



2020 AMHF President's Report

Firstly, I would like to thank Jonathan Bedloe for all his good work as AMHF's last President. He has continued to engage with us throughout the year and is a constant supporter of AMHF's work.

To say that 2020 has been a challenging year is a grand understatement. It has been like no other year as we have all had to face the changes that a global pandemic has thrust upon us. I believe that not only has the AMHF coped with many changes, but we have excelled in our work in the face of such major adversity.

The biggest immediate impact for AMHF was the cancellation in March of our 25th anniversary National Men's Health Gathering (scheduled for mid-May) but in just 10 weeks we created Men's Health Connected, a world first free month-long online men's health and wellbeing summit. This brave and hugely successful venture had 1,400 people registered to join in a wide range of discussions on how to improve men's lives and health. No past AMHF Conference or Gathering could ever have achieved this outcome.

I commend our CEO and staff, and Board Members Shravankumar Guntuku and Stuart McMinn for their substantial contributions, and a huge thank you to all the volunteers who worked with us to produce such an utterly amazing event. We engaged with men's health workers from New Zealand, USA, South America and the UK. This was truly a global event, never undertaken by any national men's health organisation, and it cemented our place as the national peak body in the men's health and wellbeing field in Australia.

Historically, AMHF has had a strong focus on community sector responses to the broader social determinants of health as distinct from more medical/clinical approaches to men's health. However, as we have always engaged with health professionals (and as we grow and evolve) we continue to place more focus on the overlap between the social and medical aspects of men's health.

In 2015 the Government published guidance on the importance of health peak bodies, which it says, "build ongoing capacity in their sector by improving linkages, networks and cooperation with their members, the health sector, the wider

community and the Australian Government". This is precisely what AMHF works to do as the peak body for people working to improve the lives and health of men and boys.

This year has seen the completion of our three-year funding agreement under the Department of Health's Male Health Initiative. We are grateful to the Department for providing us with an additional year of funding to continue our work.

The three years of funding has seen a huge period of change and growth for AMHF. Some examples are:

- Our membership has nearly doubled to more than 100 organisations and individuals.
- The AMHF website now registers more than 3,000 page views per week, up from 170 per week in 2017.
- We now have more than 5,000 people registered to receive e-newsletters, up from 130 in 2017.
- Our social media following was less than 500 people in 2017; we now have a following of 5,000+ people and reach more than 50,000 people a month.
- We have produced a range of unique and much needed resources for the men's health sector including the recently released Making Services Work for Men: A 10-step guide to developing male-friendly health services.
- We have continued to promote Men's Health Week every year and this year we piloted Men's Health TV as an online platform to host conversations about men's lives and health.
- We are growing International Men's Day with more than 50 activities taking place in 2020.

During 2020 we saw the official launch on the new National Men's Health Strategy, something AMHF has long advocated for. Our calls for a national male suicide prevention policy have also gained support with Suicide Prevention Australia and the Prime Minister's National Suicide Prevention Advisor calling for specific funding and action to tackle the growing male suicide rates.

We have put in place a five-year strategic plan with a focus on developing our work to:

- Raise awareness of men's health and wellbeing issues
- Promote best practice approaches to working with men
- Connect, support and educate the men's health sector
- Influence Government policy on the health and social issues that impact men and boys.

One of our biggest challenges is long-term funding and we are working to secure Government funding beyond June 2021. We have also worked on diversifying our own funding sources and while there is a lot of work still to do, we have seen a steady increase in public donations and fundraising activity in the last few years.

In 2020 we commissioned an independent evaluator who interviewed members and partners and provided the following feedback on our status as the peak body for men's health:

- As an organisation that has existed for 20 years AMHF has been able to bring members' knowledge, networks and past experience with it to inform its current and future approaches. AMHF has a broad brief and seeks to represent the whole sector under one connection point. This broad remit and its long history, over 20 years, of promoting men's health and wellbeing means AMHF is seen by many, if not most in the sector, as the peak body for improving men's lives and health.
- Given the sector is incredibly diverse, including many small and often under-resourced organisations, tackling a wide range of issues, a peak body was seen as essential by a number of interviewees. AMHF brings people and organisations together and gives them and the whole sector a credible voice.
- Without a peak body there was a concern that there would be a risk of having a lot more siloed approaches to men's health and well-being competing for influence. AMHF assists to bring these diverse voices together in a professional and consistent manner.
- Some of the research organisations indicated that AMHF support was very important in terms of accessing funds, either national or international, to undertake further research. The fact that the AMHF exists and is recognised as a national peak body for men's health and wellbeing helped them access funding. AMHF's extensive networks into the sector and credibility has assisted some researchers to tap into men's networks so that their research could progress more rapidly.

Virtually all interview respondents felt that if the AMHF no longer existed it would be a significant step backwards for either themselves as individuals, their organisation, the whole sector and some even mentioned the broader community.

In closing I would like to thank our hard-working staff, CEO Glen Poole, Content Manager Kim Trengove, and Administration Officer Sharon Philp for all their

amazing work and dedication to AMHF. We are truly blessed to have such a successful team.

Also many thanks to the AMHF Board Members who have carefully steered AMHF through a difficult year which, though challenging, has brought out the very best in us and has supported and improved the male health sector in Australia and thereby improving the lives and health of many men and boys and the wider community.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'G' followed by a horizontal line.

Greg Millan, President AMHF, December 2020