



The Profiler

NEWSLETTER OF THE COLLEGE OF FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGISTS

VOLUME 2



The Australian Psychological Society Ltd.

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Welcome

This is the second edition of the APS College of Forensic Psychologists newsletter. We hope to publish this three times a year and use the newsletter as a way of communicating information about what is happening in the College. We would welcome contributions from members. Please send these by email to: Andrew.day@unisa.edu.au

On behalf of the college I would like to extend our best wishes to members for the Christmas period, and hope to see everyone at the February conference.

Andrew Day
SA Section

From the Chair

It is a privilege to me to write this column as the new Chair of the National Committee of the Forensic College. During the last couple of weeks I have become aware of how busy and demanding this position is and I would therefore like to start by thanking Jim Ogloff and the outgoing committee members for their valuable contribution to the National Forensic College over the last years. The committee members were: David Curnow, Anthea Lemphers, Martine Powell, Michael Davis, Ronnie Zuessman, Murray Ferguson (Student Representative), Michael Daffern, Belinda Guadagno, Bianca Kettke, Felicity Dunne and Michael Crewdson.

I would also like to congratulate the members of the new national committee on their selection. They are:

Secretary Ms Leonie Coxon - WA

Treasurer Dr Jack White - SA

Membership Ms Mary-Anne Martin - WA

Course Approval Dr Greg Dear - WA

Professional Development Mr Ronnie Zuessman - NSW

This is the first time that the College have included members of such a range of States and this will improve cooperation

amongst the branches, but will make communication between members more difficult.

The Annual General Meeting of the College of Forensic Psychologists was held on Tuesday 23 September 2008 during the APS Conference in Hobart. Only 13 members attended the AGM. This is low compared to the previous AGM. Factors that contribute to this poor attendance are that many members do not attend the APS Conference or attended the AGMs of other Colleges that were taking place at the same time. The latter is an issue that we will discuss with next year's conference organisers. The problem of this poor attendance, though, is that it is very difficult for the national committee to meet the members of the College and to discuss issues with them. I have therefore written to the organisers of the second Forensic Psychology Conference, which will be held in Melbourne in February 2009, to enquire whether it will be possible to have a general meeting at the conference. I am sure more members are likely to attend this conference than the APS conference. I believe it is really important that we come together to talk about the threats and challenges that the College is facing. As Jim explained in the previous column, the members are the College, and we are all in this together.

On reviewing the position of the College there are a lot to feel gloomy about. Jim gave an excellent overview of the challenges facing the College in his previous column and I will not repeat what he had said here. However, as is the case with all the colleges, with the exception of the Clinical College, the number of members is a concern. We are fortunately that our numbers have remained steady, we currently have 205. The number of members in the different States and Territories are: NSW (64), VIC(58), QLD(36) WA(17), SA (17), ACT(6), TAS(5), and NT(2). However, to be able to do more for members we need to grow our membership.

Another concern is that the number of accredited programs has been eroded. The programs that will be operating next year are: Bond University, Charles Sturt University, Deakin University, Edith Cowan University, Monash University and the University of New South Wales. The reasons for the decline in the numbers of accredited programs are complex, but the dwindling number of applications from prospective students is a major factor. The drop in applications and number of programs are likely to have a detrimental effect on our future growth.

The National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for Health Professionals process is moving at a rapid pace and it is diffi-

cult to keep abreast of all the developments. This is especially true for a small resource strapped College. A related matter that the new committee will urgently have to attend to is the accreditation guidelines of the College, because these guidelines are very likely to be scrutinised by the new national registration and accreditation committee.

On a more positive note, it is a pleasure to congratulate Jack White from South Australia to whom an Award of Distinction was given at the AGM for his services to the Forensic College. Well done, Jack.

The winner of the Machonochie Prize for 2008 is Carolyn Hughes-Scholes from Deakin University. Carolyn's research project involved the interviewing of Child Witnesses. Her research on this topic was recently published and the reference is. Jones, C. H., & Powell, M. B. (2005). The effect of event context on children's recall of non-experienced events across multiple interviews. *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 10, 1-19.

Congratulations to Carolyn and Martine who was her supervisor.

As a member of the Scientific Committee of the upcoming Forensic Psychology Conference I have had an opportunity to peruse the abstracts that the organisers have received and I am impressed with their range and quality. The organisers have also been able to attract a distinguished list of guest speakers that include names such as that of James Bonta and Randy Otto that will be familiar to our members. I look forward to seeing you and talking to you at the conference in Melbourne at the end of February 2009. More information of the conference can be found elsewhere in the Newsletter.

Finally I want to thank Andrew Day for editing the Newsletter and wish you and your loved ones a safe and relaxed festive period.

Professor Alfred Allan

Membership Issues

Having now finished my term as Membership Secretary there are probably some lessons to be considered for the College as it continues to move forward. Some of these lessons are on the basis of applicant comments, whilst others are on possible risks for the College in moving forward.

First, is the level of expectation from clinicians as they go through the application process. Often, on the basis of the work they are doing, they feel they should be instantly recognised. I have observed this tendency anyway within forensic work as it tends to be a 'sink or swim' role, and clinicians tend

to be feel justifiably proud of their ability to manage in such environments. This is perhaps highlighted even further when clinicians work alone or in very small teams, sometimes in organisations where their employer considers their role as a cross to be borne rather than a valued resource. The sense of being under-valued can sometimes be transferred on to professional recognition through the College, and the College may need to take a more active role in working with the various employers across the country on their professional recognition programs when people are unsuccessful in gaining membership.

Similarly, the College may need to consider the associate membership option more closely and elevating its status rather than viewing it as a step to full membership (whilst accepting that some people will have to maintain this level of membership until they either upgrade their qualifications or gain the necessary supervision or professional development).

Second, is the reality that in some jurisdictions College membership is a key component either for further progression or a pre-requisite for entering a higher salary bracket. This can lead to considerable frustration for people, who in very real terms, feel that any hold up is actually costing them money. I am not sure what to do with this as I recognise it as an issue, but it does not mean that people from some jurisdictions should gain faster assessments of their applications. Perhaps a back-dating policy from the application could be considered to alleviate this issue.

College Meeting

There will be a meeting of the Forensic College on Friday 27 February 2009 from 5.00-6.00pm at the conference in Melbourne. Please try to attend.

All welcome.

Third, there has been dramatic drop in the number of people sending their log books or expanding on their experiences of supervision – or for comprehensive discussions on how the key competencies have been addressed. This is due, I believe, to a lack of appreciation of the importance of supervision and the difficulties in accessing College-approved supervisors. D.Psychs in Forensic

ogy have increasingly provided the path to membership and these qualifications requires none of the supervision or log book as the University virtually signs off of the suitability of the student to meet this level. The College needs to expand its supervisor program, through both private practitioners and within organisations to meet this need. It may be that some non-members are given the authority to supervise when they are in key roles in organisation to supervise a number of people at once. This will become more essential as the number of forensic programs in Australia declines, leading to a much greater need for non-university based supervision.

Fourth, similar to the latter issue of how much education is enough to be part of the College, the National Executive took the position that whilst the alternative entry option is there, only those with a Masters Degree in some form of applied psychology, could go through this route to membership. This decision was based on the APS decision to have a minimum of a Masters degree for entry, and it was felt that if that what is required for the APS then for a specialist unit in the APS it should be at least that level of education with the proof of the alternative entry utilised through the professional development experiences, supervision and work place experiences. This de-

cision has meant the alternative entry approach which was designed, it appears, for applicants with considerable experience but not the Masters can no longer join the College. This has caused considerable frustration for some very experienced applicants.

Fifth, the major challenge for the College will be its ability to answer the question "What do I get if I join the College?" Currently, in most states there is little gain in the Public Service from membership, and in court the ability to be an expert witness is based on state registration as a psychologist and not on the APS College membership. The necessity of marketing the advantages of membership around greater professional development demands, dialogue with experienced colleagues, and much broader employment opportunities, is increasingly evident. As it currently stands joining ANZAPPL would seem a better use of resources as you at least get a Journal out of the process! Approaching large public service agencies to pay the APS and Forensic College membership fees has also been successful in Victoria or for some jurisdictions where a higher level of pay is offered when membership is achieved. Even with these financial incentives, the relatively challenging Professional Development requirements will still lead people to ask the question of why they choose to be members, and what the College gives them professionally and personally.

Finally, I would like to publicly express my enormous appreciation of Joan Moore at the APS for her support over the last 3 years as she has been considerate, practical and always helpful.

David Curnow

College of Forensic Psychologists

2009 CONFERENCE

Melbourne

25-28 February 2009
(optional workshops on 25 February)
Sebel Albert Park Hotel

Sponsorship Options

THE CONFERENCE

Forensic Psychology is at an exciting, though challenging, crossroad in Australia. The number of prisons and forensic mental health beds increase, the demand for court reports from forensic psychologists continues to grow, and forensic psychologists are working in broader areas than was the case previously. A canvass of national and international literature reveals that the work

of many experimental forensic psychologists has been influential. It is hoped that the 2009 Forensic Psychology Conference will provide a forum for showcasing our work and addressing some of the challenges facing the field. A large number of abstracts has been received, indicating that the conference should offer an excellent program and good attendance.

James Ogloff (*Convenor*) on behalf of
The organising committee: Michael Crewdson, David Curnow, Michael Daffern, Michael Davis, Felicity Dunne, Murray Ferguson, Belinda Guadagno, Bianca Klettke, Anthea Lemphers, Martine Powell, Ronnie Zuessman

The scientific committee: Alfred Allan, Neil Brewer, Andrew Day, Katarina Fritzon, Jane Goodman-Delahunty, Mark Kebbell, Martine Powell, Stephen Smallbone, Don Thomson

SPONSORSHIP

In conjunction with the conference, a trade exhibition will be staged. As well as the importance of sponsors financial contribution, participation as a sponsor would give you the opportunity of mounting a display at the conference (we would provide a skirted trestle table) and distributing a brochure or leaflet in conference satchels. Your involvement would, of course, be acknowledged in the registration brochure and final program (your company name and logo would be printed), and we would provide catering during the conference for your representative. The cost of this sponsorship is \$3000 (plus GST).

OTHER FORMS OF SPONSORSHIP

Morning or afternoon tea (\$1500 + GST)
Welcome reception (\$5000 + GST)
Satchel Inserts - \$400 + GST (2 A4 pages of promotional material for insertion in satchels)

PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE ORGANISER

The organising committee has appointed **The Conference Organiser** to manage the 2009 conference. The Conference Organiser works in conjunction with the organising committee and at their direction. With over 30 years experience in organising major events, conferences and meetings, their staff will ensure that all sponsors receive maximum value for their investment.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, or to discuss the various options, please contact:

Website: www.conorg.com.au
Ellen Berah, The Conference Organiser Pty Ltd
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Tel: (03) 9349 2220 Fax: (03) 9349 2230
Email: info@conorg.com.au



**FORENSIC
PRACTITIONERS
WANTED TO PARTICIPATE
IN NATION-WIDE RESEARCH**

This nation-wide study aims to explore the normative practices employed by Australian psychologists and psychiatrists when assessing risk of violence for the criminal courts or parole boards. Participation in this study involves completing an anonymous online survey about the type of assessment methods participants employed in their most recent violence risk assessment for pre- or post-sentence matters. The results of this study are expected to shed light on violence risk assessment practices in Australia and contribute to the development of best practice guidelines and standards for the delivery of violence risk assessments in forensic contexts.

To participate in this research, please go to:
www.surveymk.com/assessingriskofviolence

Participate in this study by **31 December 2008** and enter the draw to win one year's membership to ANZAPPL!

This research is being conducted by Diane Barber, DPsych (Forensic) candidate at Edith Cowan University, WA, under the supervision of Dr Greg Dear and Dr Alfred Allan. This research has been approved by ECU's Human Research Ethics Committee.

Notices