

Message from the Conference Chair

Professor Phil Robinson

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the Medical stream of the 14th Australasian Cystic Fibrosis Conference. It is appropriate perhaps to recall the old adage that good things come to those who wait. Interspersed through the multiple challenges that COVID has presented to us over the past few years our original conference was waylaid by hosting platform issues and so now in August 2022 we can join together to participate in the medical stream of the conference. Welcome! Sadly we are unable to celebrate together in person in my beautiful home state of Tasmania, but I am sure you will enjoy the wonderful program that the hard working committee has put together and my appreciation for their efforts requires recognition and my heartfelt gratitude for their hard work.

One of the major changes that has occurred between our original meeting date of August 2021 and today is the PBS listing of Trikafta for many of our cystic fibrosis (CF) population. This exciting advance does however raise the theme of this conference to greater relevance. Our theme of “CF – care for all” emphasises that there are some patients who will not benefit from access to Trikafta and we must continue to investigate similarly effective therapies for this group of patients. The introduction of Trikafta to the large proportion of the CF population may well change the way CF care is delivered to people with CF. Frequency of outpatient reviews, the ongoing need for additional medications such as mucolytic therapies and handling the sometime significant weight gains achieved will all need re-examining in the Trikafta era. Not all people who are eligible to access Trikafta will experience the dramatic improvement many patients experience on starting this drug and as such again work needs to be done to improve these peoples lives as well – highlighting again our theme “CF - care for all”.

CF care also should be viewed in a holistic manner to include not only the person with CF but those who provide care to the person through family and personal relationships. We also must pay attention to those who provide CF care either through the medical workforce or support services such as Cystic Fibrosis Australia (CFA) to ensure that their physical and mental health is recognised and supported. This year’s program has been structured to address CF care from all these points of view.

The challenges raised over what has been a very difficult past 24 months have also impacted on all aspects of the CF care model and the development of innovative changes in providing CF care in the face of these challenges will most likely shape the way we model CF care in the future, even post COVID. Many of these innovative changes will be presented over the next few days.

Throughout the conference we will hear from some of the best CF researchers and clinicians both in Australia and NZ and further afield and I personally would like to thank CFA for their commitment, even through these tough times of social distancing and travel restrictions, in ensuring this continues to be a conference of world class quality.

As we come together in a virtual environment to learn and celebrate the wonderful science that is currently encapsulating CF please join me in recognising the traditional owners of the land on which we met and we pay our respects to their elders past, present and future, their community values, their culture and practices and their right to sovereignty and self-determination.