2019 at a glance

We assisted more than 3,600 people and organisations on Pain Link to find information and support across Australia.

Our 26 community based Pain Support Groups held 286 meetings in 2019.

We distributed health information, resources and updates via our quarterly Wellbeing newsletters, website, social media and guest presentations.
YEAR IN REVIEW

The Australian Pain Management Association Ltd (APMA) had a productive year in 2019. Our two part-time staff and large volunteer team, including the APMA Board, work hard to provide good governance, and our volunteers offer timely and wide-ranging support to enable the Australian public to access information and resources to help manage chronic pain.

The year ahead looks upbeat with increased funding. We congratulate the Healthcare Improvement Unit, Queensland Health for their foresight in recognising the high needs of people living with chronic pain and we commend Queensland Health for continuing to invest in our work.

Thank you to all of our supporters and particularly our volunteers, members and health teams - we look forward to working with you in 2020 and beyond.

David Winter
Chairperson
STRATEGY ONE

Support the public health system with innovative, affordable, front-line community based services and support including the Pain Link helpline, social media and Pain Support Groups.

The Pain Link helpline statistics indicate that APMA continues to receive high call numbers, on average 120 calls per month. Email requests for support are approximately 42 per month. APMA forwards approximately 20 emails per month to Pain Support Group Facilitators. The Facilitators then offer localised guidance to consumers. The most common topic continues to be how to effectively manage chronic pain.

Our social media approach is aimed at sharing health resources and opportunities that assist people to take action to improve their health. This is best-practice in pain management because it encourages individuals to be the drivers of their own rehabilitation. We are expanding our reach across multiple social media platforms.

One example of our posts encouraging self-management:

*I Work Out Every Day to Feel Better, Not to Lose Weight*

"People who had joined a support group often felt that the greatest benefit was the mutual understanding of what it is like to live with chronic pain."

Discover more about the different Pain Support Group options available both online in the community on the NHS Healthtalk website.

📍 Find your own local APMA PSG here: bit.ly/2rulwPc #yourAPMA

What does your PSG help with most?
(Top 5 responses)

Answered: 94  Skipped: 0

- Difficulty accepting chronic pain
- Low mood
- Problems communicating chronic pain to family and friends
- Fear of pain flare ups
- Problems communicating chronic pain to GP or other health professional

What is important about your PSG?
(tick all that apply)

Answered: 93  Skipped: 1

- People understand my pain
- I don’t have to explain myself
- Information is useful
- I often learn useful tools
- I enjoy being with others who also have chronic pain
- The facilitator/s is caring and supportive
- It gets me out of the house
- Other (please specify)
To ensure an effective online presence, APMA utilizes the voluntary services of Mike Dickson. Mike uploads and updates our website and regularly makes suggestions to boost engagement. We make sure that contact options for Pain Support Groups’ presence across the website are easy to locate and that both on-line and face-to-face Pain Support Groups are effectively displayed in location searches. This assists rural and/or isolated users to explore the full options of Pain Support Groups available to them.

STRATEGY TWO

Strengthen community engagement by fostering strategic alliances with aged care, disability, educators, trainers, health professionals, corporate and government which will improve health literacy of people living with pain and target health promotion activities to vulnerable sectors.

APMA personnel belong to a number of state and national strategic committees. At the beginning of 2019 APMA received an invitation to participate in the newly formed Queensland Health’s Monitored Substances Steering Committee. This work supported the health system to improve the quality prescription and use of addictive medicines. Our CEO also received an Appointment to the Australian Department of Health’s Spinal Prostheses Clinical Advisory Group (SPCAG) for two years. APMA benefits by acquiring detailed knowledge of the process for listing of prostheses available for private hospitals.

APMA has a seat on the Statewide Persistent Pain Management Clinical Network Steering Committee which oversees the delivering of Queensland’s public hospital pain services as well as analysing the service gaps and ensuring patient-centred health care across the sector.

Other collaborations included being involved with GSK’s paediatric paracetamol dosing project and the Global Advisory Faculty (GSK) looking at alternatives to medication for mild to moderate pain.

Finally, our CEO also participates in the Medicines Australia Code of Conduct Appeals Committee.
STRATEGY THREE

Maintain financial sustainability by promoting innovative marketing, encouraging and supporting membership and diversifying funding sources to include: government, private and philanthropic sectors.

APMA presented Queensland Health with a business case emphasising our value to the pain community. We successfully negotiated a Service Agreement with Queensland for an additional $50,000 bringing the total funding for the project, Consumer Voice for People Living with Persistent Pain to $100,000 per year for the next three years. This is a major investment by Queensland Health into improving the lives of people living with chronic pain and their families.

APMA received a Volunteer Grant from the Commonwealth Department of Social Services enabling us to sustain our volunteers through training and travel.

A big thank you to Logan Hospital's Physiotherapy team for raising much needed revenue for APMA Australian Pain Management Association on World Physiotherapy Day.

We are grateful to our many APMA members who continue to support the organization financially through membership dues, donations and in-kind support, which assists us to produce consumer resources such as: New Member’s Kit, ongoing Personalised Resources and the Wellbeing newsletter which target hope, motivation and resourcefulness to help our clients manage chronic pain.
STRATEGY FOUR

Improve quality of life for people living with pain by empowering pain sufferers’ self-management skills including quality health coaching, training and education. Identify and respond to the needs of disadvantaged people living with chronic pain by advocating for emerging national pain health issues and encouraging research into causes, and effective management of chronic pain.

APMA assisting research

APMA actively promoted 18 research projects in 2019. One of the promoted studies was published in a peer journal and APMA was recognized for its contribution: Assessing beliefs underlying rumination about pain: Developments and Validations of Pain Metacognitions Questionnaire.

APMA has been represented on the Advisory Boards for pain research with the: Hopkins Centre: Research for Rehabilitation and Resilience; the Latrobe University and the University of Queensland’s Centre of Research Excellence (CRE) in Recovery Following Road Traffic Injuries.
The study, *Effective pain management in everyday life: Developing a model of peer support for persistent pain* is the first of its kind in Australia, looking at community support for patients once they finish a pain management clinic.

In 2019 a model of peer support is being developed and pilot tested which will help patients carry out their pain management plans in everyday life.

The advisory team recognises that it is difficult for patients to change the way they normally manage pain and that persistent pain services are not adequately resourced to help patients incorporate and sustain these hospital guided regimens in their everyday lives. APMA and the advisory team believe that trained peer supporters, who are role models for effective pain management, could potentially help address this gap in care by offering practical assistance and emotional support that is frequent and flexible.

This project will generate new knowledge on the needs of patients with persistent pain and the acceptability of peer support in the context of pain management. APMA will benefit in knowing which programs can better help consumers restore and sustain their health when they suffer chronic pain.

**APMA Building Capacity of Volunteers**

The CEO, Elizabeth Carrigan broadened the initiative of teamAPMA, the Facebook group for APMA volunteers. This valuable resource keeps our volunteers up-to-date with new developments in the field of pain management so that evidence based information is being sourced and disseminated across the large grouping of APMA’s service users. teamAPMA is highly interactive and hundreds of posts were shared in 2019. Regular news articles, links to pain community resources and research opportunities are popular posts. Our volunteers regularly share updates, resources and tips across the platform.

In 2019 teamAPMA developed the capacity of volunteers, with a series of posts for a Happy and Healthy PSG. Examples include “Ask guest speakers from the wider world to come in eg Centrelink or a rehab counsellor from a job placement agency to give tips on finding work” and “Discussion idea – share ways to distract from the pain and discover the joy of new experiences”. Our volunteers are important to APMA so teamAPMA provides an opportunity for them to respond to APMA about their needs, concerns and triumphs.
MEMBERSHIP

At the end of 2019 APMA had 260 members.

As at 31 December 2019, financial membership was 260. This represents a modest increase in financial membership of 1.2% over the calendar year.

Forty-three (43) new members applied for APMA membership over the course of 2019, a reduction of 30% compared to the previous year (62). Sixteen (16) members decided not to renew their memberships during the year. One (professional) member unfortunately passed away during the year. Seventy-two (72) members failed to pay or respond to their membership renewals. Some of these members have moved and/or changed email and telephone numbers, preventing contact and they are now recorded as “lost”. Where members are ‘lost’, or do not advise of a decision to cease membership, they continue to be regarded as ‘non-financial members’.

Forty-six percent of APMA members are residents of Queensland, twenty-seven percent are from Victoria; and seventeen percent from NSW. The remaining ten per cent of members reside in the ACT, SA, WA, NT and Tasmania.

The membership by category is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>Change over year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary members</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>+11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concession members</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>+9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior members</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional members</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>-42/1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational members (small)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational members (large)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>+1.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Chairperson: David Winter**

David Winter joined APMA in mid-2017. David has worked in law enforcement for over 30 years and has specialised in ethics, integrity, workplace and criminal investigations. He is highly trained in dignitary protection and has performed high risk protection duties and provided world class comprehensive protection packages for numerous Prime Ministers, Premiers, and Presidents from Australia and overseas. He conducts lectures to government investigators concerning the skills required to effectively interview witnesses and suspects.

David is a Director of his own company, Chairperson for a commercial and residential complex and has previous experience as Chairperson for other boards. This experience combined with a university qualification and as a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors provides David with a comprehensive skill set in management, strategy, risk, conflict resolution, negotiation and governance within both private and government organisations.

David has been an active Surf Live Saver and volunteer with Surf Life Saving Queensland and participated in community groups and charitable organisations both within Australia and overseas.

**Deputy Chair: Paul Murdoch**

Paul was until recently a senior executive employed in the Australian Public Service, responsible for managing the secretariat of an independent statutory authority with a budget of several million dollars. In that role he was responsible for inter-agency liaison and relationships, and dealt with Ministers, Parliament, the Ombudsman and a wide range of stakeholders. Paul has had extensive leadership and management experience in a range of roles. He was a Director on the Board of the Consumers Health Forum of Australia Ltd., the national peak body representing the interests of Australian healthcare consumers and is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Paul was a consumer representative on the review of the Working Together Guide produced jointly by Medicines Australia and the Consumers Health Forum, and is currently a consumer representative on the Centre of Research Excellence in Recovery Following Road Traffic Injuries Policy Advisory Group.

He has teaching/training qualifications and experience, has published and presented academically and had 15 years’ experience as a union official. For more than 15 years, he has held a statutory appointment as a community representative on Queensland’s Health Practitioners Tribunal and the various AHPRA health professional conduct review panels, and was appointed as a (non-practitioner) Member of the Professional Services Review Determining Authority in 2017. Paul has served as APMA Vice-President and Deputy Chair since its establishment in 2009.
**Treasurer: Alex Leombruni**

Alex joined APMA in mid-2019, and is an alumnus of Swinburne University of Technology (Hawthorn, Victoria), completing a Bachelor of Business in Accounting and Economics. He is an FCPA with 25 years of experience in financial and executive management. He is also a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and has held several directorships in associate companies and joint ventures.

Alex is a business professional with experience across diverse markets, industries and disciplines, having worked in listed and proprietary companies; Australian based and multinational.

As CEO and CFO in growing organisations, Alex has presided over substantial transformational change, navigating the advent of new technologies, eCommerce, digital media and shifts in environmental and societal expectations.

**Secretary: Georgie Ibbott**

Georgie Ibbott is a highly qualified and experienced executive with strong leadership skills and extensive networks and community connections in Tasmania. Her tertiary qualifications include a Bachelor of Commerce, an MBA, and she is a Graduate Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

In addition to her roles as Secretary and Non-Executive Director of APMA Ltd., Georgie is an active Director of a further three organisations:

- Executive Director of the Tasmanian Audit Office (statutory appointment);
- Chair and Non-Executive Director of Volunteering Tasmania; and
- Non-Executive Director of On the Line (national social health organisation which delivers 22 outsourced telephone and digital counselling services 24/7 on behalf of its Government and commercial funders).

Georgie has held many leadership and executive roles in unique Tasmanian organisations and engaged with staff to positively transform work groups and organisations. She has pursued her keen interest and passion for the community and health sectors and prior to commencing as an independent consultant was employed as CEO of Family Planning Tasmania.

Georgie runs her own niche consultancy working with businesses to develop marketing strategies with an emphasis on business growth and sustainability. She is skilled and experienced at leading cultural change, project management, customer service, marketing and strategy development and execution.
**Director: Robyn Antill**

As a highly skilled senior leader with global experience Robyn brings strong international expertise to the APMA board in the areas of project management, strategic planning and governance.

With a key focus on delivering excellence, stakeholder alignment and outcomes, for over 35 years Robyn’s services have been sought after by global corporations across seven OECD countries. Robyn has provided outstanding leadership in the IT implementation of multimillion-dollar technology solutions for a diverse range of industries including pharmaceutical, utilities, oil and gas and government. Projects have included oversight of grant management system for USAID, turnaround scheduling and costing for Suncor and project lifecycle planning for DSS (Drug Safety Science) Pfizer.

Now back in Australia, Robyn is applying her strong business and financial acumen to serve not-for-profit and member-based organisations to reach their goals. She is a Graduate of the AICD Company Directors Course and holds her Project Management Professional (PMP) and multiple Master’s qualifications.

Robyn’s curiosity and will to understand what is important to people has driven her ‘can-do’ approach to ensure the organisations she supports continue to make a difference in people’s lives.

**Director: David Masters**

David Masters joined the APMA Committee of Management in late-2017. David is a corporate strategist with over 15 years’ experience overseeing various disciplines including engineering, finance, human resource strategy and property strategy. With a strong background in large scale project management, David specialised in the strategic planning and financial governance.

David originally started his career as a robotics engineer and holds a Masters degree in Engineering and a Graduate Diploma of Business Management while currently studying a Masters of Law. David’s board experience consists of several small unlisted companies that operate in niche markets spanning property development, online education, building services and telecommunications. He has also recently completed tenures as a trustee director on two medium sized superannuation funds and a philanthropic corporate sponsored not for profit community foundation. David is highly motivated and passionate about corporate responsibility, cultural change, governance and strategic planning.

**Director: Shaun Conroy**

Shaun is a senior operations and finance leader who joined APMA in mid-2019. He is a Chartered Accountant and Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Shaun has held CEO, COO, Managing Director and Regional Director roles in public, private and government organisations.

Shaun was formerly the COO of a large accounting, audit and advisory professional services firm where he was responsible for IT, people and capability, marketing and communications, PR, planning, risk management and financial reporting processes.

Shaun is passionate about growing people who build great teams and successful businesses, and has extensive international experience having worked in Hong Kong, Tokyo and Singapore in senior government trade and banking roles.
The Australian Pain Management Association was formed in 2009, becoming an Incorporated Association in Queensland. Its objects were carefully drafted as widely as possible to maximise the assistance and help which could be provided to people affected by pain and their families. In Australia, the widespread incidence of chronic pain was becoming more visible and topical, and the world’s first National Pain Summit, addressing the best way forward to manage patients suffering chronic pain was held in early 2010.

The Australian Pain Management Association (APMA) emerged as both a product of, and catalyst for developments during this tough time. The need to address the gaps in services for people living with pain was immense. Lil Carrigan and Annette Rijnbout, two people managing pain themselves, founded the organisation. Volunteers spent a great deal of time writing uplifting practical resources, providing peer support and advocating for more pain clinics. National leaders in the pain management specialty including Professor Michael Cousins, and Dean’s Leigh Atkinson and Penny Briscoe lobbied politicians regarding the unmet demand and need for more specialist clinics. The Queensland Government led the investment in 2010 with $39.1 million and four new pain services, paving the way for other states to follow.

Later that year APMA launched the Pain Link helpline after successfully applying for a community grant. The national phone service was set up to provide peer to peer support by sharing knowledge, inspiration and experience. The APMA peer leaders (who came to be known as ‘Pain Guides’) were committed to reducing suffering under the slogan of: “We can’t take the pain away but we can end the suffering”. The person in pain and their family – wherever they lived - had access to a service that had a firm focus on helping them with information and away from despair towards positive actions that could ease their distress.

The number of pain support groups grew organically from a small team of dedicated volunteers in Brisbane. They were set up to help others in severe pain to embrace holistic pain management. The Pain Toolkit gave our groups 12 themes to ground the practice of self-management, one step at a time. Over the years, many other volunteers took up our person-centred practice of seeing the person with pain, not just the pain condition, and motivating them to daily self-care.

Our Pain Support Groups grew quickly and by 2016 we had groups in all states and territories except the Northern Territory and Tasmania. Twice in APMA’s short existence we have been able to organise for PSG representatives from across the country to come together at residential educational workshops to learn, exchange experiences and insights, and take new ideas back to their local groups. APMA had an article published in a peer reviewed journal that highlighted the self-management education that it delivered: Evaluating Positive Thinking, Activity and Treatment (PAT): A Community-Based Pain Management Education Program.

In 2013, partnering with the RSL and Veterans Affairs, APMA organised the Walking Wounded event in Sydney. A large number of veterans were able to hear from pain experts, including Professor Rollin Gallagher MD from the US Department of Veteran Affairs and APMA Patron, Professor Ken Donald AO about the nature of pain and the toll taken on veterans in recent joint taskforces. This was the first time that chronic pain management with veterans had been made a public issue outside of research institutions.
Today, APMA has grown into an essential community service. Our purpose and strategies are founded on the person in pain and helping them “u-turn to wellbeing”. We are able to expand our reach on social media to assist more Australian families than ever before.

APMA has advocated on many issues over the decade. APMA was a strong early voice for the balanced and judicious use of opioids. The APMA CEO was involved as an affiliate of the ground-breaking POINT Study, Pain and Opioids in Treatment at the University of NSW’s National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre (2012-2019) and also developed numerous submissions for Australian Government and Parliamentary inquiries into chronic disease and other pain-related health matters. APMA has participated in numerous conferences and it also jointly hosted the 50 Shades of Pain Conference in Brisbane in 2014, the first pain and palliative care conference in Australia.

More than a decade on, pain management support is just as necessary and critical as it was in 2009. The covid-19 virus has devastated communities and the economy. Australia has an ageing population and more than 3.4 million people live with pain, not counting the carers and families also affected by this situation. The over-reliance on medication and high rates of opioid prescribing can still be attributed to a lack of other pain management solutions, particularly pain clinics and community supports.

In 2020 APMA remains the only Australia-wide organisation delivering chronic pain, community services such as Pain Link, Pain Support Groups and accessible consumer resources.
ABOUT AUSTRALIAN PAIN MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION LTD.

Australian Taxation Office (ATO) registered health promotion charity & endorsed Deductible Gift Recipient
Registered company with Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC)
Registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC)

Australian Pain Management Association Ltd. (APMA)
Level 1, Gabba Towers, 411 Vulture St,
Woolloongabba QLD 4102
GPO Box 2104, Brisbane QLD 4001