



Australasian Association for
Academic Primary Care Inc.

President's Report for Annual General Meeting 2023

Phyllis Lau

As Australia (like the rest of the world) busked in relative oblivion of the self-declared “post-COVID” era in the last twelve months, AAAPC continued to champion our vision for “multidisciplinary, high-quality and equitable primary care-oriented health systems underpinned by evidence and education”. I am so proud of the dedication and achievement of the Executive Committee; and I am so humbled by the ongoing commitment and support of our members, particularly members have contributed to our hardworking Subcommittees. My sincerest thanks to everyone!

In November 2022, the Executive Committee convened in Melbourne to develop the [AAAPC Strategic Plan 2023-2025](#). We reflected on the core values that needed to guide what we do, how engage with our members and stakeholders and how we build excellence in our health system. These values are now clearly articulated: Equity, Respect, Holism, Diversity and Collaboration; and our mission is to support and advocate for the Australasian academic primary care community to improve healthcare policy and practice. The Executives, particularly the five Subcommittee Chairs, have ben tirelessly working towards achieving the KPIs in the new plan.

In 2022/2023, we focused on:

Advocacy for PHC, PHC research and Practice-Based Research Networks (PBRNs)

AAAPC continues to and will always regard advocacy for primary care research as our key role. Whilst we are seeing positive responses to our lobbying to Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF), particularly over the last 3-4 years, it is clear that ongoing advocacy needs to continue to keep PHC and PHC research on the agenda.

In August 2022, AAAPC, as did our advocates Australian Clinical Trials Alliance (ACTA) and Australian Health Research Alliance (AHRA), provided letters of support for the Building a National Primary Care Trials Network project in their submission to the MRFF 2022 National Critical Research Infrastructure Initiative. The project, involving 12 university departments of general practice and primary care as well as industrial financial partnership, had hoped to create a national network of PBRNs to enable large scale trials and cohort studies. However, amidst immense disappointment and disbelief, the bid for funding was unsuccessful. Reason for MRFF's decision not to fund a national primary care PBRN has not been clear. The Executives have taken note and will seek an explanation.

AAAPC is fully committed to advocating and enabling the development of a national network of PBRNs. I will be representing AAAPC at the Pre-WONCA meeting of the global PBRN initiative in Sydney in October 2023. The initiative involved key PBRN players and advocates from all over the world including Australia, Sweden, France, US, Netherlands, Norway, Greece and the USA. AAAPC will continue to look for opportunities to lobby for support on the challenges faced by primary care research, and the lack of substantial and sustainable funding for PBRNs.

AAAPC is committed to promoting a strong stance in all matters of concern to academic primary care. In July 2023, AAAPC responded to the [Discussion Paper: Improving alignment and coordination between the Medical Research Future Fund and the NHMRC's Medical Research Endowment Account](#). AAAPC hopes for an outcome that will offer the best balance of coordination, unification and transparency in PHC research funding in Australia.

Engagement with the international community

AAAPC is committed to increasing international networking opportunities and benefits for our members. I continued to represent AAAPC on the International Committee of the North American Primary Care Research Group (NAPCRG), and the two organisations continue to have a productive relationship. As NAPCRG potentially expands to be a more international organization, AAAPC would play a critical role and could potentially negotiate more international opportunity through NAPCRG for AAAPC members.

In October 2022, AAAPC and the UK-based Society of Academic Primary Care (SAPC) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to “collaborate in research, teaching and related academic activities on the basis of mutual benefit, with the aim of furthering international collaboration in academic primary care”. This means that we are in a much better position to negotiate UK connections and shared resources for AAAPC members and vice versa.

Increasing engagement with the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)

AAAPC will be working with RACGP to provide support and mentorship through the EMCA Mentorship Program for the GP PhD candidates to be partially funded through the RACGP Foundation. We are also in discussion about other possibilities of collaboration including joint advocacies and research funding. So, stay tuned for exciting news soon!

Engagement of early and mid career researchers (EMCRs)

AAAPC is committed to the research and career development of EMCRs. Over the past 12 months, the F.A.C.E.S. group has been reinvented into the now Early to Mid Career Academic (EMCA) group with the aim to provide opportunities not just for ECRs but also MCRs to network and build capacities. There is now the EMCA noticeboard on the AAAPC website, and we are launching the EMCA Mentorship program at the 2023 conference.

The Annual Research Conference 2023

AAAPC is committed to hosting the best research conference for academic primary care in Australasia. AAAPC 2023 Annual Research Conference (17-18 August) is our first in-person conference after three years of online conferencing. As always, we have an exciting program with special plenaries, workshops oral presentations and posters. AAAPC continues to be very humbled and grateful to all our conference sponsors. We are particularly proud to be able to continue to provide scholarships and prizes to enable as many members as possible to attend the conference.

Celebrating AAAPC 40th Anniversary – focus on increasing benefits for AAAPC members

The year 2023 marks the 40th anniversary for AAAPC. To celebrate, we focus on ‘giving back’ to the membership. At the 2023 conference, we are announcing two new Equity Awards: the AAAPC Research/Education Equity Award (to recognise AAAPC members who require financial assistance in primary care research and/or education in First Nations or underrepresented racial and ethnic groups) and the AAAPC Hardship Equity Award (to recognise AAAPC members who are experiencing financial hardship and other disadvantages to attend the AAAPC Annual Research Conference). It is our intention to demonstrate loudly and clearly AAAPC’s commitment to our core value of ‘Equity’.

Like putting on our best clothes to our birthday party, we have also paid some attention to the refreshing of the AAAPC brand in 2023. You would have noticed our new logo and the revamped and more easily navigated website earlier in the year. We hope you enjoy them! It symbolizes our commitment to continually improve to provide our best for our members.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the contribution and quiet achievement of a hardworking 2022/2023 Executive Committee:

Phyllis Lau	President
Tim Stokes	Vice-President
Dimity Pond	Secretary

Sibel Saya	Treasurer
Katelyn Barnes	Newsletter Editor
Jon Emery	Academic Policy and Advocacy Subcommittee Chair
Renee Fiolet and Lynsey Brown	Conference Subcommittee Co-Chairs
Jessica Botfield	ECR Subcommittee Chair
Shakira Onwuka and Flora Hui	Membership Engagement Subcommittee Co-Chairs
Kylie Vuong	PHC Education Subcommittee Chair
Kirsty Douglas	Immediate Past President

This is my last report written as AAAPC President. I consider it an honour to have been able to serve in this capacity over the last three years. I have enjoyed leading AAAPC and the Executive Committee. Along the way, I have made some enemies but, gladly, many more friends. I wish AAAPC the best and brightest future. I have no doubt that it will continue to impact Australian and New Zealand academic primary care!

Happy anniversary to everyone, particularly those who have seen the ups and downs of AAAPC over the years! We've made it to 40. Let's look forward together to another 40 years!



Phyllis Lau

AAAPC President (2020/2021- 2022/2023)