

44th APS Annual Conference **DARWIN**



MEDIA RELEASE

30 September – 4 October 2009

Darwin Convention Centre, Northern Territory

30 September 2009

Interview opportunities: Psychology conference keynotes and invited addresses

Mentally preparing for natural disasters

With recent extreme weather across Australia - including a dust storm blanketing eastern Australia and an earthquake in Melbourne - and the upcoming storm and cyclone season in the Northern Territory, as well as the serious bushfire threat in many States, a leading psychologist is urging Australians to prepare themselves psychologically for potential disaster.

“Natural disasters, such as the Black Saturday bushfires, create anxiety and uncertainty during the event, as well as trauma and stress in the aftermath,” said Australian Psychological Society President, Professor Bob Montgomery.

“We know between 10 to 20 per cent of disaster survivors develop post-traumatic symptoms, such as anxiety, depression, disturbed sleep, intrusive memories and post-traumatic stress disorder,” he said. “Psychological knowledge can help individuals, communities and governments prepare for and bounce back from disaster.”

Professor Bob Montgomery will present at the Australian Psychological Society’s 44th Annual Conference in Darwin on the psychological reactions to disasters. Keynote speaker Professor Richard Bryant, from the University of New South Wales - an expert in psychological disaster response - will present on the impacts of post-traumatic stress disorder. His research is identifying the biological changes caused by traumatic experience and opening the possibility of more effective treatments.

Smashing the glass ceiling

Women’s progress into top jobs is occurring at a snail’s pace, according to a recent UK study that reflects a similar situation in Australia.

“There are indications the economic crisis is having a major impact on women managers, with recent statistics showing they are twice as likely to be made redundant compared to their male counterparts,” said Professor Marilyn Davidson from the University of Manchester (UK), who will present a keynote address at the Australian Psychological Society’s 44th Annual Conference in Darwin this week.

“This is all despite the dramatic increases in Australian and British women entering professional and managerial positions over the past 20 years, and the fact that women management and business graduates now outnumber men. Men continue to earn more than women at every level of the managerial ladder,” said Professor Davidson.

In her keynote address, Professor Davidson will discuss the changes related to women managers’ positions in the workplace and recommendations for shattering the glass ceiling.

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How emotional intelligence can boost relationships, work and study

Life-style gurus, educators and executives have all agreed that what people need most in contemporary life is emotional awareness, heightened sensitivity and street smarts. But what is 'emotional intelligence'?

In his keynote address at the Australian Psychological Society's 44th Annual Conference in Darwin this week, Professor Moshe Zeidner from the University of Haifa (Israel) will define 'emotional intelligence' and describe how it can help to manage emotions related to relationships, work and study

"Many people fail to manage their emotions successfully, which is why emotional intelligence is important," said Professor Zeidner. "Training emotional intelligence in schools, workplaces and clinics offers a viable and valuable solution to perceived individual, community, national and global needs."

Preventing teenage alcohol and substance use

Adolescence is a time of change both physically and mentally. Many times it means trying new things and for some, that includes experimenting with alcohol.

While there have been numerous studies into why adolescents drink, there has been limited research on the long-term effects of alcohol exposure in the development of young adults.

Associate Professor James Bray from the Baylor College of Medicine (Houston, Texas) and American Psychological Association President, will discuss the influence of developmental, family and peer factors on adolescent alcohol and substance use in his invited address at the Australian Psychological Society's 44th Annual Conference in Darwin this week.

Associate Professor Bray will present results from the Baylor Adolescent Alcohol Project on the influences on adolescent drinking and drug use. He will also discuss the implications of this work for prevention of underage drinking and substance use.

Using psychology in cancer treatment

Cancer remains one of the most feared diseases in the developed world. The realisation that psychology can make a substantive and important contribution to reducing the burden of illness associated with this disease has been increasingly recognised over the past 20 years.

Professor Rob Sanson-Fisher from the Cancer Institute of NSW will outline the opportunity for psychologists to make an important and positive contribution to existing care, in his invited address at the Australian Psychological Society's 44th Annual Conference in Darwin.

Health care interventions aimed at primary prevention may include efforts directed towards reducing the risk behaviours that may cause the disease. For cancer this includes smoking, exposure to the sun and some health behaviours, including alcohol consumption.

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Secondary prevention provides an opportunity to detect the early stages of the disease and includes screening for cervical and breast and more recently bowel cancer. Tertiary prevention involves attempting to reduce suffering which may be associated with the treatment or presence of the disease.

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To coordinate an interview, please contact: Elaine Grant on 0412 683 068 or Ellise McLoughlan on 0428 445 097.

About the 44th APS Annual Conference: This year's Conference will be held at the Darwin Convention Centre from 30 September to 4 October 2009. The Conference will bring together prominent psychologists, practitioners and researchers to explore topical issues including: psychological responses to disaster, emotional intelligence, Indigenous mental health and wellbeing, women in management, body image and youth substance abuse issues.

About Australian Psychological Society:

The Australian Psychological Society (APS) is the peak professional body for Australian psychologists. With more than 17,500 members and 40 branches across the country, the APS is the largest of all non-medical health professionals' associations in Australia.

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