

President's Report
AGM of the Australasian Speech Science and Technology Association,
20th December 2021

As 2021 draws to a close, I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate all ASSTA members on the resilience, generosity and creativity you have shown that has enabled individuals and as teams to flourish, your colleagues and peers to feel connected and supported, and for your ground-breaking research to progress. I've been so impressed by students' engagement and strength at this difficult time. The pandemic has certainly hit the sector hard and has taken its toll on us all through extended periods of lockdown, loss of personal connection, and the uncertainty and stress associated with an unpredictable future. Despite these challenges, you have continued to kick personal and professional goals through innovation and determination.

As you will be aware, ASSTA has made a commitment to support speech science research and training in a tangible way, particularly for ECR members. In 2021 **ASSTA COVID-19 Special Conference Support Awards** were awarded to Joshua Penney to attend INTERSPEECH which was held in Brno, Czech Republic, and to Yanping Li to attend the Acoustical Society of America meeting held in Seattle, USA.

The **ASSTA Research Event Awards** of \$5000 are designed to support research through events that strengthen existing research groups/collaborations and foster new networks and collaborative opportunities. Consider this funding when planning your next research event. An ASSTA Research Event Award supported the Māori Speech Hui hosted by the Speech Research group at the University of Auckland in July. Another recipient of the award, the SocioPhonAus event organised by Gerry Docherty and colleagues, has been postponed due to COVID but we are hopeful that this event can go ahead in mid 2022.

Make sure you take advantage of the support funding that ASSTA offers members and encourage students and other members of the speech science and technology community in Australia and New Zealand to join. We have a vibrant ASSTA community that we are committed to nurturing and supporting. If you have any feedback for the Executive please get in touch.

Last year we were incredibly sad to cancel our major conference SST due to the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic. I'm pleased to announce that we are planning SST for Canberra in 2022. Thank you to Rosey Billington and colleagues for pulling up their sleeves to bring us back together for our flagship event of the speech science calendar. I have really missed getting together with you all and I hope we can run an in-person event. As you will be aware, SST has a full 4-page paper submission which gives researchers the opportunity to publish hot off the press findings in a highly accessible format. Look out for a call for papers early next year.

Preparations are underway for an ASSTA hosted INTERSPEECH 2026 bid for Sydney. Please let us know if you are interested in getting involved and thanks to those who have already

offered assistance. We are particularly keen to connect with colleagues in speech engineering and industry to ensure that the bid has wide ranging appeal and relevance in our region.

ASSTA has been in touch with the president of the Australian Acoustics Society Jeff Parnell who is the Chair of the joint Acoustical Society of America meeting to be held in Sydney in 2023. We have had positive preliminary meetings with organisers regarding ASSTA's involvement in the event.

Many of you will have been fortunate to attend the inaugural ASSTA seminar meeting in November. Thank you Marija Tabain for initiating this meeting and for being the first speaker. We hope to make this a more regular event and we encourage you to get in touch if you would like to present work in progress, if you'd like feedback on some aspect of your research, or if you'd like to do a practice conference presentation. Please send a message to secretary@assta.org.

ASSTA has recently surveyed ECR members to find out how we can better support you. Thank you to those of you who responded. We'll be in touch regarding ECR initiatives and events. UWA student Troy Reynolds, and University of Auckland Research Fellow Justine Hui will be creating and moderating the ASSTA early researchers Facebook group.

ASSTA has distributed one newsletter this year – thank you to Jesin James for taking charge of the Newsletter. Please send new items to Jesin (jesin.james@auckland.ac.nz). Thanks also to Olcay Turk our previous newsletter editor.

Remember to use the ASSTA handle [the_real_ASSTA @realASSTA](https://twitter.com/realASSTA) if tweeting about your research to let the world know about the great work being done by ASSTA members. Please follow, retweet and tag.

As there was only one nomination for each of the President, Secretary, Treasurer and two executive members, the current office bearers will retain their positions in 2022. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the ASSTA Executive (Sasha Calhoun, Janet Fletcher, Debbie Loakes and Michael Tyler) for their hard work and dedication to the ASSTA community and you for your continued support of ASSTA.

May you and your families have a happy and relaxing holiday season.

Felicity Cox
ASSTA President