MHYF Vic Newsletter No. 95 October 2025

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MHYFVic is going national

At our Annual General Meeting in August the special resolutions authorising the proposed changes were passed unanimously. We are now applying to become a national company, limited by guarantee, registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) as a health promotion charity.

This will allow us to become an Australia-wide network, monitored by the national agency responsible for ensuring good corporate governance and strict ethical standards, the benchmark of trustworthy organizations. The new structure will allow for individual and corporate memberships. It will enable us to have branches in other states and to develop a network of like-minded organizations which will collectively have a much more powerful voice.

MHYFVic has developed an up-to-date database of mental health best practice in prevention, early intervention, standard treatment and health promotion, citing best available research evidence. Building on this basis, it provides educational programs such as workshops, seminars and lectures concerning child and family mental health to professionals and people of lived experience, and also disseminates information through newsletters, bulletins, the website and presentations such as the nationally-delivered Winston Rickards Memorial Oration.

MHYFVic advocates with government and non-government agencies primarily in Victoria for effective intervention programs, health promotion and preventive measures pursued in the context of human rights and wider community networks enhancement. It also facilitates provision of scientifically informed contributions to commissions of enquiry and other policy development forums.

MHYFVic will continue its work as before, but as a semi-autonomous working group within the new company overseen by the new Board of Management. In time it is expected that similar working groups will be formed in other states, but in the meantime advocacy can be extended from primarily Victorian to nation-wide.

Financial members of MHYFVic will automatically become members of the new MHYF company. The membership year starts on 1 July. Financial members are eligible to nominate for election and eligible to vote.

Members interested in possible election to the Board should make contact by email to admin@mhyfvic.org to discuss their interest as soon as possible.

MHYF Vic President's Report

for AGM: 28 August, 2025

Thanks for attending the AGM today. This year's major project was last year's major project: seeking to gain status with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC). There are a number of reasons why we want to move to this status: securing financial status through receipt of charitable organization funding, establishing greater footprint in the field, and preparing for the organization to be established, nationally. We want to make MHYF Vic viable beyond the timeframe of contribution of the current Committee. This has been a big job involving several half-day sessions to work through the complexities. I thank Dr Allan Mawdsley for driving this process through Sydney-based law firm Ebsworths, whose draft constitution and other documents will be presented shortly.

Interstate conversations have begun investigating usefulness of MHYFVic becoming a national organization, given that no other national advocacy body yet exists in this space. Anybody who would like to see such nationwide representation is welcome to help us with this project, especially if you have colleagues in other states and territories. How does AusMHYF sound?

As always, MHYF Vic is involved in a large number of ongoing projects and collaborations, and we are always seeking other connections. To extend and formalize the seeking of collaborations Allan has been producing a monthly *Mental Health Campaigner's Bulletin* which is circulated to our collaborators. This is a broad range of topics that demonstrate our broad interests in our field.

These topics coincide with another of Allan's innovations: *The Guide to Best Practice,* which can be viewed on our website. We want to help mental health professionals, carers, and consumers use the best available information to tackle problems that come from mental health challenges. We develop policies on how to address the problems and suggest strategies for the implementation of best practice. The Guide is under review as new research is published. A special mention goes to Dr Miriam Tisher for her contribution to the updating of the Guide.

Our website is a source of pride because people from all over the world can access the information and, sometimes, we get notes of thanks for the help offered, internationally. We are grateful for the work done by Allan with respect to the website but also to our Webmaster, Ms Linda Purcell.

Dr Suzanne Dean is another major contributor to the work of MHYF Vic. Her chairing of the sub-committee that supports the annual Winston Rickards Memorial Oration (WRMO) involves much work, year around. Most of the Committee contribute to the conduct of the WRMO, but others perform support roles. Mr Paul McDonald, head of Anglicare and founder of *Home Stretch*, an organization for providing support to those leaving State Care, upon

which he presented at this year's WRMO. This was an eye-opening presentation of a social welfare program that has changed government policies, across Australia.

As usual, Suzie began the search for next year's Orator. We are hopeful that our speaker will be an Aboriginal Elder in 2026.

Suzie has continued the liaison for MHYFVic with the Child Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Association of Australia (CPPAA) to actively explore ways of enhancing the Victorian Government's Mental Health System reforms by enriched exposure to psychodynamic approaches to thinking and programs for children, youth, and families.

Suzie has also been the chair of the Indigenous Project and has been tireless over many years of contribution. We hope that a workshop for professionals on the topic is not too far away. Another of Suzie's portfolios involves liaison with the International Associations of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professionals (IACAPAP). A webinar on the Multi-Disciplinary Team in CAMHS will be presented on 17 September. I will be presenting a taster on the panel discussion, shortly.

Another tireless Committee member is our Secretary, Dr Cecelia Winkelman. She holds the Committee together through her provision of minutes and programming, as well as through the sending of emails to our mailing list. She participates on many sub-committees. Similarly, Ms Kaye Geoghegan holds together our threadbare finances and administers our mailing list and memberships. These are vital roles that complement her sub-committee work.

Dr Liam O'Connor has continued in his liaison role with the C&AP Faculty of the RANZ College of Psychiatrists. He has joined with me in the hope of presenting a seminar on ethics in child and adolescent psychiatry at the Ella Latham theatre at RCH on 20 November. More news to come through the Newsletter!

We hold very closely to the need for communication with the field through our website our mental health campaigner's bulletins, and our newsletters provided by the editor, Allan Mawdsley. The Newsletter is always of a high standard and direct pertinence; past editions can be accessed through the website. Please join our mailing list and receive all these communications. Even better, join MHYFVic by paying $50 and help us deliver quality information across the globe.

I want to turn once more to thank our collaborators. Your contributions to the field make our contributions more relevant. We look forward to further productive relationships.

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 five 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.

We are hopeful of more in person events in 2026.

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. Join the committee as a member without portfolio! Please let us know of your interest.

Finally, I wish to thank my committee colleagues past and present for the support they have given me over my fifteen years in the role of President and committee chair. I do not feel able to continue with any MHYFVic role into the future and believe it is better to leave before the structure is instituted. There has been a lot required in the role and I wish the incoming President, and the committee as a whole, all strength in the ongoing multiple endeavours.

Jo Grimwade, Outgoing President, MHYFVic

Winston Rickards Memorial Oration 2026

Negotiations are under way for the 15th Winston Rickards Memorial Oration to be given on the emergence of indigenous mental health programs for children and families. More details will be given when arrangements are confirmed.
In the meantime, the recording of the 14th Oration can be found on our website, www.MHYFVic.org .

Allan Mawdsley

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IACAPAP 2026

Join us in Hamburg for the 27th World Congress of IACAPAP and be inspired by a lineup of visionary keynote speakers who are reshaping the landscape of child and adolescent psychiatry.

- **Laelia Benoit** (France) will explore the urgent intersection of climate change and youth mental health, highlighting how environmental crises impact anxiety, depression, and resilience in children, and how professionals can respond with care and advocacy.
- **Sven Bölte** (Sweden) introduces "Psychiatry 2.0," challenging outdated diagnostic models in autism and ADHD. Discover how the WHO's ICF framework offers a personalized, holistic approach to understanding neurodiversity and functioning across life domains.
- **Bruno Falissard** (France) provokes critical reflection with his talk on "Psychiatric Colonialism." Drawing from history and global mental health practices, he questions how Western psychiatric norms shape, and sometimes distort, care across cultures.

And that's just the beginning. Hear from other global leaders including Hilary Cass, Argyris Stringaris, Ayesha Mian, Andrés S. Martin, Guilherme V. Polanczyk, Ilina Singh, Kapil Sayal, and Chiara Servili, each bringing unique insights from across continents. Don't miss this opportunity to engage with cutting-edge research, challenge assumptions, and connect with a global community of experts. Register now and be part of the conversation that will shape the future of child and adolescent mental health.
We invite researchers, clinicians, and professionals in child and adolescent mental health to submit their symposia and abstracts within the published deadlines.

- Symposium submission deadline: **30 October 2025**, 23:59:59 CET
- Oral presentation and poster submission deadline: **20 January 2026**, 23:59:59 CET

Whether you're proposing a **symposium, oral presentation**, or **poster**, this is your opportunity to contribute to a global dialogue

under the congress theme: "Facing challenges in a constantly changing world – empowering child and adolescent mental health by evidence-based approaches."
Email: **info@iacapap.org**
Web: **www.iacapap.org**

IACAPAP Webinar

A successful Webinar for the International Association of Child Psychiatry and Allied Professions was delivered by MHYFVic on Wednesday 17th September, aimed at highlighting interdisciplinary work. It received excellent reviews.

Professor Jolyon Grimwade (Clinical Psychologist, Clinical Family Therapist, Teacher) delivered a paper entitled **"THE MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAM IN CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH: THEN AND NOW".** He explored the place of Allied Professions in developing understandings and practice in CAMHS, how collaborative models can assist effective practice and how this has been sadly challenged more recently in Australia and elsewhere.

A panel of discussants representing a range of professions responded to the topic, drawing upon their own expertise and experience in Australia - Ms Ruth Wraith (Child Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, Occupational Therapy), Assoc Professor Diane Jacobs (Speech Pathology, Psychology), Ms Anne Jeffs (Social Work, Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, Teaching) - prepared the way for a general discussion among Webinar participants.

Over 400 people, hailing from every continent world-wide, attended the 100-minute session, chaired by Assoc Professor Suzie Dean in Australia and hosted by Assoc Professor Yewande Oshode in Nigeria.

The Webinar did not shy away from the degradation of teamwork brought by misguided responses to financial constraints, but argued strongly for collaborative specialisation and creativity, as well as inclusion of service-users in collaboration, and celebrated signs of hope in some Services trying to reclaim the benefits of multi-disciplinary teamwork to the mental health of their young clients and their families.

The session is now available for general access on the IACAPAP YouTube channel.

SAVE THE DATE! SAVE THE DATE! SAVE THE DATE! SAVE THE DATE! SAVE THE DATE!

"Offering Psychodynamic Understandings to child and adolescent mental health programs throughout Victoria"

A joint initiative of Mental Health for the Young and their Families: Victoria (MHYFVic) and the Child Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Association of Australia (CPPAA)

All members are invited to a meeting to discuss a range of Workshop and Discussion Group options to offer to government and non-government services:

- On Wednesday November 12th at 7.30pm
- At 23 The Crescent, Beacon Cove 3207

More details to follow soon, but please email & register your interest at admin@mhyfvic.org

FORUM

The "Thriving Kid's" program

The "Thriving Kids" proposal is an urgently needed Federal Government initiative because mismanagement of the NDIS has resulted in an unsustainable blowout in its annual cost.

Community surveys have consistently shown that about a quarter of all children have a degree of disability in one or more domains of development. Historically, these disabilities have been perceived and dealt with by an uncoordinated patchwork of public and private services in the health, education and welfare sectors. The NDIS was instituted to assist the most severely disabled children whose costs and burdens of support were devastating for their families. However, the availability of this excellent program has had two destabilizing consequences. On the one hand, there have been huge numbers of requests for support of lesser degrees of disability, and on the other hand there have been reductions in previously available support services on the grounds that NDIS would meet those requests. The present inquiry into the proposed 'Thriving Kids' program is an opportunity to avoid repeating (and perhaps reversing) the mismanagement mistakes of NDIS.

The desired outcome for **all** children with disability is that they receive a thorough multidisciplinary assessment, appropriate case management plan agreed in consultation with the family, and appropriate treatment and support. The NDIS should deal with the most severely disabled (5%) and the 'Thriving Kids' program for the remainder of the quarter.

Central to both is the issue of assessment, which ideally should be coordinated by the one Commonwealth Government agency. Inclusion in NDIS funding would be for children whose functioning is two or more standard deviations below the mean in one or more of the functional domains. As this defines the most serious 1.5% in each domain, the aggregate cohort would approximate the desired 5% limit, given that many would be counted in more than one domain. The remainder of disabled children would be managed in the 'Thriving Kids' program.

There are major unresolved issues. How should assessments be undertaken? By whom? How is it to be coordinated? How is it to be paid for? How are the findings to be managed within the service delivery systems?

Reader's comments would be welcome.

2026 MHYF Vic Committee

* President : Vacant
* Vice- President: Allan Mawdsley
* Secretary : Cecelia Winkelman
* Treasurer/Memberships: Kaye Geoghegan
* Projects Coordinator, Allan Mawdsley
* Web Master, Linda Purcell
* Newsletter Editor, Allan Mawdsley
* Youth Consumer Representative, vacant
* Members without portfolio: Suzie Dean, Miriam Tisher, Liam O'Connor, Sarina Smale, Kylie Cassar.