ASPA Early Career Network (ECN)
Terms of Reference (TOR)

1.   Relationship to other committees

The ASPA Early Career Network (ECN) will collaborate and share with other committees in the society to highlight key information, upcoming events and achievements. A member of other ASPA committees, for example, a member of the Advocacy and Communications committee will also sit on ECN, to ensure continuity between these committees.

General purpose

The purpose of the ECN is to facilitate:

●   **Networking**: Create and facilitate networking opportunities for students (i.e., individuals in undergraduate or graduate degree programs up to 12 months after the date of their doctoral degree) and early career researchers, practitioners and policy makers (Early Career Professionals (ECPs); i.e., individuals who have completed their doctoral/terminal degree within last 10 years full time equivalent) with ASPA to grow the current member-base.

●   **Mentoring**: Offer mentoring opportunities for students, practitioners and early career professionals.

●   **Capacity Building**: Provide learning opportunities with a focus on nurturing professional development skills for students, practitioners and ECPs (e.g., communication, advocacy, research, leadership, project management, time management skills, etc.) and disseminate evidence-based/informed, physical activity promotion material and resources to ASPA members in an accessible and appropriate way.

2.   Composition and form of recruitment

The ECN will be chaired by a member of the ASPA Executive Committee (EC). The Chair will be supported by a Vice-Chair and 3-5 ECPs ASPA members. The ECP Chair/Vice-Chair will act for a maximum 2-year term. After this term, a new ECP Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected via majority vote by the complete ECN and/or ASPA EC. At this point the committee Terms of Reference will be reviewed and any required changes made.

The following processes will be adhered to:
●   If additional members are required, a call for new members for individual ECN roles will be issued.

● When actively recruiting new members for the ECN, representation across Australasia will be encouraged.

● A maximum of two persons per institute/organisation/agency will be allowed to become members of the ECN.

● For active recruitment, the Chair/Vice-Chair will select the most appropriate appointment based upon experience, profession, geographical and gender representation adopting inclusive practices.

● If individual(s) express interest in joining the ECN (at a time when there is no active recruitment) the Chair/Vice-Chair will review their application/request and present a recommendation to the ECN for discussion.

3. Mode of operation, communication within the ECN, and decision making process

● The ECN will meet as needed and at least 3 times per year. ECN meetings will be chaired by the ECP Chair/Vice-Chair and will be hosted via an accessible videoconferencing platform.

● Committee members will be required to nominate agenda items in advance of scheduled meetings.

● An agenda will be sent to committee members one week before the meeting and meeting minutes will be taken by a member on a rotating roster basis.

● During the ECN meeting, Chair/Vice-Chair of ECP will provide an update from the most recent EC and ECN meeting

● New ideas for ECP activities, or major changes within ECN will be presented to the EC by the ECN Chair/Vice-Chair. Following discussion with the EC, a decision will be made with the ECN members and Chair/Vice-Chair about progressing the idea.

4. Duties of the ECP Chair/Vice-Chair and ECN members

The duties of the Chair/Vice-Chair and the ECN are explained below. Importantly, all committee members are expected to actively participate. They are expected to attend the meetings, and to contribute to the tasks of the ECN.

a. Chair/Vice-Chair

● Represent EC on the membership committee and ECN

● Coordination and monitoring of the ECN members and their activities

b. ECN members

The ECN members will be responsible for all related activity within ECP. This includes (but is not limited to):

● Networking,

● Capacity building and

●   Mentoring

●   Disseminating information relevant to PA resources via social media (Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube) and ASPA website

5.   Short term goals (2021)

Aims: To develop a framework and strategies that align to the three general purposes of the committee- Networking, Mentoring and Capacity Building.
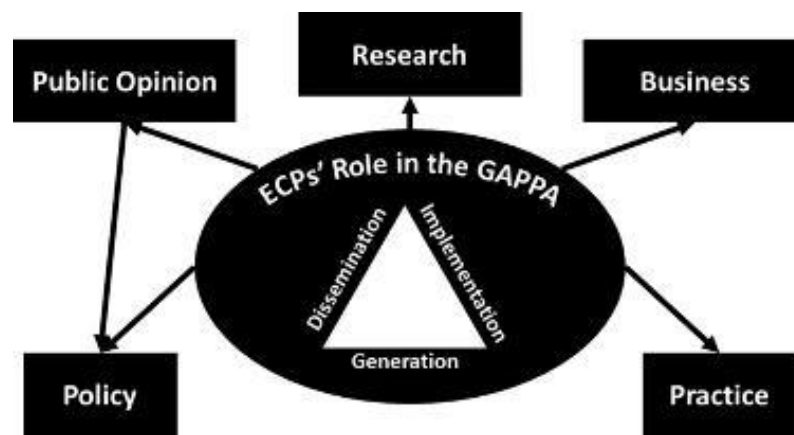

Figure: Framework for ECP capacity Building (Ref: https://doi.org/10.1123/jpah.2019-0450)

●   **Networking**

o   Organize one additional EC event at the ASPA annual conferences (hike, speed-networking, tour, etc.)

o   Coordinate EC dinner event at the annual conferences

o   Facilitate the EC zone; coordinate the space, amenities, advertising, incentives, etc.

o   Assist with the buddy program as needed

●   **Mentoring**

Finding innovative ways to present and engage with a broad range of early career professionals. Provide mentoring opportunities for students, practitioners and early career professionals though exploring potential internships, research-exchange programs and linking with a senior researcher/practitioner.

●   **Capacity Building**

o   Coordinate an ECP workshop at the annual conference (including developing the conference workshop application, creating the session format, inviting speakers to present, advertising and registration, and facilitating the workshop on the day)

o   Develop 2-3 webinars each year to support the career development of students, practitioners and ECPs (collaborating with other scientific societies/organisations in similar/related field to develop these webinars together where possible)

o   ECN member will take turns in coordinating the webinars (e.g., inviting speakers, liaising with speakers and obtaining relevant bio information, organising zoom platform to host the webinar, training the speakers in using zoom, moderating the session)

6. Long-term goals (2022- beyond)

We aim to have a network that goes beyond creating research to how we use, communicate and create research, and look at ways to encourage practitioners to contribute to research for a variety of early career professionals.

- **Networking**

o   Create an online network hub for EC members to communicate throughout the year. (search members, etc.)

o   Increase engagement in the buddy program

o   Increase attendance at each conference-related event (by 50% based on registered ECPs in the conference year)

- **Mentoring**

Provide mentoring opportunities for students, practitioners and early career professionals though exploring potential internships, research-exchange programs and linking with a senior researcher/practitioner.

- **Capacity Building**

o   Continue to coordinate an ECP workshop at the annual conference (including developing the conference workshop application, creating the session format, inviting speakers to present, advertising and registration, and facilitating the workshop on the day).

o   Develop 2-3 webinars each year to support the career development of ASPA students, practitioners and ECPs (Formalising the collaboration with other similar/related scientific societies/organisations to each lead the development of 2 webinars/year).

o   Identify and promote other relevant career development opportunities to student, practitioners and ECN members (e.g., liaise with communication committee to advertise opportunities such as blog, website, forum, social media, newsletter)