

ASC NEWS—SPRING 2009 EDITION

September 2009 Issue 4

ASC DELIVERABLES 2009

The ASC

The Australian Stroke Coalition (ASC) has progressed since its conception over a year ago in July 2008. The Coalition, co-chaired by the National Stroke Foundation (NSF) and the Stroke Society of Australasia (SSA) consists of over 30 members from state stroke networks, professional colleges, associations and consumers.

The ASC Executive consists of members from the NSF and SSA. The Executive meets between full ASC face-to-face meetings to progress already agreed upon activities. This includes the approval of project plans, seeking funding for projects and supporting the ASC secretariat.

A recent ASC Executive meeting on the 13th of August approved projects for Thrombolysis, a Stroke Specific Education Framework and Rehabilitation Assessment Process. They are currently seeking funding for these projects and commenced discussions regarding intellectual property, branding and the next face-to-face meeting.

In July 2008 five working groups were formed according to identified priority areas. Each group set goals and deliverables around the overall aim of the ASC to advance stroke care in Australia. Four of the five groups have been busy working on their agreed deliverables and there are some encouraging projects underway.

Long Term Recovery and Support (Chaired by Dr Erin Lalor representing the National Stroke Foundation)

This will be the last of the five working groups formed. Currently membership is being finalised with plans for the first meeting in September. The group aims to ensure that all patients experience a well coordinated and supported discharge and that stroke survivors have access to appropriate care which meets their needs.

Response to Acute Event

(Chaired by Dr Romesh Markus representing the SSA and ASUN)

This group focuses on public awareness of stroke, pre-hospital and early hospital response to the acute event. The ASC recently endorsed the [‘FAST’ campaign](#) as the national stroke awareness message. It is anticipated that a nationally consistent approach to promoting stroke awareness will lead to improved awareness levels and better outcomes for those at risk of or affected by stroke. A document supporting FAST as the national awareness campaign in Australia has been circulated to this working group and includes results from the Stroke Awareness Survey (2004—2008).

The 2009 FAST campaign incorporates a new visual element which aims to improve people’s recognition of the FAST test and the key signs of stroke. This will be launched on the 14th of September in National Stroke Week with a six week mass media and public relations campaign.



New FAST campaign

This group are working with the Council of Ambulance Authorities (CAA) to gather information on ambulance response to stroke and recommend a consistent approach across Australia. Dr Hugh Grantham, from the CAA has recently joined this WG and will assist with the progression of this goal. Finally this group will oversee a project to collect and collate already established protocols for the application of thrombolysis. They will then recommend a protocol that will support improved hospital response to acute stroke.



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Access to stroke units

(Chaired by Dr Andrew Granger representing the WA stroke network.)

This group aims to improve access to and quality of services offered within stroke units. The focus is on gathering information on stroke units, considering the recent acute audit results and establishing priorities for reviewing the availability, access, definitions and standards of stroke unit care.

The Organisational report of the 2009 Audit of acute stroke services was recently launched at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney. The clinical report will be due for release in November. As a result this group will begin to review the data and identify actions required over the next 3-6 months.

Rehabilitation

(Chaired by Dr Susan Hillier Representing South Australian Stroke Network.)

This group aims to ensure that all stroke patients receive a rehabilitation plan that assesses their rehabilitation needs and that they receive the right rehabilitation in the right place at the right time. Currently funding is being sought for this group's first project.

This project will focus on early rehabilitation assessment in the acute setting and the development of an agreed process. This project will look at current practice, evidence for various approaches and look to recommend a process that can be used in any setting within Australia. It will also look to develop a tool to assist with the application of the agreed process.

Up Coming Events

SSA Conference: 6-9 September 2009

National Stroke Week: 14-20 September 2009

Workforce, Training and Professional development

(Chaired by Dr Andrew Lee representing South Australian Stroke Network)

This group is focussed on improving the level of training and education available to all clinicians working with stroke patients and carers. As part of this goal, the group has agreed to develop a National Education Stroke-Specific Framework as an overarching guide for stroke curriculum development. They have gathered information on the current availability of training, education and professional development throughout Australia.

Another deliverable set by the group is to develop an undergraduate stroke package and accompanying letter for distribution.

Stroke Champions Awards

The National Stroke Foundation has developed an awards program called the [Stroke Champions Awards](#) and is jointly awarding one of these awards with the Stroke Society of Australasia.

The purpose of these awards is to acknowledge and recognise individuals working in the field of stroke who do not get formal recognition for their commitment to either improving stroke care or improving the quality of life for stroke patients, survivors and their carers.

Nominations for '[The Stroke Care Champions Award](#)' (NSF & SSA) and '[Improving Life After Stroke Award](#)' (NSF) close on the 30th of September.

Useful Links

[Australian Stroke Coalition](#)
[Stroke Society of Australasia](#)
[National Stroke Foundation](#)
[Stroke Champions Awards](#)