

Gavin Finkelstein is President, Haemophilia Foundation Australia

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Gavin Finkelstein

Haemophilia Foundation Australia (HFA) held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) and Council meeting on 6 October 2018. We had no need for elections, as our Constitution requires elections for office bearers at the AGM every two years unless a vacancy occurs sooner. The HFA Annual Report, which includes highlights of the year and the financial report, can be downloaded from the HFA website - www.haemophilia.org.au/publications/annual-report.

UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES

State/Territory Foundations are represented on Council by their President or Vice President, and our intention is that this would lead to timely and relevant discussion about the issues of concern to our communities around the country. It's always good to share local information and solutions, even when they are as simple as a strategy that helps local offices run more smoothly, or a successful activity at a family camp, for example. We spend time making sure our work is focused on our strategic plan; this often means tackling complex issues, such as the Foundation's approach to new and emerging challenges for people living with a bleeding disorder, advocacy about new treatment products, or setting priorities for the development of our education resources, for example. Key challenges for all relate to ageing, youth engagement, meeting the needs of different sectors of our community, reviewing and updating policies, ensuring future financial stability and working with the fast and ever changing social media environment and communications.

HFA works hard to ensure the voices of our members are heard in all that we do, so not only do we ask member Foundations to contribute their views on issues, but HFA staff also put calls out for comment to the members of each of the Foundations, to specialist health professionals who treat and care for our community, to other health consumer organisations and similar bodies, as well as talking to people with bleeding

disorders who generously share their experiences. It is these personal experiences that help us shape our policy recommendations to governments and expert committees, and shape the content for our education resources and peer support for our community. Our volunteers and staff have built up a long history of consulting expertise and we do gather and distil the needs and views of our community, and we work hard to find solutions for some of the problem areas.

AGEING

We were delighted and grateful that the Australian Government Department of Health agreed to our special request recently for additional funding to address the growing needs of people with bleeding disorders who are ageing. This will involve extensive community consultation and I encourage people with personal experiences to contribute to this work.

As we will come to the end of a government funding cycle for our two government grants in mid-2019, we look forward to discussions with the Federal Health Minister, the Hon. Greg Hunt MP, and his Department in upcoming months about our work as the national peak body for bleeding disorders, and for our ongoing input to blood and blood product policy.

Best wishes to all for the Festive Season and wishing everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year. ■