



Australian Association for  
Infant Mental Health Inc.

## Australian Association for Infant Mental Health

### President Report 13 September 2018

### AGM 13 September 2018

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#### **Canberra Branch Activities September 2017 to August 2018**

The main focus for Canberra branch of AAIMHI this year has been to provide quality training for professionals in the region and increase our membership and public recognition.

#### **Improve Professional and Public Recognition**

#### **Educate members and other professionals who work with infants and their families**

##### **Seminars and Workshops**

As part of a national initiative the ACT Branch hosted their first event in some time - a one day seminar on September 15 at Pilgrim House, featuring Her Honour Judge Vera Mayer, London and Visiting Professor, University College London and Honorary Consultant Child Psychiatrist (Great Ormond Street Hospital London) Dr Danya Glaser. The seminar "Emotional Abuse and Neglect: Mental Health and Judicial Perspectives" was opened by Judge Kate Hughes of the Federal Circuit Court

The event was reasonably well attended by mental health professionals working in a range of areas and legal professionals particularly those working in family law. The panel discussion at the conclusion of the seminar involved a range of professionals including a federal circuit court judge, a senior legal representative from CPS, a paediatrician working with children at risk, a family law lawyer and a psychologist in private practice. The panel discussion raised interesting questions about the current interplay between the federal and state systems for the protection of children and providing for their interests.

During their visit Judge Mayer and Dr Glaser also met with senior management of Child Protection (thanks to Judy for organising and facilitating this meeting) and with the Judges of the Family Court and the Federal Circuit Court.

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On 15 and 16 February Canberra branch hosted Dr Erinn Hawkins, Bond University to present a 2 day workshop Assessing Sensitivity in Parent-Child Interactions The Maternal Behaviour Q-Sort (MBQS). This training was a long time in the planning. It occurred at the National Portrait Gallery. There were 19 participants, short of the maximum number. Participants feedback was positive, although no-one took up the option to gain reliability.

Both these trainings made a profit for our branch.

### **Network Meetings**

We have continued to provide regular network meetings for members and professionals. Our theme for 2017 was- Predicting the Future. Why infant health matters and why your role is important. Our last meeting for last year occurred on Wednesday 29 November 2017 -The impact of Trauma and Neglect on Infant Mental Health presented by Elissa See, an Accredited Mental Health Social Worker experienced in working with traumatized children at the Child at Risk Health Unit, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and in Private Practice.

The theme for this year has been: Changing the Future: *Interventions in Infant Mental Health from pre-natal to five years of age*

The meetings were held at the QE11 and I would particularly like to thank Rosemary and Elissa for their work in advertising and logistical arrangements of bringing these meetings together and Judy and Anna for stepping in at late notice to MC the meetings.

The presentations were:

- February 2018 -Bringing Baby Home: Setting the foundations of infant mental health for future wellbeing and development presented by Cara Toynton an Accredited Social Worker, Postpartum Professional and Women's Holistic Health and Life Coach specialising in maternal and child health and wellbeing
- April 2018 - Recognising and responding to mental health problems in the perinatal period, presented by Angela Freeman a clinical psychology registrar working with the Perinatal Mental Health Consultation Service
- June 2018 -Intervening Early – Promoting Protective Factors for Toddlers, presented by Sally Carter a Child and Family Worker who has

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practiced at West Belconnen Child & Family Centre for the past 6 years. She has a background in speech pathology and community development.

- August 2018. Sexual Development in 3-5 year olds, presented by Josephine Alchin an Accredited Mental Health Social Worker and Registered Psychologist, has worked in the field of children and families for more than 25 years including at Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and the Child At Risk Health Unit

Attendance at the meetings has been variable and considering the very high quality of the presentations the committee has discussed the idea of holding a ½ day workshop in the first quarter of 2019 in order to gain a larger attendance and to further highlight the work of the network. Interest from presenters to be involved in a workshop is being sought.

### **Future Programs and Training options**

The BASE Baby watching program has continued to be a topic of discussion after community interest expressed in the BASE baby watching program being implemented in a school in Canberra. The committee has had further discussion with Gwendolin King and with Dr Karl Heinz-Brisch regarding the potential of rolling out this program in Canberra and about potential training possibly occurring around the time of WAIMH in Brisbane. Thanks to Hilary for her work in this.

### **Develop professional Competencies, standards and recognition –**

Anna is on national working group establishing the competency framework.

### **Provide Information and services to members**

We have developed a Student Scholarship in the ACT.  
Matt has been involved with the AAIMHI newsletter which is not continuing at present.

### **Enhance good governance**

A number of the committee attended the National AGM on 25 November 2017 in Melbourne. At that time a huge initiative was finalised with the constitution for the national registration of AAIMI as a company by guarantee being accepted. Thank you to Sonia for her work on the committee for this.

I attended the National Planning Day in March in Sydney and continue to attend the once every second month national meetings.

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I am on the WAIHM 2020 national organizing committee.

Our Membership increased from 19 to 32, however there has been a disappointing re-registration number.

Lastly thanks to all the committee for all your hard work and enthusiasm over the last 2 years.

Helen Willetts  
ACT President  
13/9/2018

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