

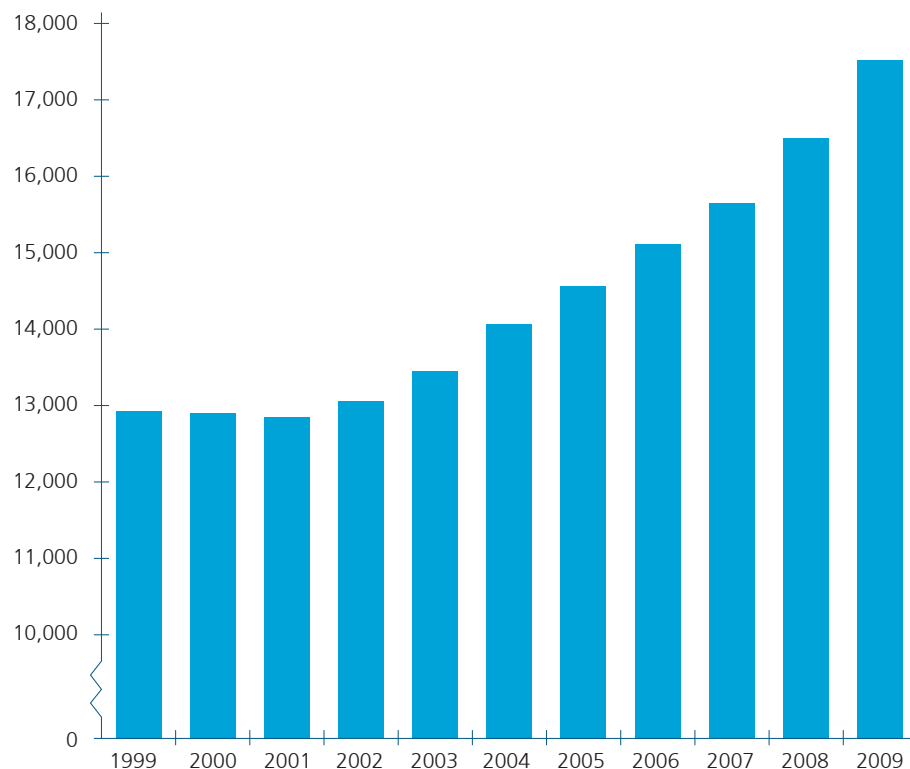
2008-09 | THE YEAR **IN REVIEW**

## 1. STRENGTHENING MEMBER SATISFACTION WITH THE SOCIETY

*The strength of the APS is dependent on attracting and retaining a high representation of Australian psychologists within the member base. This achievement has been reliant on the Society being relevant and accessible to psychologists and endeavouring to meet their needs and concerns.*

### Sustained growth in APS membership

The APS has continued to increase its membership base this year, reaching a high of 17,580 members that represents a six and a half per cent increase on last year's figures. The APS has shown sustained growth in membership numbers over the last eight years, which has coincided with a deliberate policy for the Society to become more externally focused. This policy has been energetically enacted by increasing promotion and support for the discipline and profession of psychology, and advocating for psychological services and the application of psychological expertise in the interests of community wellbeing. During this period, unprecedented interest in psychology has been shown by government, other professions and the public, and this has been accompanied by greater numbers of psychologists wishing to identify with the peak national body for the profession of psychology. In addition to its increased external focus, the Society has worked hard to attune and respond to psychologists' needs and concerns, and believes this is reflected in the sustained growth in APS membership.



Membership numbers have shown sustained growth over the last eight years

HIGHLIGHTS

## Review of APS Units to ensure they meet members' needs

A formal governance review of the Units structure and function within the APS – the State Committees, Branches, Colleges and Interest Groups through which the Society's membership and activities are organised – commenced at the end of 2008. This review is the second part of the governance review of the Society that commenced in 2005 and entailed an exhaustive examination of the previous system by which the APS was governed. This second phase is assessing whether the current Units represent the most effective way to meet the diverse needs of the APS membership. The structure by which the Society's membership and activities are organised needs to reflect the rapid change in the external environment for the profession and discipline of psychology, and ensure that the APS fulfils its primary function of serving its members and meeting their needs in this period of change.

A Committee to undertake the review was appointed, comprising an independent Chair with expertise in the governance of organisations, members from each type of APS Unit, previous Board members and Fellows of the Society. The methodology for the APS Unit review has closely followed the successful process that was used for the first stage of the governance review, comprising both research into similar professional associations and extensive consultation with Chairs of Units and the broader APS membership. The timeline for completion of the review is not fixed in recognition of the importance of extensive consultation with the membership and member groups, however, it is hoped that the review will be nearing completion by early 2010.

## Increase in student members to strengthen the future of the Society

In March 2009 the membership subscription for students was reduced significantly to encourage more student members to join the Society, resulting in an overwhelmingly positive response. Over the subsequent three-month period a total of 386 students from across Australia joined, representing all but one of the 37 universities offering an APAC-accredited course. There was particular interest from psychology students in Queensland universities, with 53 new student members from Central Queensland University and 51 from the University of Southern Queensland. Many of the new student members are studying a postgraduate course in psychology, and have taken the opportunity to join their respective Colleges as student members. The future of the Society will be strengthened by this marked influx of tomorrow's psychologists.

## 1. STRENGTHENING MEMBER SATISFACTION WITH THE SOCIETY (cont.)

### Increased access to Board members

The initiative to enable members to have the opportunity to become acquainted with the APS Board of Directors resulted in two successful 'Meet the Members' forums this year. The forums were held in the evening prior to two regular meetings of the Board. The first was in Darwin in August 2008, where approximately 35 members took the opportunity to meet with their Board representatives. The second forum was held in Perth in April 2009 with approximately 60 members in attendance.

### Responding to member concerns

The heightened media debate regarding the Medicare split between clinical and general psychologists in the lead up to the 2009 Federal Budget stimulated an increase in members' concerns that the Society was giving favourable treatment to one sub-specialty of psychology and not adequately representing the diversity of the profession. In response to these developments, the APS established a Working Group of both College and non-College members to enable direct input from the membership on this issue. The task of the Working Group has been to identify the current concerns among the APS membership and to assist in finding satisfactory strategies to address these concerns.

### Recognition of longstanding members

Following on from last year's initiative to recognise members with 10, 20 and 30 years of cumulative APS membership, the Board of Directors approved the proposal to issue commemorative membership certificates to APS members who had held membership for a cumulative period of 40 years. This completed the sequence of milestone years up to 50-year members who are granted the status of Life Member of the Society.

### Improved member benefits and services

#### Communications with members

*InPsych*, the bimonthly bulletin of the APS, has continued to improve in editorial quality and design this year. Each edition provides a cover feature on a pertinent psychological topic and articles on professional practice matters, training and research issues, concerns in areas of public interest, and aspects of membership. The State Newsletters have continued to provide local news and information on forthcoming events and this year have included a report on current activities of the National Office in each edition. The fortnightly email, *APS Matters*, has continued to provide members with the latest news, current Society activities and an insight into matters the Executive Director is engaged with through her regular column.

### **New online services**

A number of new online services have been introduced this year to increase functionality and efficiency for members, including:

- Online voting for APS Board elections
- A new APS Medicare providers register with search function
- An upgrade to PsychXchange to provide additional functions
- National Psychology Week order form and Events Calendar

### **Find a Psychologist**

The APS Find a Psychologist service enables the general public and health professionals to simply and efficiently find psychologists in private practice across Australia for referral. The number of members listed on Find a Psychologist this year reached an all-time high of 2,517, and analysis of online search data indicates there are consistently over 800 searches per day.

### **PsychXchange**

The APS PsychXchange website advertises national and international employment and business opportunities for psychologists, and has clearly been established as the major Australian search mechanism for both recruiters of psychologists and those seeking employment. This year a total of 1,471 jobs were advertised, representing over 120 advertisements per month.

### **Malpractice insurance**

Combined malpractice, public and products insurance is offered to members at substantially reduced rates through the broker for the malpractice insurance facility, Aon. This year, Aon continued to run risk management seminars to APS Branches across Australia and kept up its publication of the email news bulletin, which provides clarity about insurance issues and information on ways for members to reduce their risk.

### **Good Thinking Program**

The Good Thinking Program is designed to recognise an APS psychologist as the most professional provider of psychological services, and provides use of the logo and branded products. This year 158 new members joined the program.

### **APS Advantage Program**

APS members have continued to benefit from the APS Advantage package which offers personal benefits and preferential rates and services from a range of leading providers. These include a Gold Credit Card from American Express, an AMP Affinity home loan offer, Qantas Club membership, Hertz discounted rental rates, and ING Professionals Life and Living Benefit Plan and Professionals Income Protection Plan.

## 2. ADVANCING THE DISCIPLINE AND PROFESSION OF PSYCHOLOGY

*Another year of significant change in the external operating environment for psychology has required a sustained and energetic focus on some particular challenges, as well as the regular work of representing, promoting and advancing both the discipline and profession of psychology.*

### Review and proposal of a new model of Australian psychology education and training

In the context of both international and local pressures to review the current system of psychology education and training, the APS Board established a national Reference Group of senior academics, practitioners and Registration Board members to conduct an analysis of future training needs of the discipline and profession, and to canvass a wide range of possible education and training models that might best meet those needs. The Reference Group has grappled with the need to address the equivalencies of the two current pathways to registration to ensure that there are uniform nationally consistent high standards. It also held as a requirement the need to retain the psychology profession's longstanding status as a science and to aim for the ultimate goal of raising the Australian education standard to the minimum equivalence of international training standards, which is a Masters degree.

Through a comprehensive process of analysis, consultation and debate, the Reference Group achieved consensus on a proposed new model of psychology education and training. The model involves the introduction of an alternative '5+1' pathway to registration as a transitional arrangement to replace the current '4+2' pathway, incorporating a fifth year of university training followed by a one-year accredited workplace internship under probationary conditions. The model retained the currently available Masters and Doctorate degrees for specialist psychology training. To support the new '5+1' pathway, a fifth year accredited Graduate Diploma of Professional Psychology will be established, which incorporates coursework and professional skills training in the core capabilities and attributes for professional practice, and provides the foundation for the one-year internship. The new model was presented to the Australian Psychology Accreditation Council (APAC) for endorsement and incorporation into the Course Accreditation Standards. It is hoped that the model will be adopted under the new National Registration and Accreditation Scheme.



The APS National Psychology Education and Training Reference Group at work

## Advocacy for appropriate arrangements under the new National Registration and Accreditation Scheme

The impending National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the Health Professions – due for implementation in July 2010 – will result in major changes to current arrangements for the registration of psychologists and the accreditation of their education and training programs.

Since the Scheme was first mooted in 2006, the APS has engaged extensively in consultations to represent the psychology profession, in order to protect existing standards and the needs and rights of practitioners. The advocacy campaign on behalf of the psychology profession has been particularly extensive and sustained this year during the process of development of the legislation that will govern how the registration and accreditation functions of the national Scheme will be conducted. As part of this process, the APS has sought legal advice and broad input from APS Colleges, State Committees and appropriate Advisory and Reference Groups in preparing submissions regarding the legislation. Although some aspects of the legislation are still being finalised, it is clear that the Scheme will influence the nature of psychological practice in wide reaching ways such as how information about practitioners is collected and stored, how practitioners are investigated and disciplined for misconduct, and how much control the government has over setting the standards for psychological training and practice. The Society's role in protecting the existing standards and safeguards of the psychology profession during this extensive process has been vital.

## Establishment of a community representation policy

A policy to invite the participation of community representatives to enhance the development and implementation of designated APS activities was finalised in early 2009. The inclusion of the views and perspectives of community representatives is aimed at informing APS decision-making and enhancing the education and ongoing training needs of psychologists. In the mental health and health sectors, the utilisation of consumers and carers' experiences is now a common benchmark for the development and delivery of services and to inform professional practice.

The first implementation of the new policy was to engage the Chair of the National Private Mental Health Consumer Carer Network, Janne McMahon, as a community representative on the Board of APAC, which is the national body responsible for accreditation of university psychology courses that is a partnership between the APS and the Council of Psychologist Registration Boards. This community representation brings a consumer and carer perspective to the Board of APAC and its responsibilities in ensuring the quality of psychologists' education and training. The establishment of the APS policy on community representation will also allow the Society to engage representatives to have input on projects influencing psychological service delivery and to sit on specific time-limited taskforces associated with APS policy and activities.

## 2. ADVANCING THE DISCIPLINE AND PROFESSION OF PSYCHOLOGY (cont.)

### MAINTENANCE OF HIGH STANDARDS OF PSYCHOLOGY EDUCATION AND PRACTICE

#### Expert program development and accreditation

In the last financial year, the APS Program Development and Accreditation Committee (PDAC) and accreditation staff provided a wide range of expert accreditation services and advice to APAC. On behalf of APAC, assessment teams conducted accreditation of courses in 16 Schools of Psychology, the highest number of assessments ever conducted in a 12-month period. Forty-nine higher degree programs were assessed during the year, and accreditation assessment visits were made to four Australian programs located offshore. The APS also sent College course approval assessors to review each of the specialist postgraduate professional programs undergoing course approval. In addition, the APS provided expert advice regarding continued development of the APAC Rules for Accreditation and Accreditation Standards for Psychology Courses, revised versions of which were published in August and November of 2008. The APAC Accreditation Assessment Handbook was also revised and an updated second edition published in April 2009.

#### Assessment of overseas qualifications

The APS is contracted as the national assessing authority in Australia for assessment of overseas academic qualifications in psychology for the purpose of migration. The APS determines the level at which an applicant's qualifications are comparable to an Australian program of study that has been accredited by APAC. This service is for people who are seeking to migrate to Australia under the General Skilled Migration Categories, register or work as a psychologist in Australia, or enter an accredited psychology course in an Australian university. Over the past year there was a 16 per cent increase in the number of applications for the assessment of psychology qualifications compared to the previous year, and applications were received from all over the world. A total of 593 assessments were undertaken, made up of 208 migration (up by 16%), 121 registration (up by 3%), 32 employment (down by 3%), and 232 course entry assessments (up by 28%). Of the migration applications, 133 met the minimum requirements – a success rate of 64 per cent compared with 66 per cent for the previous financial year.

#### New ethical guidelines to assist practice

The Ethical Guidelines Committee continues to review existing guidelines and generate new ones to assist members to manage ethical concerns when dealing with particular client groups or workplace situations. This year the Guidelines for working with young people were finalised following a long period of consultation and compilation. These Guidelines will provide a valuable resource for psychologists working with young people, especially when working with children of separated parents.

## Matters managed by the Ethics Committee

The APS Ethics Committee was chaired by Professor Alfred Allan until September 2008, when his second two-year term came to a close. Associate Professor William Warren has been the Chair of the Ethics Committee since September 2008. For this reporting period, 37 ethics matters were received by the National Office, of which 13 were forwarded to a Psychologist Registration Board for investigation in the first instance. The remaining 24 cases were considered by the Ethics Committee, with three subsequently withdrawn, one on hold, 11 cases completed and nine matters currently under investigation. Of the 11 completed cases the outcomes comprised two expulsions, four reprimands, four where membership was reinstated, and one where application for membership was granted.

## Promoting high standards of private practice management

The Private Practice Management Standards (PPMS) were developed in 2005 to support psychologists in private practice to implement best management processes. Supporting materials included a PPMS web-based Self-Assessment Instrument, and a set of resources to support improvement in areas identified as requiring attention. Members continue to make use of this resource with 1,796 members having completed the self-assessment to date. In the next 12 months the APS intends to revise these management standards to incorporate recent changes in private practice, such as the obligations associated with the introduction of Medicare items for psychologists and the new professional development requirements. In revising the PPMS, a process for member input into the revision will be adopted.

## Assessment of eligibility to provide clinical psychology services under Medicare

Over the year, 505 applications for assessment of eligibility for membership of the APS Clinical College were received by the Medicare Assessment Team. During this period, 438 applicants were assessed as successful and 87 were required to undertake an Individual Bridging Plan (IBP) of further training and/or supervised experience in order to meet eligibility criteria. (Note that the addition of these two figures is higher than the number of applications received, as some applications received prior to the beginning of the reporting period became successful due to completion of IBPs.)

## 2. ADVANCING THE DISCIPLINE AND PROFESSION OF PSYCHOLOGY (cont.)

### INCREASED SUPPORT FOR THE DISCIPLINE OF PSYCHOLOGY

#### Encouraging excellence in psychology through the APS Awards Program

The APS offers a range of Awards each year that encourage and reward excellence in psychology. Recipients of APS Awards in 2008 are detailed below.

##### APS President's Award for Distinguished Contribution to Psychology in Australia

Emeritus Professor Gina Geffen AM FAPS, University of Queensland

##### Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award

Professor Richard Bryant FAPS, University of New South Wales

##### Distinguished Contribution to Psychology Education Award

Associate Professor Jacquelyn Cranney MAPS, University of New South Wales

##### Early Career Research Award

Dr Derek Arnold MAPS, University of Queensland, Dr Shayne Loft MAPS, University of Queensland, and Dr Allison Waters MAPS, Griffith University

##### Pearson Education and APS Early Career Teaching Award

Dr Winnifred Louis MAPS, University of Queensland

##### Excellent PhD Thesis in Psychology Award

Dr Jason Bell, University of Western Australia, Dr Nadine Kasparian MAPS, University of Sydney, and Dr Jee Hyun Kim, University of New South Wales

##### APS Prize

Awarded to the student with the best results in each fourth year psychology course at 37 universities across Australia with APAC-accredited programs

#### Preparation for hosting the International Congress of Applied Psychology in 2010

The premier international forum for applied psychology, an event only held every four years, will be hosted by the APS in Melbourne in 2010. This year, considerable work has gone into preparing for the 27th International Congress of Applied Psychology (ICAP 2010), which will be held at the newly built Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre from 11–16 July 2010. This is the first ICAP to be held in the southern hemisphere since the conventions began in 1920, and is likely to be the only opportunity for many years to come for Australian psychologists to participate in this impressive international event on their home soil. The Congress is expected to attract over 3,000 delegates from around the world and will feature eminent keynote speakers and invited symposia chairs whose work is at the cutting edge in their specialist fields of applied psychology.

## Presentation of the 2008 APS Annual Conference: *Psychology Leading Change*

The highly successful 43rd APS Annual Conference was held at the Grand Chancellor Hotel in Hobart from 23 to 27 September and attracted 794 delegates. A major theme of the Conference was the role that psychology can play in addressing the challenge of climate change, with the opening keynote address presented by leading UK environmental psychologist, Professor David Uzzell. The stimulating Conference program combined three other keynote presentations with 25 professional fora, 27 symposia, 141 individual papers, 62 posters and seven workshops.

## Continued improvements to APS journals

The three flagship journals of the Society, the *Australian Psychologist*, *Australian Journal of Psychology* and *Clinical Psychologist*, continued to demonstrate strong growth over the last year. The Thompson ISI 5-Year Impact Factor for 2008 increased for the *Australian Journal of Psychology* to 1.048 from .914 in 2007, whilst the *Australian Psychologist* increased to 1.007 from .814. In addition, the *Australian Journal of Psychology* is now published quarterly, up from three issues per year. The APS College and Interest Group journals have also progressed this year, with the APS launching a new College of Organisational Psychologists online journal, titled *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Organisational Psychology*.

## Reintroduction of e-newsletter, *Uni Matters*

This year saw the reintroduction of *Uni Matters*, the bimonthly brief email alert service for academic members of the APS that covers developments in teaching, education and research in psychology. *Uni Matters* also includes news about psychology, teaching materials and support, developments in course accreditation and approval, and research news.

## Submissions to reviews of research and higher education

The APS has responded to two major reviews in the university sector that have occurred over the last year, the Excellence in Research for Australia Initiative and the Bradley Review of Australian Higher Education. Submissions focused on highlighting the importance of psychology as a hub science and greater transparency and accountability for the funds that universities receive for psychology training. A full list of submissions tendered this year in support of the discipline of psychology can be found on pages 37-39.

*Continued* □

## 2. ADVANCING THE DISCIPLINE AND PROFESSION OF PSYCHOLOGY (cont.)

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF PSYCHOLOGISTS

#### Increasing the supply of trainee psychologists

The APS has continued to administer the Australian Government-funded Mental Health Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme that supports clinical psychology trainees with culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds, those with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) heritage, or those who reside in rural, regional or remote localities. This year the scholarship scheme was expanded to include an additional 24 full-time scholarships for rural, regional and remote students. For the 2009 application round, 111 scholarships were awarded – 68 full-time and 43 part-time scholarships. Twenty-six of the successful applicants were CaLD students, 11 were ATSI students, and 74 were students from rural, regional or remote localities.

#### Improving psychology students' training in alcohol and other drug problems

The APS continued to administer the federally-funded nationwide clinical placement and supervision scheme for postgraduate psychology students, which aims to develop a capable workforce to deal with co-morbid mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) problems by addressing the shortage of psychologists in AOD services. For this reporting period, a total of 36 placements for APAC-accredited postgraduate professional programs' students were arranged, including seven placements in rural areas. AOD services now receive incentive payments for hosting placements, and questionnaires have been developed and distributed to all parties involved in the placements as part of an evaluation of the scheme. Funding for the project has been extended to November 2009 when the results of the evaluation will be reported.

#### Increasing the number of Indigenous psychologists

The Bendi Lango Foundation Bursary is an APS initiative that aims to increase the number of Indigenous psychologists through financial support of Indigenous psychology students. The 2009 Bendi Lango Foundation Bursary was awarded to Natasha Perry of Newcastle, NSW. Natasha has a BPsych (Hons) from the University of Newcastle, and has worked as an intern psychologist with Autism Spectrum Australia and Centrelink in regional locations with many people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background. Natasha commenced a Master of Clinical Psychology degree at the University of Newcastle in 2009 and plans to specialise in working with children and adolescents.

## HIGH QUALITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

### Extended range of professional development workshops

The APS organised an extensive program of high quality professional development (PD) seminars and workshops this year, much of which was delivered through the APS Units. A total of 73 PD events were organised through the National Office as compared to 58 in the previous year, representing an increase of 26 per cent. In addition, 587 endorsements for other PD workshops were processed, an increase of 81 per cent on the number the year before. This year the APS introduced advanced and master class workshops across various topics that have been very well received. The APS continues to investigate, pilot and offer different PD delivery modes, particularly to assist access for those members in rural and remote locations. Offerings this year have included increased delivery of web streamed PD on various topics, and video and audio recording of workshops organised by the National Office. Other web-based modalities are being investigated, together with collaborative opportunities for online PD with the American Psychological Association.

### New PD points allocation system

A new PD point system introduced for the 2009-11 PD cycle has been designed to encourage members to engage in high quality continuing education activities. The new system offers a higher allocation of points per hour for more interactive PD activities that incorporate active learning. Coupled with this change is an increase in the minimum number of points required to 90 points per two-year PD cycle. To assist with implementation of the new PD system, a new PD Information Guide has been developed together with new endorsement guidelines and application forms.

### Professional development study tours to international locations

The aim of the APS international PD program is to increase awareness of international practice, cultural differences and needs, and to build collaborative networks and a sharing of knowledge. Two highly successful international PD study tours were offered by the APS this year – in October 2008, 25 people joined the study tour to Italy and in January 2009, 27 people participated in the study tour to Vietnam and Cambodia.

## 2. ADVANCING THE DISCIPLINE AND PROFESSION OF PSYCHOLOGY (cont.)

### GREATER ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT FOR PRACTITIONERS

#### Specific support in work sector contexts

The National Office has three advisors to offer support and advocate for members in three workplace contexts – private practice, the public sector and non-government organisations (NGOs), and in school settings. This year, the private practice advisor has developed a number of resources to assist practitioners, including a checklist of pertinent issues for psychologists making the transition to private work, guidelines for participation in a Medicare compliance audit, and a set of self-care resources for private practitioners. The public sector and NGO advisor has conducted two surveys of psychologists in this sector to inform advocacy, which have involved ascertaining their intentions regarding ongoing employment, current professional development provisions and employment conditions. The advisor has also developed policy documents regarding privacy, note-taking and access to records. A set of guidelines for the provision of services by school psychologists has been developed this year by the psychologists in schools advisor. In addition, recommendations regarding the management of psychologists' files in school settings have been developed.

#### Advice on professional practice matters

The Professional Advisory Service offers advice to members on issues encountered in the course of professional practice, and has this year responded to 5,103 telephone and email queries. The major topics of enquiry have been file management and access to records, assessment and treatment issues, ethical and legal concerns, and aspects of practice management including contracting.

#### National profile of the psychology workforce

The National Psychology Workforce Survey is a collaborative initiative between the APS and the Council of Psychologists Registration Boards. The survey was conducted to provide a comprehensive profile of the Australian psychology workforce to inform future healthcare decision making and workforce planning. It was distributed to all registered psychologists in 2008 and was responded to by 11,897 psychologists, representing 46 per cent of all psychologists in Australia. The survey data is currently being analysed and the results are anticipated to be published in a peer-reviewed journal in early 2010.

## Support for practitioners providing Medicare services

The APS provides an advisor to respond to email and telephone enquiries from practitioners who are delivering psychological services under the Medicare Benefits Schedule. The majority of advice sought concerns the nature of allowable services, referral processes, and billing and claiming processes. The advisory service provides a monitoring function and enables the APS to advocate for practitioners' concerns directly with the government.

## Submissions on policy and practice

In addition to responding to formal requests and calls for submissions, the APS constantly monitors government policy and specific initiatives that impact on professional practice, and prepares submissions to advocate for psychology practitioners and specific client groups. Apart from major responses to proposals for the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, submissions this year have included a focus on the vital role of psychologists in hospitals, community facilities and primary care for the National Health and Hospital Reform Commission, advocacy for practitioners and protection of privacy for an inquiry into compliance audits under Medicare, and recommendations for appropriate classification structures to the NSW WorkCover Authority. The psychological needs of specific client groups were the focus of submissions to the National Disability Strategy and the Department of Health and Ageing regarding the new Autism Spectrum Disorders initiative. A full list of submissions tendered this year in support of psychology practitioners can be found on pages 37-39.

## Advocacy through influential national partnerships

The Mental Health Professionals' Association (MHPA) is a collaborative group of the four key professional groups involved in mental health care that includes the APS. MHPA received funding to produce a national multidisciplinary education program to improve collaborative care, and this has been undertaken by a specially formed company, the Mental Health Professionals Network. It is planned to deliver 1,200 workshops across Australia.

The APS has supported the large and influential Allied Health Professions Australia (AHPA) on a number of multidisciplinary projects for which AHPA has received funding. These include a shared care in chronic disease management project and the establishment of an Indigenous Allied Health Network.

The APS is one of 19 national peak health organisations representing over 100,000 frontline health professionals working in primary health care to form the National Primary Health Care Partnership (NPHCP). The NPHCP aims to provide an advocacy body and communications platform for practitioners in the Australian primary health care sector.

### 3. ACTIVELY CONTRIBUTING PSYCHOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE FOR ENHANCEMENT OF COMMUNITY WELLBEING

*An increased focus on heightening awareness of psychological expertise and its role in enhancing community wellbeing has this year seen the Society maximise a number of opportunities to influence public debate and improve psychological services.*

#### Response to the Black Saturday Victorian bushfires

The expertise of specialists within the APS membership and staff at the National Office combined in a significant contribution to the disaster recovery efforts in response to the devastating Victorian bushfires in February this year. The APS devoted considerable resources to support both the bushfire survivors and those who were assisting them, and the work will continue for some time due to the sheer scale of the disaster. It has been estimated that up to 2,000 people may experience some form of mental health condition as the result of the fires.

In the immediate aftermath of the bushfires, the APS established a register of over 800 Victorian psychologists who were willing to assist, and worked with authorities to coordinate the provision of psychological assistance as required. A Disaster Recovery Briefing was organised by the APS to orient psychologists and other health professionals to the field of disaster response in the context of the fires. A number of information sheets and other resources were developed by the APS and made available from the website to both assist people providing psychological support and to provide direct information to people affected by the fires. To contribute to community recovery, the APS participated in public events and provided psychological advice and information to community newsletters. The APS worked with State and Federal Governments and the Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health to develop a training package to up-skill mental health professionals to respond to the large numbers of people whose mental health has been affected by the bushfires. The coordinated and effective response to the Victorian bushfires has enabled the establishment of models of care that can be used to respond to future disasters.



The APS Disaster Recovery Briefing was attended by over 600 people



The APS participated in 'The City Cares' event at Melbourne's Federation Square, organised to show support to people affected by the bushfires

## Historic formation of the Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association

The Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association (AIPA), a new body established under the auspices of the APS, was officially launched at the APS Annual Conference in Hobart in September 2008. With 39 Indigenous psychologists in Australia – many of whom are high profile people – this represents an historic achievement for Australian psychology. It is anticipated that AIPA will provide the leadership to achieve equitable participation of Indigenous people within psychology. Given that Indigenous people constitute 2.5 per cent of the population, the current number of 39 Indigenous psychologists is only 10 per cent of what it should be.

AIPA has as its vision that:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will have access to high quality psychological assistance
- Psychological assistance will be grounded in holistic Indigenous perspectives and the social determinants of health
- Psychology in Australia will be culturally responsive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values and belief systems
- Numbers of Indigenous entrants into undergraduate and postgraduate psychology programs, including programs across all specialties, will increase substantially
- AIPA will become the professional body responsible for quality control of workshops and training programs with respect to the application of psychology in Indigenous contexts.

AIPA members are already much in demand individually and as a group, for media comment, student mentoring, cultural competence training, and partnerships with local communities. An invitation by the Australian Human Rights Commission for AIPA to join the leadership group of the Close the Gap campaign has put psychology and mental health firmly in the picture of the major national Indigenous health equality campaign.



*APS Past President Amanda Gordon and members of the Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association at the official launch of the Association last September*

### 3. ACTIVELY CONTRIBUTING PSYCHOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE FOR ENHANCEMENT OF COMMUNITY WELLBEING (cont.)

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#### Presentation of the inaugural APS Annual Oration

The inaugural APS Annual Oration was presented by psychologist, social researcher and novelist, Hugh Mackay, in Sydney on 12 November during National Psychology Week 2008. Hugh is a longstanding Fellow of the APS who has made a lifelong study of the attitudes and behaviour of Australians, and is the author of eleven books – including five bestsellers – in the field of social analysis. The oration, titled 'Is it beyond our control?', was presented to a large and enthusiastic audience at the Sydney Hilton. Hugh discussed the rapid and ongoing changes that have impacted on Australian society over the last 25 to 30 years, and argued that the human psyche has not been prepared for the extent of change to the socio-cultural landscape. His oration was an insightful and thought provoking presentation that underscored the increasing relevance of psychology in a world with escalating political, economic and environmental challenges.

#### Contribution to addressing climate change

Through a number of initiatives over the last year, the APS has fostered a greater involvement by psychology and psychologists across the spectrum of environmental issues and challenges facing Australians and the global community. A major theme at the 2008 APS Annual Conference in Hobart was the role that psychology can play in addressing the challenge of climate change. A further initiative was the preparation of an APS Position Statement on psychology and the natural environment, which was printed and distributed to relevant government agencies and non-government organisations. The APS has also contributed to the Federal Government's Strategic Review of Climate Change Programs and has participated in numerous forums, highlighting how psychology can contribute valuable perspectives to address this serious environmental threat.

#### National Psychology Week 2008

The 2008 National Psychology Week proved to be the largest of these annual events yet, with over 600 activities organised by APS Branches and individual psychologists ranging from displays to information sessions and public forums. The Week commenced with the release of a nationwide survey of more than 4,400 people which was designed to identify what events and situations irritate Australians most and what methods they use to deal with them. The survey results were used to promote media awareness of what psychologists offer to the public, which resulted in over 100 media hits in print, radio, TV and online.

## Guidelines for the use of restraint and seclusion strategies in the disability sector

This year the APS has worked with the Victorian Office of the Senior Practitioner in Disability on the development of national guidelines for the use of psychological interventions to reduce the need for physical and pharmacological restraint. A national reference group of psychological experts in the sector was established and has met regularly to inform the guidelines. The first stage of the project was the production of a discussion paper to assist the consultation process in developing the guidelines, which are expected to be available in late 2009. It is hoped that this work will provide the platform for the establishment of an APS Interest Group on disability that will provide valuable input to initiatives relevant to the work of psychologists in this area.

## Contribution to the Science Meets Parliament forum

The APS sent two representatives to the 2009 Science Meets Parliament forum in March. The purpose of the event is for parliamentarians to make direct contact with Australian scientists, so they have the opportunity to hear about their research and work being undertaken, and to be briefed first-hand on selected topics of community concern. The APS representatives provided a psychological perspective to a number of parliamentarians on three relevant topics – obesity, climate change, and unemployment and the global financial crisis.

## User-friendly and informative Tip Sheets

The APS has developed a range of Tip Sheets to inform the public about common psychological issues and how psychologists can assist with their management. The Tip Sheets are available for purchase from the APS and are provided to clients by psychologists, GPs and other health professionals. This year, the following new Tip Sheets were developed with expert input from APS members:

- Understanding and managing anxiety
- Talking with children about the environment
- Understanding and managing psychological trauma
- Understanding and managing relationship problems.

## Promoting psychology through the media

The APS developed 27 media releases throughout the year, providing psychological knowledge and advice in response to topical issues of public concern, and publicising psychological research of interest to the community. The APS media referral service managed over 500 media enquiries throughout the year, connecting journalists with APS psychologists with expertise in particular areas and experienced in media presentation.

### 3. ACTIVELY CONTRIBUTING PSYCHOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE FOR ENHANCEMENT OF COMMUNITY WELLBEING (cont.)

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#### DEVELOPMENT ROLES IN FUNDED PROJECTS FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLBEING

##### Expansion of KidsMatter and headspace mental health programs

The two major Australian Government child and youth mental health programs in which the APS is a development partner, have both seen consolidated gains and expansion on a national scale over the past year.

The pilot program of KidsMatter – the Australian primary schools mental health initiative – is undergoing formal evaluation, but favourable preliminary findings have meant that plans for a national expansion of the program are proceeding. Models of dissemination have been investigated to enable more primary schools across Australia to formally implement and maintain KidsMatter, and to more effectively link the initiative with educational policy and priorities. This will increase the longer-term sustainability of this comprehensive child mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention program.

headspace, the National Youth Mental Health Foundation, is an initiative to promote early and effective interventions for young people aged 12 to 25 years with mental health and substance use problems. The primary goal of the education and training aspect for which the APS has responsibility is to improve the uptake and delivery of evidence-based interventions by a range of service providers who work with young people. Seven education packages have been successfully developed and implemented through workshops at 30 headspace sites across Australia, contributing significantly to this effective new model of collaborative care for youth mental health.

##### Development of resources to support the Autism Spectrum Disorder initiative

The Australian Government provided funding for the development of printed and electronic resources to support health practitioners in delivering services under the Helping Children with Autism package. The APS received funding to develop resources to educate psychologists about current approaches to assessment and intervention for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Resources will also be developed to inform parents and health professionals about the role of psychologists in the assessment and treatment of children with ASD.

## Training for allied health providers assisting people who attempt suicide

This Australian Government pilot project under the Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care program aimed to assist GPs in supporting patients at high risk of suicide because of an attempted suicide or self-harm. The APS was engaged to develop a training package and clinical support to up-skill allied health providers to offer immediate and increased intensity of support and treatment to these patients over a short period. The training was delivered via a DVD with online assessment, and to date 105 clinicians have successfully completed the training.

## Training for allied health providers delivering telephone-based cognitive behaviour therapy

A second pilot project under the Better Outcomes in Mental Health Care program involved a trial of telephone-based CBT interventions in rural and remote areas for people with mild to moderate depression and/or anxiety. The APS was engaged to develop and disseminate the training for allied health professionals providing telephone-based CBT and to provide clinical support to practitioners in the trial. The training was delivered through a webinar medium, with 98 practitioners successfully completing the training.

## Training in post-disaster mental health response

The APS has been integrally involved in the development and dissemination of an education and training package to up-skill mental health professionals to respond to the mental health needs of communities affected by the Black Saturday bushfires. The training package is funded by the Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, and is being rolled out through the bushfire-affected Divisions of General Practice and DHS regions.