



# AAIMHI NEWSLETTER

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## Guidelines for contributors

AAIMHI aims to publish quarterly editions in March, June, September and December. Contributions to the newsletter are invited on any matter of interest to the members of AAIMHI.

Referenced works should follow the guidelines provided by the APA Publication Manual 4<sup>th</sup> Edition.

All submissions are sub-edited to newsletter standards.

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## A Brief History of the Australian Association of Infant Mental Health Inc. (AAIMHI)

Beulah Warren

*Vice President of the Inaugural Committee.*

An abridged version of this article was presented as part of the DW Winnicott Memorial Lecture, at the Joint National Conference of AAIMHI with the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Perinatal & Infant Mental Health Conference *When Minds Meet: Pausing, Connecting & Relating*, October/ November, 2007.

### Introduction

#### *The beginnings*

The Australian Association of Infant Mental Health (AAIMHI) was a coming-together of several divergent forces in 1988. These were:

a) Adult psychotherapists and others who were struck by the work of Stern and the new research on infants and how that research challenged current perceptions of the infant.

b) A number of child psychiatrists who had attended the World Association for Infant Psychiatry (WAIP) Congresses in the 1980s who began to meet as an Australian WAIPAD.

c) Staff of the Early Intervention Program (EIP), Sydney, and others working in the framework of the relationship of mother and infant had formed an interest group to meet and discuss issues relevant to working with parents and infants.

One of the adult psychotherapists, Kerryl Egan, saw the new research as 'a huge opening'. She was so captivated by the research that she attended the 1988 International Society for Infant Studies Biennial Conference, in the USA. As well as meeting many key people involved in infant studies, Kerryl met with Directors of the International Association of Infant Mental Health

(IAIMH) and discussed the possible relationship between an Australian association and IAIMH.

On her return, Kerryl approached the newly formed interest group of those working in the field, as well as the child psychiatrists who were meeting as WAIPAD Australia, to enlist cooperation to establish an Australian Association for Infant Mental Health.

**AAIMHI** held its Inaugural Meeting at the NSW Institute of Psychiatry, on the 14th September, 1988. In the minutes Kerryl Egan, the Foundation President, is reported as follows:

The concept grew from her experiences in a study group and was consolidated by the prospect of becoming affiliated with the IAIMH. In discussing with colleagues the possibility of establishing an association, she also became aware of a number of existing networks, isolated from one another but sharing common ground. It is envisaged that the Association will provide a forum for communication between such groups, and for multi-faceted discussion in the area of infant development.

There were 16 foundation members: three staff members of the EIP, adult and child psychiatrists, adult and child psychotherapists, an occupational

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## A Brief History (cont.)

therapist (Helen Hardy who was on the original committee of management), speech pathologist, social worker, and an academic child psychologist. The original committee of management was drawn from the above membership. It was agreed to try and co-opt to the Committee:

- \* a nurse, a representative from Early Childhood Health Centres (Well Baby Clinics)
- \* a representative from the Child Protection Services
- \* a social worker, representing those who work with drug addicted mothers
- \* a paediatrician
- \* a physiotherapist

From its inauguration AAIMHI has been inclusive and broad based, aiming:

1. to improve recognition of infancy as important in psycho-social development,
2. to improve awareness that psychological and biological development processes are interrelated,
3. to provide a forum for multi-disciplinary interaction and cooperation,
4. to generate discussion nationally and internationally,
5. to provide members with access to the latest research on development in infants,
6. to facilitate the integration of such research into clinical practice and community life,
7. to work for the improvement of mental health and development in all infants and families,
8. to provide reports and submissions to Governments, authorities, organisations and individuals on matters relating to infants, family health and welfare.

*(Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of AAIMHI, 1988).*

### Struggling Beginnings

Initially, the Association struggled financially but immediately planned to hold a series of Saturday morning workshops and bimonthly seminars, publish

a newsletter and begin dialogue with the fledgling local WAIPAD group. The first Saturday workshop in February, 1989, 'Do Babies have Feelings: The Emerging Self: Implications for Practice', attracted 65 participants. The speakers were Drs Curtis Samuels, Russell Meares and Bruce Tonge.

Balancing the budget, holding regular seminars and getting a newsletter established were priorities for the Foundation Committee through 1989 and 1990. The first workshop was followed by Seminars on 'Infant Observation', 'Attachment Theory and Practical Implications', 'Infants in Hospital', 'Giving Birth to Feelings', 'The Transition from Coupling to Parenting', 'Crying Babies' and workshops on 'Maternal Grief', and 'The Neonatal Behavioural Assessment Scale (Brazelton 1984)', to name a few.

Renate Barth, a psychologist on the EIP Team, undertook to be the first Editor of the Newsletter. Number 1 was published in the Autumn (May 8th, 1989) with a letter from the President, an events calendar and an article on, 'Colic - its management within the framework of self-regulation theory'.

The Newsletter has continued to be published quarterly. Subsequent editors have been Dr Kim Powell, the Inaugural President of the Infant Mental Health Association of Aotearoa New Zealand, Drs Isla and David Lonie, Dr Paul Robertson and Dr Sara Jones, Victor Evatt, and Ms Shelley Reid.

During the late 1980s and 1990s, the dialogue with those who proposed a WAIPAD branch continued and plans were made for AAIMHI to join with WAIPAD to hold a conference. The inaugural Infant Mental Health Conference in Australia was the Pacific Rim Meeting of WAIPAD, entitled *Mothers, Fathers and Infants: Transition to Parenthood*, held in Melbourne, April 26 - 28, 1991. This was the achievement of the newly formed AAIMHI and those associated with WAIPAD in New South Wales, working with the WAIPAD group

in Victoria. The plenary speakers included Drs Tiffany Field, Graeme Russell and Kyle Pruett.

Topics addressed in workshops and seminars:

- \* Attachment (parent-infant and infant-parent)
- \* The Infant in Hospital (pre-term infants, perinatal death, handicapped infants)
- \* Reproductive Technology (transition to parenthood following a period of infertility)
- \* Internal Working Models (the parent and infant within)
- \* Disturbances of Early Relationships (child abuse and neglect)
- \* Infant Observation (Psychoanalytic perspectives)
- \* Early Intervention (role of the maternal and early childhood nurse, early intervention programs)

This International Meeting was successful in bringing together professionals interested in infant mental health from all over Australia (there were over 300 registrants); it was also financially successful, providing a core fund for future meetings, and it was hoped that with so many professionals enthusiastically returning to all States, public awareness of the needs of infants would be increased. In planning the conference it became clear that the two groups in New South Wales should amalgamate (interview with Dr David Lonie). Thus, as AAIMHI had a formal structure and was affiliated with the International Association for Infant Mental Health, the NSW WAIPAD committee decided to disband and support AAIMHI.

When the two international organisations, WAIPAD and IAIMH amalgamated in September, 1992, AAIMHI, through its affiliation with IAIMH was affiliated with WAIMH. This created a situation where we had two Australian Associations – AAIMHI and WAIMH (Vic) which formally established itself

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## A Brief History (cont.)

at a meeting on 22 July, 1992 (Paul, 1993). The Regional Vice President, Dr David Lonie began discussions with the Presidents of the two Associations as to how they could operate together, whether as two separate organizations relating through the Regional Vice President, or should there be a national organisation with state committees (Lonie, 1993). As the discussion continued, with regular updates published in the newsletter, the solution evolved.

With each successful conference, the membership of AAIMHI increased Australia wide. Members in different centres began to meet together to address local needs, formed local committees representing State Branches. The hard-working committee in South Australia was the first to formally launch a State Branch. The Inaugural Conference and Launch of the South Australian Branch of AAIMHI was held in October, 1994.

By September 1996, the States of Western Australia and Queensland also had active Branches. A federal organisation with active state chapters appeared to be the way forward. To this end, the members of WAIMHI (Vic) sought legal advice to determine if the existing AIMHI Constitution could be altered to accommodate the growing, truly national organisation.

Proposed changes and points of concern were raised and discussed with members at the third and fourth National Conferences in 1996 and 1997. Finally, the new Constitution was presented and approved by the membership at a Special Meeting in June 1998. AAIMHI now has a small National Executive Committee with representatives from each of the State Branches. The quarterly newsletter and the annual national conference are the responsibility of the National Committee and delegated to a State Branch.

Past Presidents of the Association are:

Ms Kerryl Egan  
Professor Bryanne Barnett  
Ms Beulah Warren

Ms Marianne Nicholson  
Dr Isla Lonie  
Dr Brigid Jordan  
Dr Elizabeth Puddy  
Ms Michelle Meehan  
Mr Victor Evatt  
Ms Pam Linke (2007)

### National Conferences

In October 1991, AAIMHI joined with the Australian Early Intervention Association to present a Conference, *Under 5 and At Risk*. Drs Arnold Sameroff and Susan MacDonough of Brown University, USA and Dr Ruth Schmidt-Neven of the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne, were the plenary speakers.

Gathered in Australia in July 1994 were attachment experts from both the United Kingdom and USA so, in recognition of the International Year of the Family, AAIMHI hosted in Sydney a two-day conference, *Principles of Attachment Theory: Relevance to Intervention with Infants and Caregivers*.

Dr Marvin presented his work on attachment of children with a disability; Drs Lynne Murray and Peter Cooper of Cambridge University, UK brought those in attendance up to date with research on the effects of postnatal depression on infants and The Cambridge Study, while Dr Mary Sue Moore of Boulder, Colorado, brought together threads from the other presentations to outline implications for the management of infants, including the consequences of trauma, and the relationship between infants and their parents. This conference provided an opportunity for a broad range of people working with infants, their parents and caregivers, to gain a greater knowledge of attachment theory and current research in the area.

Our Second National Conference was the Third Pacific Rim Meeting of the World Association for Infant Mental Health, entitled *The Baby, Family & Culture - the Challenges of Infancy*,

*Research and Clinical Work*. The scientific programme was in the hands of the WAIMH (Vic) Committee and the Conference was hosted by the AAIMHI Committee in Sydney in April, 1995. An impressive array of international speakers joined local presenters and included:

Dr Hiram Fitzgerald, Executive Director of WAIMH from Lansing, USA;  
Dr Hisako Watanabe from Yokohama, Japan;  
Dr Antoine Guedeney from Paris, France;  
Dr Charles Zeanah from New Orleans, USA;  
Mrs Dilys Daws from London, UK;  
Dr Mary Sue Moore from Colorado, USA;  
Dr Eric Rayner from London, UK;  
Dr Ann Morgan from Melbourne;  
Mrs Elvie Kelly from Melbourne, Australia.

The conference was held back-to-back with the Pacific Rim Marcé Society meeting in order to encourage cross fertilization. Over 200 Australian professionals attended the AAIMHI Conference. The conference also gave membership a boost. By July 1995 there were 191 members, from all States except Tasmania and the Northern Territory. Today the membership is twice that at around 400.

Many members attended the Association's (Third National) Annual National Clinical Meeting held in Melbourne, Victoria, in December 1996, *The Interplay of Infants, Parents and Therapists*. International Speakers were Ms Juliet Hopkins of the Tavistock Clinic, London and Dr Mary Sue Moore, Boulder, Colorado. Ms Hopkins gave the DW Winnicott Memorial Lecture, *The Dangers and Deprivations of Too Good Mothering*.

The 1997 Fourth Annual National Conference was hosted by South Australian Branch in Adelaide, October, 1997.

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## A Brief History (cont.)

Dr Anne Sved-Williams and Ros Powrie, the scientific co-convenors, brought together three outstanding figures from the international arena as well as presenters from Australia and New Zealand to produce a conference of 'excellent academic and practical merit' (Sved-Williams, 1997). International luminaries were:

Professor Marinus van Ijzendoorn, Professor of Psychology at Leiden University, in the Netherlands;

Dr Martha Erikson, of the STEEP Project, Rochester, Minnesota, USA;

Dr Hisako Watanabe, Child Psychiatrist, Keno University Hospital, Tokyo, Japan.

In 1998 AAIMHI joined with the Perinatal Society of Australia & New Zealand, the Australian Neonatal Nurses Association and the New Children's Hospital, Westmead, to bring Professor Heidelise Als of the Boston Children's Hospital, and Associate Professor of Psychology (Psychiatry) at the Harvard Medical School to Australia. In addition to being a plenary speaker at the 2nd Annual Perinatal Society of Australia & New Zealand Congress, Heidi presented a Seminar in Sydney on *Newborn Developmental Care in NICU*, in March, 1998.

The Fifth Annual Conference: "*With No Language but a Cry*" - *Trauma in Infancy*, held in Sydney in September, 1998, drew participants from all States and New Zealand. As the title suggested, the focus of the meeting was on understanding the enduring consequences of various forms of trauma in infancy and was directed by keynote speakers:

Dr Mary Sue Moore and Ms Janet Dean, Boulder Colorado;

Dr John Bying-Hall, co-founder of the Family Therapy Training Program at the Tavistock, UK;

Professor Barry Nurcombe, Chair Department of Child Psychiatry, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia.

### Academic Courses in Infant Mental Health

Although the Annual Conferences, individual seminars and short courses conducted by the Association were successful in meeting some of the educational needs of the growing number of professionals, it became apparent that there was a need for a more formal course of study in infant mental health.

It was the Victorian Branch of the Association, (and in particular Dr Campbell Paul, Ms Brigid Jordon and Frances Thompson-Salo), which was instrumental in setting up the first Post Graduate Diploma and Masters in Infant Mental Health at the University of Melbourne, in 1996. The NSW Branch, in collaboration with the NSW Institute of Psychiatry, followed with a Post Graduate Course in Infant Mental Health and the first intake of 15 students was enrolled in the two year course in July 1998. The Master programme was offered in 2003 with the addition of a third year.

### AAIMHI finds its political voice

In 1996, the Executive Committee decided a submission from AAIMHI to the *National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Children from their Families*, would declare publicly that we have a major interest in the well being of infants and their families. The Committee decided to address the transgenerational issues in terms of Attachment Theory. The submission addressed the question, "What are the effects on the child of separation from a primary carer at birth, in infancy, in later childhood?" An outline was given of the consequences for those infants who had experienced little, none, or interrupted mothering and included the following statement:

*It has been argued (Bowlby, 1988) that early loss of a mother or prolonged separation from her before age 11 is conducive to subsequent depression, choice of an inappropriate partner, and difficulties in*

*parenting the next generation. Anti-social activity, violence, depression and suicide have also been suggested as likely results of the severe disruption of affectional bonds*  
(Bowlby, 1979).

This statement was used in the Report of the Inquiry to give meaning to the many submissions made to the Inquiry by Aboriginal people of their lives of tragic loss and self-destructive behaviour (Wilson, 1997). AAIMHI felt it had made a significant contribution.

The Association also made a submission to the New South Wales Government Inquiry, Parenting Education and Support Programs in New South Wales in February, 1998, and was asked to write the chapter on the Developmental Needs of Children for the NSW Government Report on Parenting Education & Support Programs.

Since the implementation of the new Constitution in June 1998, the State branches act independently in their respective States, hosting seminars and workshops, and making submissions in relation to State issues. However, if there is a national issue which calls for a response, the National Executive takes responsibility.

Further submissions include:

**2002** Response to the Consultation on the National Agenda for Children. AAIMHI ensured there was an infant voice.

**2003** Submission to the Inquiry into Child Custody

**2007** Submission into the Inquiry into Breast Feeding

In addition, two Position Papers have been published by the Association:

*Controlled Crying*

*Responding to Baby's Cues.*

There continues to be a National Conference each year, hosted by a different State branch.

For Conferences since 1998, the

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## A Brief History (cont.)

themes and keynote speakers have been:

**1999** Sixth, Melbourne  
*The Infant Speaks: The Baby, Her Family and the Therapeutic Process.*

Dr Stephen Seligman, Dr. Bernard Golse, Professor Colwyn Trevarthan.

**2000** Seventh, Adelaide  
*A Baby & Someone: Parents & Carers.*

Professor Klaus Minde and Professor Joy Osofsky.

**2001** Eighth, Fremantle  
*Policy Makers & Infant Vulnerability: Coming together. Development of Self Regulation.*

Dr Alicia Lieberman, Dr Peter Fonagy, Dr Dylis Daws & Dr Mary Sue Moore.

**2002** Ninth, Sydney (with NIFTeY):  
*Frozen Futures: Exploring the effects of early stress on later outcomes.*

Prof. Peter Hepper, Prof. Megan Gunnar, Assoc. Prof. Joy Browne, Dr Julie Quinlivan.

**2003** Tenth, Adelaide (with Marcé):  
*Building Better Beginnings: Infant Initiatives in Context.*

**2004** Eleventh, Melbourne (WAIMHI 9th World Congress):

*The Baby's Place in the World.*

Prof. Joy Osofsky, Judge Cindy Lederman, Dr. Alicia Lieberman, Dr. James McKenna, Dr Antoine Guedeney.

**2005** Twelfth, Brisbane  
*Before the Bough Breaks: Working with infants, families and communities.*

Dr Amanda Jones, Professor Joy Osofsky, Judge Cindy Lederman, Dr. Frances Thomas Salo.

**2006** Thirteenth, Melbourne (One day linked to 17th World Congress of the International Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions):

Prof. Tuula Tamminen, Prof. Charles Zeanah, Dr Maria Rose Moro (France), Dr Miri Keren & Dr Sam Tyano (Israel).

**2006** AAIMHI NSW Branch (Supported the Inaugural Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Conference):

*Old Families New Beginnings.*

Prof. Ken Wyatt, Prof. Helen Milroy, Prof. Julie Quinlivan, Ass Prof. Louise Newman, Prof. Sandra Eades, Ms Dorothy Shipley, Prof Pat Brodie

**2007** Fourteenth, Sydney (Joint National Conference with the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Perinatal & Infant Mental Health Conference):

*When Minds Meet: Pausing, Connecting, & Relating.*

Prof. Karl Heinz Brisch (Germany), Prof. Kai von Klitzing (Germany), Ms Suzi Tortora (USA), Dr Michael Trout (USA)

### Conclusion

As an organisation we have developed and grown. Nationally we are more confident about advocating for infants, their families and carers. Are we doing enough?

The figures quoted recently on the incidence of children known to DoCS in NSW, "One in five", would indicate that there is much more to be done, working directly with infants and their families as well as advocating on their behalf.

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## NATIONAL NEWS

Your national committee consists of representatives of each State and some extra positions for office holders. The committee members will have their contact details on the website ([www.aaimhi.org](http://www.aaimhi.org)) in the next few weeks so you can contact your State representative or the national committee directly.

There are a number of **advocacy issues** that we want to continue to work on over the next year. The Government has not yet made a commitment to paid parental leave to allow young infants at least some time getting to know their mother without the added financial pressure of being out of the work force. They have however undertaken that they will look into this. AAIMHI believes that mothers who are not in the work force also need support in caring for their babies but Australia, with the USA, is at the bottom of the world in commitment to paid maternity leave, below most developed and developing countries. Some other advocacy issues we are addressing by developing position statements as we did with controlled crying and baby cues. These statements are developed through a consensus from all of the State committees and will be available on the website hopefully during 2008.

There will be two major **educational initiatives** next year – the international conference to be held in Tokyo in July (check [www.waimh.org](http://www.waimh.org)) and the Australian conference to be held in Adelaide, 5-7 November together with the Aboriginal infant and perinatal mental health conference. More news will be available soon on [www.aaimhi.org](http://www.aaimhi.org).

Australia has a good representation on the **World Association for Infant Mental Health**. There are real benefits for belonging to WAIMH – including discounts at world congresses which provide a wealth of knowledge and skills as well as the opportunity to meet with world leaders in our field. WAIMH membership also includes the Signal and World Infant Mental Health Journal, both really worthwhile publications. For those of you who are members of the world association, you will have received an invitation to vote on some changes to the by-laws. Some of these changes relate to simplifying the organisational structure, and some to giving more involvement in the world body to affiliates such as AAIMHI. One of the changes, section 4, states the intent of clarifying that “infant mental health really spans the range from infancy to kindergarten or roughly 0-5 years of age”. Our committee had some concerns about this possibly weakening the emphasis on the first three years, especially as there are a number of other organisations that focus on the years 0-5 and 0-8 whereas AAIMHI is one of the few that focus on the first three very important years and we would not want to see that focus lost.

The option to vote requires that there is only one vote for all the changes, which means that we cannot vote for the organisational changes and against the change in emphasis on birth to three. It will be important therefore, if you have concerns about the change in focus and vote against all the changes, that you make it very clear in your comments why you have done so. Should the changes be voted in there will be a further option to bring it up for discussion and consideration at the WAIMH Affiliates Council in Yokohama.

As this is the start of my time as president I would like to take the opportunity to thank the outgoing committee for their dedication and hard work, especially Janet Rhind as treasurer who saw us through many GST issues, and Victor Evatt the past president who is the author and instigator of the new website database which should make life much easier for branch secretaries and members (Victor will be staying on as treasurer). Together with the rest of the committee I would also like to acknowledge the ongoing work and commitment of Marianne Nicholson our public officer, Campbell Paul who is our international representative and Shelley Reid our newsletter editor, now national secretary as well. And finally welcome to two new national committee members – Sally Watson from South Australia, and Libby Morton from Queensland.

I wish all members a very happy Christmas and New Year.

**Pam Linke AM**

National President

## Media Release

# Autism Detection in Early Childhood - ADEC

## Overview of the *Autism Detection in Early Childhood (ADEC)*

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) has recently published a ground-breaking new autism screening tool, the *Autism Detection in Early Childhood* or "ADEC". Following innovative research lead by Associate Professor Robyn Young from Flinders University, Australia, children as young as 12 months can now be effectively screened for autism using the ADEC.

Prior to the ADEC, children with autistic disorders could not be easily identified until they were three or four years of age. This is a serious issue because research indicates children with autism are more responsive to early interventions before difficult behaviours become entrenched. Early diagnosis can lead to significantly better quality of life and developmental outcomes, with subsequent major savings in health-care costs estimated to be between \$4.5 and \$7.2 million annually in Australia alone.

Because early symptoms of autism are often characterised by an absence of normal behavioural development, rather than the presence of unusual behaviour, Associate Professor Young and her team discovered it's the things a young child doesn't do that often provide the clues to the presence of autism.

"Many of the classic behaviours associated with autistic disorder, such as delayed or repetitive noncommunicative speech, and obsessive interests, develop or become more apparent later in life," Professor Young said. "Therefore, unless one is aware of when skills should develop and how they should develop, their absence may not cause concern. It is only when the secondary behaviours develop, and the more obvious milestones of speech and social play do not develop, that the child may receive more serious attention."

By the time traditional symptoms of autism become obvious to parents or teachers, a child may require years of time consuming and costly interventions. To detect autism before these characteristic symptoms become a long-term problem, the ADEC has identified 16 specific and observable behaviours that differentiate normal and autistic categories in very young children. If a child fails to demonstrate these 16 age-appropriate behaviours by 12 months to two years of age then an early diagnosis of autism should be investigated further.

Given the potential benefits of the ADEC, there has already been considerable international interest: Mexico plans to use a modified Spanish version as part of a national screening tool, and a Chinese version is also undergoing research in Malaysia and China.

### Key features of the *Autism Detection in Early Childhood (ADEC)*

- \* Ability to screen children as young as 12 months for autism or autistic tendencies
- \* Target behaviours are well operationalised so the ADEC can be administered by psychologists, general medical practitioners, maternity healthcare nurses, allied healthcare professionals, therapists and special needs educators
- \* Based on behavioural observation rather than parental report
- \* Assists in identifying specific behaviours that require intervention
- \* Able to discriminate autistic behaviours from learning disabilities and other developmental disorders
- \* Strong psychometric properties, with research indicating high reliability statistics (internal consistency > .85; test-retest reliability = .9), and demonstrated content and convergent validity
- \* Developed in Australia

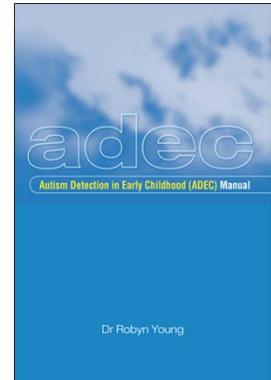
### For further information on the ADEC:

- \* Visit the ACER website:

<http://shop.acer.edu.au/acer-shop/group/ADEC>

Alternatively, please call Jon Walker, ACER Psychology Consultant, on +61-3-9835-7444, or email [walkerj@acer.edu.au](mailto:walkerj@acer.edu.au)

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) is a not-for-profit organisation that has been publishing and distributing educational, psychology and human resource assessments for over 76 years. ACER strives for excellence in customer service and is highly regarded by health professionals worldwide.



## STATE REPORT

### Victoria

Following the Victorian Branch AGM the new office bearers are:

- \* President – Brigid Jordan
- \* Treasurer – Julie Stone
- \* Membership Liaison – Rosalie Birkin
- \* Secretary – Nichola Coombs
- \* Scientific Program Coordinator – Christine Hill

Scientific meetings continue to be held monthly at the Royal Children's Hospital.

In October we were treated to presentations from six contributing authors to the special edition of the *Infant Observation Journal: Infant observation in Australia* (2007, Vol 10, No 2). This edition featured articles from practitioners Australia-wide and presentations came from a broad perspective: from personal experiences as observers to research papers to outcomes for observed infants and parents. The lively discussion following the presentations highlighted how much can be gained from an infant observation and how it can stimulate our thinking and understanding when working with infants and their families across many different fields.

Planning for next year's scientific meetings is well under way with a view to presenting a range of different formats including half-day seminars as well as evening meetings.

***Teresa Russo***

### **AAIMHI National Conference 2008**

*Preliminary notice*

5 – 7 November 2008

Hilton Hotel, Adelaide