

Speech Pathology Australia celebrates 60 Years



Our history in brief...

Miss Elinor Wray, the founder of speech therapy in Australia, began work in Sydney in **1931**.

The first professional organisation was established in **1944** – the Australian Association of Speech Therapists – in Sydney. Other associations were also established in South Australia and Western Australia. By **1948** Australia had four separate state representative organisations for speech therapy and it was felt that, to avoid possible variations in standards of examination and qualification, an Australian College of Speech Therapists should be established to function as an examining, qualifying and professional body.



In November **1949**, after much discussion and planning, the Australian College of Speech Therapists (ACST) was inaugurated as an unincorporated body. The Board of Examiners was appointed in **1950** and immediately embarked on the preparation of an examination syllabus.

In **1951** the Federal Council of the Australian Branch of the British Medical Association (now the Australian Medical Association) granted the college full professional recognition as the examining, qualifying and representative body for speech therapy within the Commonwealth. Reciprocal recognition with the College of Speech Therapists in London was granted.

In **1954** the Australian College of Speech Therapists (ACST) became an incorporated body, registered in the Australian Capital Territory, with Miss Grace Ellis elected as the first President. The Memorandum and Articles of Association was established and a Council of Management with representation from each state convened. By the time of incorporation, the college had already held its first conference and published its first journal issue.



In **1955**, the College's first Annual General Meeting was held on 12 March in Sydney. Branches of the College were established in NSW, Vic, WA and Qld in 1956.

In **1958** the College gained affiliation with the International Association of Logopaedics and Phoniatrics (IALP) that acknowledged the strength of international links.



Graduates – the first degree speech therapy students from the University of Queensland in 1969.

In **1962**, the University of Queensland introduced the diploma course in speech therapy, the first university course of its kind in Australia. Elizabeth Usher, having developed the course curriculum the previous year was appointed part-time lecturer. Shortly after the course became a three-year degree with the first graduates completing their bachelor in 1969.

Prior to the establishment of the training course at the University of Queensland, the Education Department had been providing one year of training to some teachers and then called them 'speech correctionists'. It took many years for the profession to overcome the hurdles associated with this inauspicious start.

In **1963**, following successful fundraising, a national office was established in Melbourne, relocating this function from Sydney.

In **1968** following increasing contact with Northern American speech therapists, the ACST invited Marianne Frostig to be the keynote speaker at the dyslexia conference. That year, proceedings of the annual conference were published, for the first time.

In the early 1970s, the College began to receive applications from immigrants with overseas qualifications in speech pathology and, for the first time, needed to consider the difficulty of encountering people whose communication abilities posed a problem in a therapy setting. In response, the Standards and Ethics Committee commenced formal procedures for processing overseas applicants.

The late 60s and early 70s were important years in the development of tertiary education programs for speech pathologists across several states. Consequently, in **1973** the College's role in training was phased out. By **1978**, Australia had five training programs in speech pathology.

In **1974** the Australian Journal of Human Communication Disorders began publication.

The change of name of the Association in **1975** to the Australian Association of Speech and Hearing (AASH) reflected changes in the profession and in the education of undergraduates. At this time also, the title used for members of the profession was changed from speech therapist to speech pathologist.



In **1979**, the Queensland government introduced The Speech Therapists' Act giving speech therapists in Queensland similar status and protection as other health professions have both for the profession and the public. It is of interest to note that extension of registration of speech therapy to other states remains unsuccessful at this time.

In the mid-1980s the Council of the Association began a process of planning for the future of the Association. The Memorandum and Articles of Association were significantly reviewed resulting in a streamlined corporate structure. The size of Council reduced from 20 to 11 and organisational lines of responsibility were clarified. A Strategic Plan was developed and in **1988** AASH employed the first full-time executive director.

In **1988** a 'future directions' corporate plan was developed, with modifications in **1991** seeing the introduction of the portfolio structure, which while slightly revised remains in place today.

In **1992**, Council approved new guidelines for eligibility for membership for those with overseas qualifications, spelling the end of the national exam.

In **1994** the Competency Based Occupation Standards (CBOS) documents were launched. These standards form the basis for entry into the profession and establish the standards and objectives for speech pathologists in a formal and accessible manner.

Speech Pathology Australia



Giving people a say in life

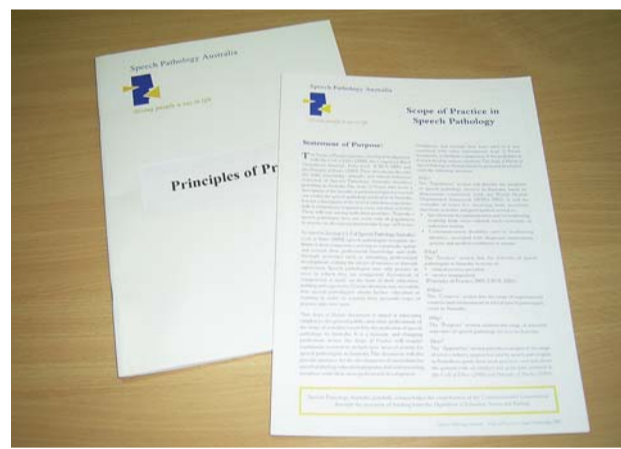
In **1996** the membership voted to change the Association's name to 'Speech Pathology Australia', with the new logo and byline 'giving people a say in life' also launched. The inaugural Speech Pathology Week was also held to raise awareness of the profession and the Association. The Association's website was also launched.



In **1997**, the National Office moved from East Melbourne to its own premises at Bank Place, in Melbourne CBD.

In **1999**, Dr Linda Worrall presented the inaugural Elizabeth Usher Memorial Lecture at the Sydney Conference and the Association's journal, was re-launched as *Advances in Speech-Language Pathology*.

In **2000** the Professional Self Regulation program was introduced with over 1,500 members accepting the initial invitation to join the voluntary scheme.



2001 and **2002** saw the development of the Principles of Practice and Scope of Practice documents. **2002** also saw the launch of Association funded research grants for both clinicians and students throughout Australia.

In **2004** the Mutual Recognition of Credentials between ASHA, CASLPA, RCSLT and Speech Pathology Australia was signed at the International Association of Logopaedics and Phoniatrics World Congress hosted by the Association in Brisbane.



2005 saw the inaugural Children's Language and Literature Award presented to well known children's author Paul Jennings. Further presentations of this award have been made to Colin Thiele and Mem Fox.



In **2006** Speech Pathology Australia launched COMPASS™, (Competency Assessment in Speech Pathology) a competency based assessment tool designed to validly assess the performance of speech pathology students in clinical placements.

In **2007** leading up to the Federal Government's election, the Association launched the national lobby campaign to champion the need for accessible and adequate services for those with

communication and swallowing disorders, that can present across the lifespan.

In **2008** the Association launched their new Corporate Identity, with a modern and bold logo. A new public awareness brochure was released as part of that year's Speech Pathology Week.



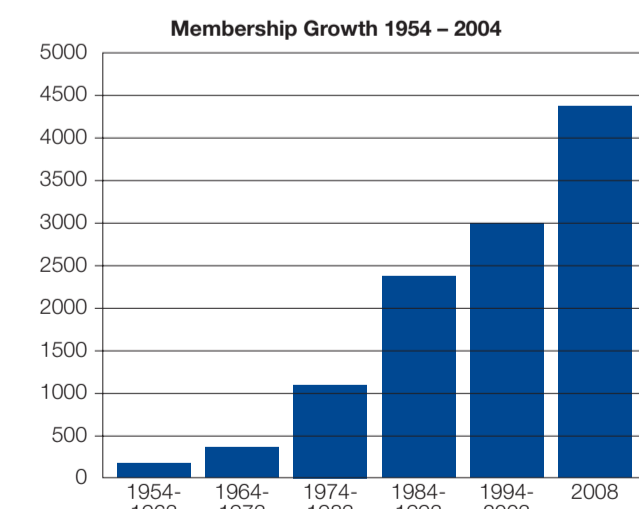
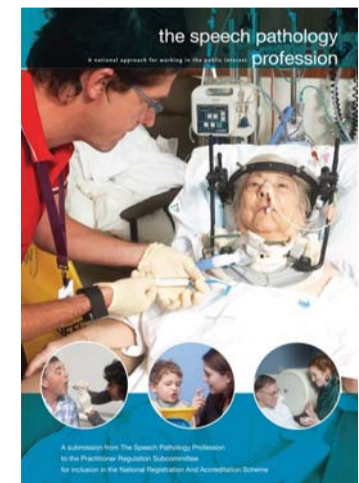
The Association's journal was re-designed and the new title 'International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology' launched, reflective of its increasing international standing.



An extended agreement for the Mutual Recognition of Professional Association Credentials (2008) including ASHA, CASLPA, RCSLT, IASLT, NZSTA and Speech Pathology Australia was signed at the ASHA Congress in Chicago.

A submission for consideration of the speech pathology profession's inclusion in the proposed National Registration and Accreditation Scheme was submitted to the Practitioner Regulation Subcommittee (NHWI) in late **2008**, with the outcome still pending.

And now in **2009**, the Association can stand proud of its steady growth and developments leading to its current status as a highly professional and dynamic organisation. The Association boasts a membership of approximately 4,500 members, with active Branches in all states and territories. It has recognition by a number of government departments and is well regarded by affiliated bodies and international speech pathology associations. Tertiary training programs of Bachelor or Graduate Entry Masters degrees are offered across most states of Australia, with the exception of Tasmania, ACT and the Northern Territory.



60 years on, Speech Pathology Australia continues to achieve its vision of being an informed, influential and dynamic peak body of professionals, striving for excellence and recognition for the profession of speech pathologists and for the interests of our clients with communication and swallowing difficulties.