Statement – Melissa Locke

I am honoured that the Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA) has nominated me as a candidate for WCPT Vice President 2019-2023. I am sincerely grateful to the Taiwan Physical Therapy Association and the American Physical Therapy Association for supporting my nomination. I hope to speak with many member organisations (MO’s) over the next eight months about their current needs, as well as their thoughts and opinions regarding WCPT’s future direction. I am passionate about all things physiotherapy and am a fearless advocate for the profession across all settings and jurisdictions.

I joined the WCPT Board as the member from the Asia West Pacific Region in 2015. At this time, we formed what amounted to a new Board, with Emma Stokes ably serving as President. One of our first priorities was to form a Finance Committee to guide the organisation with its financial and audit functions. The Board appointed me as the inaugural Chair of Finance and Treasurer of WCPT. I am proud to have seen key initiatives implemented over the past three years. We improved the auditing and reporting of MO’s numbers. This meant that whilst MO’s supported three incremental fee increases over the period of 2016-2018, only one small increase has occurred. We recruited two independent finance committee members whose significant finance, international and “for purpose” expertise ensured that we capitalised on broader perspectives and rigorous financial oversight. We supported appointing a dedicated Finance Manager to WCPT, which has resulted in improved planning, reporting and internal auditing. The decision to triennially tender for external auditors has ensured transparency and accountability that will safeguard WCPT.

Throughout 2015-2016, we as a board worked tirelessly to create an aspirational strategic plan coupled with a realistic business plan to present to our MO’s, who called the organisation to account at our 2015 General Meeting in Singapore. With Brenda Myers retirement in 2016, the Board commenced a search for a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who would guide WCPT through an age of unprecedented social, economic and technological change. I am proud to have been an active member of Jonathon Kruger’s recruitment and selection as WCPT CEO.

Amongst these tremendous steps forward, the move from four to two yearly conferences, enabling us to better engage with our members and physical therapists, cannot be overstated. However, the financial implications of this substantial change caused trepidation for us as a board and organisation. It fell to the Finance Committee to provide strong oversight to ensure that Cape Town 2017 was a financial success that created a sound position for WCPT to further initiatives within our business plan.

At the end of 2016, a family tragedy occurred, which in June 2017, resulted in me stepping away from my WCPT and other duties to care for a loved one. With things settled on the home front, I am fully committed, as Vice President, to progressing WCPT’s strategic agenda through my vast extensive experience as a former president of the APA and as a non-executive director on multiple boards.

WCPT is an organisation with a broad membership base. This broadness of membership means that each MO has varying needs and wants, dependent on the professions position in their respective countries, at any point in time. I believe I have the requisite skills to seek and understand the competing global and local needs of MO’s; to distil this information; and work collaboratively with MO’s to reach a place where they feel WCPT adds value to them and reciprocally, that they add value to and are valued by WCPT.

My governance expertise well places me to support the President in the running of the Board and ensuring the organisation fulfils its fiduciary requirements and responsibilities. My strategic leadership skills allow me to explore and evaluate organisational opportunities and assess, and mitigate threats.
As APA President (2011-2013), I oversaw a period of unprecedented growth for the organisation that demanded meaningful engagement with various stakeholders across the wellness and disability sectors. This required extensive negotiation and sympathetic communication. One of my proudest achievements was presenting to the National Government multiple times at Commission and at Senate Hearings for the now-implemented National Disability Insurance Scheme, which supplies no fault long term funding for individuals with disability.

I currently sit on the Board of the Australian Physiotherapy Council, which accredits University physiotherapy programmes and assesses overseas-qualified physiotherapists wishing to register in Australia. This provides me with skill sets that bridge physiotherapy accreditation and regulation spectrums, as well as issues surrounding global workforce portability and mobility.

As a small to medium enterprise business owner, I have considerable commercial acumen. I have lived experience with the unique challenges faced by private sector and community-based health practitioners. I also understand the paramount importance of interfacing with tertiary settings and non-government organisations to ensure effective and fiscally responsible patient care.

My former university posts and current undergraduate clinical educator role and postgraduate teaching role at the Australian College of Physiotherapists highlights the importance of research, evidence and information sharing, and their critical interplay with clinical practice. As a paediatric and disability physiotherapist, I am committed to the concept of maximising function and universal participation for all. The promotion of physical literacy for each individual underpins my practice of physiotherapy.

Finally as a parent of two nearly grown up children, still living at home, my negotiation skills are well honed and I have a tried and tempered approach to resolving frequent disputes. I welcome the opportunity to serve the profession as Vice President of WCPT and look forward to meeting you in Geneva, if not before. I wish all candidates “Bonne Chance”, “Good luck” and “Buena Suerte”.

M. A. Locke