

LINKS

An occasional newsletter linking those with an interest
in Community Psychology

August 2008

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Welcome.....

Hello everyone and welcome to the August issue of **LINKS**, our occasional newsletter for those with an interest in Community Psychology.

In this issue, **LINKS** readers delve into Community Psychology around the world. Asten Paton explores issues local to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Oman, offering us a stunning insight into another culture. Also Foreign Correspondent Kathryn Russell sends us her initial thoughts regarding the conditions faced by the mobility impaired/disabled citizens of Russia.

Closer to home, Lauren Breen travels to Melbourne to attend the 8th International Conference on Grief and Bereavement, relating current perspectives offered by keynote speakers from around the world. And in our own backyard we celebrate the RSPCA Million Paws Walk in style with the gorgeous "Muttley Crew". We'd also like to extend a hearty welcome to our *Where Are They Now* contributor who was kind enough to give us some insights into life after study.

So enjoy this issue of **LINKS** and be sure to e-mail us with your comments and suggestions so that we can continue to make **LINKS** a newsletter from the community to the community!



Members of the 'Muttley Crew' relaxing before the walk!

Feel free to contact **LINKS** with your responses on this issue and suggestions for future issues. General contributions are welcomed and should be forwarded to: amiee-jade@westnet.com.au

Where Are They Now?

Anonymous

I began post graduate study in Community Psychology (CP) a number of years ago at Edith Cowan University. After slogging it out for four years, and with an unfinished thesis in hand, I decided to make the move back into the 'real world'. It was time to see how well the professional identity I had acquired, and the knowledge, skills, and attributes I developed throughout the course of my study, transferred to an environment where CP was not known or easily understood.

The direction to take my career was clear to me. Over a number of years of CP study, I had developed an orientation to work within a policy-making environment. I acquired a job with a government department in a policy directorate, and embarked upon learning the requirements to negotiate what initially resembled, and often still resembles (although I have become somewhat desensitised to it), a rigid and uncompromising culture.

It was once said to me that policy development was easy. If I was looking through a subjective lens, I would say that I now have a good set of experiences to draw on in providing an unreserved objection to that statement. My experiences of policy development within a government agency have been, first and foremost, exercises in ensuring that there is osmosis of the broader directional objectives of the department through to each individual policy approach. This osmosis is an agency necessity and, in some cases, it is a good thing; while in others, it perhaps is not. However, the more testing reality is managing the ongoing struggle between trying to provide well-researched policy advice, and accepting the limited voice afforded to the *refinement* of that advice prior to a decision being made.

This can be an unsettling position for anyone to be in. Well-researched advice about agency directions and policy impacts often belong to voices that are, in the long run, invariably unheard. It is an artefact of a deeply entrenched agency culture; one which is not limited to my department ... or any other government agency (although I expect it is more pronounced in these settings). I often like to remind myself of the comment that a highly positioned officer made when discussing with representatives from other states the possible strategies for negotiating a funding agreement with the Commonwealth. He said, "Let's be honest,

this is not an *agreement* between the Commonwealth and the States, it is *subjugation!*" I let out a small giggle then, particularly since it is all too commonplace in this environment that quality advice is often suppressed and any presentation of choice is almost always an illusion.

As a student of CP, I was, and continue to be, highly energised by discourse theory and critical psychology. Power is a central organising theme for much of the thinking related to these areas, and it also underpins the machinery of government. I continue to think about the enabling and disabling effects of power on its subjects, only now in full light of a much larger and more complex set of relationships than that found in each of the settings I have inhabited in the past.

Having said all of this, I would encourage emerging CP practitioners to consider a career in the public service. It can be a hard road, but opportunities are particularly abundant in WA given the current resources boom and the array of skills shortage industries that have lured many capable people (and some less capable) from public service positions. The long-term career prospects are also very attractive; the impending retirement of many 'baby-boomers' in the coming decade or so mean that many executive and other high-ranking positions will be vacated. I am very optimistic that emerging CP practitioners, who can commit themselves to a public service career without becoming unseated by the many bumps along the way, can play a key role in influencing and driving change in government agencies in future years.

Where Are They Now?

Thanks to the Anonymous author who submitted the above piece for the Where Are They Now? Segment. [LINKS](#)' avid readers, would like to hear from more. Let us know what you've been up to since graduating from Community Psychology. Jot down your tale and forward it to AJ: amiee-jade@westnet.com.au



Some of the Muttley Crew team relaxing before the walk.

RSPCA Million Paws Walk: Perth

Anne Sibbel

Community psychology was again well represented at the Western Australian Million Paws Walk, raising money for the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA). Our team the “Muttley Crew” included a diversity of dogs great and small who all enjoyed the walk along the beautiful Swan River with their families, although some were disappointed they weren’t allowed to swim the distance rather than walk.



The Muttley Crew’s team logo.

Our team was distinctive in our very own tshirts and scarves, and our fund raising efforts were very successful. It never fails to amaze me the way in which so many humans and dogs (in WA approximately 12,000 people and their dogs this year, plus the odd ferret or horse) can walk so well together.



Panther and Hunter were first time participants in the Million Paws Walk.



Bronte models The Muttley Crew’s bling scarf!

The aim of the walk is to raise money for the RSPCA, to highlight the work of this organisation and the ongoing plight of animals in our human-centred world. Not only does the RSPCA rescue and re-home abandoned or mistreated animals they also advocate for the welfare of those animals we rely on for companionship, food, clothing and transport – issues such as the plight of battery hens, lot fed cattle, mulesing of sheep, the live transport of sheep and cattle to other countries and pets bred in “puppy farms”. It reminds us of the valuable role animals have always played in human existence and the need treat them with respect and compassion.



This camel was a great sight walking along the Swan.

If you’re interested in finding out more about the RSPCA and the tireless work that they do please visit their website at <http://www.rspca.org.au>



United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Practicum Placement

Asten Paton



Oman Sunset

After completing my first two practicum placements in local Perth organisations, I decided my final placement should be something that I really wanted to do, even if it was going to present me with many challenges. With plans to relocate to the Middle East at the end of my degree, I focused my attention on various international organisations working in the region in order to get a culturally diverse experience. After a few months of researching and contacting community psychology relevant organisations in the Gulf, I received an invitation for an internship with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

In the end I selected UNFPA Oman, mainly for their projects and mandate priority areas. These included women's empowerment, youth empowerment, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. As well as the UNFPA mandate, I was also drawn to it as UNFPA Oman is the office for the six Gulf countries; Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and United Arab Emirates, therefore I believed I would have many opportunities to be a part of a variety of projects.



UNFPA car waiting whilst we met with the community capacity building stakeholders in Wadi Bani Khaled

After selecting UNFPA over WHO I began to prepare travel arrangements and all the necessary documents for my exciting practicum experience. Whilst I expected and wanted to be challenged by this practicum I didn't expect the obstacles to arise so soon; the university debated over my safety for participating in the practicum, and after many meetings I was advised that the university could not approve the practicum and proceeding with it would be at my own risk. Therefore I signed the disclaimers and went ahead with it, and can say now that I am so glad I did.

In January 2008 I landed in Muscat, Oman, a country which shares borders with Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and United Arab Emirates. I had actually been to Oman previously so I had some idea of what I was getting myself into. The first few weeks of the practicum involved a lot of education and advocacy work, teaching the community via an exhibition stall on the work that UNFPA does. This was a very fast way for me to learn about UNFPA when I had to deliver the information to the general public.



Colleagues/Friends at UNFPA: Alla and Amira

Following the Muscat Festival I was involved in a variety of tasks. I prepared speeches and presentations for a Women's Empowerment conference to be delivered in Bahrain, worked on advocacy campaigns, took study tours to UNICEF and WHO, and researched and compiled a social health database for all GCC countries. As well as these I was able to assist with a community capacity building project for women in a remote rural area. I was also given the opportunity to assist in developing the activities for the annual World/International days, such as International Women's Day.

Everyday I was learning new things, as well as getting a lesson in cultural diversity. As much as being culturally sensitive seems like an obvious way to operate, it is actually really challenging. I found this when working on advocacy and education for 'The Right to Family Planning'. In Australia we take access to these services for granted, and wouldn't even think to pause when saying words such as *condom* or *the pill*. Therefore it was difficult to create methods of delivering the importance of family planning messages without being offensive in a culture where these ideologies are only recently being accepted. I left UNFPA with a greater appreciation of the importance of being culturally aware

and sensitive; otherwise education and advocacy efforts are simply wasted if they are not accurately targeted.

Since completing my internship with UNFPA Oman, I have recently been offered an employment contract with a private consulting firm in Oman, of which one of their clients are UNFPA. To anyone considering an overseas practicum, I thoroughly recommend it. Furthermore if it can be with an organisation like the UN, it's not only a fantastic learning experience it also looks really impressive on a resume! Don't just settle for any practicum; use the opportunity for practical training to your advantage and to truly develop skills and experience.

Observations of Conditions for a Minority Group in Russia

Kathryn Russell

I feel poorly qualified to be writing about a country I have been living in for only 3 months. It surely takes much longer to become familiar with a different way of living and to understand how a country works. I am particularly loath to draw too many conclusions as I have been living in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, a city in Far East Russia where there is a significant population of Australians, British, Americans and Dutch who work and live here, rather than the more populated areas of Central and North-Western Russia. However, I have come to realise that Australia is indeed the lucky country in many ways – at least for the privileged classes. In this short paper, I will focus on just one minority group – the mobility impaired/disabled – and describe what I have discovered during my time here in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk as well some observations during my visit to Moscow and St Petersburg. The term “disabled” will be used for the sake of expediency to describe people mainly with mobility impairment. However, it should be noted that many of the descriptions are applicable to people with other disabilities or challenges.

For some time disabled people have been at a distinct disadvantage in Russia. Through Soviet times and now more than 15 years after the demise of the USSR, disabled people have been hidden away in institutions or have been isolated in their own homes. Compared to Australia, conditions for the disabled are appalling in Russia. However, similar to Australia, there is a basic pension paid to disabled people although it is only a very small amount. The main difference though

in Russia is a yearly application must be made to receive the pension, often meaning significant hardship involving examinations and applications to various agencies. Other bureaucratic processes must be borne in order to obtain mobility aids and this becomes another barrier for disabled people.

While Australia actively encourages disabled people to work in the mainstream workforce and has legislation to ensure the disabled are not discriminated against, Russia's legislation aimed at helping disabled people work is not easily enforced. Long standing attitudes among the Russian people suggesting that disabled people are less deserving mean little is done to assist them to gain employment. Recent figures indicate there is an unemployment rate of approximately 85 percent among disabled people compared to 6 percent for the general population.

Even though the employment figures are rather astounding, day to day difficulties for disabled people are equally astonishing. In Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, only a few buildings have some access for people in wheelchairs or who may be challenged by stairs; generally these are constructed by western companies operating in Russia. These companies also employ people who may also have a disability. For the majority of the buildings though, there are steps up to buildings and only narrow doorways. Additionally, most doors do not open automatically but rather, need to be pushed or pulled open.

Even though some buildings may have some sort of facility, such as a ramp or a wider doorway by which a disabled person may enter, the footpaths to reach the buildings must be negotiated. Following the winter season when the snow and ice melt, there is considerable damage to the footpaths. In some cases, there is quite dramatic subsidence, and holes appear in the middle of footpaths (and roads). This makes negotiating the footpaths and roads precarious even for able bodied persons.

Although there are some disabled people employed for companies working on the oil and gas project here, I haven't seen many disabled people in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk and it's no wonder. The majority of transport is by foot or public transport by bus or mini-bus, there is also the option of taxis. None of the transport modes have special equipment available that I know of for people who need assistance with wheelchairs or crutches or walking frames.

It is possible that there are not many disabled people in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. However, it is unlikely given that Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk has a population of around 200,000 and there are 14.5 million people in Russia who have a

disability. What is more probable is that many of the disabled people are unable to leave their homes through lack of facilities. The one person I have seen in a wheelchair is often near the entrance of the markets, where he collects donations. He then travels home in his wheelchair along the roads dodging potholes and cars. I have also seen some young disabled people, one a young man with an amputated leg using crutches, the other a young lady with what appears to be cerebral palsy. Both are mobile but not without considerable difficulty. The only other mobility aids I have seen people use have been walking sticks used by the elderly.

I thought things might have been different in St Petersburg and Moscow, cities of 5 million and 10 million respectively. However, it appears that there is little concession made for people with a disability. Although there are ramps in place at the metro stations, they are placed directly over the stairs and are steep. Even if it was possible to negotiate to the ramps, a disabled person would have to be able to get to the station entrance and then negotiate the (often two) swinging doors. I couldn't find any lifts in the metro, although I believe Moscow now boasts two metro stations that are disabled friendly and have lifts. However, it does not mean the metro is any more accessible! It appears that token gestures, such as a ramp or a lift, are made to improve access for disabled people but in reality are not useful as there are just too many other obstacles to overcome to even access aids.

Travelling by air in Russia is possible for a disabled person but on many airlines only if they have an able bodied person with them. In some airports, people in wheelchairs often need to be lifted up stairs or otherwise manhandled. I was mildly amused though to see a disabled sign on the toilet door of the aeroplane we took from St Petersburg to Moscow. I'm not too sure though how it was different. From my perspective it was the same size (read very small) with no added features!

While the disabled population of Russia is largely hidden, there are signs that the present government headed by President Medvedev is interested in fostering understanding of the many challenges faced by Russia's disabled people. To appreciate and understand how ignorant even Russian leaders have been of the needs of disabled people, in 2001, ex-President Putin invited people from several disability groups to attend a forum at the Kremlin. They were almost denied access when it became apparent the representatives of the disabled groups would not be able fit their wheelchairs through the standard entrance. This incident, while causing embarrassment, brought disabilities to the centre stage and highlighted

the need for reform.

For some years, several groups have aimed to educate and inform mainstream society about disabilities and to promote tolerance and understanding. For example, a task force of young disabled people enter mainstream schools through Russia to raise awareness of disability as well as to promote inclusion of disabled students into mainstream society. Such activities suggest that there is a change happening, albeit slowly, in attitudes towards Russians who have a disability. There is however, a huge amount of work to be done to allow disabled people in Russia to enjoy living as active citizens rather than be shut away in their homes unable to leave through lack of facilities.

If you are interested in reading about my other experiences in Russia you can visit www.travelpod.com/members/kathryn.russell

International Conference on Grief and Bereavement

Lauren Breen

The 8th International Conference on Grief and Bereavement was held in Melbourne from Monday 14th to Friday 18th July. The conference featured paper presentations, symposia, posters, practice forums, 'how-to' sessions, and workshops around the theme 'Consequences of loss: Resilience and complications in the grief experience'. Attracting approximately 680 delegates from 17 countries and several disciplines, the conference boasted seven keynote speakers – Prof. George Bonanno (USA), Prof. Grace Christ (USA), Professor Mario Mikulincer (Israel), Prof. Robert Neimeyer (USA), A/Prof. Holly Prigerson (USA), Prof. Beverley Raphael (Australia), and Prof. Margaret Stroebe (The Netherlands).

Having referenced six of the seven keynote speakers about a million times in my thesis, I was particularly keen to attend. In hindsight, perhaps I was too keen – I submitted three abstracts for paper presentations and all three were accepted. Two of the papers were drawn from my PhD: 'Family and social networks after bereavement: Experiences of support, change, and isolation' and 'Acts of resistance: Breaking the silence of grief following traffic crash fatalities.' The third paper was titled, 'The current practice of grief counsellors in Western Australia.' While their acceptance was exciting, it also translated into a considerable amount of preparation, especially as data

collection for the third project was only completed in June.

The conference was opened by Walter Mikac, whose wife and two young daughters were killed in the Port Arthur massacre, and each keynote presentation was preceded by a personal perspective on grief. These were provided by bereaved parents and spouses, and hearing a glimpse of their experiences was really important in light of the theoretical and empirical presentations that dominated the conference programme.

The emphasis within the keynote presentations on the lack of efficacy for most grief interventions was perhaps somewhat controversial, given the high proportion of grief counsellors in the audience. Several keynotes reviewed the evidence for efficacy and concluded that universal intervention (i.e., aimed at all bereaved) shows no positive effect and could indeed be harmful; selective interventions (aimed at the 'at-risk' bereaved) shows modest but often temporary effects; and indicated intervention (for those with 'complicated' grief) shows positive and lasting, but still modest, effects.

The inclusion within the next DSM of the diagnostic category Prolonged Grief Disorder (formally called Traumatic Grief and Complicated Grief Disorder) was, at times, debated heatedly. The stated importance of having a diagnostic category in order to provide effective support and intervention for the 10 to 20 percent of bereaved people who suffer for longer than six months, and perhaps would result in the development of a specific drug treatment, was met with concerns about the increasing medicalisation of a 'normal' response, the stigma associated with psychiatric diagnosis, as well as the increased role of psychiatrists and clinical psychologists in the treatment of Prolonged Grief Disorder and the reduced role of other professionals who might also be beneficial for bereaved people.

I am grateful to The Centre for Social Research and The School of Psychology and Social Science for supporting my participation in this conference. (If you'd like more information about this debate and the research on intervention efficacy, please contact me at the email address below).

Lauren Breen
Centre for Social Research
Edith Cowan University
l.breen@ecu.edu.au

Upcoming Conferences

NATIONAL

2nd National Volunteering Research Symposium at the Radisson Resort on the Gold Coast in Queensland.
2 September 2008
Call for proposals now.
Email: events@volunteeringaustralia.org
<http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/Conference>

12th National Conference on Volunteering at the Radisson Resort on the Gold Coast in Queensland.
3-5 September 2008
Call for proposals now.
Email: events@volunteeringaustralia.org
<http://www.volunteeringaustralia.org/Conference>

9th National Mediation Conference: Mediation: Transforming the Landscape at the Hyatt Regency Perth Hotel in Perth, Western Australia.
10-12 September
<http://www.promaco.com.au/2008/mediation>

43rd APS Annual Conference: Psychology Leading Change at the Hotel Grand Chancellor in Hobart, Tasmania.
23-27 September
<http://www.apsconference.com.au>

Rural and Remote Mental Health Conference 2008 at Queens Park Theatre in Geraldton, Western Australia.
5-7 November
Email: Michele Young
Michele.young@health.wa.gov.au

2008 Vario Health Conference: Physical and Mental Wellness—Integrative Approaches to Health at the Health and Wellness Building, Edith Cowan University, Joondalup Campus in Perth, Western Australia.
1-2 December
Email: info@varioinstitute.org
<http://www.varioinstitute.com/conference/2008/index.php>

Re-Orienting Whiteness 2008 in Melbourne, Victoria.
3-5 December
Call for abstracts now.
<http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/historical-studies/news-and-events/reorienting-whiteness-2008/index.php>

The Australian Consortium for Social and Political Research Inc. Social Science Methodology Conference at the University of Sydney in Sydney, New South Wales.
7-10 December
<http://www.acspri.org.au/conference2008/>

11th Trans-Tasman Community Psychology Conference: Exploring Boundaries, Expanding Frontiers in Perth
Mid 2009
Email: Dawn Darlaston-Jones
ddarlastonjones@nd.edu.au
or Julie Ann Pooley
j.pooley@ecu.edu.au

INTERNATIONAL

British Psychological Society Division of Health Psychology and European Health Psychology Society Conference: Behaviour, Health and Healthcare: From Physiology to Policy at the University of Bath in UK.
9-12 September 2008
<http://www.bath2008.org.uk>

Annual UK Community Psychology Conference: Walking the Talk: Community Psychology, Mental Health and Making a Difference for Communities at Napier University in Edinburgh, UK.
18-19 September 2008
Call for proposals now.
Email: Grant Jeffrey GR.Jeffrey@napier.ac.uk
Or Rebekah Pratt rebekah.pratt@ed.ac.uk
<http://www.pacarras.net/CP2008.html>

3rd Annual Northwest ECO/Community Psychology Conference in Portland, Oregon, USA.
17-18 October 2008
Email: pdx01350@pdx.edu

2008 Midwest Eco Conference in Battlecreek, MI, USA.
10-11 October 2008
Email: MidwestECO2008@gmail.com

Princeton Graduate Studenty Conference on Psychology and Policy Making at Princeton University in New Jersey, USA.
24-25 October
Email: psychpol@princeton.edu
<http://www.princeton.edu/~psychpol/>

7th International Conference on Urban Health: Knowledge Integrations: Successful Interventions in Urban Health at The Westin Bayshore Resort and Marina, Vancouver, Canada.
29-31 October
<http://www.icuh2008.com/>

9th International Conference for Social Psychology for Liberation: To Current Challenges, Collective Responses toward Collaboration at Universidad de la Tierra (University of Earth) in San Cristobal de Las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico.
14-16 November
<http://www.liber-accion.org/congresochiapas08/convocatoriangles.html>

Unite for Sight 6th Annual Global Health and Development Conference: Achieving Global Goals Through Innovation at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, USA.
18-19 April 2009
<http://www.uniteforsight.org/conference>

3rd International Community, Work and Family Conference: Innovation and Sustainability in Utrecht, the Netherlands.
16-18 April 2009
Email: cwf2009@uu.nl
<http://www.fss.uu.nl/cwf2009>

XXXII InterAmerican Congress of Psychology: Psychology: A Road towards Peace and Democracy in Guatemala
2009
<http://www.sip2009.org/>

Thanks to everybody who forwarded the information on the conferences above. Please continue to send in information on conferences and events for inclusion in [LINKS](#).

Australian Community Psychologist LINK

The latest of Australian Community Psychologist is now available on-line at:
<http://www.groups.psychology.org.au/ccom/Publications>
Happy reading! Remember that your comments and responses are very welcome and we hope that this issue might generate a series of papers challenging or contesting or supporting what has been included in this issue!

Australian Community Psychologist Contents Page from the Latest Issue

Editorial

Introduction to the special issue on place-based research and intervention
Colleen Turner

Special Edition Papers

Building Community Connectedness in Broadmeadows
Cemile Yuksel and Colleen Turner

Working on the Ground to Redress Disadvantage: Lessons from a Community-based Preschool Program
Deborah J. Warr

Families Living in Poverty in Broadmeadows: Challenges, Survival Strategies and Support Services
Matthew Barth and Heather Gridley

Relieving some of the Legal Burdens on Clients: Legal Aid Services Working Alongside Psychologists and Other Health and Social Service Professionals
Liz Curran

Working with Wasism: A Convergence of Community
Anne Pederson, Mary Anne Kenny, Linda Brinkman and Sue Hoffman

Community Involvement Among Residents of Second-order Change Recovery Homes
Leonard A. Jason, Dan Schober and Bradley D. Olsen

A Place-based Approach to Supporting Low Income Minority Children and Their Families: Including Children with Disabilities
Donald G. Ungar, Tara Woolfolk, Vanessa Harper and Teresita Cuevas

Evaluating Playgroups: An Examination of Issues and Options
Ann Dadich and Catherine Spooner

Using the Theory of Planned Behaviour to Determine Recycling and Waste Minimisation Behaviours: A Case Study of Bristol City, UK
Georgina Davis and Alexa Morgan

APS College of Community Psychologists

WA Branch News

Anne Sibbel
APS College of Community Psychologists
Chair, WA Branch

This year to date has been quiet for the WA branch as we ponder possibilities for the future of the College. In some ways we seem to be in a holding pattern at the moment. The update from the College's National Chair, Grace Pretty, elsewhere in this issue of Links, discusses in more detail the APS Board's response to our concerns.

We would like to add our heartfelt thanks to Dawn Darlaston-Jones and Neil Drew for their valued contributions to the WA Branch of the College. While they will be missed from the formal structure of the College, we look forward to continuing associations in the wider field of community psychology beyond the confines of the APS.

Our current WA CP College Committee members are:

Chair:
Anne Sibbel asibbel@westnet.com.au

Secretary/Treasurer:
Diane Broderick d_broderick@westnet.com.au

Student Representative: Vacant

Committee:
Goff Barrett-Lennard gt_barrett-lennard@inet.net.au
Amiee-Jade Pember amiee-jade@westnet.com.au
Lynne Cohen l.cohen@ecu.edu.au

If you would like to fill the position of student representative or become a general committee member please contact one of the committee members, you will be very welcome.

All College members or supporters are welcome to attend any of our committee meetings. Please contact me for details of our next meeting.

National College News

Grace Pretty
APS College of Community Psychologists
Chair, National College

Update on letter to the APS regarding viability of the College

Following its 2007 AGM the College of Community Psychologists submitted a letter of concern in February 2008 to Lyn Littlefield, Amanda Gordon and the APS Board of Directors. The letter outlined several specific issues limiting the College's ability to function within the current APS parameters, to meet the needs of its members and training programs, and to conduct its business consistent with the CP principles of equity and respect for diversity. The letter requested the Board's opinion and advice on these matters, and on the possible solutions set out in the letter.

In June an email was received from APS President Amanda Gordon indicating that this letter received considerable discussion at an APS Board meeting, and that the difficulties described by the College were acknowledged. She indicated that the APS Board was concerned with the survival of the Community College, valued its contribution to psychology in Australia and wanted to be supportive. The College Executive was informed that the APS was conducting a review of the APS structures, including the College system, and that the findings and recommendations of this review would serve to address its concerns.

Further correspondence from the Executive to the President expressed the College's appreciation of the Board's sentiments, but felt dismay and dissatisfaction with the form and lack of substance to the APS response. During its deliberations, the Executive noted that some of the Community College's concerns are being voiced by other Colleges. Indeed all Colleges are expressing a need to improve the level of engagement and representation with the Board of Directors, and have been involved in a collective campaign to recruit nominations of College members for the upcoming Board of Directors elections. The College Executive is currently in further consultation with the membership as to the future of the APS College as the representative body of Australian community psychologists.

Our journal *The Australian Community Psychologist* continues to provide us with thought-provoking and best practice articles in our field. However it is with sincere

regret that we say goodbye to our Editor, Dawn Darlaston-Jones who has guided the WA team of Lynne Cohen, Anne Sibbel, Lauren Breen, and Sharon McCarthy to produce this world-class journal. Dawn has resigned her membership in the College and in the APS. We wish her well in her future endeavours which will undoubtedly result in further achievements as this College has had through her contributions. Please continue to support the Journal with submissions and assistance reviewing articles when invited. We are inviting people to express their interests in working on the Editorial Board or production team for the Journal.

I am also sorry to inform you of the resignation of another longstanding member of our College, Neil Drew. His contributions span the breadth of development of psychology and community psychology in WA and Australia. From his student involvement to the diverse professional, academic and APS offices he has held at state and national levels, Australian psychology has been fortunate in his 20 years of contributions. However, with the challenging community projects that Neil continues to facilitate and inspire, he will remain at the heart of community psychology in Australia and across the Tasman.

There are a few upcoming events of note. The College has an interesting program of papers and workshops at this year's APS Conference in Hobart Tasmania, September 23 – 27. Great PD and social opportunities for all; check out the Program on the APS conference website. (see attached list of Community Psychology highlights below).

Some of you may be wondering about the next Trans-Tasman Conference in Community Psychology. We are anticipating that Perth will be the venue in 2009. With a team of NZ and Aussie community psychs developing the program you won't want to miss it! You will hear more as plans are confirmed.

Grace Pretty, PhD, FAPS
Chair, APS College of Community Psychologists
On behalf of the National College Executive

Highlights of the APS Conference program for Community Psychologists

Tuesday 23rd September

Keynote Speaker: David Uzzell

The challenge of climate change; the challenge for psychology

Climate Change Forum

Reser, J. How crucial is psychology in addressing the challenges of climate change?

Wednesday 24th September

Symposium - Gridley, H. (Convenor)

Psychologists' social responsibility: responding as researchers, practitioners and citizens to refugees and asylum-seekers

(CCOM) Consumer Issues Individual Papers

D. Rickwood, G. Rose

Thursday 26th September

CCOM) Psychology and Women Symposium

Gridley, H. (Convenor)

Leading change at the margins: doing feminist research with social justice in mind

CCOM Community College Individual Papers

Zinkiewicz, L.; Tutchener, C.; O'Grady, L.

Friday 26th September

(CCOM) Community College Symposium -

Khawaja, N.

Refugees: their journey from stress to growth

CCOM Community College Individual Papers

Refugee issues

Public Sector & NGOs Forum - Duffy, C.

Saturday 27th September

Workshops:

Full-day - Uzzell, D.

Environmental Attitudes and Actions in Context

Half-day - Smith, M.

Personal, professional and political: Personal experiences in the context of research, professional development and community psychology practice

LINKS DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in **LINKS** are those of the contributor, and are not necessarily those of the **LINKS** editorial team.

Useful Contact Details

WA Community College Committee Contacts

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APS College of Community Psychologist website:

<http://www.psychology.org.au/units/colleges/community/>

Comm. Psych: Australian Based Community Psychology e-discussion List

To Subscribe/Unsubscribe to the Comm. Psych List:

Send the following in an email to

listproc@info.curtin.edu.au

Make sure that there are no automatic signatures on the bottom of your email and a few lines after the text in the email.

The only way to subscribe to the list:

Subscribe commpsych <your name>

There are 2 ways to unsubscribe from the list:

Unsubscribe commpsych **OR** Signoff commpsych

COMMUNITYPSYCHUK: UK Based Community Psychology e-discussion List

To unsubscribe or to change your details visit the

website: <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/COMMUNITYPSYCHUK.HTML>

For any problems or queries, contact the list moderator rebekah.pratt@ed.ac.uk