



Australian Association for  
Infant Mental Health

West Australian Branch

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## **Acting President's Report**

### **2019 Annual General Meeting**

Good evening everyone

Thank you for attending the Annual General Meeting of the WA Branch of the Australian Association for Infant Mental Health. AGMs are not considered the most thrilling event to attend in my experience, but we are clever, because we offer you drink and food beforehand and an engaging presentation afterwards. AGMs are important as they provide the opportunity to reflect on the year just gone and give us a focus for the year ahead. Tonight, I will provide the overview of the 2018/19 year and talk a little about what we can look forward to.

At the AGM last year, I sat in the audience not knowing this is where I would be standing this year. I had not nominated for a committee position and was not intending to put my hand up. However, I was moved by our past President, Jenna Thornton's report and passionate plea for more members to become active within the WA Branch. I realised I had been enjoying the benefits of being a member, attending seminars and enjoying the social connections they provide, without stepping up to do my bit. Jenna was right and more of us do have to take a more active role. Thank you Jenna for triggering a response in me and thank you for your constant support and kindness as I have fumbled my way through the first year as acting President.

This role is supported by the members of the Management Committee. I wish to acknowledge and thank all our 2018/19 Committee Members:

Vice President and WA National Representative - Raylene Lewis

Secretary – Sara Browne

Treasurer – Stephanie Rae

Seminar Team – Sara Stephens and Stella Rogers

Membership Officer – Orla Peoples

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INFANT MENTAL HEALTH

Committee Members – Narelle Pryer, Rubela Wilborn and Nicole Wade

The committee meets approximately every 6 weeks throughout the year and via email conversations in between. We are a productive friendly group and look forward to welcoming new members. I want to give special mention to Orla Peoples who has continued to complete tasks related to membership, even after needing to leave the committee a few months ago. Nicole Wade temporarily moved to Canada to complete her studies earlier this year but was an enthusiastic and committed voice from Kalgoorlie for our country members. My personal thanks and gratitude to all the members of the 2018/19 Management Committee for their encouragement of me, for their time given to the WA Branch and for being the lovely people they are who I enjoy spending time with. Please join me in showing your appreciation of what they have done this past year by giving them all a round of applause.

A Management Committee only exists because we have Members. This past financial year we had 149 Members with 9 being from rural WA and 1 from the Northern Territory, Victoria and Switzerland. Our members come from the following professions:

- Psychologist (Clinical and Counselling) - 35
- Registered Nurse - 19
- Social Worker - 10
- Occupational Therapist - 8
- Midwife - 6
- Physiotherapist - 5
- Full time Student – 5
- Psychiatrist - 4
- Early Childhood Educator - 3
- Speech Pathologist - 1
- Researcher - 1
- Psychotherapist - 1
- Medical Doctor - 1
- Other-21
- Not Stated - 29

**So let's reflect on what happened in 2018/19.**

One of our most important tasks is bringing our members the seminars each year. This year we have enjoyed the following 6 presentations.

<b>Presenter and Topic</b>	<b>Competencies addressed</b>	<b>Competencies addressed</b>
18 Oct 2018  Dr Anne Sved-Williams - Working with infants and their mothers with borderline personality disorder (BPD)	Direct Service Skills:  Intervention/ Treatment Planning	Direct Service Skills:  Parent-Infant /Young Child Relationship- Based Therapies & Practices
7th February 2019  Dr Vincent Smith - FASD and NAS diagnosis and management in newborns and families affected by substance use	Knowledge:  Disorders of infancy/early childhood	Direct Service Skills:  Intervention and treatment planning
21st February 2019  Anne Buist - Mother-infant forensic psychiatry: the good, bad and the ugly	Direct Service Skills:  Screening & Assessment	Direct Service Skills:  Safety
16th May 2019  Anne Alvarez - Developmentally-Informed Psychotherapy of Autism	Theoretical Foundations: Disorders of infancy/early childhood	Direct Service Skills: Observation & Listening
13th June 2019  Lorraine Rose - Learning to Love: Normal Developmental Processes	Theoretical Foundations: Infant/ very young child development & behaviour	Direct Service Skills: Observation & Listening
8th August 2019  Dr Raffaella Salvo - High risk infants - promoting infant mental health in the child protection system	Direct Service Skills:  Observation & listening	Direct Service Skills:  Screening & Assessment

For 2019 we trialled new venues. Initially we were offered the meeting room at the Telethon Kids Institute inside the new Perth Children's Hospital. Unfortunately, we were unable to continue there due to a change of hospital policy and have now moved to The Boulevard in Floreat. We have had some challenges with seminars this year mostly due to IT issues, and although Ross Horley has used all his magical powers, we have occasionally been unable to link in our country colleagues. We do not accept this as good enough and if we experience any further IT difficulties we may look to return to the SJOG venue. Through the use of videoconferencing we are able to bring you professional presenters from not just Australia but internationally. These seminars are not possible for us to host without the magnificent support and expertise provided by Ross. Please can I ask you to show our appreciation with a huge round of applause for Ross.

During 2019 we tried two ways of increasing our seminar attendance. The first seminar of the year with Dr Vincent Smith was offered for free and wow did we have an unexpected registration of over 100 people. Not all arrived on the night, but we did have a room full of people. During Infant Mental Health Awareness Week, we offered members the opportunity to bring a friend for free and we had about 20 non-members join us.

The other key work that has been happening for WA Branch this year is the Endorsement Implementation Project supported by the Competencies Guidelines and Endorsement Working Group. Congratulations to Anne Lowagie, our Project Coordinator, Rochelle Matacz and Gally McKenzie for their passion and drive of the Endorsement Implementation Project. This small team have collaborated closely with the US Alliance for the Advancement of Infant Mental Health and been responsible for:

- extensive adaptations to the endorsement information and management system for the WA context
- training and organising training for the Endorsement Team members
- developing online and other information materials and
- engaging with stakeholders, including potential early applicants, partners and funders
- 46 expressions of interest (EOI) have been received from practitioners and workers across many disciplines in the IMH field with 13 AAIMH Members have indicated that are interested in applying for endorsement as soon the system is available

The work is ongoing and we are hopeful of further funding to see the project through. For now I extend a huge thank you to the working Group Chairperson - Liz Oxnam and committee members Lloyd Fernandez, Raylene Lewis, Rochelle Matacz, Gally McKenzie, Lynn Priddis and Nicole Wade. This project is ambitious and exciting for Western Australia.

In 2019 our National body offered Indigenous Scholarships to assist with participation at the AAIMH National Conference in September. WA Branch supported this and had hoped to fund a local person to represent WA at the conference. Unfortunately to date we do not have any

applicants, but I hope the initiative will be considered again for future conferences. Applications now close tomorrow Friday 9 August 2019.

The Management Committee approved funding for a Reflective Reading Group pilot project to be facilitated by Sharon Cooke. I hope you all received your invitation by email this week and will consider applying to be part of this pilot group. Our country members are highly valued, and we are giving them priority, so they have the opportunity to grow their Infant Mental Health knowledge and practice in a supported way. We will be using Zoom Videoconferencing as the platform for country members to join the group. Please forward your Expression of Interest to Sharon before the 16<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

**Now let's reflect on what is coming up for all of us.**

I would like to acknowledge Gally McKenzie who is currently National Chairperson for AAIMH. It is an honour to have the National Chair be from WA. Congratulations Gally.

The Management Committee will hold a planning day on Saturday 12 October to set some goals for the new incoming committee. If you have ideas about what you want us to focus on, please have a chat with me tonight. I would be happy to have members attend the planning day if anyone is interested as we want members to be able have a say about what they would like.

We have the **2019 AAIMH National Conference** being held in Adelaide on the 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> September with the theme '**Our Infants - Infant Mental Health is a Public Health Matter**'. Plus remember to put in your diaries for 7<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020 the **WAIMH 2020 Brisbane Conference: 'Creating stories in infant mental health: research, recovery and regeneration'**.

2019/20 will be the year for the launch of the Endorsement process so please keep a lookout for this and express your interest with the team now.

We are currently in discussions with an international speaker to bring to WA in 2020 for training and for a seminar. I am going to keep the name a surprise for now but can say it will be someone you will want to meet. Further details will be released once we have dates confirmed.

Griffin Longley, CEO of Nature Play WA, will be our guest presenter for the October seminar and he will share his findings from his recent Churchill scholarship.

Thank you for allowing me the time to share my reflections with you tonight. I hope they have been of interest and just maybe given you some reason to think about coming onboard to join our committee. Together we can do more for the WA Branch and be advocates for the infants and their families we all support.

Prue Ward

Acting Branch President