

Presidents Report 2014/15

As President I have the responsibility and privilege to report on the activities of the association for this reporting period. As we arrive at this Annual General Meeting (AGM) of our association, I believe it is a critical point in the history of AMHF.

While our conferences are a focal point for AMHF I would remind members of how important the constant ongoing work of AMHF is on a regular basis between these highlights to remind many aspects of government, and the community in general, of our fundamental purpose that *"promoting a social approach to male health and wellbeing"* has a critical influence in improving and maintaining the health and wellbeing of Australian males and is central if we are to have a well balanced society.

Since the last conference in 2011 Matt Stubbs and his team have worked diligently to provide a gathering program that is not only highlighting some of the issues facing men in Australia but is also inclusive of all men, with important insights and also opportunities to experience friendship with others and relax in a splendid environment. On behalf of the board, all AMHF members, and conference delegates we thank everyone involved in this organizational process of planning and delivering this gathering.

As I am sure everyone is aware the Gatherings have been the main source of funds for AMHF since its inception. Unfortunately this conference and the Brisbane conference in 2013 have had a serious impact on our finances. Because of these changed circumstances the board has been actively considering alternative fundraising options. As part of this process the board has decided to shift the next gathering to 2018. Our reasoning is that a number of biannual conferences fall in the same cycle as ours and we believe it will better serve our support base by shifting to the alternate year.

One of our undertakings this year has been to develop a proposal to secure ongoing sustainable funding to expand our influence as a peak body. The board has made some significant decisions and developed a strategy to achieve this goal.

The key decisions made are:

- That AMHF will remain a peak body representing as wide a cross section of male health and wellbeing support agencies. We will not become a service provider.
- Although keen to obtain some Government funding, hopefully from the Department of Health Peak Body funding round, we do not want to be totally reliant on government so we can retain our independent advocacy role. We have submitted a comprehensive request to the Minister for Health seeking this support.
- We also recommend that at least 55% of our funding needs should come from the private sector. To this end we have prepared a prospectus to present to a variety of businesses and charitable foundations seeking their willingness to partner with AMHF.

Australian Men's Health Forum Inc. ABN 31 209 049 926

PO Box 741 Richmond NSW 2753 AUSTRALIA

Phone: 0437 571 130 Email: president@amhf.org.au Website: amhf.org.au

(2)

One of the major issues your committee, and in particular our Executive Officer Gary Bryant, has been able to achieve this year has been to have AMHF recognized for Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status through the Australian Charities and Non-profit Commission (ACNC). In spite of the obstacles' encountered, including modifications to our constitution, we now have DGR status

The board and I wish to again thank Shirley Lasky and Karen Keogh of Tress Cox Lawyers for their pro-bono assistance. After being initially rejected, they assisted in preparing the reviewed submission.

I would remind members again that 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 continues to play a very active role in the establishment of the Global Action on Men's Health, which has a website www.gamh.org plus a Twitter account @globalmenhealth. Our Secretary, Anthony Brown is the Chairman of the 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, Jonathon Bedloe, 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.

(3)

AMHF is currently represented on the Mens Health Longitudinal Study advisory group by myself, Jonathon Bedloe, also representing Tasmanian men and Greg Milan also representing NSW men.

Last year 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.

The importance of our advocacy in this area was highlighted again this year when funding for Dads in Distress was withdrawn. Our advocacy on their behalf did make a difference which was highlighted in a letter from Scott Morrison which stated *"I would like to thank you for your letter as your representation has been a critical part of this process to ensure that services will continue to be there for those that need them"*

As we move forward I again remind members our role is to represent ALL males. There is much to do, it can only be achieved as funding permits.

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 continue to invite members to be involved in the development of working parties 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. Simon is leaving the board this year, we all thank you sincerely for your contribution and we know our paths will cross in the future. A big thank you also to Grant Westthorp, who produced the newsletter and to Tom Glavas, who looked after the website. Our treasurer Ken Meldrum working with Chris Johnson to keep us financially on track, Anthony our Secretary and Gary in particular deserves much more than we can offer. I think without Gary keeping us all on track I don't know where we would be, on behalf of the board and membership we thank you. To each board 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.

Your President
Julian Krieg
22 October 2015