

ASA PRESIDENTS REPORT



2022 – 2023

2022-2023 has seen ASA in conjunction with our professional conference organisers, Conference Design, preparing for our conference in Adelaide, South Australia. The theme of the conference is *Critical Care in the Air: Reflection, Resilience and the Future*. Now only approx. 1 week away all the fine tuning is well underway for what we envisage will be a successful and enjoyable conference.

Following conference closure, two significant days have been planned. On Thursday 7th September the 'Learning Hub' is being hosted by RFDS Adelaide and Rescue, Retrieval & Aviation Services, MedStar & Special Operations. This is a day of interactive learning via skill stations, scenarios and simulations.

On Friday 8th September, facilitated by Dr Mardi Steere, ASA is holding an inaugural strategy day to focus and plan on what as a non-profit group we are about, where are we heading and what future planning we would like and need to put in place.

Thank you to ASA committee members James Koens and Cameron Edgar who have continued to produce entertaining but insightful conversational podcasts with various members of our aeromedical community. To date they have accrued 3781 downloads. The podcasts produced by James and Cam are done so under the ASA banner. A massive acknowledgment and thanks to them both as they do this on top of their full time and incredibly busy careers.

It is with sadness but understanding that the ASA committee has accepted the resignation of Paul Gallagher. Paul has been an ASA committee member since 2008, an incredible 15 years. Paul has contributed to helping organise many of our conferences and has a wealth of knowledge about the aeromedical industry. He will most definitely be missed but we wish him every success in his new career pathway.

Globally we continue to be challenged by extreme weather and geological events including some of the biggest fires ever seen in Europe and Canada. Speaking on behalf of NZ, extreme flash flooding in Auckland followed by Cyclone Gabrielle that ravaged in particular the Eastern Coast of the North Island, resulted in devastation and destruction that people and communities have yet to recover from. Atmospheric rivers became the new meteorological term of the day. Some of the worst hit areas have since then continued to be plagued by these ongoing 'weather events' as they are now called. Many of these areas are isolated rural communities poorly resourced. However, in concert with part of the theme of the conference, the resilience that these communities have shown has been phenomenal without which there would have been entire collapse. However, their future remains very unknown.

On a personal level the loss of a friend who was a volunteer fireman in the rugged Auckland West coast community of Muriwai struck a particular chord. Although not aeromedical, Dave was leading frontline search and rescue work in his community during the afore mentioned flash flooding. In searching through a house in what was seemingly a benign point-in-time, within seconds became a death trap in the form of a major landslide. Amongst many things this served as a poignant reminder for myself involved in aeromedical work. That is, to always acknowledge the physical environments and situations we find ourselves working in and how rapidly and unexpectedly they can change, especially so now in these particularly volatile climatic times. Situational awareness is a common, perhaps habitually communicated theme; stop, take stock and reset on what situational awareness encompasses in the true sense of these words.

Continuing on a mindful course, NZAAS and the Starship PICU intensive care retrieval team with whom I fly had the very unexpected loss of one our much loved pilots. Kuni you will always be remembered for the love of the work you did, your expertise as an aeromedical fixed wing pilot and most importantly for your humbleness and sense of humanity. For the Starship PICU retrieval team members, we always knew we, and our patients and families were in safe and competent hands when flying with you.

To James Koens, I would like to acknowledge the loss of your colleagues and friends in the MH90 crash in NSW. May some closure be achieved in the form of knowing why this crash occurred.

Finally, I would like to convey my sincere thanks to the ASA committee and to Catherine Jones, for all your support during my Presidency these last two years. You all have your individual areas of expertise, strengths and knowledge that at various times, if not almost consistently, I have called upon and have been very grateful for.

I now pass over the Presidency into the very competent hands of Mr Mark Buick who I know will continue to lead us forward. This year, Mark will officially take over at the close of our Adelaide conference.

To all, take the very best of care.

With thanks,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Di Fuller', written in dark ink.

Di Fuller

ASA President 2021-2023