

## **Presidents Report 2013/14**

As President it is always a privilege to report on the activities of Australian Men's Health Forum Inc.(AMHF),

*"The peak national forum promoting a social approach to male health and wellbeing"*

As we arrive at this Annual General Meeting (AGM) of our association, it is also the mid-point between our biennial conferences. While our conferences are a focal point for AMHF I would remind members of how important AMHF is between these highlights in keeping everyone aware of our purpose, as the health and wellbeing of males is pivotal if we are to have a well balanced society.

I was reminded of this fact last week, I was invited to join our local health advisory group and when I looked through who was eligible to be members of the committee it listed a formidable so called "inclusive range" across a multicultural demographic with one glaring omission MEN! While I don't think it was deliberate it struck me that there was a subconscious presumption that men are not interested, and most men are!

Our last AGM was held at the Brisbane gathering. I would like to congratulate the organisers of this gathering. The committee tried some new and innovative things which I believe were a resounding success. Perhaps the highlights were the acknowledgment of achievement at the dinner and the panel discussion forum. The program was successful on many levels, quality speakers, and breadth of male inclusiveness, great venue and good food. Unfortunately financially the conference has eroded our cash reserves as attendance numbers were down on expectations. The board has accepted this problem as a challenge; we are managing within tight fiscal conditions which are I think reflective of a large section of our society in general since the Global Financial Crisis.

Significant work is now being undertaken by Matt Stubbs and his team in planning the next gathering. Based on the feedback from the Brisbane gathering there will be changes that will lift and improve the next gathering event further. The Centre for Social Impact has been appointed as the conference organiser and working parties for the various aspects of the Terrigal gathering are established with planning in the advanced stages. By now you will have received information on this event, so start planning to register as soon as possible for 20-23 October 2015. Details are available at <http://www.workingwithmen.org.au/>

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One of the major issues your committee, and in particular our Executive Officer Gary Bryant, has been working on this year has been to have AMHF recognised for Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status through the Australian Charities and Non-profit Commission (ACNC). Although some obstacles have been encountered, we are optimistic that this will be achieved. After being initially rejected, I wish to thank Shirley Lasky and Karen Keogh of Tress Cox Lawyers for their pro-bono assistance in preparing the review submission. The objects in the constitution will have to be amended to explicitly state that AMHF works towards preventing disease. This will require a special general meeting to be arranged in the near future.

The process has highlighted a range of concerns and those organisations with DGR status in place need to be aware that the ACNC are reviewing the status of a range of agencies. If you haven't already done a "self assessment" of your status I would suggest you do as a matter of urgency. (Talk to Gary Bryant for more details)

Teleconferences involving representatives from the state and territory organisations have been held periodically. AMHF is very supportive of these state based organisations but unfortunately is not in a position to assist financially with projects or programs beyond the teleconferences at this time. However it is gratifying to see these organisations growing and prospering across Australia. The teleconferences will continue and are an important strategy for developing a cohesive national approach to the issues facing men and boys.

AMHF in cooperation with the Men's Health Information and Resource Centre at the University of Western Sydney was also involved promoting men's health and wellbeing activities around International Men's Health Week in June. 140 events conducted in all states and territories were promoted on the website in conjunction with our partner organisations.

AMHF has played a very active role in the establishment of the Global Action on Men's Health, which has a website [www.gamh.org](http://www.gamh.org) plus a Twitter account @globalmenhealth Our Secretary, Anthony Brown is the Chairman of the steering committee and AMHF has provided \$1,500 in seed funding and hosted a recent teleconference.

There have been opportunities for executive members to represent AMHF views in a variety of formats. I would encourage members to keep us informed of issues as they emerge so that we can have our voices heard in relevant circles. I would particularly thank Anthony Brown, Greg Millan, Mick Adams and Gary Bryant for their support in this area. Our past president John Macdonald also continues his active support of AMHF in his academic area of influence, thank you John.

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AMHF made a submission to the inquiry into the Child Support Program being undertaken by the Social Policy and Legal Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives. Simon Santosha and Gary Bryant appeared as witnesses by telephone before the committee.

AMHF was also a signatory with 10 other national agencies to a joint community sector statement on health, in response to the Senate Select Committee established to inquire into and report on health policy, administration and expenditure.

As we move forward I again remind members our role is to represent ALL males. There is much to do and it is still a bit like eating an elephant, it can only be achieved one mouthful at a time, and if you try eating more than you are able it has adverse effects.

Our goal must be to do what we do well, look for additional resources to achieve more but keep our courage we are making a difference.

One strategy that we hope to adopt is to invite members to be involved in the development of interest groups and the preparation of position papers on various issues.

Finally there are always individuals that give significantly to keep the organisation on track who need a special mention. A big thank you to two volunteers, who are not members, Shannan Beal, who produced the high quality newsletter and to Tom Glavas, who looked after the website. Unfortunately, both have resigned. Our treasurer Ken Meldrum working with Chris Johnson to keep us financially on track, Anthony our Secretary and Gary in particular on behalf of the board and membership we thank you. To each committee member, a sincere thank you and to every member, your support is important as we move forward in this exiting era of male health development.

I particularly wish to thank and acknowledge retiring board members, Vice-President Mick Adams, Terry Melvin and Jonathan Bedloe, all long serving Board members who leave the board at this AGM. I am confident these men will still be involved with male health issues and continue to advocate on behalf of AMHF.

The President  
Julian Krieg