

President's Report

As president it is my privilege to report on the activities of Australasian Men's Health Forum Inc.(AMHF), *the national peak body seeking to the improve male health by a holistic approach*, the 2011/12 year.

I am humbled and appreciative of the commitment and support given to AMHF by the executive, who all give time for no financial reward to improve the wellbeing and health outcomes for all Australasian males irrespective of their race, age or social background.

For me as president this overarching principle of inclusiveness is a most important aspect of what AMHF stands for as we move forward with our program to address better wellbeing and health outcomes for males. Too often focus is placed on areas of extreme need, which often has the effect of losing sight of overarching problems while obvious in a sector of the community in extreme distress or need but leads to symptom remediation without addressing the fundamental causes creating symptoms.

Examples of this are evident across the spectrum of males in our society, from boys in school to Aboriginals in remote communities to farmers, business managers and miners struggling to hold life and family together. The great thing about AMHF is the focus on social determinants and all this encompasses to address ways to improve the long term outcomes for all Australian males.

Our last AGM was held in Perth at the end of a very successful gathering. I would like to congratulate the organisers of the Perth gathering. The program was successful on many levels, quality speakers, breadth of male inclusiveness, good food and of course financial profit, these aspects came together well at the Perth conference.

Significant work is now being undertaken in planning the next gathering. The Conference organiser is in place and working parties for the various aspects of the Brisbane gathering are established with planning in the advanced stages so start planning to be in Brisbane in 2013.

AMHF is monitoring the implementation of the National Male Health Policy plus the National Longitudinal Study of Male Health. I wish to thank Professor John Macdonald, the Immediate Past-President of AMHF for his very valuable input to both areas.

Another exciting development has been the establishment of state based male health organisations. A teleconference involving representatives from the state and territory organisations was held recently. These will continue to be held periodically and are an important strategy for developing a national approach to the issues facing men and boys.

AMHF is very supportive of these state based organisations and to date has been able to demonstrate that support by giving small loans to get programs rolling in NSW, Victoria and Tasmania.

On the subject of funding the executive has made funding available over the last two years to support an Aboriginal health worker with their study expenses. The allocation to this project is significant, up to \$10,000 per scholarship, and will contribute to improved services for local communities by better trained and empowered indigenous health professionals.

AMHF also supports two very important special interest groups, the Aboriginal Male Health Leadership Group and the Men and Vulnerable Families Sector Development Group. Both have been made sub-committees of AMHF. This provides them with a legal entity. In the future they may choose to become independent organisations.

AMHF has also supported the “Walk Ride Widders,” from Brisbane to Sydney in October, being undertaken by Steve Widders and our Vice-President Mick Adams to raise support and awareness for healthy communities.

The executive group is working hard to ensure the peak body position of AMHF is better understood. To assist with this the executive has been working on a new Logo. This is proving a little more difficult than first expected but we hope to have this resolved before Christmas. Also we are developing an information brochure that will better reflect the peak body image we wish to promote. Our objective is to support state organisations and promote male health needs at the Federal level more effectively.

AMHF was also involved significantly in promoting men’s health and wellbeing activities around the International Men’s Health Week in June. Significant numbers of events were promoted on the website in conjunction with our partner organisations.

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 Andrew King and Mick Adams for their support in this area. Our past president John McDonald also continues his active support of AMHF in his academic area of influence, thankyou John. As we move forward I again remind members our role is to represent ALL males. There is much to do and it is 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.

Finally there are individuals that give significantly to keep the organisation on track who need a special mention. Our hard working treasurer Chris who keeps us financially on track, Anthony our Secretary and Gary who has taken over Jackki's position we thank you all. To each committee member a sincere thank you and to every member your support is so important as we move forward in this exiting era of male health development.

Thank you
Julian Krieg
President.