



## MHYF Vic Newsletter No. 8 September 2022

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### **MHYFVic ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Sadly, for the second year in a row, the 2022 MHYFVic Annual General Meeting had to be held as an on-line Zoom meeting. The business part of the meeting, which included the President's summing up of the year's important achievements (published below) was followed by a presentation by James Wood-Bradley, Coordinator of Fire-CAP, Fire Rescue Victoria: *"The Firelighting Consequences Awareness Program (Fire-CAP): Risk-taking and mental health for children and youth"*

#### ***MHYF Vic President's Report for AGM:***

Welcome everybody, especially our guest speaker, Mr James Wood Bradley. In the twelve months since I last reported much has happened. The biggest changes have been wrought by the pandemic, with this our second virtual AGM. We really wanted to have an in person event, but the timing coincided with the predicted peak of the Omicron wave, so we chose to protect vulnerable people by moving online. We are grateful to James Wood Bradley for being able to present with a pre-recording and be

available for discussion after the recorded presentation.

MHYF Vic is an organization committed to hearing the voices of consumers and of professionals. At each of our forums, and in our newsletters, we try to present the range of professions that contribute to the delivery of quality mental health services for children and families. Tonight, we have a presentation on a special program for the prevention of fire lighting from Fire Rescue Victoria.

We would also like to honour the passing of a foundational member of MHYFVic and our Immediate Past Vice-President, Ms Jenny Luntz. Jenny worked hard for a long time within what became Alfred CAMHS. She then spent many hours a week working for MHYF Vic in a host of roles. She died in June this year. Our tribute to her can be found on our website and in our newsletter. We mourn her loss and celebrate her contribution.

This year, we have continued to work to achieve more understanding of the needs for mental health services for children and families through a series of collaborations. The past two years have made collaborating difficult. Most of the activities have been reported in our newsletters, but we have been active within:

- Winston Rickards Memorial Oration
- Koori Kids
- Spectrum Borderline Personality Service

- Royal Commission implementation

The achievement of the year, as usual, was the annual Winston Rickards Memorial Oration. This year the speaker was one of Australia's most distinguished paediatricians: Dr Frank Oberklaid. He was to be the 2021 Orator, but this was not possible. We are grateful that he was available this year! His address is on our website with a full video recording enabled by the Zoom presentation to a wider audience. It was good to have had limited attendance possible.

Congratulations to the WRMO sub-committee for again finding a topic of great importance and a speaker of exceptional quality. Next year's presentation will move to a field of great interest to Winston Rickards: infant mental health, a topic not yet covered by a WRMO presentation within the broad domain in which mental health work is conducted.

Another collaboration of long duration has been with the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service Koori Kids program, with whom our Treasurer, Ms Kaye Geoghegan, was connected through her work in the 1990s. Dr Suzanne Dean has led the collaboration and we hope to be able to announce an educational seminar for professionals in the new year.

We continue to want to run educational forums and we planned for a collaboration with Spectrum Borderline Personality Service to run a program for child and adolescent mental health practitioners for May, 2021. This will now happen on 5 November, 2022, at Mindful. The presenters will be Dr Jo Beatson and Dr Sathya Rao. The program has been organized by Allan Mawdsley.

There has been one further collaboration, but our collaborators are not easily identified. The Victorian Royal Commission in Mental Health Services produced many recommendations. Suzanne Dean has

provided detailed feedback to the Government, and we hope to influence how services are re-designed for the benefit of families.

There are three major ongoing tasks: our newsletters, the website, and the renamed Guide to Best Practice. Each of these activities have been under the stewardship of Allan Mawdsley. The newsletter has always matters of interest and contemporary activity, as well as reports of our activities.

The role of webmaster has moved to Ms Linda Purcell, and she has updated the website with great effect and utility. We remain grateful to our former web master Mr Ron Ingram, who has retired. We believe we have made the website more appealing to younger people, but would like ongoing feedback from website users. We encourage those present tonight to take a look and provide feedback.

The Guide to Practice Atlas is the idea of Allan Mawdsley and the first draft has emerged. Parts of the Guide have already been reviewed and renewed. This is an ongoing task, and anybody can contribute by offering new topics or by updating entries.

Administratively, we have had no changes; until tonight. We need a new Vice President, and we need new members. Our newest recruit is child psychiatrist, Dr Andrew Wake. We hope this leads to an expanded collaboration with the Faculty of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. We invite members of the meeting tonight to join us. We particularly seek community members and consumer or carer members.

So, to finish: I wish to express my gratitude to the committee for the work of the year. Dr Dean and Dr Mawdsley are great contributors on all topics.

Ms Geoghegan in her roles of Treasurer and Membership Secretary, has been active and has contributed widely. She buys the cards

and flowers when important people deserve celebration or condolences. Thanks Kaye.

Dr Cecelia Winkelman is much deserving of my thanks and the appreciation of all the Committee. She has undertaken the role of Secretary with energy, reliability, and timeliness for the past four years.

We remain grateful for the contribution of Dr Miriam Tisher, who is the most urgent correspondent on our various productions, especially with the updating of our Guide to Best Practice.

Once again, I thank our webmaster, Ms Linda Purcell.

Another thank you is due to Allan Mawdsley: we have begun the process of updating our principles and policies documents, such that they become springboards for action. Again, this will be a long and intense process, but I hope to report next year on action plans.

We are hopeful of more in person events in 2023.

Once more I invite participation of all at whatever level you can. We have been talking from time to time about recruitment and renewal of the committee, and planning for retirements. I am pleased to say that, with the recruitment of Andrew Wake, I am not the youngest committee member! Join the committee as a member without portfolio! Please let us know of your interest.

Jo Grimwade

## **Fire-CAP**

Fire-CAP is a world-class early intervention program offered state-wide, since the 1990s, by Fire Rescue Victoria to children and youth (3-18 years of age) who have engaged in firefighting through risk-taking or curiosity. Within a family or out-of-home-care setting, specifically trained Firefighters tailor the educational program to meet the

developmental and circumstantial needs of the individual. Ideally, the whole family is involved. There is strong emphasis on mental health and preventive dimensions and the program is informed and supported by Clinical Psychologist Viviane Lebnan, who also participated in the lively Discussion following this presentation. James Wood-Bradley raised many of the complex personal issues underlying firefighting, and the understanding that Firefighters bring to their work with children and youth.

### ***MHYFVic Membership***

Annual membership of MHYFVic is now due.

Our mission is to promote improvements in mental health for the young and their families, so you receive our newsletters and notices whether or not you are a paid-up member.

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.

Send cheques to MHYFVic, PO Box 206, Parkville, Vic 3052; or Transfer funds to MHYFVic, BSB: 033 090 Account: 315188; write your name in the Reference tab. In addition, please send a confirmatory email to [admin@mhyfvic.org](mailto:admin@mhyfvic.org)

### **News from Emerging Minds.**

**Newsletter 31/8/22**

**Webinar recording now available:**

***Working with children who are experiencing or engaging in bullying.***

Thank you to everyone who attended our recent webinar. We had over 1,800 of you join us live on the day! This webinar discussed the impact of childhood bullying on child mental

health and the importance of prevention and early intervention in limiting the effects of childhood bullying in adulthood. For those who missed it or would like to watch it again, the recording is now available on our website.

## Decriminalization of drug abuse

On 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022 it was International Overdose Awareness Day. The Burnet Institute issued a press release titled “Time to explore decriminalization of drug use” in which they highlighted the abject failure of traditional conservative criminal sanctions to lessen drug use and its associated societal harms, including fatal overdoses.

MHYFVic expresses total support for the Burnet proposals for decriminalization of drug use. However, we would go much further, by suggesting supervised supply of hitherto illicit drugs to registered users, thereby ensuring both safer use and the undermining of illegal supply profitability.

The full text can be read on the ‘Hot Issues’ page of our website [Mhyfvic.org](http://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](http://mhyfvic.org)

### 2023 MHYF Vic Committee

- \* President : Jo Grimwade
- \* Past President: Allan Mawdsley
- \* Secretary : Cecelia Winkelman
- \* Treasurer/Memberships: Kaye Geoghegan
- \* Projects Coordinator, Allan Mawdsley
- \* WebMaster, Linda Purcell
- \* Newsletter Editor, Allan Mawdsley
- \* Youth Consumer Representative, vacant
- \* Members without portfolio: Suzie Dean, Miriam Tisher, Celia Godfrey, Andrew Wake.