



Australian Association for  
Infant Mental Health

Victorian Branch  
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## AAIMHI (Vic) President's Report 2019

### Professional Development Events

In 2018 the Committee reflected that the most effective function the branch serves is to provide *a secure base for relationships that the branch can provide for those working in the field*. Thus, the Committee set the 2018 priority to: "provide nourishing multidisciplinary seminars, creating safe spaces for practitioners across disciplines to reflect openly on their work and feel bolstered to seek help when they need it." AAIMH (Vic) paused in early 2019 to invite member participation in a PD event survey to inform PD planning. Thank you to all members who took the time to share their views which are being reviewed and will be incorporated into planning for PD events for 2019/20.

**Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2018: The Need to Put Things Right, Juliet Hopkins Invited Response to John Bowlby's 'Hysteria in Children' (1939)**, Premier Screening of Film Commissioned by AAIMH (Vic) Discussants: Dr Julie Stone Dr Frances Salo, Dr Bob Salo & Dr Campbell Paul. 2019 was capped-off by this film event prioritising (a) low cost/accessibility for members (and to attract non-members), (b) festive fare to encourage conversation & networking, and (c) a fascinating and nourishing agenda to help practitioners feel bolstered in their own work with babies and families. The Committee decided to cater the event and make use of National Conference/Reimbursement funds to achieve these objects and absorb any additional costs. This was a fabulous event. *Thank you to Dr Julie Stone who organised the commissioning of this film*. The film will be made available as a member resource in future.

**Saturday 15 June 2019: Our Families are Special to Everyone Here, Olivia, 3-Years-Old** Presenters: A/Prof Brigid Jordan, Dr Anne Kennedy & Early Years Education Research Project Educators Jacky Clark, Tina Howard and Sonia Shard. This special event was hosted following a suggestion by a member in the PD survey. Members braved the winter cold to listen to the Early Years Educators as they reflected on their work as participants in the infant mental health informed Early Years Education Research Project. This event was also an opportunity to acknowledge significant transitions for AAIMH (Vic) in 2019.

**Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> August: 2019 Reflections on a Decade of the Ann Morgan Prize (including commemoration of the Life and Work of Dr Ann Morgan)** Given Dr Ann Morgan's passing in this 10th anniversary year of the prize, AAIMH (Vic) is holding two events to honour and celebrate her contribution, the above event followed by an AAIMH National Conference event in Adelaide on Saturday 7 September where the 2019 Ann Morgan Prize winner will be announced and winning entry will be read to the audience.

Planning has also begun for a November clinical forum coinciding with the launch of a book with chapter contributions from multiple AAIMH (Vic) members and edited by Dr Wendy Bunston and Sarah J Jones. Committee discussion is currently centred on the question of balancing a range of events over the course of the year that break-even financially, generate revenue, and on some occasions absorb a loss. The Committee will look in 2019/20 to clarify a process for making decisions around event partnerships and costings on behalf of the membership and welcomes member feedback. Following member feedback, dates for 2020 PD events will be confirmed and circulated well in advance, before the end of 2019.

*Thank you to Tamera Clancy, Sue Denmead, Jessica Little, Emma Meredith, Robyn Ball, Meredith Banks and Cath McPhee for their contributions to the PD events for 2018/19 and to all presenters.*

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## Submission to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System (RCVMHS)

Many in the AAIMH (Vic) community have been active throughout the year in community consultations for the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System. AAIMH (Vic) held a targeted focus group with member representatives across disciplines, prepared a branch submission and encouraged members to prepare individual submissions to increase the impact of a collective argument for babies and their families. Resources were prepared to assist members in their individual submissions included a Submission tip sheet, submission template and offer to connect members with other members to provide feedback on submission drafts.

Given that there was minimal capacity for committee members to prepare a comprehensive response, external writers were contracted to assist. This highlighted the lack of existing processes for contract procurement in AAIMH (Vic). Therefore AAIMH (Vic) Committee has added the development of formal contract procurement policy/process to the agenda for 2019/20. The RCVMHS process has also highlighted the need for a clear advocacy agenda for AAIMH (Vic) into the future to ensure that this reform opportunity is maximally harnessed as an opportunity for improving visibility and resourcing for infant mental health. To this end AAIMH (Vic) will look at convening a formal advocacy committee for 2019/20 including consideration of a future media/social media strategy for AAIMH (VIC).

*Thank you to Brigid Jordan, Meredith Banks and Kathy Eyre in particular for their substantial contributions of their voluntary time to the AAIMH (Vic) RCVMHS response as well as to all members who contributed to the targeted focus group and submitted individual responses to the RCVMHS.*

## AAIMH (Vic) Philanthropy

AAIMH (Vic) commits to utilising a portion of our funds each year for philanthropy for the advancement of infant mental health. In past years this has been utilised to fund persons working with infants (not in a position to pay for themselves) to attend our national conference, in addition, toys and other resources have been purchased for use in the Asylum Baby Playgroup, run by volunteers from AAIMH Victoria. In 2019 the Committee received a nomination for philanthropy for an initiative based outside Australia driven by a current AAIMH (Vic) member. There were nil philanthropy applications for support to attend the AAIMH (National) Conference this year which historically has attracted multiple philanthropy applications. It will be important for the Committee to understand the reasons for this.

The successful philanthropy recipient was the *Ghana Playgroup* project. Kate Dumedah was provided with \$346 for costs associated with establishing a playgroup in her Kumasi, Ghana that she facilitated in partnership with another local community member. Kate will present on her learnings at a future AAIMH (Vic) PD Event. Attached is her written report on the project.



## Honouring the contribution of departed colleagues

Earlier this year we lost two colleagues and leaders who contributed inestimably to the field of infant mental health: Sue Morse (an active AAIMH Vic Committee member at the time of her death) and Dr Ann Morgan. We feel very fortunate to have been influenced as a community by each of these incredible women - and we will miss them. AAIMH (Vic) separately arranged tributes for Sue and Ann in the newspapers, sent flowers to their families and attended their memorial services, *Dr Campbell Paul was asked to speak at both memorial services and the committee thanks him for representing AAIMH (Vic) so sensitively and eloquently at both events.* We will recognise and celebrate the unique contributions of Dr Ann Morgan through the 2019 Ann Morgan Prize activities and for Sue Morse through the inaugural Sue Morse Scholarship in 2020.

## Queen's Birthday Honours: Brigid Jordan AM

Associate Professor Brigid Jordan, AAIMH (Vic) Honorary Vice President, was in the Queen's Birthday Honours recognised with an *Order of Australia Award: For significant service to medicine in the field of paediatrics and infant mental health.* Countless infants, families, researchers and clinicians have benefited through Brigid's erudite and lively contribution to the baby and her experience. Brigid continued to raise awareness of our youngest citizens with the timing of her award, ushering in *Infant Mental Health Awareness Week 2019!* *The Committee is delighted that Brigid has been recognised for her inestimable contribution to the lives of babies in Victoria.*

## **AAIMH (Vic) Branch Committee and Committee Family & Friends**

Thank you to all of the dedicated members of the AAIMHI (Vic) 2017-18 Committee who have contributed in their voluntary time on behalf of infants and our membership: *Meredith Banks, Michele Meehan, Brigid Jordan, Jessica Little, Tamera Clancy, Kathy Eyre, Peter Tyler, Christine Hoyne, Sue Denmead, Cath McPhee, Catherine McQueen & Campbell Paul; Nichola Coombs and Julie Stone* on the Ann Morgan Prize Committee and *Campbell Paul* as WAIMH representative. I feel heartened by the committee's working together and creative solutions during this time of transition as I conclude my term as president and Cath McPhee and Meredith Banks take-up a Co-Chair role to support a thoughtful and unpressured orientation for Cath into the role for 2019/20.

A big thanks also to Committee members' families and friends for their contributions and encouragement. We also welcome Ari, Jessica Little's new baby, and thank Jessica in particular for all of her dedicated work organising PD events in 2018! We send our good wishes to Tamera Clancy who is just about to go on leave with the imminent birth of her baby, too! We thank our honorary feline committee member Orson, parented by Peter and his partner, for bringing his aloof and light-hearted perspective to our recent videoconference meetings.

In the President role I would like in particular to acknowledge and thank past presidents: Teresa Russo, Meredith Banks, Nichola Coombs, Brigid Jordan and also Julie Stone, for their support.

It has been my privilege to work alongside such a kind, committed and spirited group of colleagues and friends in AAIMH (Vic). I feel very proud of what we have together achieved.

**Emma Toone**  
**President**  
**AAIMHI (Vic)**