



MHYF Vic Newsletter No. 69 February 2020

This edition

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Winston Rickards Memorial Oration 2020

The 2020 Winston Rickards Memorial Oration will be given on Monday 6th April in the Ella Latham Lecture Theatre of the Royal Children's Hospital. The oration:

‘The elephant leaves the room:

An increased (and belated) focus on policy and service reform in child mental health.’

Recent years have seen a welcome and long overdue focus on child mental health, which creates both opportunities and challenges for those of us working in the field. This presentation will outline some of the issues that need to be addressed if we are to achieve an accessible, equitable and evidence-based system for prevention, timely intervention and effective management of child mental health issues.

The Orator, **Professor Frank Oberklaid** AM, is a developmental/behavioural paediatrician with longstanding clinical, research and policy interests in child mental health. He is currently co-chair of the National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

News from the National Mental Health Commission

The February newsletter of the Commission included the following two items:

New Funding for Suicide Prevention Initiatives

On 30th January 2020, the Government announced \$64 million funding for suicide prevention initiatives, with a fundamental shift to a broader approach that considers social determinants and a specific focus on community based programs and support.

This announcement is an early response to the initial advice submitted by the National Suicide Prevention Taskforce to Prime Minister Scott Morrison in November last year. A summary of the initial findings and advice follows, written by Christine Morgan, CEO of the National Mental Health Commission, and National Suicide Prevention Adviser

“It has been a privilege to engage with so many Australians as National Suicide Prevention Adviser, many of whom are living with suicidal thoughts and behaviours or been impacted by suicide. We have heard from people living and working in rural and remote areas, people managing national suicide prevention trials, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations, veterans’ representatives, members of our culturally and linguistically diverse communities, sector experts, LGBTIQ+ agencies, youth representatives, peak bodies, as well as Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers and agencies.

What we have heard from people is the need to act now on what we know works in suicide prevention as well as the need to get our longer-term strategy and approach right. People have rightly identified the importance of an improved and more proactive service response that begins when people are in distress and in need of immediate support, while also seeking to address the social determinants and other factors contributing to suicide such as housing, employment, personal finances and social supports.

Initial advice

In November 2019, I provided the Prime Minister with initial findings and some emerging advice to inform and complement the Government’s Towards Zero initiatives. The initial advice was informed by the views and ideas shared with the National Suicide Prevention Taskforce, led by Ms Jaelea Skehan, and myself through wide ranging consultation – in particular at our landmark Towards Zero Suicide Forum held in November 2019. We also worked with our Expert Advisory Group, chaired by Lucy Brogden AM with Alan Woodward as Deputy Chair.

The initial advice outlined the need for a fundamental shift to a broader approach which places the needs of people at the centre of all strategies and initiatives. For it is people that need compassionate and effective support in times of personal difficulty, and it is people who are deeply affected by the loss of loved ones to suicide. We must draw on people’s lived experience of suicide to know how policies, services and programs can best meet their needs.

There also needs to be significant improvements in data collection of both suicides and suicide attempts so that decisions on priorities and service planning is based on evidence. We also need a coherent Australian suicide prevention model (approach), building on the evidence base to inform how cross portfolio initiatives can be selected and directed.

Australia’s present approach does not always respond to those in distress in a timely way. At times, the service response is not where the person seeking help wants to be. In addition, our current efforts are often fragmented and patchy across the country, access to professional services can too frequently be dependent on personal financial resources, support networks or geography. It is also clear that more needs to be done to co-design our services and responses in a way that is led by

those with lived and living experience of suicide. We also need to ensure the needs of our first Australians are addressed in ways that work for them their culture and their communities.

While the Terms of Reference - National Suicide Prevention Adviser did not require a report until July 2020, we believed it was important to submit a more comprehensive summary of initial findings as well as emerging recommendations in November 2019. This enables us to fully canvas early findings with the sector and all interested stakeholders as we work towards our two formal reports due in July and December 2020.

Key themes within initial advice

Our early findings identified six broad themes and fields of action that would shift Australia to a more compassionate and proactive prevention model, with lived experience central to the design of all elements. These will be further refined and developed over the next six months and reported in July 2020.

1. A whole-of-government approach that ensures we have a focus on the health system as well as all other government and community settings that have a role to play in suicide prevention. This means implementing the Fifth National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan, developing a standalone Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Plan and also bringing the whole-of-government elements and a 'suicide prevention in all policies' approach together in a coherent way with the right governance and architecture.
2. A heightened focus on responding much earlier to distress, using community and government touchpoints that interact with people at points of vulnerability. This also means widespread investment in developing the capability of new workforces with a role in suicide prevention and further investment in and evaluation of current community-based suicide prevention trials to inform future models for regional suicide prevention approaches.
3. An improved response to the specific needs of all communities and groups who are more vulnerable to suicide. This includes immediate and ongoing support to communities impacted by drought, bushfires and other adverse events as well as work focused on youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, veterans, children and adults who have experienced trauma, LGBTIQ+ communities, and more targeted strategies for men and younger women.
4. An enhanced and coordinated response across health and related services, ensuring an effective response for people who have presented in suicidal distress and/or following a suicide attempt or self-harm presentation. This also includes universal access to evidence-based aftercare and accelerating alternative service models that better suit people's needs and an investment in developing the clinical and non-clinical workforces; ensuring a focus on the role of alcohol and other drug services, the peer workforce and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations.
5. Better support for families and friends along the full continuum of suicidal behaviour. This means ensuring support for natural and chosen families, friends and significant others when someone is in suicidal distress and following a suicide attempt. It also includes extending the reach and quality of postvention and bereavement support options across community settings for people impacted by suicide.

6. Improved data and evidence, including enhanced national data sets for suicide attempts and self-harm in addition to suicide so we can better respond in a timely and coordinated way. A fundamental shift to measuring outcomes in suicide prevention is also required, including research investment directed towards national priorities.

Next steps

The process of developing advice is ongoing, the early findings are being used to inform priority tasks for 2020. The input of diverse stakeholders will be critical in developing the interim advice to the Prime Minister in July and testing that advice for final submission in December 2020.

We will have a much stronger and deeper focus in the next 10 months on bringing together what we know from those with lived experience, taking into account the diversity of the Australian population. We will continue the process we began last year of consulting widely with those who have attempted suicide and their family and carers. We need to hear their reality as the basis for our advice, recommendations and any new strategies or initiatives.

Thank you to the many people who are passionate about suicide prevention who have provided input to date. Identifying the final recommendations needs the collective wisdom and input of our broad range of stakeholders. This passion and expertise will be critical as we develop practical recommendations that governments, workplaces, community organisations and the sector can take forward to move us closer to a best-practice model of suicide prevention in Australia.

Providing feedback on initial advice

The initial advice provided to the Prime Minister in November 2019 and a supplementary report detailing key themes and early findings has been made available to ensure all stakeholders have access to our initial work. This is accompanied by a report from the [Summary of Outcomes: Towards zero suicide prevention forum](#) held in November 2019.

We expect there will be a range of views as to the areas of focus we have identified and the draft emerging recommendations. We welcome input as we continue to consult, analyse, debate and formulate our thinking for the final recommendations.

An online survey will shortly be available for anyone who may wish to provide feedback at this point. Further opportunities to engage with this work will be available following the interim report to be released in July 2020.

Children's Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy Expert Advisory Group

The Commission is leading the development of a [National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) as part of the Government's Long Term National Health Plan. Consultations have already started and a draft strategy is due to be delivered to the Government by June 2020.

We would like to welcome the newly appointed members of the Expert Advisory Group, which is being led by Co-Chairs Professor Frank Oberklaid and Professor Christel Middeldorp.

On 14 August 2019, the Minister for Health announced the development of a National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (the strategy) as part of the Government's Long-Term National Health Plan. The Commission is responsible for leading the strategy, informed by a steering committee and expert advisory group led by Co-Chairs Professor Frank Oberklaid and Professor Christel Middeldorp. Details of the expert advisory group membership are below.

The strategy will guide and inform the Government's investment and commitment to the health and wellbeing of our children and will provide a framework for preventing mental illness and reducing its impact on children, families and the community. A draft strategy is due to be delivered to the Australian Government by June 2020.

We are committed to hearing about models that work and ideas to inform our thinking. This is not a tender process and no funding will be provided for any model or information shared. The Commission will also be undertaking a consultation process through a variety of formats from February 2020. More information on public consultations and details of the planned online survey will be shared on this page as we progress.

Information for the National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy can be emailed to cmhws@mentalhealthcommission.gov.au

- National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Expert Advisory Group membership
- Professor Frank Oberklaid, Director, Centre for Community Child Health, the Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne (Co-Chair)
- Professor Christel Middeldorp, Professor Child & Youth Psychiatry Child Health Research Centre, University of Queensland (Co-Chair)
- Ms Christine Morgan, CEO, National Mental Health Commission
- Ms Maureen Lewis, Deputy CEO, National Mental Health Commission
- Professor Helen Milroy, Commissioner, National Mental Health Commission
- Dr James Best, General Practitioner
- Ms Nicole Rogerson, parent representative
- Dr Jim Watterston, Dean, Melbourne Graduate School of Education
- Associate Professor Vanessa Cobham, School of Psychology, University of Queensland
- Mr Warren Cann, CEO, Parenting Research Centre
- Ms Louise Wightman, President, Maternal, Child and Family Health Nurses Aust

HISTORY CORNER, 2020

MHYF Vic likes to think, we create a little history each year with the annual Winston Rickards Memorial Oration. We started in 2010 and this year will be the eleventh in the series. We try to present a range of speakers and a wide range of topics that bear on the practices of those who work

in the field of child and adolescent mental health, whether, publicly, privately, or in the many associated fields.

This year we have one of our mentor's long-term colleagues and collaborators, Professor Frank Oberklaid, paediatrician, of the Centre for Community Child Health at RCH.

The elephant leaves the room: An increased (and belated) focus on policy and service reform in child mental health.

Narrative: Recent years has seen a welcome and long overdue focus on child mental health, which creates both opportunities and challenges for those of us working in the field. This presentation will outline some of the issues that need to be addressed if we are to achieve an accessible, equitable and evidence-based system for prevention, timely intervention and effective management of child mental health issues.

Professor Frank Oberklaid AM is a developmental/behavioural paediatrician with longstanding clinical, research and policy interests in child mental health. He is currently co-chair of the National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

An important feature of the Orations is to build a connection the work of Winston and the new work that his work inspired. Another feature of the Orations is that the previous year's speaker provides a response to the next presentation. We are pleased that our tenth Orator, Winston's nephew, Professor Field Rickards, will be responding on behalf of the audience this year.

The following is a listing of all speakers and their topics (this can be accessed, along with the presentations themselves, from our website (www.mhyfvic.org)).

2019: The **tenth** WRMO

Mental Health & Schooling: The Educational Challenge

Professor Field Rickards, Dr Lisa McKay-Brown, Associate Professor Peggy Kern.

The intersection of education and child welfare was explored from three different points of view.

2018: The **ninth** WRMO was delivered by Dr Allan Mawdsley OAM entitled 'Prevention of Mental Disorders in Children'.

Dr Mawdsley systematically set out the need for preventive work and how it could become usual practice for clinicians.

2017: The **eighth** Winston Rickards Memorial Oration

Advocating on the Edge in Public Service: Three quarters of a Century of the Children's Court Clinic of Victoria.

Dr Patricia Brown, Director, Children's Court Clinic, and outlined the achievements of the Court Clinic and the ongoing challenges of helping children with troubled families.

2016: The **seventh** Oration was delivered by the **Reverend Dr Francis Macnab** AM OM PhD DD entitled "Psychotherapy for the very old and the very young".

Dr Macnab celebrated his fifty-five years in private psychotherapy work in Melbourne with a view to the future of the work and its social value.

2015: The **sixth** Oration was given by **Mr Bernie Geary**, Principal Commissioner, Victorian Commission for Children and Young Persons.

Hearing the Voice of Vulnerable Children"

Mr Geary, coming from a Youth Worker background, spoke of his career and the struggle to work with vulnerable children, especially to give voice to their needs.

2014: The fifth Oration was given by **Professor Louise Newman** AM.

"Cry Freedom! Child asylum seekers in Australia: The intersection of human rights and mental health".

As Director of the Centre for Developmental Psychiatry and Psychology at Monash University, and Professor of Child Psychiatry at Monash, Professor Newman has had a longstanding interest in the mental health and wellbeing of child refugees and their families.

2013: The **fourth** Oration was given by **Professor Allan Fels** AO.

"Child and Adolescent Mental Health".

As Chair of the National Mental Health Commission established in 2012, Professor Fels outlined the broad approaches to mental health and mental health services and then focused upon the special challenges concerning the mental health of children, adolescents, carers and families in Australia.

2012: The **third** Oration was given by the **Honourable Alastair Nicholson** AO RFD QC

"Human Rights of Children and Youth in Australia: It is time we got serious"

The Oration deals with the many pressures on children and youth engendered by society, and society's failure to respond appropriately.

2011: The **second** Oration was given by **Emeritus Professor Dorothy Scott**

"Children as Clients, Consumers or Contributors: How these Roles may Shape Child Wellbeing".

The three roles – client, consumer and contributor, are, of course, not mutually exclusive. Children and young people, like adults, can occupy all three to varying degrees, and each role carries its own potential costs and benefits for the individual child, the family and the community.

2010: The **first** Oration was given by **Professor Bruce Tonge**

"Promoting Recovery from Youth Mental Illness".

The Oration dealt with the importance of providing appropriate treatment for child and adolescent mental health problems which in some cases set the scene for ongoing mental illness in adult life.

For those who are new to our field, the following might be informative.

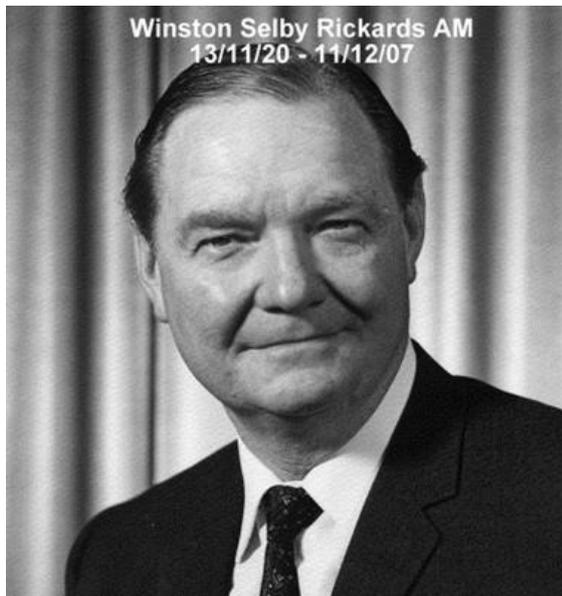
DR WINSTON RICKARDS AM – A LIFE OF ADVOCACY FOR THE YOUNG

A tribute by Dr Suzanne Dean

From 1948 to 2007, Dr Winston Rickards held appointments at the great institution of the Royal Children's Hospital: the teaching paediatric hospital of The University of Melbourne, one hundred and fifty years since its foundation, this year. A Child Development Research Clinic had been formed

within the Children's Hospital in 1923, and in 1928 this became the Psychiatric Clinic, which went on to provide services. In 1955, Winston was appointed the foundation Director of a newly formed Department of Psychiatry. Dr Rickards held this position until 1983.

Under his leadership, this Department grew to embrace the disciplines of psychiatry, psychology, psychiatric social work, child psychotherapy, audiology, speech pathology, educational therapy, and child psychiatric nursing. As well, he developed close liaisons with the Education Department and other relevant disciplines in the Hospital. In the early 1980s, the Department was re-titled the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Science.



A Life of Advocacy for the Young

2005: Life Member, Australian Psychological Society
2004: The President's Medal, International Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions.
2004: Meritorious Service Award, Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, Victorian Branch
1999: Life Member, Gowrie Victoria
1999: Honorary Life Member, Anorexia & Bulimia Foundation of Victoria
1996: Distinguished Service Award, Royal Children's Hospital, Victoria
1991: The F. J. Angus Award, Mental Health Foundation of Australia (Victoria)
1985: Festschrift honouring WSR, Department of Psychiatry & Behavioural Science, Royal Children's Hospital, Victoria
1979: Honorary Life Member, Victorian Child Psychotherapists' Association
1960: Honorary Member, The Melbourne Institute for Psychoanalysis

As Director of Mental Health Services within The Royal Children's Hospital, Winston was directly responsible for teaching and training in developmental psychiatry, associated with both The University of Melbourne and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists. He was also committed, over decades, to training in allied professions - speech pathology, audiology, child psychotherapy, social work, psychology and nursing. Further, he directed, supervised and facilitated the research work of the Department, linking this to both the Hospital itself and the Hospital's Research Foundation. He subjected to special scrutiny his own clinical work with young ones suffering eating disorders.

A gifted clinician himself, Winston generated a rich, multidisciplinary centre of excellence, serving infants, children, young people and their families. This excellence - world best practice- was hailed world-wide. He brought national and international innovators here, to stimulate critical reflection and action. Colleagues from the International Association of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions, and other outstanding experts, visited regularly for inspiring exchange.

Upon leaving the position of Director of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Science, Winston became an Honorary Consultant Psychiatrist in this Hospital, stepped up his private practice, and became a Consultant Psychiatrist at the Melbourne Clinic -1985 to 1991. From 1985 to 2006, he embarked on a new phase of his professional life, by expanding his already intensive involvement in community mental health organisations. He was determined that young people and parents should themselves be heard!!! Outstanding here were his roles as Vice President of the Mental Health Foundation (Victoria), and in establishing the Australian Infant, Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health Association, of which he became Patron, and Mental Health for the Young and their Families: Victorian Group, of which he was Founding President.

Throughout his career, Winston was dedicated to the formation and ongoing support of many other professional and community organisations - local, state, national and international - within psychiatry, allied professions, and children's services generally. His many awards testify to his own generosity - his love of the field and his love of the individual child.

An integrative, creative and passionate thinker, Winston challenged so many of us working with the young and their families – “to seek, to find, and not to yield”. Giving of his heart and mind with great energy, he inspired others to do likewise.

Winston was enormously hard-working, and he has actually left us a rare legacy. Since his passing, his wife, Dr Anne Rickards and Dr Suzanne Dean have endeavoured to put order to his monumental treasure trove of paperwork and prepare his Archives for historical research purposes. His RCH papers are held by the RCH Archivist. An even larger mass of material relates to his extensive RANZCP work, especially in training and standards, and especially in the founding and consolidation of the specialisation of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in Australia. This set of Archives encompasses other relevant organisational work as well, and is housed by the Library of Mindful, the Training Centre for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Psychiatry, courtesy of the Director Dr Sandra Radovini, and the Librarian Wendy Bristow. The contents of the Catalogues be accessed on Mindful's Website.

We look forward to the next instalment of living history with the presentation of Professor Oberklaid.

Jo Grimwade

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Put the date in your diary – Thursday 27th August, 2020. The after-dinner speaker will be Sister Brigid Arthur of the Asylum- Seekers Resource Centre, who will bring us up to date on what has been happening to the children and their families as the political games play out.

Details of the event will be featured in our next newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Annual membership of MHYFVic runs for the Financial Year. Only paid-up members are entitled to vote at our AGM, normally held in August each year. Friends and associates who are not paid-up will still receive our electronic newsletters and notices because it is our mission to promote improvements in mental health for the young and their families.

However, it is important to reflect upon the difference between paid-up and non paid-up members.

Membership subscriptions of \$50 per annum enable the organisation to maintain its website, mailbox, telephone service and to undertake its administrative tasks. If you value the work that MHYFVic does, we need your financial as well as your ethical support.

Our mail address is PO Box 206, Parkville, Vic 3052. If you prefer to pay by Direct Funds Transfer, the BSB is 033 090 A/C Number 315188 with your name in the Reference tab. It would be appreciated if you could also send a confirmatory email to admin@mhyfvic.org

OUR UPDATED WEBSITE

After much thought our website has been significantly revised to give casual visitors immediate information about what we do and what we stand for, whilst at the same time allowing members to go straight to specific sections such as Projects or Newsletters or Events, without having to navigate past reams of information.

Now that the main revision has been implemented we are working on tasks of development of Projects to give us the evidence base for our advocacy. There are quite a few items under development at the present time which are not yet reflected in the website but over the next few months we expect to see a burgeoning of activity.

Visit us on **mhyfvic.org**

2019 MHYF Vic Committee

- * President : Jo Grimwade
- * Vice-President : Jenny Luntz
- * Past President: Allan Mawdsley
- * Secretary : Cecelia Winkelman
- * Treasurer and
- * Membership Secretary:Kaye Geoghegan

- * Projects Coordinator, Allan Mawdsley
- * WebMaster, Ron Ingram
- * Newsletter Editor, Allan Mawdsley
- * Youth Consumer Representative, vacant
- * Members without portfolio:
Suzie Dean, Miriam Tisher, Celia Godfrey.