

## **AFCA Chairpersons Report for AGM 16<sup>th</sup> August 2007**

Thankyou to the Hunter region for stepping up to the mark and organising this colourful conference here on the picturesque lake. Conference is always a valuable way for us to reconnect with our peers, reflect on new ways of working and to refill our cup of inspiration.

It is also a way for us to do our bit to sustain the association that sustains us.

On behalf of AFCA I welcome all the new members here today, we look forward to the unique flavours that you will bring to AFCA in your own time and invite you to draw upon the support of the wider AFCA network at any time you feel the need.

This last year of AFCA began with the leadership of Louise Knight, as chairperson. I thought vice chairs got to get away with doing nothing, yet I am now chairperson by default due to Louise's resignation and entry into private practice.

Louise Knight and Elisha Patterson were hosts to our training day this year at Manly on the topic of working therapeutically with multicultural adolescents and their families (particularly recent migrants who experience the grief and loss of their culture and confusion within ours).

This year Louise initiated a process of requesting for feedback from AFCA members on our current policies and procedures. Some thoughts have been suggested-however no new changes have been made.

This is partly due to our existing work loads and to the commitment we all have to our face to face work. Perhaps the low response is also influenced by underlying feelings that if it ain't broke don't fix it.

It is my recommendation that we do however collectively set aside some time in the next 12 months to reflect on and adapt P & P where necessary either collectively whether that be by web correspondence, or through a particular workshop day, or even scheduling time into the next conference for regional meetings to suggest any changes –if any to the voting collective.

The Adolescent and Family Counsellors Association now have a website. This has been talked about for many years and thanks to the efforts and expertise of our web master Grahame Williams, we have now reached our goal. Can I please ask all members to whistle and cheer for Grahame now in appreciation?

The web page is a tool that lends itself to readily shared information over great distances allowing members to access info at their convenience

Another function of the web is the central up to date version of information.

To demonstrate this I will refer to the last exec meeting held at Granville.

- *Between the four of us there were at least two or three different versions of the same policies and procedures on paper ( over 20 years there have been several changes)*
- *Yet not one copy was complete in itself*

- *They did not appear to match up with what was loaded on to the web.*
- *We interrupted the flow of that meeting to achieve some clarity*
- *There and then we needed to bring the web up to speed*
- *We decided to toss all the old copies*
- *The web will continue to be the central source of updates.*

Let's all avoid confusion and go and toss and recycle every hard copy of Policies and procedures we have! All hard copies are incomplete.

At present the Web is complete until the next change.

#### **More benefits from the WEB**

- An opportunity to post recent and valuable news including future training days, conference details, and regional updates.
- An opportunity to list helpful links
- To share therapeutic tips
- And to post all minutes from executive meetings.

#### **More Executive suggestions from meeting**

- *That future conferences have a brief regional meeting tacked on to the conference i.e. approx ½ an hour after breakfast on the day of AGM eg nominate regional reps and clarify if needing to put anything on the agenda (also beneficial to country reps who get together infrequently)*
- *That future applications submitted by regional groups to docs for conference funding be submitted well in advance eg 5 months- to allow plenty of time at least 3 months for planning and booking presenters. Planning a conference with last minute grants of money is very stressful.*
- *That regional newsletter's be simplified by being located on the web Instead of hard copies. Producing newsletters can be a lot of work and it seems more user friendly to allow all members to email Graham with info for the newsletter page of web at the time they feel like it.*
- *Melinda our treasurer is looking into AFCA achieving a tax deductible gift recipient status (DGR). This will lower our annual insurance and allow us to access funds from foundations and Trusts.*

The 2008 conference will be hosted by the country region in August – location to be confirmed in future.

That seems to be the important points to cover,

It's great to see you all again and I hope you all enjoy the remaining conference.

Regards Meg Benson  
Vice Chairperson