

Presidents Report 2016/17

As President I have the privilege to report on the activities of the association for this reporting period.

Your board has worked hard in the reporting period and as most of the membership would be aware we (AMHF) has been able to secure significant financial support from the Federal Department of Health. I would like to acknowledge the support of Alan Philp and his team in assisting us to get this funding as it will allow AMHF to pursue a number of our goals to promote the importance of "social determinants" as a key factor driving wellbeing and health outcomes.

A key purpose of AMHF is to remind government, and society more generally that "*promoting a social determinant approach to health and wellbeing*" has a critical influence on improving and maintaining the wellbeing and health of Australian males and is central if we are to have a well balanced society focused on prevention of illness in all its forms rather than the specific treatment of disease both physical and mental which is the dominant focus of the health system currently.

The funding injection has allowed us to employ two staff, Gary Bryant, who is well known to most of the membership is now being paid part time as our executive officer. Gary has been in this role for many years in an unpaid capacity so he knows the business of AMHF well and I know will continue to serve the organisation well in this capacity. Also as part of the administrative team Chris Johnston from Queensland has taken on a contract role as our financial administrator. Chris is also well known to many and has had a long relationship with AMHF and we thank him for taking on this important task.

The board has also been able to secure the services of Glen Poole as our development officer. This is a full time position and so far Glen's feet have barely touched the ground as he has been out there promoting our organisation in many varied forums which is starting to influence the changes in approach needed to facilitate change in the way wellbeing and health is managed for all Australians.

As reported last year, as a way of getting this message out we developed our foundation position statements, *Male health in Australia - A call for action....* And our second position paper on male suicide collated by Glen. Both continue to be widely circulated and used by many as tools to outline the deficiencies in Male wellbeing and health services and programs around the country. (They also formed the basis for our successful funding application to the Federal Government).

The board is in the process of working through the development of a number of other relevant position papers in the near future to further enlighten the community on issues impacting male wellbeing and health. The funding has also provided opportunities to refresh our website and a range of other things that will strengthen

our ability to draw together the evidence needed to influence policy direction in the delivery of wellbeing and health promotion and services.

I know I have said this before but it is important to remind members again that our key reasons for existence are:

- That AMHF is the peak body representing a wide a cross section of male wellbeing and health support agencies who believe we must focus on the importance of “social determinants” if wellbeing and health outcomes are to be improved.
- Our focus must be on ensuring improvement for ALL males in the forum of “Social Determinants” including mainstream society supposedly the ones not seen as “At Risk” which tend to be ignored by government and health service providers.
- We cannot be reliant on government funding, which by its very nature comes with specific objectives which can limit our capacity to retain our broader independent advocacy role that is not linked to specific departmental health objectives.

I reiterate these points because I feel it is easy for us to lose focus because we have funding from the health department. While I am extremely grateful to Alan in getting this funding for us it does come with appropriate KPI's that must be met in due course and if we are not careful can become the overriding focus of AMHF to the detriment of the broader goals which we claim to represent.

At last year's AGM a number of proposals were voted. These changes allow the board to co-opt relevant skills that might not be readily available in the membership. This year these changes are being implemented.

I believe that the recommended changes will improve the governance of the organisation and bring expertise to the board that we have not had in the past. To allow this process to eventuate room had to be made on the board for this to happen so we are faced with a significant change in the board membership with four members leaving and only one position being filled by the vote of members.

I wish to personally thank those members retiring from the board voluntarily. Ken Meldrum from Queensland has been our treasurer for a number of years has stepped aside so thank you Ken for all you have done. Sadly one of the other members stepping down Kim Hopkins has passed away unexpectedly but his contribution to AMHF has been significant and particularly we will remember his contribution to the Terrigal conference. We have expressed our condolences to his family and he will be missed by all who knew him.

I am also aware that Paul Mischefski will be continuing as a board member as he is the only one to nominate for the one vacant position on the board. Paul brings valuable insights to the board and I am sure will continue to do this in the future.

Finally my term on the board has also expired. I know it is possible for me to accept a position on the board as one of the board nominated positions but the question I ask myself is this in the best interest of AMHF given our drive to achieve better governance and accountability etc.

I have taken the decision to step down from the board and in particular as president because I recognize that AMHF is entering a new era of its history so entitled to create its future and build on the achievements of the past. I feel that what I set out to do, with the support of the board, has been achieved. We have arrived at a place where we have good governance and procedures in place, we have enough funding secured to make a start on our overall objectives and it is time for someone new to take control.

My particular interest is around improving the wellbeing of mainstream society and men in particular. I am aware that many members of AMHF are focused on those most impacted by the consequences when social determinants are ignored which tends to shift focus from what I perceive to be the main objective of the organisation. This does create tension between these two perspectives.

As an organisation AMHF must address this difference in opinion as it will impact the future of AMHF. I feel that at this time it is best that the board is given the opportunity to develop its direction under a new president so I have elected to step away.

I have faith that this matter will resolve satisfactorily and AMHF will achieve its designated purpose as the peak body influencing changes in policy around wellbeing and health services in Australia. I thank you all for the support I have received and I feel very proud of our achievements to this point in time.

As we move forward, I again remind members our role is to represent ALL males. Our goal must be to do what we do well, this includes appropriate governance restructure, looking for additional financial resources to achieve more but keep our courage we are making a difference.

It may be slow but we are making a difference!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Julian Krieg', with a large loop at the end.

Retiring President
Julian Krieg
November 2017