conference for academic primary care in Australasia.**

### Providing webinar learning opportunities

Our webinar series is going stronger and stronger since we started in 2018. This year we managed to provide three wonderful webinar learning opportunities for members. We thank Associate Professor Lauren Ball, Professor Carl May and Dr Jean-Frederic Levesque for donating their time. These webinars were well-attended and our evaluations showed our members really appreciated them. **AAAPC is committed to increasing value for our membership.**

### Networking of early career researchers

F.A.C.E.S. continues to be a key group in AAAPC and providing many opportunities to ECRs to network and build capacities through activities and events. AAAPC has now made student membership even more affordable and has made ECRs a priority in our recent funding of the Travelling Fellowship. **AAAPC is committed to the research and career development of ECRs.**

### Engaging with New Zealand Primary Care Community

For the first time, AAAPC will be making an official appearance at the 2021 NZ Primary Care, GP & Rural Health Research Symposium on 27 August, straight after our own conference. Has taken far too long to happen, if you ask me! **AAAPC is determined and will make every effort to establish even deeper links with our colleagues across the Tasman.**

### Growing the Executive Committee

The Executives' commitment to the many causes of AAAPC this year has caused us to reflect deeply on the future of AAAPC and our own capacity to lead the association into its future. We met out-of-session on 16<sup>th</sup> March and made the decision to move to a skills-based Committee to meet future challenges. We subsequently assessed our Committee composition and developed a Committee skills matrix for the first time in AAAPC's history in late June. **I am committed to building the capacity of our new Executives based on the skill matrix after this AGM and beyond.**

Whilst the public face of AAAPC is more obvious through its advocacies and events, other work done in the background is less conspicuous but no less significant. I acknowledge therefore the contribution of a hardworking Executive Committee:

Liz Sturgiss	Vice-President
David Chua	Secretary
Chris Barton	Treasurer
Melinda Choy (up to 26 April 2021)	Newsletter Editor
Katelyn Barnes (from 27 April 2021)	
Grant Russell	Academic Policy and Advocacy Subcommittee Chair
Lauren Ball	Conference Subcommittee Chair
Rita McMorrow	ECR and Capacity Development Subcommittee Chair
Lauralie Richard (upto 21 May 2021)	Membership and Marketing Subcommittee Chair
Kristi Milley (from 22 May 2021)	
Kylie Vuong	PHC Education Subcommittee Chair
Kirsty Douglas	Immediate Past President
Lynsey Brown	Co-opted Member

Having been forced to a new normal of Zoom and Microsoft Teams so rapidly by the pandemic, it is amazing the workflow of AAAPC has not missed a beat. I have enjoyed my time this year leading AAAPC and the Executive Committee. Even though we have not seen each in-person now for over a year, we are united in our commitment to ensure AAAPC's work on behalf of its members increase in both volume and importance. I'm grateful to the Executive Committee and all AAAPC members. I am absolutely committed to another productive AAAPC year ahead.



Phyllis Lau

AAAPC President