

APS Riverina Branch Newsletter March 2015

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Chair's Message

Dear Riverina branch members,

I hope that you will have an equally successful 2015 as the last year with good attendances in CPD functions, and with relative policy stability in our professional sector. However, this year is likely to bring some major challenges for our profession that may require proactive consideration and Branch input.

- 1) We already had the 4+2 training program PsyBA consultation process that closed on 27th of February. Our branch has provided a separate submission under the names of the 4+2 working party, and provided constructive input to the APS submission.
- 2) The DGPP seems to be still struggling to get its own identity and website. The NSW section of the DGPP is currently looking for a second representative. I hope this position will soon be filled and DGPP will have its own website.
- 3) The impact of the trial roll out of the NDIS had a serious negative impact on the employment of psychologist within this sector. The changes at the Newcastle trial site is likely to result in job losses for psychologist employed with NSW-ADHC.
- 4) The federal government will soon be releasing the Commonwealth Mental Health report. It would not be unreasonable to assume that this report will shape future Commonwealth mental health policy and directly influence the 2015 federal budget allocations for the mental health sector.
- 5) The change of Medicare Local to Primary Health Networks (PHN) will also pose new challenges to service provisions and employment of psychologists, especially since the role of the new PHNs are not directly responsible for the provision of services.
- 6) At the NSW level, I strongly suggest that you read the Mental Health Commission of NSW- Living Well- A strategic plan for mental health NSW 2014-2024 <http://nswmentalhealthcommission.com.au/>. This report provides the reader with some insight into the local challenges for our profession and mental health services in general.

As you can see, challenges come from both the federal and state governments. At the time of writing this letter, I am not aware of any proposed policy changes or policy details from both the federal and state governments. However, the APS will keep you posted through the website, newsletters and APS mail-outs like APS Matters.



On a lighter note, we recently had our Meet & Greet function. This social gathering apart from being a great opportunity to meet up with peers gave me an opportunity to share with you important developments from my attendance of the recent state committee and branch chair forum meetings.

Finally, we are working through the recent CPD survey to plan for our 2015 local training program. I hope you we can accommodate your wishes within the current Branch constraints.

I wish you a great autumn season and I hope I will see all of you at our CPD events.

Karl
APS Riverina Branch Chair
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Treasurer's Report

The Branch is currently in a relatively strong financial position and coming out of a good year in which a number of high quality well attended professional programs and workshops have been offered.

Consequently, and as a bonus to members, we are able to offer the next two one day training activities to be held in Wagga at the considerably reduced price of \$55 for APS Branch members and \$290 for non members.

It is anticipated that these activities will be facilitated by the Black Dog Institute and are expected to be held in late April and late May. Further details are to come pending final arrangements.

John Sheppard
APS Riverina Branch Treasurer

Report on recent membership survey regarding branch committee meeting minutes

At the 'Meet and Greet' function some members asked if the committee meeting minutes could be distributed to the members. The Chair stated that while this was not a requirement of the committee he would nevertheless poll the membership to ascertain their views on the topic. Consequently, the question was asked as part of a broader survey to all 87 branch members.

In total only 17 members responded (some of whom were the actual committee) and of those 58% were in favour of distributing minutes. Of course those of you who were keen and enthusiastic stats students will know that this result is pretty much meaningless. The decision was therefore taken not to distribute the branch meeting minutes.

This result highlights the importance of members making the time to respond to surveys and other communication from the committee, and we encourage all members to become more involved in their branch. All members are welcome to attend meetings, or to send agenda items for them. The latter can be done via email to either the branch chair or secretary.

