



## MHYF Vic Newsletter No. 73 October 2020

### **This edition**

MHYFVic Annual General Meeting

News from Emerging Minds

Opinion 2020

Our Website

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Our AGM on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020 at 8.00pm by Zoom teleconference had a short Business component including the President's report followed by a presentation by Sister Brigid of the Asylum Seeker's Resource Centre.

#### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Welcome everybody to the 2020 MHYF Vic AGM. I am pleased to report on another active year by the MHYF Vic Committee and the building of broader efforts to put our policies into actions and to achieve outcomes for children and families. As usual, we have not achieved as much as we would have liked to have done, because there is much to do. New attendees to our AGM might find areas of interest to which they might like to contribute. If you have interest, please speak with a Committee member and, of course, we invite new members to our Committee.

And, of course, the COVID-19 Pandemic has pulled the rug out from under the 2020

MHYFVic Program, as it has done for most other organisations around Australia.

At last year's AGM we had Chris Lewis and Ross Mortimer from Merri Community Health talking about Youth mental health and the problem of silos in mental health, drug and alcohol, and welfare services. This year, Sr Brigid Arthur will address us about asylum seekers and their needs.

The most important thing MHYFVic achieved in the past twelve months seems a long time ago: a forum on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> November at 1.30pm in the Ella Latham Lecture Theatre of the Royal Children's Hospital to consider how we are shaping up in relation to the principles of the Convention for the Rights of the Child. It was sixty years since the adoption of the Declaration and thirty years since the Convention was accepted by the United Nations. There were presentations on a variety of topics, including legal rights in Australia, ethics, infants, indigenous children, refugee children, and out-of-home care children. Responses were given by Liana Buchanan, the Commissioner for Children, and the Honourable Justice Nicholson, former Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia.

There has been a long list of things not achieved due to the pandemic: the first was the Winston Rickards Memorial Oration 'The elephant leaves the room: An increased (and belated) focus on policy and service reform in child mental health' by Professor Frank Oberklaid AM RCH developmental/

behavioural paediatrician and current co-chair of the National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Expert Advisory Group as part of the Government's Long Term National Health Plan. A draft strategy was due to be delivered to the Government by June 2020. Anybody seen it? Maybe the delay of the WRMO presentation to 2021 might include some of the findings of this group?

For similar reasons, the effects of our submissions to the Productivity Commission or Royal Commission are yet to be discerned as these have been held up with other priorities.

Two related submissions for publication in *The Age* were not published: *Our Mental Health system needs bottom-up change* by J Grimwade and *Our Child Protection system is broken* by Allan Mawdsley. But they did appear in the Newsletter! The newsletter has been really high quality with the article of the year probably that of Ros Webb on psychotherapy practice under COVID: *Reflections on Lived Experience in the age of Covid19*. This was the theme of a scholarly paper being prepared by Ros Webb as President of the Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Association of Australasia (PPAA).

We designed a special workshop on Borderline Personality Disorder to improve understanding among child and adolescent mental health workers with Dr Jo Beatson and her staff at Spectrum. May happen next year!

We tried to gain information from child and adolescent mental health workers on the impact of COVID-19 on mental health organizations and service delivery. We are still waiting for feedback from people adversely affected or placed at risk because of procedures.

Like the painting of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, our Best Practice Atlas of child and adolescent mental health continues with

additions from time to time and statements of Policy emerging. Allan Mawdsley continues to churn through the data and produce statements. He has been joined frequently by Miriam Tisher to finetune these documents and the work they have done has been very useful. The funny thing about meetings having to go online has been the increased availability of Miriam and this is has been very positive. However, Jennifer Luntz has not been able to attend with as much energy, as the technology has proved difficult. Her home was a good place for the Committee to meet.

The other continuing project for 2020 has been the website. Ron Ingram has worked away diligently as ever.

The part we feel most ineffective about is actual inclusion of carers and consumers in our Committee work and general organizational processes. We invite consumers who are present to join us at all levels of our endeavours.

I would like to offer special thanks to Allan Mawdsley for his efforts this year. Especially with the Best Practice Atlas and our Newsletters. I think they are better than last year's: Allan has worked hard to bring us a very interesting range of topics and news this year, in the absence of the forums we had planned.

Further special thanks are deserved by Suzie Dean, who has done many things again, but probably feels a little frustrated that the time she had available for projects was limited by personal events, moving house, and the NBN!

Another who deserves special thanks is our erstwhile Treasurer, Kaye Geoghegan. She is also our membership secretary. She will present our state of finances shortly.

Special thanks are also due to Cecelia Winkelman who has the world record for minutes production. This is so helpful!

So we move into 2021 with a full agenda and we need hands on deck. Fortunately, we have a number of events already planned! That is, of course, if we can get together!

Thank you for your attention.

Jo Grimwade  
President

### **ASYLUM SEEKERS**

Sr Brigid spoke on way the Australian government treats the Asylum Seekers and the cruelty of the system. The Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project provides practical help in the form of rent and food. They also advocate for a change in government policy.

Yet there are bigger issues, she said, the world-wide issues that cause people to become refugees. She said that the number of displaced people is 80 million; of which only a trickle come to Australia. Most of these come by plane and are screened appropriately.

By law, those who arrive in Australia by boat are detained and treated inhumanely. Even if released into the community they can be re-detained. Because they are not allowed to work, they can end up destitute.

She illustrated how this system damages the mental health of those detained. We need a new system, she said, one based on compassion. Rather than creating a mental health problem for people in detention, we owe them a fair go.

## **National Mental Health Commission September news:**

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) together with the National Mental Health Commission (NMHC), released a

website in September which is part of Australia's first suicide and self-harm monitoring system to support the national goal of working towards zero suicides.

[The National Suicide and Self-harm Monitoring System](#) is part of the national effort to address suicide and self-harm in Australia and fits within the broader prevention efforts happening nationally. It will be regularly updated and improved as data collection from all States and Territories aligns.

"This brings together the most comprehensive collation of data to date for suicide deaths and self-harm across eight States and Territories in a single, web-based, interactive and integrated platform. With more than 3,000 people dying from suicide every year in Australia, and over 65,000 suicide attempts, the National Suicide and Self-harm Monitoring System will support governments, services, and communities to better respond to suicide and self-harm," said Mathew James, Deputy CEO, AIHW.

Christine Morgan, CEO of the NMHC said, "Preventing suicide and suicidal behaviour is a key priority in Australia. Every life lost to suicide is one too many. We can all take action to prevent suicide with some understanding of who is at risk with simple steps. This new national system and the representation of the data, will help facilitate public conversations about suicide, self-harm, and suicide ideation, potentially saving lives."

The website is only one part of the project. Data improvement and enhanced data sharing is also a key part of the system. The pandemic has highlighted the importance on timely data including the timely data on suspected deaths by suicide that are available from suicide registers. A key goal of the National Suicide and Self-harm Monitoring System is to establish suicide registers in all jurisdictions. Registers currently exist in Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania, and Western Australia with plans to establish a register in New South

Wales by October 2020. The AIHW is working with South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory, and the Northern Territory to help establish registers in these jurisdictions.

A key component of the monitoring system is the establishment of the National Ambulance Surveillance System (NASS). The NASS is a partnership between Turning Point, Monash University, Eastern Health (Victoria) and jurisdictional ambulance services across Australia. It is the world-first public health monitoring system that will provide timely and comprehensive data on ambulance attendances for suicide attempts, suicidal ideation, self-injury, and mental health.

From April, the AIHW has been collating data each week on the use of mental health services and data on suspected suicides from existing suicide registers, to inform government.

The data released on this new site shows that while there has been a significant increase in the use of mental health services and an increase in psychological distress reported, particularly among young people, there is no evidence to date that COVID-19 has been associated with a rise in the rate of suspected deaths by suicide.

The National Suicide and Self-harm Monitoring System was announced as part of the Australian Government's Prioritising Mental Health Package in the 2019–20 Australian Government Budget (Department of Health 2019) and has been established to address suicide and self-harm in Australia.

The new monitoring system has been developed by the AIHW with the NMHC, the Commonwealth Department of Health and an Expert Advisory Group including representation from people with lived experience of suicidality, State and Territory government representatives, researchers and representatives from the suicide prevention sector including service providers.

## **HISTORY CORNER, 1925:**

### **Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic**

The Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic was opened in June, 1925 in the building adjacent to the Children's Hospital of Pennsylvania (CHOP). The first Director was Frederick Allen. It was originally funded by the Commonwealth Fund as a Demonstration Clinic, but as soon as 1927 was funded by local government. PCGC provided child guidance services to other counties, and in 1948, established the Child Guidance Resource Centers (CRGC) in Delaware County. This is a somewhat disappointing story.

PCGC continued to provide services until it was finally absorbed into the Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Behavioral Science at CHOP, although the date of this integration seems unclear. What was the PCGC has been absorbed into CHOP. There have been many changes with the range of clinical work reading like any large children's hospital. The service units are: Anxiety Behaviors Clinic (ABC), Autism Integrated Care Program, Behavioral Health Integrated Program, Center for Management of ADHD, Center for Pediatric Traumatic Stress, Child and Adolescent Mood Program (CHAMP), Children's Intensive Emotional and Behavioral Services, Eating Disorder Assessment and Treatment Program, Family Stress and Illness Program, Gender and Sexuality Development Program, Healthy Minds, Healthy Kids: Integrated Care Program, Neurodevelopmental Disorders Consultation Clinic, Neuropsychology and Assessment Service, Pennsylvania Telephonic Psychiatric Consultation Service Program (TiPS), Psychology Services, Young Child Clinic, and Youth Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Research Center.

The most productive period for the PCGC was from 1965, when Salvador Minuchin took over

as Director. Soon after (1967) he published *Families of the slums* (written in conjunction with Montalvo, Guerny, Rosman, & Schumer) and he attracted many important family therapists to work there and to present. This was the time of the development of what he called Structural Family Therapy and the famous video called *Taming monsters*.

Minuchin also oversaw the move of the clinic alongside the brand new CHOP in 1974. Minuchin departed the PCGC in 1976. He lived for another two decades, continuing to contribute to the field of Structural Family Therapy. In 1978, with Rosman and Baker, he produced *Psychosomatic families: a study of treatment of anorexia*. In 1984, this work was extended by Rosman with treatment of diabetes. In 1981 Salvador Minuchin left Philadelphia for New York and founded Family Studies, a training and consultation institute, which was renamed, upon his retirement in 1995, as the Minuchin Centre for the family. He died at 95 years in 2017.

The pioneering work of the original PCGC was carried on through the CRGC which became an independent service in 1956. It celebrated sixty years of community service in 2016. A strong component of the CGRC was community education and information resources; both as a library and provider for those seeking self-help. A separate child guidance clinic opened in 1964. In the 1980s, several new clinics opened and then in 1998 a Truancy Prevention Program began, with increased connection to juvenile justice. In 2012, CGRC became the Philadelphia Center of Excellence for Autism. CRGC supplies services to about 10, 000 children and family members per year. The sad part of the story is that the pioneering of the PCGC is no longer. This might have been the most influential of the original Demonstration Projects.

**Jo Grimwade**

## DEATH OF MARGOT PRIOR

We are very sad to announce the passing of Professor Margot Prior. Margot was a remarkable person, an outstanding researcher and a visionary clinical leader. From 1994 until 2002 she was Professor of Psychology in the then Department of Psychology and Director of Psychology at the Royal Children's Hospital. In this role she advocated for evidence-based psychology practice, and led important changes in child and family psychology practice which continue to today. Together with her colleagues she established the Australian Temperament Study in the early 1980s, which continues today and has contributed enormous knowledge to our understanding of child and adolescent development. She was also integral in the foundation of the Parenting Research Centre, which is now a national resource for Australian parents and supports the Raising Children's Network. She was the first woman to hold a professorship in clinical psychology in Australia when La Trobe University appointed her to that role in 1989. Before finding her calling in psychology Margot had a storied career as an orchestral musician after receiving degrees in arts and music.

Margot is best known for her distinguished and prolific record of scientific publication on child temperament and mental health, and especially for her work on children's literacy and autism. Her outstanding legacy in this field is continued at the Margot Prior Autism Intervention Centre, based in the Margot Prior Wing of the La Trobe University Community Children's Centre. Her leadership and scientific contributions in this field, and also in advocacy for child welfare and social justice, reflected in her chairing the Social and Human Sciences Network for UNESCO, were widely recognized. Among many other honours she was appointed an Officer of the Order of

Australia (2005), as Victoria's Senior Australian of the Year (2006), and winner of the Lifetime Achievement Award of the International Society for Autism Research (INSAR; 2018). She also served in many leadership and service roles, including as Patron of Autism Victoria, Chair of the Olga Tennison Autism Research Centre, and a member of numerous advisory committees and editorial boards.

Margot made great contributions to the psychology discipline, and to child mental health more broadly, locally and internationally, but will be most keenly remembered by her colleagues for her personal warmth, enthusiasm, acute intelligence and generosity of spirit. She was a trailblazer in the field of child clinical psychology and left her mark on generations of trainees. We are hugely grateful to Margot for her role in shaping child mental health services on our campus, and highlighting the importance and value of high quality child mental health research. At a personal level, I feel very fortunate to have been able to collaborate on research with her. She will remain an inspiring female role model for generations to come and was a true pioneer in her field. We extend our sincere condolences to her loving family, who are also in our thoughts.

**Vicki Anderson**

## **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](mailto:admin@mhyfvic.org)

Visit us on **mhyfvic.org**

## **2020 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.