



**Presidents report
ACRA AGM 12th August
2025
Hotel Grand Chancellor
Carmel Bourne**

- Strategic plan
- Vividus Marketing review
- ICCPR Clinician Credentialling
- Executive management committee (EMC)
- Sub-committee reports
- ACRA Collaborative Activities

Vision: To achieve optimal and equitable outcomes for all affected by cardiovascular disease.

Strategic plan: 2023-2026



VIVIDUS Marketing Review

ACRA EMC made the decision engage Vividus a medical marketing firm to review ACRA. Thank you to Vanessa Poulsen who led to project & sourced the initial quotes from a number of marketing agencies.

The review aimed to assess ACRA's current position, uncover gaps, and identify opportunities for sustainable growth, brand elevation, and improved member value.

The project was led by a working group, drawing insights from EMC workshops, financials, system exports (Currinda, Mailchimp), and stakeholder feedback.

A big thank you to ACRA Vic Tas who funded this process.

STRATEGIC GOAL of the review

- Strengthen the ACRA brand, messaging, and value proposition.
- Improve industry awareness, national presence, and perceived relevance.
- Increase member retention and long-term value.
- Grow new memberships to over 500+.
- Enhance financial sustainability and diversify revenue.
- Improve digital systems, governance, and operational efficiency.

Key Areas of Investigation and takeaways:

- Membership Data & Revenue Accuracy: *often inaccurate*
- TAS Contract Performance: *TAS's performance is inconsistent, with limited proactive reporting and rising costs not matched by measurable outputs.*
- Currinda Software Review: *Currinda is a barrier to engagement due to lack of automation, difficult navigation, and poor data visibility.*
- Website Review: *ACRA's website is outdated and underutilised, with poor user experience, poor navigation architecture, and missing professional credibility signals*
- Digital Communications & Marketing: *Communication efforts are inconsistent across states, lacking segmentation, branding, and structure.*
- Operational Governance: *There is a significant opportunity to elevate ACRA's digital presence and operational consistency through targeted structural reform.*

Vividus provided a list of recommendations by focus area – EMC to discuss, plan an implantation strategy and call for EOI's for interested members to assist with the changes.

ACRA-Funded ICCPR - CRFC Program

At the 2024 ASM – in collaboration with Solve CHD and ICCPR: ACRA launched the initiative to fund members to complete the Cardiac Rehabilitation Foundations Certificate (CRFC)

Over 210 applicants- funded by ACRA over the past year –poster at Solve CHD stand for list of completed (^110) and over \$22,000

117/366 programs had at least one clinician completed the course.

Eligibility Criteria changes

To promote & encourage ACRA membership and the success of the CRFC – membership criteria was relaxed to being a current member (6 months)

There were a small number who applied and never commenced- these positions have been transferred to new applicants – we will keep monitoring this.

New support structure:

ACRA will be supporting the Program Excellence initiative.

ACRA will continue to support members to complete the program however we will be asking for applicants to pay for their own course and once completed apply for a capped refund from ACRA.

Applicants must be a member when they apply for the course and have current ongoing membership to qualify for a refund.

2025 update:

Life time support to access further education through ICCPR / CRFC portal

Recognition that you are committed to delivering quality cardiac rehabilitation - signature banner available on completion of course.

Successful candidates can then work towards program excellence award

More information:

Available on the ACRA website under **Education and Training**



International Council of
Cardiovascular Prevention
and Rehabilitation (ICCPR)



Australian Cardiovascular Health
and Rehabilitation Association

ACRA Executive Management Committee 2024 - 2025

Carmel Bourne	President
Joanna Clark	President elect
Minke Hoekstra	Treasurer
Michelle Iadanza	SA/NT State President
Justine Williams	NT Territory State Representative / Secretary
Diana Lynch	SA State Representative
Snezana Stolic	QLD State President
Jo Wu	QLD State Representative
Dion Candelaria	NSW/ACT State President
Robert Zecchin	NSW State Rep
Heather Chadwick	ACT State Representative / Secretary
Shihoko Pearson	Vic/TasState President
Alison Beauchamp	Vic State Rep
Andrew Maiorana	WA State President
Julie Prout	WA State Rep
Vanessa Poulsen	Heart Foundation Representative
Alun Jackson	Australian Centre for Heart Health

A sincere thank you to the EMC for the work they do as volunteers .Two co-opted members: Susie Cartledge and Joe Weddell

We have met 4 times by zoom; 1 x 2-day face to face, F:F Sunday and multiple zoom meetings for Vividus workshops and sub-committee meeting

Committee Chairs

Advocacy: co-chairs *Shihoko Pearson & Alison Beauchamp*

Communications: Chair *Joseph Weddell & Katrien Janssen*

Research & Quality: Co-chairs: *Jo Wu & Andrew Maiorana*

Education & Training: Co-chairs: *Susie Cartledge & Dion Candelaria*

Research and Quality Subcommittee

Support for grants/partnerships 2025/2026 (2 approved)

- **Prof Nicole Freene:** *Scaling up a very brief intervention for physical activity behaviour change in cardiac rehabilitation: the Measure It! Trial*
- **Dr Dion Candelaria:** *The MCNAIR–AU Study: coMparative effeCtiveness of iN-person and teleheAlth cardiac Rehabilitation–Australia*

Endorsed projects: (3 approved)

- **Chiara Ritorto, Monash University:** *Cognitive impairment in individuals with chronic heart failure*
- **Dr Ling Zhang, The University of Sydney:** *Clinicians' knowledge, attitudes and confidence in multicultural cardiac patient education study*
- ICCPR Global CR Audit – lead in Australia by Dr Dion Candelaria and Dr Susie Cartledge

New - **Research & Quality Working Group:** call for EOI

Goals to be achieved by end of 2025

1. Finalising ACRA endorsement, advertising, partnering policy/guideline, including drafting a statement of what the endorsement means.
2. Creation of a spreadsheet to track applications endorsed/advertised/partnered on could be added
3. To have ACRA document storage area, e.g. Google drive

Ongoing review 2014 ACRA Core Components of Cardiovascular disease and Secondary Prevention & Cardiac Rehabilitation.

Advocacy Sub-committee

The advocacy sub-committee includes 9 members from across Australia.

We have determined that over the next 12 months our priorities are to:

- Review the website content
- Develop social media strategies
- Develop posters to better advocate for cardiac rehabilitation in the clinical space. These will be a series of posters that primarily target clinicians working on cardiac wards.
- Each will have a 'call to action' (such as patient referral to CR) plus a link to the ACRA website/further information.
- The first of these will be shown at the ASM for member feedback.

Communications & Membership Sub-committee

1. Monthly newsletters via Mailchimp have been delivered since February 2023, with the exclusion of January (Christmas break).
2. Average opening rate of 61%, up from 52% last year. 13,738 emails sent and 13,619 delivered successfully.
3. Since last ASM, we have overhauled the subscriber list so that only active ACRA paid members receive Mailchimps. This has dropped our bounce and unsubscribe rates. (New tagging system in Mailchimp, where members are tagged by each financial year.)
4. Newest features of the newsletters have included cardiac rehabilitation program spotlights (still piloting), and much work with SOLVE-CHD and ICCPR initiatives that ACRA are supporting.
Potential future plans for content may be to include ICCPR CRFC questions in poll form, with correct answer provided the following month.
5. Assessment of ACRA national Facebook found to be largely inactive apart from leading up to conferences. Current decision, as a subcommittee, is for this platform to be inactive due to lack of engagement. Suggestions from Vividus to move away from Twitter and towards LinkedIn but not discussed yet as a subcommittee.
6. Membership drive has been successful this year with ICCPR CRFC and since last ASM.
7. Email blasts/flyers via Mailchimp leading up to ACRA 2025 ASM.
8. NEWSLETTER – main form of communication for ACRA members

Education and Training Sub-committee

Webinar summary

The majority of webinars have been driven and hosted by ACRA but we continue to tap into Rural Health West webinars (Helen McLean) and the Heart Foundation and clinical sites like Alfred Health.

Webinars are advertised in the national newsletter, administered through Humanitix and delivered via zoom.

Webinars Aug 2024 onward

ACRA hosted three webinars – August, September and November

- o CR provider certification
- o Post ASM webinar
- o MHML Updates with the Heart Foundation

Webinars Jan – July 2025

ACRA hosted six webinars (including one from SA chapter) and Rural Health West etc.

hosted two

- o Feb – Rural Health West- Decompensated HF
- o March – ACRA SA – Journey to Cardiac NP
- o May – ACRA hosted – Advance Care Planning
- o June – ACRA hosted – Heart Foundation Walking
- o July – ACRA hosted – Women’s Health with Monique Watts

Webinar summary

While revenue has been limited, the webinars continue to attract consistent attendance and provide value to ACRA members.

Totals and reach for 2024 -2025:

- o Registrants: over 334
- o Attendees: over 238

Mentoring

- o Working to refine and simplify the mentoring program.
- o Aim is to have a list of available mentors on the website and then mark them as unavailable when they are at capacity.

ACRA Collaborative Activities

CSANZ and ACRA Position Statement on Quality Use of Telehealth in Cardiovascular Care

A joint ACRA/CSANZ position statement is being prepared on the use of telehealth in cardiovascular care. It will provide a practical overview of evidence about how to deliver high quality CV care via telehealth.

The statement covers a range of principles (e.g., cultural safety, consumer perspectives, technologies, workforce training, implementation, evaluation) and use cases (e.g., integrated care, clinical consultations, secondary prevention).

It is in final stages of review with the CSANZ QSC."

A sincere thankyou and acknowledgement to ACRA members Susie Cartledge & Jonathon Rawstorn stepped up as lead authors to complete the position statement.

Australian Centre for Heart Health:

The long-term affiliation of ACHH with ACRA is coming to an end with the resignation of Alun Jackson & ACHH from the ACRA EMC.

ACHH has been a core member of ACRA and Cardiac Rehabilitation research for over 35 years & will be sadly missed. We can only wish everyone involved with ACHH all the best in their new endeavours and we look forward to their ongoing connection with ACRA.

Heart Foundation:

- Heart Health Checks – Stakeholders Campaign group led by Heart Foundation. Successfully campaigned for the continuation of the Heart Health check MBS item for a further 3 years
- ACRA reviewed and endorsed the National Heart Foundation of Australia & Cardiac Society of Australia and New Zealand: Comprehensive Australian clinical guideline for diagnosing and managing acute coronary syndromes 2024
- **Website:** ACRA - now visible on the Cardiac Rehabilitation landing page – with a link to the ACRA website.

SOLVE CHD:

Heart Foundation Catalyst Partnership Grant: Heart Strong: Better cardiac care for every heart

Led by Julie Redfern and Robyn Gallagher – Solve CHD:

An enormous task – which saw the team make the final 20 and were given the opportunity to present our case at the Catalyst Showcase. While unsuccessful gave rise to the new “C/R program excellence initiative”.

Global Forum – Cardiac Prevention and Rehabilitation

- ICCPR and Solve CHD
- Attended the ICCPR Global Forum as ACRA representative in London – amazing experience
- Outcome “World Heart Federation: Cardiac Rehabilitation Roadmap” is being presented at ESC on August 30 2025.

Professor Robyn Gallagher presented update on ICCPR & Solve CHD.