

**President's Report, AGM of the Australasian Speech Science and Technology
Association,
14th December 2022 5pm AEDT**

2022 has been a year of change as we move into a world where living with Covid-19 affects all of our planning and decision-making, both professionally and personally. Yet, we have again shown resilience and adaptability. The kindness of colleagues, friends and family members supports and sustains us in these challenging times. Despite the difficulties that Covid brings, ASSTA members have remained positive and productive. The number of new members continues to grow and our association continues to flourish. Congratulations to members who have been successful in external and internal research funding, to students awarded higher degrees (and their supervisors), to members who have had books, papers, chapters, conference abstracts accepted, who have presented their work at learned meetings, who have moved into new roles, and who have successfully delivered engaging course materials with knowledge and passion.

I am so pleased that we have finally been able to come together face to face for SST 2022 after the unfortunate cancellation of SST 2020. Thank you to Rosey Billington and the SST 2022 organising committee for mounting the conference in this time of change. The flexibility that we have gained in our lives dealing with the pandemic and the creativity and resourcefulness of humans has led to some major positive advances in how we live and work. To be able to attend virtual conferences anywhere in the world has been a huge advantage for many who cannot (or prefer not to) travel.

This year we were deeply saddened by the loss one of our most ardent supporters and long-time member Anne Cutler. I send my heartfelt condolences to Anne's family, colleagues, students, and friends. Anne was a luminary in the field of psycholinguistics whose research had wide-ranging impact leading to ground-breaking insights in language processing. Anne was an inspiration for women in science, a brilliant and passionate scholar, and a loyal friend. Anne attended SST conferences with gusto. She was an enthusiastic and fiercely competitive spectrogram reading contestant, strategically assembling her team for maximum impact.

I would like to announce that in honour of Anne's advocacy for women in science and her generosity as a mentor to junior researchers, one of the keynote presentations at each SST will be named the Anne Cutler Lecture to be delivered by a female scholar with preference for an early career researcher.

In February 2022 ASSTA signed a joint submission to the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee's inquiry and report into the ARC Amendment (Ensuring Research Independence) Bill 2018. The aim of the bill was to remove ministerial discretion in ARC grant funding and ensure the integrity of ARC research funding systems. The result of the submission process is that, even though the bill was rejected, there is now an independent review into the *Australian Research Council Act 2001* (ARC Review) to which many of you may have contributed through your institutions.

ASSTA has been in discussions with the Language Data Commons of Australia (LDaCA) group, headed by Michael Haugh, to provide a portal for access to the AusTalk corpus. This involves repackaging AusTalk in a way that will ensure accessibility and governance.

As a reminder, ASSTA has a number of awards and grants to support members including the **New Researcher Awards Scheme, Conference Travel Awards, Special Initiative Awards, Carer Support Scheme**, and the **COVID 19 Special Conference Support Scheme**. Please encourage colleagues and students to join ASSTA to take advantage of the support programs available. The New Researcher Award recipients for 2022 will be announced at the dinner.

ASSTA is also committed to supporting groundwork meetings for setting up new or strengthening existing research collaborations and for seminars or workshops on particular themes. The **ASSTA Research Event Awards** are offered for up to \$5000 each. This year SocioPhon Aus – 3rd Workshop on Sociophonetic Variability in the English Varieties of Australia went ahead after postponement due to Covid. Congratulations to Gerry Docherty, Janet Fletcher and Olga Maxwell for mounting a fantastic event, part of which will occur at SST 2022.

Our support for members comes from income generated mainly from memberships and profit that may be achieved through ASSTA sponsored conferences. ASSTA has presented a bid to ISCA to host INTERSPEECH in Sydney in 2026. We have assembled an exceptional team of phoneticians, speech scientists, engineers, technologists, clinicians, educators, and industry partners to join our organising committee and we have received a generous support package from all levels of government. Interspeech was last in Australia in 2008 in Brisbane and we believe it is time for Interspeech to return to Australia as our community has changed considerably since that time and substantial scientific advances have been made. Our proposed theme is Diversity & Equity - Speaking Together. Interspeech in 2026 would be a major event for ASSTA, building on the success of ICPHS 2019, and would further raise awareness of the important phonetic, speech science and speech technology research being done in our part of the world.

The Forensic Speech Sciences Committee of ASSTA has been active, particularly through a boost from the new Research Hub for Language in Forensic Evidence established at University of Melbourne's School of Languages and Linguistics and led by Helen Fraser. On 12th October on behalf of ASSTA I formally endorsed the workshop 'Using transcripts by police 'ad hoc experts' to assist juries' perception of indistinct forensic audio: Is reform needed and if so how can it be achieved?' hosted by The Research Hub, Deakin Law School, and Melbourne Law School's Criminal Law Research Forum to discuss the problem of police transcripts. This work follows ASSTA's support for the call to action motion endorsed at the 2018 AGM. Helen will provide an update as part of the Forensic Speech Science Committee report.

In 2022, ASSTA launched the ECR/PG network. Josh Penney and Louise Ratko are leading this initiative with Sasha Calhoun as the facilitator. The group will consider new ways to engage and support ECR and Higher Degree Research members.

ASSTA is planning a newsletter for early 2023. Thank you to Jessin James for taking charge of the ASSTA Newsletter. Please send through your lab reports and news to Jessin as soon as possible (jesin.james@auckland.ac.nz).

Now is the time to move forward with planning for SST in 2024. I call on members to think about hosting SST in two years. There is plenty of time to start planning. Now that virtual meetings are the norm, there is no reason why an even bigger and better SST2024 cannot go ahead in whatever form is appropriate.

In October I received notification that Michael Tyler and Janet Fletcher would be stepping down from the Executive. I would like to thank Michael, who has served for seven years on the ASSTA Executive as Treasurer, and Janet for six years of service as an Executive Member. We really appreciate the voluntary contribution that office bearers make over and above their regular academic roles. Thank you Michael and Janet, for your valuable contribution to the ASSTA community. Your service has been greatly appreciated.

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. I look forward to working with the new committee as we strive to build the ASSTA community and think about innovative ways to support and expand speech science and technology research in Australasia. I am honoured to represent you and I am incredibly thankful for your kindness and support.

I wish you a very happy and relaxing holiday season.

Felicity Cox
ASSTA President