

Gavin Finkelstein is President, Haemophilia Foundation Australia

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Gavin Finkelstein

2019 CONFERENCE

It gets exciting as we come closer to our national conference. I missed the Melbourne conference in Melbourne in 2017 due to an unfortunate accident in the swimming pool I use regularly! But now well and truly recovered from that, I am looking forward to catching up with old and new friends in Sydney. Manly is not too far from the Sydney airport or a quick ferry ride from Circular Quay in the Sydney CBD. We are told the weather is usually lovely in October and with the conference venue right over the road from Manly Beach, we could not ask for a better location.

Opportunities for learning and development

The conference is a perfect opportunity to meet people who share similar experiences, and to learn from each other. Whether you are a parent of a child with a bleeding disorder or an adult with a bleeding disorder or someone you care for has a bleeding disorder, the program will have plenty of relevance to you. Conference sessions cover bleeding disorders from all angles – most sessions have personal stories of people living with bleeding disorders, or their families, as well as information from health professionals and others with experience and knowledge to support our personal journeys.

For many people in our community, the conference is one of the rare chances they have of meeting others who go through some of the same things - these days where people don't need to go to their Haemophilia Treatment Centre (HTC) as often as in the past, and they may never come across others with a bleeding disorder. In the old days we would meet up in hospital wards, and our parents would meet when they came to the hospital. Things have changed a lot – if all is going well, people may only need to visit their HTC once or twice a year, even though they are often in touch with their treating team by telephone, email or SMS. It's not uncommon for people to say at conferences, 'this has been fantastic, it's the first time I have met others like me, who know what it's like!'

We have a wealth of experience in Australia to develop a rich program. So many people have generously

agreed to speak at the conference, and we also have invited three well-known and respected participants from further afield. Prof Alfonso Iorio is a clinician from McMaster University in Ontario, Canada who has a great interest in clinical research and improving and measuring treatment outcomes. We are also delighted that Greig Blamey has accepted our invitation to participate in the conference as well as attend the Australia New Zealand Physiotherapy Haemophilia Group Annual meeting as a guest speaker. Greig is a specialist physiotherapist who hails from Winnipeg in Canada. Greig is the Chair of the World Federation of Hemophilia (WFH) Musculoskeletal Committee and has a wealth of experience and knowledge. Our third international guest will be Marie Ann Fernandez, WFH Regional Program Manager for Asia & Western Pacific. Marie Ann will be sharing her experiences as a Development Worker at the Women's Breakfast.

GO FOR IT GRANTS

We are delighted that Pfizer has agreed to sponsor the Go For It Grants again in 2020. This awards program aims to inspire and support people affected by a bleeding disorder to achieve new personal goals. This might be in the area of study or to take on a new and challenging activity. Grants in previous years have given people affected by a bleeding disorder a chance to learn something new, by taking on an education or training course, a special challenge or setting goals they did not think would be possible for them to achieve without the support and encouragement of the grant that was awarded.

Applications must be received by **30 November 2019**. See the HFA website for details. #