

Spinal Research: Strategic Plan 2008-2009

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The following article is the conclusion of a series of three - the aim of which was to share information about the Australian Spinal Research Foundation (ASRF) relating to its Vision, Research Priorities and Grant Application Process, and now it's Strategic Plan for 2008-2009.

The Strategic Plan is an evolving document, as different aspects of it are being accomplished and others developed further. The risk in writing a synopsis is that many important aspects of it may not be given expression. However the intention is to give our members, benefactors and those considering membership a very transparent sense of the Foundation's activities.

Ultimately the Foundation seeks to provide well researched evidence for the miracle of chiropractic we are privileged to experience daily in practice. This information can then be disseminated to the public at large, validating the philosophy that has made chiropractic unique for the past 103 years, and deserving of being at the cutting edge of 'Wellness' care today.

The ASRF's focus is on funding research projects that investigate the nature of vertebral subluxation and its impact on physiology, health and quality of life. Our research priorities acknowledge the federal government's National Research Priorities (NRP's) of "Promoting and maintaining good health and wellbeing for all Australians".

The NRP's with which we are aligned most closely are focused on preventative healthcare and fall into the following 4 areas:

1. **A healthy start to life:** Pregnancy, early and adolescent years.
2. **Aging productively:** Workforce participation.
3. **Aging well:** The retirement years.
4. **Strengthening Australia's social and economic fabric (sustaining productivity):** The working years.

The government is clearly looking to improve quality of life to reduce the economic burden of an aging population, a perfect arena for chiropractic to position itself as a major provider, if we can supply research based evidence to prove this is what we effectively do! Plans to achieve this are set out in 5 Domains to reflect the strategic focus

of the organization in accordance with directions agreed upon by the Board of Governors.

Domains:

1. **Grow the base of evidence supporting the chiropractic paradigm.**
 - Greater research outcomes demand not only increased funding of quality research projects, but also growth in the number of researchers within our profession who have their research questions and hypotheses coming from within the chiropractic paradigm. The Foundation seeks to create and support a culture whereby those participating in research are in touch with and closely aligned to the practicing majority.
 - Ultimately, an attractive career path for researchers is necessary, to give our brightest and best with an aptitude for research the confidence to undertake such a career.
 - Further support and enhancement of relationships within the research community, and stimulation of activity, will be achieved through the Foundation engaging in or hosting research symposia.
2. **Make evidence known through expanded and improved communication.**
 - This Domain seeks to heighten the visibility of our work and research achievements through enhanced and expanded communications. Avenues include: website, research reviewers workshop, presentations at symposia, researchers forum, newsletters, seed grants, patron and ambassador activity, and possibly PR consultants.
 - Accumulation and distillation of research material, married to effective communication with those audiences which are important to the foundation, utilizing 'best suited' and multiple channels to reach these audiences, is a must.
 - Continued growth and management of our data base underpins these activities.
3. **Grow the funds available to enable increased investment into funding, gathering, and communicating research.**
 - Increase funds from existing revenue sources (positioning, membership, Bright Future campaign, direct mail appeal, personalized

telemarketing, DG congress, DG experiences, Parker seminars, Exhibits, Sponsorships / commercial partnerships, without compromising our principles.

- Identify and generate new sources of funds, carefully identifying ‘front end’ investment; opportunity; planning and testing; use of disciplined processes, consistently applied and refined over time. This includes evaluating potential sources of government funding, identification of trusts or foundations that may provide grants, interactive giving, appealing to philanthropists by having ‘named research funds’, prescribed private funds, bequests, Art Union, and Events.
- Source potential opportunities for collaborative funding.
- Optimize the return on existing investments held by the foundation, whilst balancing risk.

4. *Continuously improve the capacity of the Foundation to deliver its mission.*

- The ASRF will continue to attract people with appropriate skills and competencies to achieve its objectives. Those in alignment with the Foundation’s vision, mission, values, ethos and research paradigm will be provided with appropriate induction, advice and autonomy for their role. In return those who support and contribute to the Foundation in their ‘working’ roles will be enriched and empowered by the experience.
- The work ethic, competencies and role modeling of Governors will underpin the Foundation’s success.
- We will be willing participants in encouraging and adopting shared agendas related to our research paradigm with significant ‘bodies’ involved in the international chiropractic community .

5. *Continue to develop and expand the Foundation’s professional reputation.*

By clearly articulating disseminating our Research Culture Statement and Research Priorities, we will grow the number of people within the chiropractic community who engage with the Foundation through membership, donations, performing work, undertaking research, or being involved in the Dynamic Growth movement.

- We seek to give a detailed brief to those who hold positions of influence in the chiropractic community both in Australia and internationally.
- Outreach to other bodies such as undergraduate chiropractic students.
- ASRF representatives will attend significant events on the chiropractic calendar (within budget constraints).
- We will work to expand our international reputation and identify key influential parties, targeting significant professional leaders to ensure they develop a good understanding of the Foundation’s activity and mission.

For each planning Domain the long term outcomes (typically 5-20 years) are defined, these are aspirational and provide long term guidance for the planning process. Each Domain also has Strategies, (likely to be relevant for 2-5 years) which provide a series of Focus Points dedicated to achieving the long term outcomes and actions to be undertaken in the current year. The annual operating plan consists of the actions aligned to strategy and budget.

This has been a brief overview of the plans the Foundation has in place to achieve the realization of our vision:

“We are the research foundation which demonstrates that subluxation based chiropractic care improves quality of life and human performance.”

Thank you from the Australian Spinal Research Foundation Board of Governors for your ongoing support.

By Dr Lisa Shelton, Governor, Australian Spinal Research Foundation