MHYF Vic Newsletter No. 96 December 2025

This edition

MHYFVic is going national

Winston Rickards Oration 2026

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Forum

MHYFVic is going national

We have now applied to become a national company, limited by guarantee, registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) as a health promotion charity. It is not known how long the application processing will take.

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 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.

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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MHYFVic INDIGENOUS LIAISON GROUP

TREATY has succeeded at last in Victoria!!

This week has seen the fulfilment of years of strenuous effort by Aboriginal groups and the Victorian Government in the establishment of Australia's first Treaty between our First Nations and a State. Hopefully this initiates a process that can embrace all of our communities and families in Australia - Indigenous and Non-Indigenous alike.

Now the critical work of the Treaty and the associated Aboriginal Assembly begins, and MHYFVic stands ready to respond in all ways open to us that can support the children, young people and the families whose wellbeing is directly affected.

Our Indigenous Liaison Group, which has been active ongoingly for over 20 years, is clarifying evolving processes to extend our support for the Aboriginal Organisations involved in striving to enhance the mental health and wellbeing of children, young people and families in Indigenous communities in this country.

If you wish to join our thinking and action, please contact our Liaison Group Convenor, Suzie Dean, via admin@MHYFVic.org - your interest will be very welcome!

IACAPAP 2026

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY AND ALLIED PROFESSIONS (IACAPAP): Connecting with colleagues world-wide……

THE UPCOMING 27th WORLD CONGRESS OF IACAPAP IN HAMBURG, JULY 1-4 2026 will be as stimulating and important as ever in our troubled world. Contributions are invited from all and any person interested in the child and adolescent mental health and wellbeing field, and individual papers and posters can be submitted until 20th January 2026. Full details about submitting an abstract are found at https://iacapap.org

INVOLVEMENT OF ALLIED PROFESSIONALS IN IACAPAP is highly valued. An international IACAPAP Group of Allied Professionals has been meeting during the past year, to brainstorm how IACAPAP can be of optimal use to the breadth of professionals active in the field. This led on to a very successful international webinar being organised by MHYFVic in September this year, which focussed, from an Australian perspective, upon the critical role of allied professionals in multidisciplinary teamwork. Over 400 people from 60 countries participated. Two more such webinars are planned for 2026, featuring other parts of the world and other urgent issues. Anyone wishing to contribute to this effort in any way at all, please contact Suzie Dean at admin@MHYFVic.org, who will get back to you.

WEBINARS OF OVERALL RELEVANCE IN CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH are offered by IACAPAP on a regular, frequent basis. Highlighting complex issues, they are presented by excellent expert colleagues, and are of high quality. Also, surprisingly, they are often also free of charge. You can find out how to be notified ongoingly by going to the website: https://iacapap.org

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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 February 18th 2026 at 7.30pm
- At 23 The Crescent, Beacon Cove 3207

The meeting was deferred from its previously proposed date. More details to follow soon, but please email & register your interest at admin@mhyfvic.org

FORUM

Mental health services for the public.

In our last newsletter we made comment on the "Thriving Kids" proposal to develop a program catering for the approximately one quarter of all children who have disorders in one or more of the developmental domains, but not severe enough to fall 2+ standard deviations below the mean to qualify for NDIS eligibility.

Whilst strongly supporting the proposal, in our concurrent Bulletin we pointed out two fundamental flaws in the NDIS legislation that should be avoided to make the proposal work. Firstly, the program should be a shared whole-of-government responsibility across Federal, State and Local Government levels. Secondly, that it should be delivered in Community Health Services located in Community Hubs in all Local Government areas.

I invited readers to add their comment to mine. Within days of the newsletter and the Bulletin going out there was a newspaper story of several Community Health Centres operated by a not-for-profit agency announcing their imminent closure because their funding had fallen too far below their operating costs.

The very place we advocate should be hosting multi-disciplinary developmental and mental health assessments for government programs, is the one being starved of funding. Ironically, this is because of the same fundamental flaws that dogged the NDIS.

We advocate that community health services should be located in community hubs in every local government area, capable of undertaking multidisciplinary assessments and case management. This requires a Commonwealth/State agreement for whole of government coordination of healthcare services.

The Commonwealth roles include:

- leadership of the initiatives,
- funding the administrative structure for:
    - coordinating the assessment methodology,
    - recording the findings and recommendations,
    - researching outcomes,
- Medicare and Social Welfare funding

The State Government roles include:

- collaboration with local government in provision of Community Hubs incorporating Community Health Centres
- coordination with the range of health, welfare and social agencies,
- ensuring that State health departments provide appropriate programs for persons whose management plan have been developed in the assessment process.

Reader's comments would be welcome.

Allan Mawdsley

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.