

Branch Handbook



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Peter Coombs generously volunteers his time and expertise in many ways to assist the ASA. He is a previous recipient of the ASA's prestigious Pru Pratten Memorial Award for his outstanding contribution to the sonography profession.



Purpose of handbook

The Australasian Sonographers Association (ASA) aims to ensure that Branch Committee members have the information they need to make their involvement enjoyable, rewarding and effective. This handbook provides Branch Committees with information to enable them to perform their important role. It also outlines relevant ASA Office contacts for branch support.

Related ASA documents:

- [Branch Committee Terms of Reference](#)



Background

The ASA is the peak body and leading voice for sonographers. As outlined in the *Strategic Intent 2021–2023*, the goals of the ASA are to:

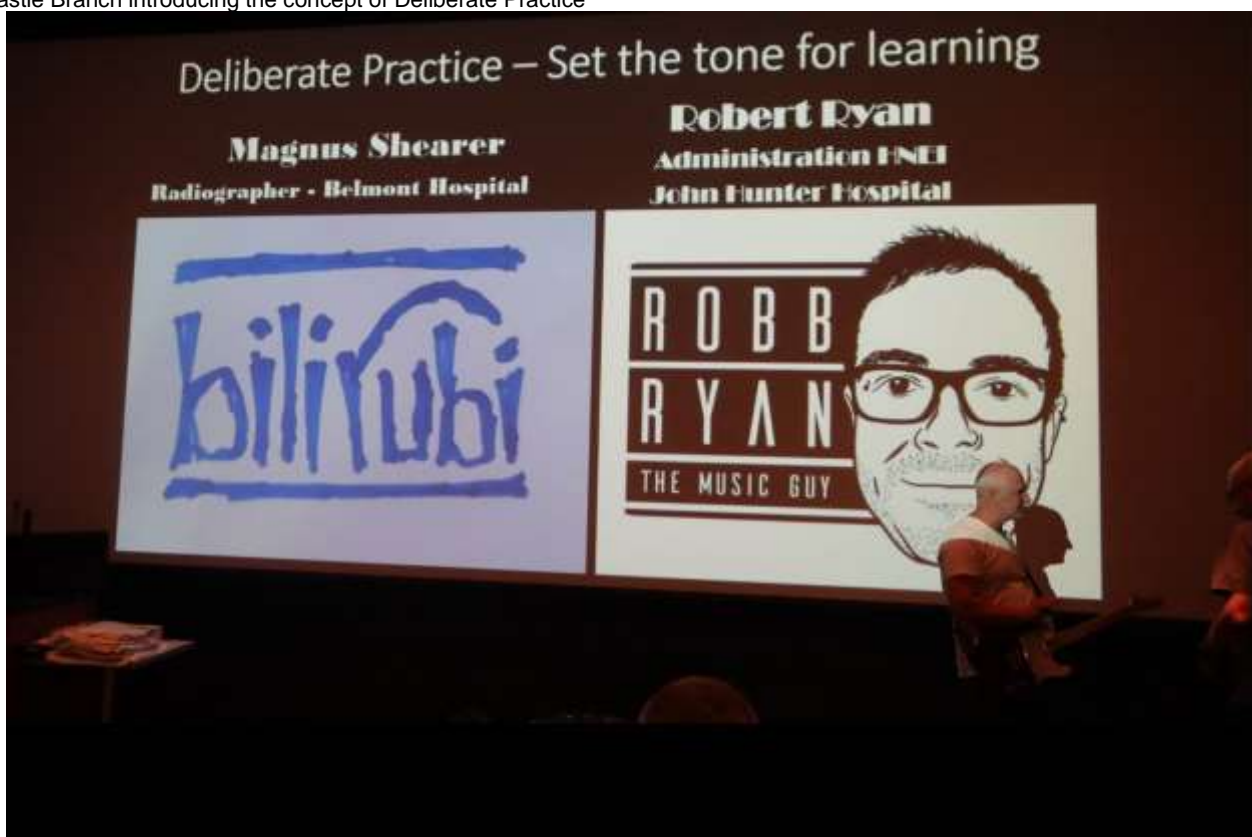
- promote and advance the sonography profession
- drive the quality and standards of sonography practice
- facilitate comprehensive skills and professional development opportunities in ultrasound
- innovate and evolve to deliver organizational excellence, sustainability and value for members
- Nurture a great organization to belong to

In order to achieve these goals, the ASA has a number of initiatives, including the provision of education, continuing professional development (CPD) events, workshops and networking events. The ASA's branches are a key component of networking and professional development. Branch meetings and workshops are an opportunity to meet local education needs, and for speaker development at the grass roots level. They also provide an opportunity for members to meet other members and share professional ideas and advice.

The size and composition of branches varies – from large to small, and from urban to rural. This is reflected in the varying nature of branch activity, as local Branch Committees know best what works for their members. The ASA supports and assists the Branch Committee chairs and members in their roles by providing this handbook but does not prescribe branch activity.

The ASA Office provides operational support to Branch Committees, and the Member Services team is the first point of contact for all branch matters. Working together the branches and office staff help deliver local ASA events, and work towards our overarching goal of *a healthier world through sonographer expertise*.

Newcastle Branch introducing the concept of Deliberate Practice



Committee member positions – roles and responsibilities

Branch Chairperson

Each Branch is required to appoint a Branch Chairperson.

Role responsibilities

- Overall responsibility for the running of branch activities.
- Chair the Branch Committee meetings and branch meetings/ workshops. If unavailable, ensure the Vice-Chairperson or an alternative committee member is appointed to perform this function.
- Work closely with the Branch Secretary to plan an appropriate Branch Committee meeting schedule and to ensure agenda and minutes are documented and disseminated.
- Work with Branch Committee to plan events for the coming year.
- Ensure that an ASA patient consent form (general or transvaginal) is completed by the patient, presenter and a witness prior to a scanning session (or designate a committee member to do so)
- Report any issues or problems relating to the smooth operation of the branch to the Member Services team.

Branch Vice-Chairperson

Each Branch is encouraged to appoint a Branch Vice-Chairperson.

Role responsibilities

- Overall responsibility for the branch in the absence of the Branch Chairperson (refer to the Branch Chairperson role responsibilities).
- In the absence of the Branch Chairperson, chair Branch Committee meetings, and report any issues or problems relating to the smooth operation of the branch to the Member Services team.
- In the absence of the Chairperson, ensure preparatory and follow-up tasks for Branch Committee meetings are performed by the Branch Secretary.



Committee member positions – roles and responsibilities

cont.

Branch Secretary

Each Branch is required to appoint a Branch Secretary.

Role responsibilities

- Work closely with the Branch Chairperson to plan an appropriate Branch Committee meeting schedule and submit it to the Member Services team.
- Ensure venue, catering and other arrangements are in hand for branch committee meetings. These arrangements are undertaken by the committee.
- Formulate and disseminate the agenda for committee meetings, in consultation with the Branch Chairperson, via the Branch Portal at least one week prior to the Branch Committee meeting.
- Prepare draft minutes from committee meetings and forward to the Branch Chairperson for review within seven (7) days of Branch Committee meetings.
- Once reviewed and approved, upload the minutes to Branch Portal as soon as possible following the meeting in order that CPD points can be allocated by Member Services to the attendees
- Retain copies of other information relating to each branch meeting (agenda, correspondence etc.) in the Branch Portal to assist with planning future events.



Committee member positions – roles and responsibilities

cont.

Branch Sponsorship Coordinator

Each Branch may appoint a Branch Sponsorship Coordinator.

The ASA office does not arrange corporate sponsorship for branch events. Where possible the Sponsorship Coordinator should attract local sponsorship for branch events to provide speaker gifts in the first instance. If additional sponsorship is available this can be used to offset other costs and sponsorship may also include the provision of a suitable ultrasound unit when required for live scanning purposes. Requests for sponsorship should not be excessive and it is vital to acknowledge and thank all corporate partners who offer to sponsor a meeting.

Responsibilities

- Liaise with potential sponsors regarding sponsorship of events.
- Liaise with sponsors and Branch Committee regarding any specific arrangements for sponsorship, including venue, audio-visual requirements, applications specialist support and equipment for demonstrations as required.
- Provide the Member Services team with sponsorship details to create an invoice if required and for advertising purposes.
- Provide appropriate recognition for the sponsor during the Branch meeting or workshop. The sponsor should be given the option of presenting the speaker gifts.



Branch Committee meetings

Committees hold Branch Committee meetings to plan and organise member events. These are encouraged to be held online via an ASA licensed Zoom account.

Member Services will organise the Zoom meeting and post the link for all committee members in the Branch Portal. Email memberservices@sonographers.org to arrange.

If holding a Branch Committee meeting in person, the member services team should be notified of the meeting to ensure approval for the costings for catering. Estimated costs are approximately \$10 per head with the understanding that a reasonable costing will be approved.

Branches also provide an opportunity for members to communicate with the ASA office, and therefore a mechanism for troubleshooting member issues. Branches are encouraged to arrange as many Branch Committee Meetings as required.

Each branch should aim to provide a broad cross-section of topics and ensure that both specialist and novice sonographers are catered for. There is no single formula for the perfect Branch Meeting or Workshop and it is recognised that branches differ in their setting, members' interests, and local availability of speakers. We strongly encourage branches to take advantage of local and visiting experts.

Branches are also encouraged to promote sonographers to present for the first time and this speaker development is an important objective of the ASA.

Following a Branch Committee meeting, the Branch Chair or Secretary is required to:

- Upload minutes of Branch Committee meetings to the Branch portal within a week. Minutes should include:
- Attendees' names (first and surname)
- discussion points and the outcomes of decisions made at the meeting
- any issues which require clarification.

Branch Committee members are eligible for CPD points for attending committee meetings. Points are awarded under ASAR Category 4 (any other documented educational or professional activity) and are accrued at a rate of 1 point per hour. The Member Services Team will log these points to your member record on your behalf.



Branch Meetings and Workshops

Branch Meetings

These meetings are predominantly held on a weeknight where local members engage in CPD presentations and are offered online or face to face (1-2 hours in duration, including end of year Interesting Case Nights).

These are free of charge to members. Non members can also attend for \$25 (which includes a CPD certificate emailed to them). The ASA provides a budget of \$10 per person for these meetings.

Branch Workshops

These high quality CPD events held on a weekend and comprise of live scanning and/or presentations and offer a great opportunity for local networking (typically more than 2 hours in duration).

There is generally a nominal charge for members for a workshop and the ticket price will depend upon costs and if local sponsorship has been sourced. These workshops need to be arranged in conjunction with member services with the aim of a cost neutral event.

Branch Committees should undertake the following when organising meetings or workshops:

- select and invite an appropriate speaker to present at the branch meeting (if holding a presentation-based event). Speakers should be selected based on their scanning expertise, presentation skills and topics being offered. Branches are encouraged to use local speakers
- ensure appropriate facilities (including audio-visual equipment) are available for any presentations or demonstrations
- supply the Member Services team with the following information about the branch event for promotion via the Booking Form:
 - topic/s (or specialty at a minimum)
 - speaker/s (including bio)
 - date and times (arrival, refreshments and speaker timings)
 - Venue details (including a map and any instructions for parking and access)
 - provide maximum number of attendees (if applicable)
 - sponsor (if relevant)
 - any special delivery requirements (e.g. for equipment)
 - appropriate contact for forwarding the meeting pack via email
 - if the ASA is covering the speaker gift, organise a gift for speakers presenting at the branch meeting up to the value of \$20
- advise the Member Services team of any changes to the meeting schedule promptly, so that meeting flyers; the e-newsletter *cross section*; and the ASA website can be kept up to date.
- use marketing materials if supplied by the ASA Office to ensure appropriate promotion of the ASA during the branch meeting.
- committees are also encouraged to provide photos from meetings and workshops for publication in ASA social media. Mobile phone photos are acceptable and should be provided to Member Services as soon after the event as possible so they remain current.

Branch Meetings and Workshops



Scheduling

Each Branch should hold regular Branch Meetings or Workshops throughout the year. There are no restrictions to the timing of the events (apart from May when the ASA Team are working on the annual conference), but it is anticipated that the branches will schedule meetings at a time and location that will accommodate the majority of members.

- Branch Meetings are predominantly held on a weeknight where local members engage in CPD presentations and are offered online or face to face (1-2 hours in duration)
- Branch Workshops are typically held on a weekend and comprise of live scanning and/or presentations from expert sonographers.(2-6 hours)

When planning events, Branch Committees should consider the dates of other ASA events , ultrasound events and conferences. The Member Services team can assist with this.

It is the responsibility of branch committees to give the Member Services team 8 weeks' notice to allow time for planning and promoting, with the event to go live on the website at least six weeks prior to the event but as far in advance as possible.

If events are planned and scheduled in for the year ahead, then even better.

Branch events are advertised on the ASA website, and in the fortnightly member e-newsletter cross section. Members in the area are also sent direct emails.

In recent years, branches have held more diverse types of events:

- networking-only events such as trivia nights
- gathering to watch screenings of **asawebinars** with discussion afterwards
- student presentation nights
- interesting case studies

Interesting Case Nights are encouraged to be run as an annual end of year event. The best case winner (as voted by the Branch Committee) are offered a 30% discount on the registration fee of the annual conference.



Branch Meetings and Workshops *cont.*

Costs

Branch Meetings

Costs incurred in holding Branch Meetings should be kept to a minimum. Branch Meetings will remain free of charge for members and non-members will pay \$25. Venue costs and catering to be covered by the ASA. Venue and catering quotes should be sent through to the ASA for approval with the understanding that a reasonable costing will be approved.

- Catering is estimated up to approximately \$10 per head, reasonable costings will be approved
- Speaker gifts should be sourced through local sponsorship or the ASA will cover \$20 per speaker.

Third parties such as catering or venue suppliers can submit their invoice directly to the ASA member services team for payment.

If a committee member has incurred an expense, the committee member is required to send the receipts/tax invoices with an expense claim form via email within 2 weeks of the event occurring and the ASA Office will reimburse the already approved expenditure.

Branch Workshops

Ideally a Branch workshop registration fee for members should be kept to a minimum. These workshops need to be arranged in conjunction with Member Services with the aim of a cost neutral event.

Venue and catering quotes should be discussed with Member Services for approval with the understanding that a reasonable costing will be approved and the ticket will be priced accordingly.

- Catering is to be estimated up to approximately \$5 per head for a morning tea.
- Catering is to be estimated up to approximately \$15 per head if a lunch is to be provided based on a workshop extending from morning to afternoon.
- Speaker gifts are to be sourced through local sponsorship where possible or the ASA will cover \$20 per speaker.

Third parties such as catering or venue suppliers can submit their invoice directly to the ASA member services team for payment.

If a committee member has incurred an expense, the committee member is required to send the receipts/tax invoices with an expense claim form (via email) within 2 weeks of the event occurring and the ASA Office will reimburse the already approved expenditure.



Branch Meetings and Workshops *cont.*

Live Scanning

The following guidelines must be followed when live scanning demonstrations are held.

An ASA patient consent form (general or intimate) must be completed by the patient, presenter and a witness prior to the scanning session and returned to the ASA (via email). This can be obtained on the Branch Portal.

The patient may be offered remuneration in the form of a gift voucher for assisting. The following amounts are appropriate for a half day workshop:

- \$50 for general scanning
- \$100 for intimate scanning

Gift vouchers can be purchased (and reimbursed) by the Branch OR the Member Services Team can email a gift voucher directly to the volunteer patient model if required.

The Member Services team must be notified of the intention to include live scanning and the number of patients being scanned. This for budgetary reasons and to ensure the correct CPD points are allocated to the speaker.



Process for organising a Branch Meeting/Workshop

Branch Meeting/Workshop	Notes
<p>Once full details of a meeting or workshop are known, send the Member Services team the booking form to promote on the website. The more time to promote the event the better (you can even plan all events for the coming year if appropriate)</p> <p><i>(Member Services require a minimum of 6 weeks to give ample time for promoting the event)</i></p>	
Source a sponsor if applicable	
Organise speakers and topics for the event	
Organise a volunteer patient for live scanning if applicable	
Submit the <i>Branch Event Booking Form</i> to the member services team	
Create a draft flyer and send to Member Services to approve and upload OR seek assistance from Member Services to create the flyer. Include times, speakers, topics and any sponsor details	
Member Services will open the event on the ASA website and invite registrations a minimum of 6 weeks prior to the event taking place	
Member Services will include the event in <i>cross section</i>	
Member Services will notify sonographers in surrounding areas of event via direct email	
The ASA Branch Pack to be emailed to the chairperson or event organiser by Member Services ahead of the event including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • signage (if needed) • pre-registered attendant sign-in sheet • non-registered attendant sign-in sheet • presenters sign-in sheet • Branch Claim Form for reimbursement (this can also be found in the portal) • Certificate for non member presenters (as required. Member presenters have certificate uploaded to their dashboard) 	
Final registration numbers will be emailed to the chairperson two days prior event by Member Services	
Attendance forms and Expense Claim Form to be returned via email to member services within 14 days of event taking place	
Reimbursements managed by Member Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • catering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approx. \$10 per head for Branch Meetings • venue hire (if any) • AV hire (if any) • speaker gifts (if no sponsor) – up to \$20 per gift. 	
CPD points and certificates allocated by Member Services to member's individual dashboard	



Branch meeting/workshop follow-up

- Ensure delegate and presenter attendance sheets are completed for allocation of CPD points.
- The presenter's attendance sheet with signature.
- Submit attendance sheets to the Member Services team no later than one week after the event so that certificates of attendance can be uploaded to member's dashboard.
- Submit claims for reimbursement to the ASA Office within 14 days, with the appropriate claim form completed and tax invoices attached. **Tax Invoices/receipts MUST be included to enable your claim to be processed**
- Provide photographs if applicable for ASA to put on social media

Photos

Branches are encouraged to submit photographs of members' meetings and workshops which may be used in social media.

- Images supplied via email as separate files (not embedded in a Word document)
- A caption should be supplied for each photograph providing names of people and any other relevant details
- Mobile phone photos are acceptable

CPD recognition

Accurate and timely recordings of branch activities provide evidence of participation for audits conducted by ASAR and NZMRTB.

Attendees

Attendees at branch education events are entitled to receive CPD points for their attendance.

- Points for attendance – 1 CPD point (1 ASAR credit) per hour.
- Non-members can register to attend branch meetings for a \$25 fee including CPD certificate emailed to them.
- Lunch and refreshment breaks are not included in the time allocation for CPD points.

Speakers

Speakers are eligible to claim CPD points for each presentation at branch meetings and workshops:

- points for an oral presentation – 15 CPD points (15 ASAR credits – Activity code 2C)
- points for presenting a workshop including live scanning or a case study – 10 CPD points (10 ASAR credits per presentation – Activity code 2C).

To be eligible for CPD points, delegates and presenters should:

- sign the appropriate attendance form.

CPD certificates will be uploaded by the ASA office to the member's dashboard upon receipt of the Branch Committee attendance sheets as part of our ASA-MY CPD Program.

Non members will have CPD certificate emailed to them.

ASA Office support of branches

The Member Services team is available to assist Branch Committees with the smooth planning and marketing of their members' branch meetings and workshops.

ASA office staff will visit branches from time to time, to meet with committees and members for an exchange of information and ideas.

Responsibilities

The Member Services team and ASA office staff members where relevant, are responsible for:

- liaising regularly with the Branch Chairperson or designated contact about branch meetings or workshops
- processing registrations
- supporting promotion of branch meetings and events by providing and managing event details:
 - on the ASA website. This will include details about the presenter/s based on biography information provided by the Branch Committee
 - to the ASA's Communications Team, for inclusion in the weekly member e-newsletter *cross section*;
- promoting via direct email the branch meetings and workshops through communication with sonographers in the broader geographical location relevant to the meeting location
- providing a list of registrants to the Branch Chairperson or designated contact to be received in the week before meeting. This will include:
 - signage
 - attendance sheets where applicable
 - claim form for reimbursement
 - any other instructions or requirements;
- arranging reimbursement to Branch Committees for refreshments upon receiving receipts and a claim form
- allocating CPD points for attendance at meetings and workshops and for those presenting
- uploading certificates of attendance for branch meetings and Branch Committee meetings upon receipt of signed attendance sheets
- reviewing the Branch Committee Handbook annually
- providing relevant documentation to the Branch Committee via the portal.

Limitations

ASA staff members do not undertake any of the following for branch meetings or other branch events:

- organise catering.



Branch Portal

Each Branch Committee member has access to a Branch Portal on 'My Committees' section in their member's dashboard.

The Committee Portal is used to store relevant documentation for the Branch Committee and for the Committee to communicate.

Documentation include:

- Branch Handbook
- Terms of Reference
- Branch Committee Meeting minutes template
- Branch Expenses Claim Form
- Patient Consent Form



FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Member Services Team

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