

# 40th Anniversary Australasian Society for the Study of Brain Impairment Guest Editorial

The Australasian Society for the Study of Brain Impairment (ASSBI) celebrated its 40th anniversary at the annual conference in Melbourne this year. The conference theme was apposite:

‘Looking Back to Look Ahead’

and we have decided that this celebratory edition of the journal should continue that theme.

Major anniversaries are important milestones. In addition to the chance they provide for celebration, they also provide opportunities for us to reflect together on the historical trends that have shaped our development; to remind ourselves about why our work matters; to consider how to build on those historical accomplishments; and how to bring additional innovative depth and breadth to the organisation’s future. As our theme suggests, anniversaries allow us to look back to look ahead.

With this in mind, I am honoured to have been asked to provide a brief commentary to mark this very important anniversary. As someone who attended both the initial workshop in 1976 (when the organisational name and logo were chosen) and the inaugural ASSBI conference in 1977, watching this society grow and flourish over the past 40 years has been a source of great satisfaction and pride for me.

ASSBI has always been my favourite professional organisation. Why? Because ASSBI has stayed true to its mission to be a multidisciplinary society dedicated to improving the quality of life of people with brain impairment and their families. This began with an educational focus. The annual conference provided a forum where professionals from a wide range of disciplines could meet together to present, learn about, and discuss the latest clinical research and advances in treatment. ASSBI has also always encouraged student members to not only attend these meetings but to present their own work. This has often been the first time a future generation of professionals has presented publicly and I believe this has added a particularly important dimension to ASSBI’s role in promoting informed, multidisciplinary-oriented and enthusi-

astic professionals dedicated to improving the lives of others.

The growth of the organisation is reflected in the numbers who attend this conference, with the initial meeting in 1977 hosting perhaps 50 participants. Our 40th anniversary meeting has hosted 445 delegates, not only from across Australia but from Japan, Singapore, the United States, the United Kingdom and New Zealand.

Now, in addition to the annual conference, ASSBI sponsors regular continuing education workshops and seminars, provides high-quality assessment and treatment resources through ASSBI Resources and, of course, publishes this journal, *Brain Impairment*, now in its 17th edition.

It is with particular pride that I am able to include the *Brain Impairment* journal as part of our celebrations as the first issue was published during my presidency and included my presidential address to the conference of 2000. In that address, I reflected on some of the changes seen in the neuroscientific field since the 1991 presidential address by ASSBI’s founding father, Professor Kevin Walsh. So, to be once again reflecting on our challenges, growth and future gives me additional pleasure.

Through the outstanding efforts of our inaugural editors, Professors Jacinta Douglas and Robyn Tate, and our current editors, Professor Jenny Fleming and Associate Professor Grahame Simpson, *Brain Impairment* has developed from a fledgling publication to an internationally recognised journal included in global abstracting services. The journal has reflected the multidisciplinary approach that has been the cornerstone of ASSBI’s philosophy and is now planning to move to four editions each year with a strong submission rate and excellent citation ranking.

In conclusion, this 40th anniversary edition of *Brain Impairment* provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the past and future of an organisation that was founded in the hope that it would foster the wellbeing of those with brain impairment, their families and the professionals who serve them. It has been a privilege to be part of that organisation

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throughout that time and to watch it grow into the healthy and vibrant organisation that it is today.

I am sure you will find this edition stimulating and informative and that you will join me in congratulating ASSBI on all that it has accomplished in the past 40 years and in wishing both ASSBI

and Brain Impairment ongoing success and growth over the coming 40 years.

Jan Ewing  
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