



ASCEPT STRATEGIC PLAN 2026–2030

Looking to the future

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Message from the Board

The *Strategic Plan 2026-2030 “Looking to the Future”* outlines the Board’s vision, our values and the strategies we will enact to ensure that ASCEPT remains the premier pharmacology and toxicology society in Australasia. This critical document outlines initiatives designed to retain and engage our current membership in Society activities while continually seeking opportunities to engage new members. The Strategic Plan will ensure that ASCEPT remains a sustainable Society operating within a robust framework of social, ethical, and governance responsibilities.

The 2021-2025 Strategic Plan: COVID 19 and Beyond gave us a blueprint for sustaining the Society through the pandemic. ASCEPT with a keen focus on serving the best interests of our members emerged from this period relatively unscathed. After two virtual Annual Scientific Meetings (ASM), we were able to regroup for an in person ASM in Perth. During this time the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy was implemented and embedded in all ASCEPT policies, operations and initiatives. The development of the ASCEPT Environmental Sustainability Policy ensures that we take responsibility for managing our environmental impact as we move forward. Despite the global disruption of COVID, ASCEPT was able to maintain a sustainable financial position allowing us to continue support for our student members to attend our ASM. Our experiences and the lessons learned throughout the COVID period demonstrate that we are an agile and resilient Society that can respond effectively to challenges. The 2026-2030 Strategic Plan: Looking to the Future maintains the spirit of the previous plan while providing strategies and initiatives that progress our mission to promote and advocate for education and research in clinical and experimental pharmacology and toxicology, and the application of these disciplines.

Members of ASCEPT continue to provide academic and clinical leadership and generate world class research in Departments of Pharmacology and Toxicology, Schools of Pharmacy, Schools of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences as well as Research Institutes around the globe. The Society has a strong relationship with government and industry. Our members provide numerous representations to State and Commonwealth Departments of Health. Many national and international boards and (government) working parties benefit from having ASCEPT members providing expert input. ASCEPT has been a constituent and voting member of the International Unions of Pharmacology and Toxicology (IUPHAR and IUTOX, respectively) for many years and maintains strong membership of key committees of both entities. This demonstrates that ASCEPT continues to be relevant to education, industry and government both nationally and globally. The successful bid for the World Congress of Basic and Clinical Pharmacology (WCP2026) in Melbourne is an opportunity to showcase the excellent work of Australasian pharmacologists and toxicologists and to also strengthen our global partnerships and international reputation.

Our Special Interest Groups and Forums are the pillars of our Society. Outside the ASM, their activities include hosting the NZ forum meeting and the Clinical Pharmacology weekend in person, and multiple virtual activities throughout the year. SIG and forum members also represent ASCEPT on committees and contribute to ASCEPT’s policy responses and advocacy on a multitude of issues. All of these activities are key to maintaining a vibrant Society and achieving the goals of our strategic plan.

The Australian Medicines Handbook (AMH) continues to provide independent, evidence-based information to support practitioners, students and the Quality Use of Medicines (QUM). Many of our members contribute in innumerable ways to this excellent resource. We continue as joint owners of the AMH, a relationship that has been a key factor in supporting our financial stability over the past few years and moving forward. The changing QUM landscape as a result of decommissioning of the National Prescribing Service makes AMH all the more important for supporting the safe and effective use of medicines in Australia and internationally.

Looking forward, our focus is to retain and grow membership, ensure engagement with and opportunities for our diverse and multidisciplinary membership, ensure vibrant active SIGs, engage with stakeholders and maintain financial stability. The Strategic Plan 2026-2030: Looking to the Future builds on our previous successes and reinforces those strategies that have proven to be fruitful. The Strategic Plan also introduces a new Domain focused on Environmental and Social Governance. The Domain will ensure that the principles of equity, diversity, and

inclusion, environmental sustainability and robust governance are embedded across all strategic goals, performance imperatives, and Society activities. There is some overlap across domains, and so strategies and Key Performance Indicators may appear in more than one domain. The Board has made every effort to ensure that the Strategic Plan 2026-2030: Looking to the Future will ensure the advancement of our mission to advance pharmacology and toxicology education, training, research and therapeutics for the benefits of patients and society.

Mission

ASCEPT seeks to advance health by promoting and advocating for education, training and research in clinical and experimental pharmacology and toxicology and the application of these disciplines.

Our Values

The pursuit of knowledge and advancement of health, collegiality, cooperation and innovation within the disciplines of pharmacology and toxicology.

OUR GOALS ARE TO:

1. Advance health by supporting the development of, and effective and safe use of, all medicines through research, education and advocacy.
2. Position ASCEPT as the premier Society for research, education and training in the disciplines of pharmacology and toxicology in Australasia.
3. Build and maintain ASCEPT's profile as the key Society for advocacy of clinical and experimental pharmacologists and toxicologists in Australasia.
4. Attract and serve a diverse membership by providing opportunities and skills training to empower ASCEPT members to thrive in every stage of their career.
5. Position ASCEPT as a respected, authoritative and valued independent source of advice and contribute to policy development in Australasia and globally in the disciplines of pharmacology and toxicology.

Strategic Plan Overview

In order to achieve its mission, ASCEPT's focus will include:

1. Environmental, Social and Governance
2. Leadership and Engagement
3. Research
4. Education and Training
5. Advocacy
6. Social Sustainability and Growth

1. Environmental, Social and Governance

ASCEPT is committed to sustainability and responsibility in the areas of governance, environmental sustainability and equity, diversity, and inclusion. Underpinning all our activities supporting the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) strategy are:

1. ASCEPT's constitution
2. ASCEPT's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) policy
3. ASCEPT's Environmental Sustainability policy (ESP)

Aligned with these documents, the goals of the ESG strategy are to ensure robust governance over all activities, to provide an environment where our diverse membership can participate in all ASCEPT activities in a respectful, collegiate and safe community, to minimise the environmental impact of our activities, and to support and advocate for environmental sustainability in research and clinical use of drugs.

OBJECTIVE

To ensure that ESG considerations are integrated into all Society activities.

STRATEGIES

1. ASCEPT will elect and maintain a Board as defined in the Society constitution
2. All Society activities will be undertaken within the governance framework of the constitution
3. ASCEPT will embed the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and environmental sustainability across all strategic goals and activities
4. The ASCEPT Board will maintain an EDI Committee to be chaired or co-chaired by a Board member who will report to the Board and ensure that all activities are aligned with the principles outlined in the EDI policy
5. An ASCEPT Board member, or ex officio member, will manage the environmental sustainability policy, including monitoring sustainability goals

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Annual review of the constitution
- Biennial review of EDI and environmental sustainability policies
- Annual reporting of KPIs of EDI and environmental sustainability policies

2. Leadership and Engagement

Members of ASCEPT are the cornerstone of the Society. Member and student member support and participation in ASCEPT initiatives and activities are crucial for the sustainability and success of ASCEPT. It is the role of the ASCEPT Board to seek and facilitate opportunities and activities for members to promote pharmacology and toxicology and ultimately the advancement of health. ASCEPT, its mission, values and goals must be seen as relevant, beneficial and worthwhile for its members. Members of ASCEPT need to recognise benefits for their contributions to ASCEPT and, importantly, feel valued as an ASCEPT member.

OBJECTIVE

ASCEPT will develop and promote opportunities and initiatives for members to achieve ASCEPT'S mission and goals.

STRATEGIES

1. Seek and facilitate strategic opportunities for ASCEPT members through:
 - communicating opportunities for members to actively participate in ASCEPT Annual Scientific Meetings (ASMs)
 - supporting members to nominate for leadership positions within ASCEPT's Special Interest Groups (SIGs), Forums and ASCEPT Committees
 - supporting members to nominate (including self-nominate) for awards both within and outside ASCEPT
 - nominating and endorsing members for national and international committees with external stakeholders
2. Communicate effectively with the membership through:
 - distribution of timely and relevant information relating to point 1 above via the newsletter, focused emails, through SIG and Forum networks, the ASCEPT website, and other relevant platforms
 - research and implement the optimal use of technology and communication strategies to meet members' changing needs and expectations
3. Ensure adequate support for member initiatives by:
 - promoting and supporting, where possible, SIG and Forum initiatives outside the ASCEPT ASM
 - seeking and responding to feedback on initiatives from new, ongoing and exiting members
4. Provide opportunities to all members for leadership and engagement, including:
 - formal mentoring from senior ASCEPT members
 - representation among SIG and Forum leadership groups
 - Board membership and its associated portfolios
 - support of a student-led Student Forum and associated activities
 - support for early-mid career researchers (EMCRs) and educators to participate in leadership roles within ASCEPT
 - support Advanced Trainees in leadership roles in ASCEPT and Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP)
 - foster opportunities for representation outside the Society
5. Engage with stakeholders to:
 - develop and maintain strategic partnerships with government bodies, the education sector and relevant organisations (e.g. AMH)
 - develop strategic partnerships with industry either directly or through more industry-focused associations, centres and/or programs
 - identify where ASCEPT members can better support the healthcare sector through research, education and contributions to medicines-related policy, governance and guidelines

- Engage with government and regulators to provide trusted expert advice
6. Maintain a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship that encourages development of new strategies and activities that will attract new members, enhance career growth and encourage retention of existing members.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Positive and diverse membership retention
- Annual report of numbers in formal mentoring programme
- Thriving SIGs and Forums with activities organised outside of the ASCEPT ASM
- Maintained number and breadth of proposals for ASM symposia from SIGs
- Monitoring activity on communication platforms, such as SIG and Forum networks, and relevant social media
- Record ASCEPT representation on external bodies

3. Research

Research in experimental and clinical pharmacology and toxicology sits squarely at the centre of the ASCEPT mission to advance human health through the development and judicious use of medicines. ASCEPT provides opportunities for members to showcase their research findings in high profile and multimodal formats including plenary and symposia presentations, oral presentations, poster presentations and workshops. The annual scientific meetings provide members with opportunities for career development, peer recognition, funding opportunities and are an important nurturing ground for researchers at all levels (students, ECRs, MCRs, trainees etc). Special interest groups and forums provide opportunities for networking and engagement with colleagues at a national and international level and open up collaborative research possibilities.

OBJECTIVE

To promote excellence in experimental and clinical pharmacological and toxicological research.

STRATEGIES

1. ASCEPT will organise:

- a yearly ASM
- the New Zealand Forum meetings
- the clinical pharmacology weekend

2. ASCEPT will promote:

- excellence in experimental and clinical pharmacology and toxicology research at ASCEPT scientific meetings
- Researchers at all levels (students, ECRs, MCRs, trainees etc) through opportunities and awards, opportunities to represent ASCEPT in international society and on organising committees for local and international conferences
- members' research achievements internally and externally with emphasis on highlighting our junior members
- representation on pharmacology and toxicology funding and policy committees
- research collaboration and exchange of information among our members via our SIGs and Forums
- integration of environmental sustainability principles in research initiatives

3. ASCEPT will collaborate with:

- other synergistic organisations in terms of research policy development and co-hosting, or representation at, scientific meetings

4. ASCEPT will facilitate:

- opportunities for members to give plenary and symposia presentations
- identification of research priorities relevant to ASCEPT members and communication of these to the membership, funding bodies and policy makers
- equitable opportunities for our diverse membership, including early mid-career researchers to chair/co-chair sessions at the ASM and to be represented on SIG committees

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Sustained attendance at ASMs in line with membership numbers
- Sustained SIG engagement with society activities, symposia and workshops
- Encourage ASCEPT badged research symposia in untapped areas to promote interdisciplinary collaboration
- Establish member spotlight in newsletter

4. Education and Training

Education and training are a core component of our Society's activities. Education underpins the multiple pathways for the application of pharmacology and toxicology. This applies to people working in research, medicine, pharmacy, other healthcare sectors, and industry. The Society's membership plays a fundamental role in the training of emerging pharmacologists, toxicologists, Advanced Trainees in Clinical Pharmacology, and a wide range of allied health professionals. By providing high quality, focused, inclusive and evidence-based education and training, ASCEPT will foster a sustainable pipeline of expert members who will be the leaders of the future.

OBJECTIVE

To lead quality teaching of pharmacology and toxicology through curriculum development, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), and clinical training.

STRATEGIES

1. To maintain a vibrant and inclusive Education Forum
2. Lead the development of education programs and resources relevant to pharmacology and toxicology undergraduates, postgraduates, Advanced Trainees in Clinical Pharmacology, programs for other healthcare professionals and promote these through the Education Forum
3. Promote teaching of pharmacology and toxicology in universities and clinical settings by pharmacologists and toxicologists
4. To provide high quality professional development opportunities for educators of all stages and disciplines, students, graduates (including Advanced Trainees in Clinical Pharmacology), and professionals from other healthcare sectors
5. Increase the visibility of Education Forum activities to promote the relevance of education to the broader ASCEPT membership and wider community to further engage members and drive Society membership
6. Emphasise the importance of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) through dedicated Education sessions at the ASM (pre-ASM workshops, symposia, poster sessions), poster prizes for honours and higher degree students and awards
7. Embed pharmacology and toxicology education in the organisation of the ASM
8. In concert with all SIGs, lead, promote and support initiatives to develop translational training for pharmacologists and toxicologists, particularly in entrepreneurship, innovation and research impact and influence
9. Advocate for maintenance of the number of training positions for Clinical Pharmacologists
10. Promote and disseminate important clinical research findings related to QUM to the membership through participation in pre-ASM workshops, the ASM, and the ASCEPT Clinical Weekend
11. Communicate ASCEPT's education activities and expertise through international communities (e.g. IUPHAR and related societies) and other STEM societies, to promote the Society as leaders in biomedical education

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Development and delivery of teaching and curriculum-focused workshops and symposia at the ASM, Clinical Pharmacology Weekend and other avenues throughout the year
- Expanded range of activities for providing continuing professional development in education practice and research outside of the ASM
- Involvement in curriculum development and review activities at the local, national, and international levels
- Maintaining a prize for Education
- Inclusion of an Education Career Development Workshop at the ASM
- Increased attendance of Clinical Pharmacology trainees at ASCEPT Clinical Weekends and ASM
- Involvement in development and endorsement of training modules for students, graduates, and professionals e.g. Prescribing Skills Assessment, National Prescribing Curriculum, Pharmacogenomics training modules
- Promote assessment of prescribing competency through the ANZ-PSA
- Contribution to education initiatives of other relevant stakeholders (e.g. IUPHAR, IUTOX, Science and Technology Australia, BPS/Prescribing Skills Assessment, HERDSA)

5. Advocacy

ASCEPT is the leading society in Australasia for the representation of pharmacologists and toxicologists. ASCEPT is recognised by the Australian Academy of Sciences, international organisations (IUPHAR and IUTOX), and numerous government and other professional bodies in both Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

ASCEPT has an important role to play in advocating broadly for the adoption of sound pharmacological and toxicological principles in medical research, particularly with respect to the development, safety and efficacy of medicines. This also extends to the development and implementation of medicines policy and clinical guidelines. ASCEPT also has a crucial role in advocating for quality education and training in pharmacology and toxicology. To maintain this position, ASCEPT needs to be proactive in advocating for its members to be appointed to external national and international bodies as well as associated committees as representatives of ASCEPT. ASCEPT needs to ensure it has a 'voice' that speaks to issues of relevance and concern.

OBJECTIVE

To maintain and strengthen ASCEPT's position as the leading society that represents pharmacologists and toxicologists through advocacy.

STRATEGIES

1. Support and endorse ASCEPT member participation on external committees and peak government bodies
2. Enhance opportunities to influence policy development by proactively engaging with policymakers and stakeholders
3. Provide evidence-based responses to consultation relevant to pharmacology and toxicology e.g. to government, popular media and industry
4. Maintain records of nominated members who are representing ASCEPT on named committees
5. Ensure any ASCEPT endorsed statement is reviewed and approved by the ASCEPT President

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Report on member participation on external committees and other bodies (particularly those related to research funding and medicines policy) and ensure stability or growth in numbers
- Report on impact of participation of members on external committees by detailing any outcomes related to member involvement (e.g. changes to policy, publications etc.)
- Report on number of evidence-based position statements in key areas of pharmacology and toxicology, and ensure stability or growth in numbers

6. Social Sustainability and Growth

The ability of ASCEPT to meet its objectives - to represent pharmacologists and toxicologists in Australasia and provide valuable services to members and the broader community - depends on continued financial stability.

Through careful financial management, fastidious handling of the share portfolio during and post the global financial crisis and the Covid-19 downturn, and increased dividends from the AMH, the Society has returned to a position of financial sustainability. This has allowed for the resumption of student travel awards and support for student registration. Additionally, the Society introduced subsidised registration for EMCR members for the 2024 annual joint conference and plans to continue supporting students and EMCR members at future meetings.

OBJECTIVE

To maintain and grow the financially stable position of ASCEPT, while enhancing its capacity to serve members and the broader community.

STRATEGIES

1. Maintain separate budgets for ASCEPT ASM, the Aotearoa New Zealand ASCEPT ASM, ASCEPT Clinical Pharmacology Weekend, and other meetings, and operational expenses
2. Budget ASMs and other meetings to operate on a cost neutral basis while maintaining high quality programmes
3. Review any ASCEPT sponsorship associated with ASCEPT awards and ensure its alignment with ASCEPT's financial capacity and strategic priorities
4. Evaluate and optimise ASCEPT operational costs
5. Continue to hold joint conferences with key national and international societies (e.g. APSA, PAGANZ, IUPHAR) to enhance visibility and share meeting costs
6. Seek and secure multi-year sponsorships for both the Society and the ASM
7. Strategically underwrite conference(s) of international standing with a proven record of cost benefit to the Society
8. Regularly review charity status requirements and ensure compliance with requirements and legal obligations
9. Explore flexibility on membership categories

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- Cost-neutral or profitable ASMs
- Maintenance and growth of ASCEPT's financially stable position
- Multi-year sponsorship of the ASM
- Joint conferences with key national and international societies (e.g., APSA, PAGANZ, IUPHAR)
- Maintenance of charity status
- Annual review of support provided to key membership groups in line with financial capacity
- Positive and diverse membership retention and growth
- Annual report of membership categories