



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**TUESDAY, JULY 30, 2019**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE USE**

## **NSANZ secures charity status & appoints new President**

**Australia and New Zealand's peak professional body for the practice of neuromodulation has today (Tuesday, July 30, 2019) announced its approved charity status, and the appointment of a new President.**

**The Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC) has awarded Neuromodulation Society of Australia and New Zealand (NSANZ) charity status, recognising its invaluable role in striving to uphold the professional practice of neuromodulation across the Tasman, and supporting the estimated one-in-five Australians<sup>1</sup> and New Zealanders<sup>2</sup> living with chronic pain.**

Neuromodulation, also known as Spinal Cord Stimulation (SCS), is a minimally invasive and reversible therapy<sup>3</sup> that may prove an effective, additional or alternative option for those who have tried, and failed, conservative pain management treatments.<sup>4,5</sup> SCS works by intercepting pain signals as they travel along nerve fibres through the spinal cord, before they reach the brain.

Melbourne-based Pain Specialist and Anaesthetist, Dr Nick Christelis, has hit the ground running in his new role as NSANZ President, spearheading the development of several policies that promote best practice within the neuromodulation industry.

"I am truly honoured to have been appointed President of NSANZ.

"I am also delighted that NSANZ has been awarded charity status, which will allow us to perform three major functions – fund and promote further research in the neuromodulation field; educate doctors training in this medical field; and establish a neuromodulation device registry," said Dr Christelis.

"Chronic pain is a significant health challenge for Australia. As a not-for-profit, we will strive for continuing improvement to patient outcomes, and to ease the significant economic impact of pain.

"I am genuinely excited at the prospect of further consolidating our organisation's significant success to date, and continuing to strengthen our position as professional pain management industry leaders," Dr Christelis said.

"We are currently drafting policy documents and guidelines outlining standards for safe and effective neuromodulation practices, encompassing device-related education, training, implantation techniques and management.



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"We are also planning to perform a local audit to determine the need for establishing a national neuromodulation device registry, which will be the first of its kind in Australia and New Zealand, similar to the national joint replacement registry," said Dr Christelis.

An estimated 3.24 million Australians, including children and adolescents, are living with chronic pain.<sup>6</sup> Chronic pain is neither preventable, nor the consequence of poor health choices. The debilitating condition affects the young and old, and can significantly compromise a person's life, from a physical and mental health and wellbeing perspective, often leading to social isolation and loss of purpose.

Each year, an estimated 50,000 spinal cord stimulators are implanted worldwide, mostly for persistent or worsened pain after spinal surgery, and the severe nerve pain condition, known as complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS).<sup>7</sup>

As the peak professional body for the practice of neuromodulation, NSANZ is dedicated to the advancement of scientific development, awareness, education and the safe practice of neuromodulation, and patient advocacy.

"In the past two months, NSANZ has launched several exciting initiatives. Importantly, we hosted the International Neuromodulation Society's 14<sup>th</sup> World Congress in Sydney for the first time ever, from May 25 – 30, which attracted more than 1,200 professional delegates. We further established a Women in Neuromodulation (WIN) sub-group, which focuses on the leadership, coaching and mentoring of female pain physicians practicing in this field of medicine," Dr Christelis said.

"In addition, we created a Relations Committee to unite leading organisations in pain management and advocacy, including the Australian Pain Society, Faculty of Pain Medicine and Pain Australia, to enhance pain management awareness, education and advocacy. We have a fundamental commitment to engaging with stakeholders to deliver effective and cost-effective neuromodulation care."

According to a Deloitte Access Economics report released by Pain Australia earlier this year, the 2018 estimated total financial cost of chronic pain in Australia was \$73.2 billion, comprising \$12.2 billion in health system costs, \$48.3 billion in productivity losses, and \$12.7 billion in other financial costs.<sup>6</sup>

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## **MEDIA CONTACTS & INTERVIEWS**



**Kirsten Bruce or Bella Poidevin, VIVA! Communications**

+61 (2) 9968 3741 / +61 401 717 566 / + 61 423 041 631

[kirstenbruce@vivacommunications.com.au](mailto:kirstenbruce@vivacommunications.com.au) / [isabella@vivacommunications.com.au](mailto:isabella@vivacommunications.com.au)

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