

# THE HANDSHAKE

*The Australian Hand Surgery Society*



## NEWSLETTER

*Jeff Ecker*

This newsletter has been created to keep you informed of what is happening in the world of hand surgery in Australia.

### AHSS ONLINE FORUM

The AHSS has created an online forum for members to communicate and collaborate regarding the **MBS billing code revision**. It is an opportunity to share issues you may have encountered and for others to offer potential solutions. It can be found in the members area of the AHSS website. I encourage all members to contribute to the forum. Please do not be complacent in these challenging and dynamic times. We need to participate and provide our opinions so the Board can represent and advocate for hand surgeons in Australia.

WHAT YOU'LL FIND INSIDE:

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## Annual Scientific Meeting

Preparations are well underway for the AHSS Annual Scientific Meeting in Port Douglas, Queensland on 9-12 March 2021. We have three virtual international speakers – Elisabet Hagert, David Ring and Amy Moore. This promises to be a very stimulating, thought provoking and exciting meeting.

**Early registrations close on 4 February 2022.**

You can register via -

**<https://tayloredimages.eventsair.com/2022ahss/registration/Site/Register>**

**The closing date for abstracts has been extended to the 31st of January 2022.**

The Sheraton Grand Mirage has implemented a variety of new protocols and elevated practices in response to Covid. Social events will be held outside where possible and the AHSS will be taking all necessary steps to make this a safe in-person meeting. In accordance with Queensland government regulations, proof of vaccination is required to attend the meeting.

The Annual General Meeting will be held in the afternoon on Thursday 10 March 2022. In accordance with the constitution, **nominations for AHSS Board and Executive positions must be submitted one month prior to the AGM.** All members are welcome and encouraged to attend the Annual Scientific Meeting and Annual General Meeting.



## Sustainable Hand Surgery

Inspired by the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), held in Glasgow in November 2021, Elisabet Hagert (on behalf of the Federation of European Societies for Surgery of the Hand) has requested AHSS members complete a short survey regarding the current practice and experiences of hand surgeons in relation to sustainability. To truly evaluate what role sustainability has in our profession, responses are required from a global, not just European, audience. What role do we, as surgeons and clinicians, play in affecting our environment? How may we contribute to a more sustainable practice? What are the experiences from hand surgeons in various parts of this world? The AHSS welcomes suggestions about how we, as a group or individually, can reduce the environmental impact of hand surgery in Australia.

The results will be presented at the International Federation of Societies for Surgery of the Hand (IFSSH) conference in London in 2023 and published in an international hand surgery journal.

I encourage all members to complete the survey which can be found via the following link -

**<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SustainabilityHandSurgery>**

## MBS Billing Code Revision

The AHSS continues to liaise with the Health Department to amend unworkable descriptors within the framework of the Rapid Review Process.

A meeting was held on 23 December 2021 and attended by representatives of the AHSS, AOA and Department of Health. Representing the Australian Hand Surgery Society was Jeff Ecker, Mark Ross and Mark Baker. Representing the AOA was Dr Annette Holian (President), Adrian Cosenza (CEO), Kathy Hill (Advocacy and Governance Officer). Representing the Department of Health was Megan Keane (Principal Advisor, Medical Benefits Division of the Department of Health and Chair of the meeting), Nigel Murray, Leeann Galloway, Polly Logmans and Rebecca Jacobs.

The meeting was constructive and the Health Department appeared to hear our concerns and agreed with most of the changes recommended. This is in process and the AHSS will continue to update the membership as developments occur.

## AHSS Research Grants

Applications are open for AHSS research grants to support clinical or laboratory-based projects that are relevant to the field of hand surgery. It is anticipated that up to three grants will be awarded with a maximum funding of \$7,000 per project.

Applications must list an AHSS member as the Principal Investigator and outline the research hypothesis, objectives, background and methods and how the funds will be used. Please submit applications to [education@ahss.org.au](mailto:education@ahss.org.au) no later than **14 February 2022**.



## AHSS Travelling Fellowship

Applications for the 2023 AHSS Travelling Fellowship will close on **30 June 2022**. The successful applicant will be supported for travel, registration and accommodation expenses for a major meeting (IFSSH, APFSSH, FESSH, BSSH, ASSH) to a maximum of \$18,000.

Our 2021 guest speaker, Paco Piñal, graciously gifted his honorarium of \$2000 towards travel for a young AHSS member who would like to visit his centre in Spain in 2022 or 2023.

To apply or for more information, please email [education@ahss.org.au](mailto:education@ahss.org.au)

## Diversity in Hand Surgery

Thank you to those who responded to the AHSS **Diversity Survey**. The AHSS recognises the value of diversity within the Society and will use the information gained to continue to foster an inclusive and supportive environment for our current and future members. These results will be presented at the upcoming AHSS ASM in March.

## Covid Omicron Variant

We are facing challenging times with the cessation of elective surgery in most states due to Covid Omicron variant. We emphasise the importance of your input and comments so the AHSS can effectively represent and unite hand surgeons throughout Australia. Please send feedback and comments to [admin@ahss.org.au](mailto:admin@ahss.org.au)