



Dear valued members and stakeholders

It is with sadness, we would like to inform you that after extensive discussion and consideration, INHSU has made the difficult decision to postpone our annual conference. This means that we will hold our next major conference in Glasgow in the later part of 2021. We are currently working to secure dates and will contact you as soon as these are finalised.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on all of us. At all times, our priority is the safety of our members, staff, stakeholders and the public. Given the ongoing uncertainty regarding the progression of the pandemic, the disruption to travel and the impact on economies around the world, we believe the most appropriate course of action is to delay the conference until next year.

We are very conscious that many in our network are on the front line of the response to COVID-19 and are still responding to this global public health crisis. We do not believe it is appropriate to divert this important effort to activities that are required to plan and deliver a conference this October.

Many people have taken the time to write and submit abstracts and scholarship applications. Others have been reviewing these applications. We thank you for your ongoing commitment to our collaborative work. We will be contacting authors and reviewers separately but are committed to providing people with a range of options to ensure work undertaken to date will not be lost, but also provide the opportunity for people to update work given the changed timeframe of the conference.

We are deeply aware of the value of the conference, both in terms of knowledge exchange, and its role in connecting professionals from around the world. While we are unable to deliver a major conference in October, we do recognise that there will be a need for us to continue to connect to share our learnings, exchange knowledge and nurture professional relationships. As such, we will be creating opportunities for us to come together virtually and participate in a range of activities and events. We look forward to sharing our plans and inviting you to be part of these. We will be in contact when we have further details about these opportunities, as well as new plans around the conference. Please feel free to reach out to us about your ideas via info@inhsu.org.au.

Through this time, our thoughts remain with the patients, healthcare professionals, researchers and others who are responding directly to the COVID-19 pandemic. This time of global challenge has highlighted to us the importance of global endeavour and the value of networks such as INHSU. As we move through the pandemic, these approaches will be more important than ever.

Thank you for your understanding during these difficult times, we look forward to seeing you in 2021. We're grateful to everyone who has contributed to our conferences in the past and welcome your input on those to come.

Professor Jason Grebely, President, International Network on Hepatitis and Substance Users