

## ASCEPT Environmental Sustainability Policy

### Policy vision

The ASCEPT Environmental Sustainability Policy formalises our commitment to the reduction of carbon emissions across all Society activities. It is expected that the ASCEPT Board, SIG executives and all members adhere to the Policy as best they can.

The Environmental Sustainability Policy is intended to provide guiding principles to aid decision-making by the ASCEPT leadership. The provisions are forward-looking and pragmatic, enabling ASCEPT leaders to benchmark environmental sustainability strategies against future objectives. It is expected that the policy will positively enhance our relationship with conference sponsors, partner societies, the drug industry, regulators, and health care organisations.

### Policy statements

ASCEPT recognises that immediate action is required to address the global environmental emergency.

ASCEPT acknowledges that the climate change crisis adversely impacts human health while the health care system itself is also a major contributor to carbon emissions.

ASCEPT joins a growing number of scientific and healthcare organisations internationally in a call to mitigate the detrimental environmental impact associated with the development and clinical use of drugs. To that end, we support action to reduce carbon emissions to achieve the target set out in the Paris Agreement of net zero emissions by 2050.

### Policy Principles

The following guiding principles are intended to inform decision-making related to environmental sustainability by the ASCEPT leadership, the SIG executives and ASCEPT members.

### LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The ASCEPT Board is responsible for providing leadership and vision in matters related to the Society's environmental impact. The Board will develop a governance structure to enable the effective implementation and monitoring of environmental sustainability strategies outlined in this policy. In addition, the Board will assign a Board member, or *ex officio* member, to manage the environmental sustainability portfolio (herein the 'Environmental Sustainability Officer').

### ASCEPT-RELATED EVENTS

ASCEPT acknowledges that air and ground travel associated with Society activity, including the annual scientific meeting and Board meetings, are most likely our biggest contributors to carbon emissions. Working with conference organising committees, conference organisers, our secretariat and members, the ASCEPT Board will develop strategies to minimise and off-set the environmental impact of the following;

1. Air or ground travel,
2. Meeting venue and hotel use,
3. Catering,

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4. The creation of food and other waste,
5. Water and energy use,
6. Paper and plastic use.

### **JOINT CONFERENCES**

ASCEPT will encourage all partner societies involved in joint conference organisation to adopt the provisions of the ASCEPT Environmental Sustainability.

### **COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING, OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT**

ASCEPT will promote environmental sustainability on the Society webpage, in social media feeds and in published ASCEPT news. Active engagement with organisations who advocate for sustainable pharmacology and health-care (e.g. Doctors for the Environment Australia) will be encouraged.

### **EDUCATION & INCENTIVES**

ASCEPT will direct the Environmental Sustainability Officer, the ASM organising committee and the prize coordinator to develop, promote and initiate symposia, prizes and other strategies to actively encourage member engagement and education about sustainable health care, pharmacological and toxicological research.

### **MONITORING RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Board is responsible for the environmental performance of ASCEPT in relation to the provisions of this policy. This is delegated to the ASCEPT Environmental Sustainability Officer, who will monitor the sustainability strategies against the objectives and target dates set out in the Policy Provisions and provide a yearly report to the Board and members.

## **Policy Provisions**

### **LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE**

The Environmental Sustainability Officer will;

- Develop and implement a process for benchmarking, monitoring and reviewing the environmental performance of ASCEPT in relation to the objective and provisions of this policy (note: this does not include carbon footprint calculation);
- Conduct a yearly stock-take to monitor the environmental impact of ASCEPT activities;
- Provide a yearly report to the Board and ASCEPT membership on the environmental performance of ASCEPT;
- Attend the ASM organising committee meeting as required and liaise with the conference organiser on environmental matters

### **ASCEPT-RELATED EVENTS**

#### *Travel*

- ASCEPT considers the annual scientific meeting to be the most important event of the calendar year. We feel that an in-person meeting provides value to members that currently outweighs the environmental impact of holding the event. Therefore, for the foreseeable future, ASCEPT will not pursue online or hybrid meeting options for the ASM unless in extraordinary circumstances (review in 5 years).
- ASCEPT will explore options to off-set carbon emissions resulting from member travel to the ASM, Board meetings, and SIG events (e.g. the Clinical Weekend).
- Carbon off-setting will be encouraged for members attending the ASCEPT ASM, Board meetings and SIG events from November 2026. Note that members of joint/ partner

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societies involved in joint conferences are not required to adhere to this policy (although encouraged)

- From November 2026, SIG events not associated with or running close to the time of the annual scientific meeting will be on-line. SIG groups are encouraged to utilise local or regional hubs where possible. The Clinical Weekend for clinical pharmacology trainees and the ASCEPT-NZ Forum annual meeting will be exempt and will continue to run in-person for the foreseeable future.
- ASCEPT Board meetings not part of the annual scientific meeting or mid-year strategy meeting will be held online starting in November 2025, with the use of local or regional hubs encouraged.
- Explore combined or co-located scientific meetings with other societies where possible to reduce travel to multiple meetings throughout the year.

#### *Meeting venues and hotels*

ASCEPT will prioritise and select meeting venues and accommodation providers that optimise environmentally sustainable features preferably in line with, and monitored according to, the EarthCheck criteria ([earthcheck.org](http://earthcheck.org)) or similar certification. These may include (examples);

- Venues in locations that minimize air travel and maximise public transport use. Locations outside of Eastern Australia will continue to be considered (e.g. Perth, New Zealand) on a rotating basis as is currently the case.
- Venues that use renewable energy sources for lighting, air conditioning and heating
- Venues that provide water bubblers and/or drinking fountains for refillable drinking bottles
- Venues that provide commercially compostable rubbish bins and recycling containers
- Venues that use environmentally friendly cleaning products

#### *Catering*

ASCEPT will prioritise and select caterers who demonstrate environmentally sustainable practices. These may include;

- A clear strategy to reduce food waste
- Use of compostable packaging
- Minimize the use of disposable or plastic bottles, flatware and cutlery, and single serve cups or packages
- Option for fair-trade coffee and tea and environmental sound disposal of coffee grounds
- Discounts on drink prices for reusable mugs
- Use of locally sourced products and ingredients
- Use of environmentally friendly cleaning products

#### *Recycling and waste*

ASCEPT will commit to being paper-free by 2030 including the following strategies;

- Elimination of ASCEPT-produced printed materials associated with the ASM, Board meeting and SIG activities,
- Encourage all ASM sponsors to reduce or eliminate printed material (not on recycled paper) and to eliminate disposable give-aways such as conference bags, plastic pens, note pads, toys, etc,
- Review the use of poster boards and assess alternatives including printing solutions (partner with local green print centres),
- Replace disposable lanyards and plastic covers with sustainable alternative (e.g. bamboo lanyards matched with eco-friendly badges which can then be recycled)

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- Where it is not feasible to replace print material with a green option (e.g. sponsor display material, venue display signs etc), the use of recycled paper with vegetable-based inks and dyes will be encouraged.

## COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING, OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

- ASCEPT will publish and update the Environmental Sustainability Policy on the society webpage.
- The annual report of the Environmental Sustainability Officer will be publicly viewable on the ASCEPT webpage.

## EDUCATION, AWARDS & INCENTIVES

- A call for SIGs and ASCEPT members to submit symposia on the theme of sustainable health-care and pharmacology will be included in the ASM call for symposia and pre-conference workshops.
- The prize coordinator (along with the sustainability officer and organising committee) will promote and award a prize for the most innovative carbon reduction strategies presented at the ASM.

## MONITORING AND MEASURING

The Environmental Sustainability officer will prepare an annual report outlining strategies and achievement of targets for dissemination at the Annual General Meeting before dissemination to the wider membership via the ASCEPT Newsletter.

## INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

ASCEPT, in consultation with an accountant, will endeavour to select investments that limit the environmental impact of our share portfolio while being mindful of the society's financial stability and sustainability.

## RESPONSIBILITIES AND POLICY REVIEW

- It is the responsibility of the ASCEPT Board and all members to ensure the implementation of this policy.
- Progress on the implementation of this policy will be reported yearly to the ASCEPT Board by the Environmental Sustainability officer.
- This Policy will be reviewed every year by the ASCEPT Board.

## DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

TERM/ACRONYM	DEFINITION
ASCEPT	Australasian Society of Clinical and Experimental Pharmacologists and Toxicologists
ASM	Annual Scientific Meeting
BOARD	the board of Directors of the Company.
EXECUTIVE OFFICER	means the person appointed via a management agreement. The Executive Officer is responsible for the management of the Executive Office and membership activities of ASCEPT.
SIG	Special Interest Group

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

### VERSIONS

Version 1.0 (1/10/ 2023) - draft

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*Version 2.0 (18/3/2024) - draft for exec review*  
*Version 3.0 (30/8/2024) - draft for feedback*  
*Version 4.0 (10/10/2024) – draft for board review*

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