



# AAIMHI NEWS

[www.aaimhi.org.au](http://www.aaimhi.org.au) | affiliated with the World Association for Infant Mental Health

PO Box 39, Double Bay NSW 1360 / ABN 93045 030 281

## August 1- September 30

Philanthropy Grants available for the development of Infant Mental Health in South

Australia:

[http://www.aaimhi.org/media/marketing\\_emailmarketing/253/Philanthropy-Guidelines-2017-AAIMHI-SA.pdf](http://www.aaimhi.org/media/marketing_emailmarketing/253/Philanthropy-Guidelines-2017-AAIMHI-SA.pdf)

## October 21-22

Neonatal Behavioural Assessment Scale (NBAS) Training

Wesley Hospital, Sydney

<http://www.aaimhi.org/branches/nsw/nsw-seminars-and-training/>

## October 16-17

Core Components of Mindful Parenting: A Reflective Approach to Working with At-Risk Dyads, with Diane Reynolds

Queensland Multicultural Centre, Brisbane

<http://www.aaimhi.org/branches/qld/qld-seminars-and-training/>

## All Events & Training Info

<http://www.aaimhi.org/events-and-training/>



## AAIMHI National Conference, 23-26 November, Melbourne

<http://aaimhiconference.org>

## WELCOME

**In this September 2017 issue you will find:**

- Newsletter Editor welcome, p. 2
- President's Report, p. 2-3
- Infant Mental Health Awareness Week recap, p. 3
- Regional news from NSW, p. 3-4
- National AAIMHI Conference information and info on Keynote Speaker, Dr Graham Music, p. 4-5
- *Letter from your baby* by Andrew Roberts, p. 6

(Relevant conference, training and funding opportunities are also featured here on page 1 in the sidebar and above.)



## Welcome from the Newsletter Editor

---

Hello everyone. My name is Lauren Porter and I am your new Newsletter Editor. A big thank you to Emma and Ben for all their amazing work on the past years' newsletters, to Sally for appointing me, and to Annie for all her help. I appreciate the opportunity to get involved and get to know some of you.

I was a member of the Executive of the New Zealand infant mental health association (IMHAANZ) for a decade, until our family moved to Queensland in 2014. I am currently completing a PhD at the University of Canterbury and hope to be out in the workforce soon after. I am the mother of 2 children, 13 and 16. My husband is a clinical psychologist.

I hope that our newsletter can represent infants and practitioners from all around Australia and can serve as a mechanism to connect us, spark thought and discussion, and to keep us all informed of issues related to our infants and society.

Please feel free to contact me at any point to submit something or to give me feedback... or just say hello ([newsletter@aaimhi.org](mailto:newsletter@aaimhi.org)).

Warmly,  
Lauren

## President's Report from Sally Watson

First of all I would like to thank Lauren Porter for taking on the role of Editor of the AAIMHI Newsletter. It has been some time since we produced a newsletter and in order to support Lauren to make it a National newsletter we have set up a subcommittee with representation from Branches to source articles.

Much has been happening in 2017.

AAIMHI was instrumental in having Infant Mental Health Awareness Week added to the Federal Health Department calendar for the first time in June 2017.

This coincided with Infant Mental Health Awareness week in the UK. Each Branch had independent events occur to promote the week, and Nationally we did some Press releases to which we had two major responses. Deborah O'Neill's Office (Shadow Minister for Mental Health) contacted us for a briefing and she made a speech in Parliament.

We were also contacted by an online Early Childhood magazine and they recorded a podcast. We plan to make this an Annual event to raise community awareness of Infant Mental Health.

You will have all recently received an email with a Background paper to proposed changes to the Act under which AAIMHI operates. AAIMHI currently is incorporated under the NSW Incorporations Act. The National Committee is proposing that we move to being a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) which is more in line with the organisation we have developed into – a medium sized National Organisation. I encourage you to read the Background Paper and contact your local Branch if you have questions. It will be voted on at the AGM in November.

The Constitution has been a matter of considerable discussion for quite some time. We must make changes regardless of which Act we are incorporated under and it seemed timely to change the Act under which we operated.

In November we have our first AAIMHI Conference in two years. A decision was made in 2015 that we would move to having a Bi-annual conference and in the off year, have a Speaker tour,

(continued on p.3)

that would go to two or three Branches. Plans are currently underway for planning the 2018 tour. The program for the 2017 conference to be held in Melbourne is looking very exciting and I strongly encourage you to attend and invite your colleagues along to be part of this major Infant Mental Health event

I will be stepping down as President at the AGM in November after three years in the role. Meredith Banks from the Victorian Branch will be stepping into the role. Over the last three years much has been achieved - we have developed our new logo, seen the launch of our new website, and won the bid for the WAIMH Congress in Brisbane in 2020 to name a few. All of this could only have been achieved with the hard work of the National Committee and the all the work that happens at the Branch level.

I look forward to seeing you at the Conference in Melbourne.

Sally Watson, National President

---

## Infant Mental Health Awareness Week: Recap

We celebrated Infant Mental Health Awareness Week (12-16 June) around Australia. On 13 June, Assistant Shadow Minister for Mental Health, Senator Deborah O'Neill gave a speech to the Senate. In her speech she said:

*“What happens to children has a significant impact on their life futures, as do the decisions we make here around public policy impact on their parents and their capacity to provide that great level of care. A child that begins life with warm, sensitive, stable and responsive caregiving relationships will be more likely to return to these attributes in later life. These are the tools that the Australian Association for Infant Mental Health seeks to promote for caregivers during this week.”*

This was a fantastic opportunity to raise awareness of Infant Mental Health amongst our national leaders and policy makers.

A range of activities were also organised by AAIMHI members and community groups, including displaying posters, distributing the ‘Letter from your baby’ (see p. 6 of this newsletter) to new parents, giving presentations, and hosting breakfast seminars.



## NSW regional news from Martha Birch

*We take to the road...*

In response to the Strategic Plan, developed by the National Committee, the NSW Branch decided to do a tour of Rural and Remote NSW, to deliver a two-day seminar covering a range of topics, pertinent to Perinatal and Infant Mental Health, including brain development, attachment, assessment and formulation and intervention. A highlight of day two was the small group discussion and reflective supervision. We hoped, in some small way, to satisfy the educational needs of the local workforce, as well as increase our membership in these remote communities.

(continued on p. 4)

After canvassing for interest in wider NSW, all regions put up their hands and a number of area support people were listed to aid the implementation of our plans.

Our initial engagement was in Wagga Wagga, supported by our local contact, and a team of three committee members flew there in mid-March. It was a resounding success, despite some venue issues, so we were very encouraged. Our second booking was Taree in June, again with excellent local support and the seminar was extremely well received. We did plan to visit Coffs Harbour in August, but due to our contacts having little time to help us, this was cancelled and we hope to get there next year.

From the evaluations, participants found the seminars very relevant to their work practices, enjoyable, and good value for money. Most importantly, participant feedback indicated that the seminars enabled them to provide a better service to their clients. Clearly there is great need for education in Perinatal and Infant Mental Health in these more remote and rural areas. The team will hold their next seminar in Tamworth on 15-16th of November, and plan to visit Lismore, Wollongong, Batemans Bay and Coffs Harbour in 2018.

### **Neonatal Behavioural Assessment Scale (NBAS) training, Sydney.**

Since 2016, the NSW Branch has held biannual training seminars at the Wesley Private Hospital, Ashfield. Beulah Warren, a founding member of AAIMHI, is the only fully qualified trainer of the NBAS in Australia. The NSW Branch felt it was important to support her work and we hope to train as many students in the Scale as we can, and that one of them will go on to become a Certified Trainer as well.

The weekend seminars are held in April and October each year and are well attended by students from a variety of settings both in Australia and New Zealand. We are supported by Royal Prince Alfred and Canterbury Hospitals, and the Ashfield Baby Health Centre, to find parents and infants for the two or more demonstrations we need for the training. Students are also shown films by Dr T Berry Brazelton (the creator of the Scale) and Dr Kevin Nugent, demonstrating the Scale in detail. The students then practice on their dolls and have plenty of opportunity to ask questions and discuss aspects of the Scale. For enquiries about training contact the Secretary at [info-nsw@aaimhi.org](mailto:info-nsw@aaimhi.org); for more information and registration: <http://www.aaimhi.org/branches/nsw/nsw-seminars-and-training/>







## Spotlight on Conference Keynote Speaker, Dr Graham Music

*Graham will be giving the Winnicott Lecture at the upcoming AAIMHI National Conference in Melbourne*

[www.aaimbconference.org](http://www.aaimbconference.org)

Graham Music (PhD) is Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist at the Tavistock and Portman Clinics and an adult psychotherapist in private practice. His publications include three books (*Nurturing Natures: Attachment and Children's Emotional, Sociocultural and Brain Development*; *Affect and Emotion*; and *The Good Life: Wellbeing and the New Science of Altruism, Selfishness and Immorality*),

as well as many journal articles and book chapters.

He has a interest in exploring the interface between developmental science research and clinical work. Formerly Associate Clinical Director of the Tavistock's child and family department, he has managed a range of services working with the aftermath of child maltreatment and neglect, has a particular interest in the therapeutic challenges of working with trauma and neglect, and has specialised for many years in work with children who have been adopted or are in public care.

He has also organised many community based psychotherapy services, for example in over 70 schools, aiming to make therapy services more accessible. He currently works clinically with forensic cases at The Portman Clinic. He teaches, lectures and supervises on a range of trainings in Britain and abroad, and speaks regularly at conferences and in the media.

Highlights from his 2012 publication, Music, G. (2012). Selfless genes, altruism and trauma: Research and clinical implications. *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 28(2), 154-171. include:

.....  
"As well as being selfish, **humans are innately primed to be charitable, decent and generous to others and not just to those to whom we are biologically related.** The same reward circuits in the brain light up when we make charitable donations as when we receive a reward for ourselves (Moll et al., 2006). Being generous and caring is rewarding in itself. The circuits involved in attachment and close interpersonal relationships are also activated when we make donations or gifts, again suggesting a link between pro-social behaviour and attachment. These are similar brain circuits

involved in both empathy and understanding the motivations and intentions of others (Tankersley et al., 2007)." (p. 166)

.....  
"What I hope to have argued is that **being generous, empathic and altruistic are part of a range of developmental capacities that co-emerge with others**, given a 'good-enough', possibly evolutionarily expectable, environment, but such capacities do not emerge in the same way in the face of extreme early neglect and/or abuse." (p. 167)

.....  
"**Therapeutic work, as I hope I have suggested, has a role in facilitating such developments**, maybe particularly through the development of mind-minded capacities." (p. 168)

## LETTER FROM YOUR BABY



Dear Mum and Dad,

This first year is pretty intense, isn't it? You're adjusting to huge changes in your world. So am I! It's going to take time and patience for us to figure things out together.

I can't tell you in words yet what I feel and what I need. A lot of the time you'll have to guess, and you won't always get it right. But please keep trying. Just the way you keep trying reassures me that you love me, and that's the most important thing I need to know.

When you look at me and smile, it feels wonderful. When you talk and sing to me, I'm comforted by your voice, and I learn about sounds, rhythm and language. When you gently rock or dance with me, it teaches me to enjoy moving. When you hold me in your arms, I learn about touch.

I love it when you're interested in exploring the world with me. Sometimes I'll get scared, and I need to know I can always come back to you and feel safe again. That's how I'll get confident exploring and learning. When I'm in danger and don't realise it, I need you to protect me. You keep watching and I'll keep changing. You have my permission to be amazed by me!

While I'm figuring out how the world works, it's nice if the same kind of things happen around

the same time each day. But I don't need really strict routines – I can't read a watch yet! Somewhere in the middle is great. Don't get too stressed out by all the advice you hear and read. We're working this out together, day by day.

I will cry when I'm uncomfortable. I will cry when I'm hurt. I will cry when I'm afraid. I never cry because I am upset with you. Try to stay calm: that will help me feel calm. Get other grown-ups to help you. Eventually I'll get better at calming myself – but there'll always be times when I need comfort from you. The work we put into this relationship now will pay off for the rest of my life.

Sometimes it's all too much. If I turn away, it might mean I need to take a break. When I'm distressed, try to stay with me and comfort me, even when that's hard for you. Sometimes it might help to distract me, but most often it helps to just hold me, so I feel someone understands. Show me that I don't need to be afraid of my big feelings.

I know sometimes we don't get along. Our relationship doesn't need to be perfect. When we have a problem, I need you to repair things between us and be with me again afterwards. I need to know we can get through these things together. This 'growing up' is hard work. Please keep being patient with both of us – you can't ever be 'too' kind to me.

Being a parent is the most important job you'll ever do, and the most rewarding. We're going on an amazing journey together and it's just beginning. Don't be afraid of your big feelings. Enjoy me, delight in me, take it one step at a time. We've got this.

All my love, Your Baby

*Printed by permission of Andrew Roberts, author*