



Youth Health Conference 2017

6-7 July 2017

Aerial UTS Function Centre

SPECIAL EDITION

August 2017

YOUTH HEALTH CONFERENCE

In this month's special issue, we'll take a look at the [2017 Youth Health Conference](#).

Conference Wrap

On 6th and 7th July, AAAH hosted the National Youth Health Conference in Sydney, welcoming 200 delegates from Australia and New Zealand. Young people from diverse backgrounds and regions were the fabric of the Conference, being the first to speak at the opening plenary, co-chair all sessions, act as rapporteurs in the closing plenary session, present in Symposia, give keynote speeches, entertain us, and attend as delegates.



Special Offer to

Conference delegates

who are not AAAH Ltd

members yet:

Join now and only pay

\$95 for the

2017-18 membership

year (usually \$110).

This year's Conference theme was 'Youth Health, Research, Policy, Practice: Tying it All Together'. The Organising Committee wanted to encourage speakers and delegates alike to look beyond individual research projects and service programs, and ask 'how do we bring our individual expertise together to advance youth health across Australia and beyond?'

Held on the land of Gadigal people of the Eora nation, delegates were welcomed by Ann Weldon from the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council. The Conference heard from five amazing [keynote speakers](#): [Megan Mitchell](#), Bronwyn Milne, [Keely Johnson](#), and [Tim and Judy Sharp](#).

Three specially-convened/sponsored symposia were held on the [Access 3 research study](#); young people, chronic illness and disability; and clinical updates on contraception, eating disorders and gender issues. In addition, there were nine proffered paper sessions, poster displays and some wonderful exhibition booths.

During the afternoon plenary of the first day, the NSW Minister for Health, The Hon. Brad Hazzard MP, launched a new [Youth Health Policy Framework for NSW](#). Mr Hazzard spoke about the need to understand the backgrounds of young people and the conditions in which they live, grow, study and work, and the need to take a holistic approach to health care. He acknowledged the need to support young people access health services and move around the health system more easily, and the importance of research to inform policy.

A final program highlight was the announcement of the inaugural AAAH Award for Outstanding Contribution to Youth Health. There were three finalists, with the winner being Brett Hatfield. Read about the three finalists below, and Brett's response to winning this award.

The [AAAH Board](#) and [Youth Health Conference Organising Committee](#) would like to thank the Youth Health 2017 Conference sponsors without whom the Conference would not have been possible: Don Stein AO and Family, NSW Health, NSW Refugee Health Service, UTS Faculty of Health, The Sydney Children's Hospital Network, Family Planning NSW, and the Starlight Foundation.





[CLICK HERE FOR MORE IMPRESSIONS FROM THE CONFERENCE](#)





The Youth Health Conference 2017: Tying It All Together Marc Zen, Youth Health Conference 2017 Convener

It's been six weeks but I'm still buzzing from the excitement and would like to thank the Organising Committee and everyone who attended. The 2017 Conference was the third AAAH Conference I had been involved with, which is why it was extra special to be able to take on the role of Convener.

The conferences have always provided an inspiring boost of energy to the organisation, simply as a result of having so many like-minded professionals and advocates and young people all in the one room. The challenge now is to keep the momentum going and to stay connected so if you aren't a member of the AAAH already; I encourage you to sign up today and consider sponsoring a young person to join.

During the closing plenary, I spoke about how it's up to us working in youth health to make sure that the opportunities are there for all young people to engage, which is why we were so thrilled to have young people co-chairing the conference sessions.

So let's hear what they had to say about the Conference:

Alice Zhang

'It was incredible to see people gather around from all over Australia to talk about adolescent health. Adolescence is a very tumultuous time and for people experiencing aspects of marginalisation and oppression, it can make it extremely difficult to get through, and our current health care system isn't

necessarily conducive to easy access for these young people. For me, it meant the world to me to have people care, and to come together to make this a better place for young people.'

Steven Drury

'It was inspiring to meet and hear from such passionate individuals about their work in youth health. Innovative methods of delivering information to young people are being implemented, but it is evident that there are technological and regulatory challenges. Overall, the inclusivity of young people in decision making processes was a key takeaway for me.'

Selena Ly

'The opportunity to attend the Youth Conference was an amazing opportunity to speak and engage with experts from all around Australia especially in regards to research that challenges current ideas of health that are taught in our textbooks.'

Matthew Behan

'The AAAH 2017 Youth Health Conference was my first experience attending and presenting at a conference and not one I will forget. Unsure of what to expect, I soon learnt that AAAH conferences operate to a different tune to most, which in fact saw all delegates singing along to "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" with inspirational country singer and youth advocate Keely Johnson, being surprised by a troupe of youth dancers performing in the aisles and laughing along with Tim and Judy Sharp and Laser Beak Man. The most impressive aspect of AAAH YHC 2017 however was the conference bringing together so many people dedicated to realising the potential of youth, sharing their work and stories, and listening to all of the youth that participated in the conference.'



Jessika Hill

'My name is Jessika Hill and I am currently in my second year studying a bachelor of Nursing. It was an honour to be accepted as a young participant in the bi-annual Youth Health Conference. Ever since I was a little girl, my passion has been to help people and nursing truly satisfies this. As I currently work with and

study about Australia's older population, it was an amazing experience to listen to the research conducted and programs created in order to help the children and teenagers of our country. My highlight of the conference was meeting so many like-minded people all striving for one goal, that being to better youth health. I am particularly interested in helping homeless youth and Indigenous Australians, and I learnt of ways in which I can start to get involved with these groups and begin to make a difference. The Youth Health Conference has definitely left a profound impact on me and I hope to use this inspiration to fuel my future career paths and continue to help others!

Grace Kinsela

'Keynote speaker Tim Sharp's and Keely Johnson's presentations particularly resonated with the AAAH conference audience. Their stories, born from immense physical and emotional suffering, transcended ethnicity, age and education. Tim's journey into adulthood was an exceptional story, wrought with immense hardship in his battles to be understood as a creative individual. Diagnosed with autism at an early age, Tim overcame all language barriers, as well as his own cognitive and emotional challenges to create Laser Beak Man, an international super hero. His quirky sense of humour touched a global audience, through his simple message of happiness in yourself, your passions and your unique, powerful talents. Most importantly, it was his message of hope and persistence in creating a better world, regardless of the circumstances that may inhibit your path. Keely's presentation also powerfully evoked this mantra for today's youth and elders. Her ongoing experience with the incurable cancer 'Langerhem's Cell Histiocytosis' inspired her to create the Golden Octopus Foundation for childhood cancer in 2015. Her work also inspired international awareness, through the 'Make a Wish Foundation'. Both individuals gave the audience the gift of love, an enduring value that should ultimately shape the function of society at all levels of interaction, but at times is easily forgotten, or ignored. If I could only name one thing I took from the conference, it would be to never underestimate the impact of a single act of kindness for another individual.'

[JOIN AAAH LTD NOW AND RECEIVE \\$15 OFF!](#)

This special issue of the AAAH newsletter will go to all Youth Health 2017 Conference delegates as well as AAAH Ltd members. AAAH would like to offer all Conference delegates who are not AAAH members to join at a discounted rate of \$95 for the 2017-18 year (usual rate \$110). This offer will only be valid **until the end of September 2017**. To join AAAH at this special rate, please [click here!](#)

Young people (under 25 years) who would like to join, are encouraged to apply for a [Young Person Sponsorship](#) – these are donations that are directed towards a one-year membership for a young person.

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE CONFERENCE SPECIAL](#)

AAAH Ltd Outstanding Achievement in Youth Health Award

This year, the AAAH Ltd Board decided to create an award for Outstanding Contribution to Youth Health, and a call for nominations was made in May. The award's intention was to acknowledge the time, effort, and commitment of individuals to improving, promoting or advocating for the health and well-being of young people. Reading through nominations was a humbling experience for all Board members and the

three finalists all thoroughly deserving of their nomination. The winner was decided through votes by Board members and Brett Hatfield announced as winner during the closing plenary of the 2017 Youth Health Conference.

A short biography about each of the finalists and their contributions to youth health follows:



Sharne Milgate

Sharne is a youth worker who has volunteered at The Children's Hospital at Westmead for 10 years within the Department of Adolescent Medicine. Sharne volunteers 2 days a week in the Youth Arts and Groupwork programs, and has developed a series of leisure activities based on popular game shows. Sharne generously donates an amazing array of goodies as prizes to reward and encourage patients' participation. Sharne's approach with adolescent patients makes them feel comfortable and included. She shows genuine interest in patients' lives and wellbeing and easily connects with adolescent patients in group and individual sessions. Her friendliness extends to all staff, bringing a positive vibe to the workplace. Sharne's generosity with her time allows the clinical team to support the young people of the hospital in a greater capacity, and by not asking to be remunerated for the work she does, funds are redirected into clinical programs.

Brett Hatfield

Brett first volunteered in youth health as a teenager for an education program in Malaysia for children with a disability. For the past 6 years, he has volunteered in the Starlight Express Room at major children's hospitals in Perth and Sydney. During Brett's nursing studies he created a social media campaign entitled 'The New Norm'. The campaign aimed to empower young people to actively take part in creating a more inclusive environment for LGBTQI people in their high school. The movement attracted champions such as AFL players, politicians, mental health clinicians, the Equal Opportunity Commission and the Department of Children and Adolescents. Brett was acknowledged by being nominated as a finalist in the 2014 WA Young Person of the Year Awards. In 2016 he volunteered in Peru as a nurse in a community clinic. In his new job Brett works as a refugee health nurse where he started the 'Oceans Without Borders Program'. Brett was impacted by the number of drownings in NSW over the Christmas period, and so he organized the program with two main goals: 1) to educate refugee youth about beach and water safety in Australia, and 2) to introduce refugee youth to the Australian beach culture through a fun and social excursion.



Greg McGahan



Greg has been a mental health nurse for over 25 years. He has managed three adolescent mental health units in Queensland and has been involved in commissioning two of these. For the past three years Greg has been working to establish Mater Young Adult Health Centre Brisbane, a service that offers a unique environment for young people 16 – 25 years. It has been recognised as a leader in developing innovative programs that fit the needs of young people. Greg is passionate about consumer participation and about understanding what is important to young people and their families. As a clinician, Greg has worked tirelessly to ensure positive outcomes for young people and their families. Greg has led the development of service initiatives that have championed reform through a commitment to being recovery focused whilst delivering care that is evidence based. Through Greg's work, the Mater Young Adult Health Centre Brisbane now delivers support across a broad spectrum of specialties relevant to adolescents and young adults, managing patients with chronic and complex conditions.



Brett Hatfield has written the following response to his award:

I just wanted to thank the AAAH for the 'Outstanding Contribution to Youth Health' award. I am filled with immense gratitude for this wonderful acknowledgement for my past work with young people. Being on the tail of youth myself, I know how it feels to be underestimated by those who associate age to a lack of experience or ability to achieve something great for the good of others. Age in itself is only a number, and the young people that I met at the AAAH Conference are champions in getting across this message as they displayed their fiery passion in making an extraordinary difference to our world. Receiving this award has helped me to fully comprehend how we as young people are just as capable as the next person to positively impact the lives of many people regardless of age or background. I am very excited to continue working with Australia's youth throughout my career and to be continuously inspired by their dynamic minds and empowering energy.

President's Report

I would firstly like to thank the tireless efforts of the Youth Health 2017 Conference Organising Committee in bringing together what turned out to be an amazing two days of collegiality, learning, and passion for youth health. With no secure seed funding at the beginning of conference planning, and a mandate to break even on budget, the Board directed the Organising Committee to think big, plan small. The timing of this Conference was also impacted by the World Congress of the International Association for Adolescent Health (IAAH) that will be held at the end of October 2017 in New Dehli, India. A mid-winter Conference during school and university holidays was also a potential risk, and holding a one-day youth forum as part of the Conference, which had been so successful in Fremantle 2013 and Melbourne 2015, was not financially viable. However, the Board need not have worried, and the original 'Mini-Conference' emerged as a full two-day packed program with young people participating in every aspect of the Conference; as keynote speakers, co-chairs, performers, rapporteurs and co-presenters. I would also like to thank our generous sponsors whose contributions enabled the Conference to achieve a small profit which will of course provide the seeding needed for the next Youth Health Conference. The full Conference profit and loss statements are being finalised and will be presented at our next Board meeting.

The AAAH Board has been through some further changes of Directors in the past two months. In late May and early June this year, two Board members, Jasmine Smithers from Western Australia and Angela Agostini from the Northern Territory, resigned as Directors due to work and family commitments. Jasmine and Angela were elected to the Board at the November 2015 AGM in Melbourne. On behalf of the Board I would like to once again thank Jasmine and Angela for their enormous contribution to AAAH over their tenure – Jasmine as Treasurer and Angela for the work she did in putting together the '[Resources](#)' section of the AAAH website. Their enthusiasm and the perspectives they brought from WA and NT were invaluable and they will be sorely missed.

On behalf of the Board I would also like to warmly welcome our new Directors, Angela Grant, Rachel Bienenstock and Rohan Borschmann. They each bring diverse experiences and a shared enthusiasm for promoting youth health and well-being and we are very pleased to have them join us.

AAAH Ltd Advocacy

AAAH members and supporters will have seen our [social media posts](#) opposing the proposed Federal government postal vote on marriage equality.

The AAAH Position Paper on health care access is in its final draft and we hope to publish it later this year.

AAAH members are invited to [contact the Board](#) at any time to propose [position statements](#), [position papers](#) or social media posts.

Research Project – Calling for participants!

**Have you worked in
THERAPEUTIC RESIDENTIAL CARE**

for more than three months, 12.5 hours a week? If so, you're
invited to participate in a

RESEARCH STUDY

This research aims to learn more about how support staff can
provide the best possible care to young people by building
relationships with them.

If you are interested and have about 30 to 40 minutes to spare,
please contact:

Abbie Koenig

0434 507 586

abbie.koenig@my.acap.edu.au

All of your information will be kept securely and confidentially,
and your survey responses will be anonymous

**AAAH Ltd as a Specialty Society of The Royal Australasian College of Physicians
(RACP)**



The Royal Australasian
College of Physicians

The [RACP](#) is the organisation that represents and trains thousands of physicians (specialist doctors, including paediatricians, adolescent and adult physicians) across Australia and New Zealand. The RACP recognizes AAAH as a Specialty Society which means that they contact AAAH when seeking input relevant to common interests, such as policies around adolescent health as well as education and training for their members. The RACP also occasionally seeks a representative of AAAH to sit on committees or attend special meetings. The RACP recently called for feedback on their proposed 'Training Provider Standards'. These are nine standards that set out the level of quality expected from training settings and networks responsible for physician workplace training.

The Training Provider Standards Consultation Paper can be found on the [RACP website](#).

In order to collate feedback, could interested AAAH members read the Paper and open the link to the survey without completing any of the questions online. Instead, send either general feedback or specific responses to questions to [Cindy Metzke](#) by **16th October 2017**, for collation.

A brief explanation about the AAAH Board

As AAAH Ltd transitioned to a Public Company Limited by Guarantee in 2016, we had to write a new [Constitution](#). We decided that elected Board members would serve two year terms, but wanted these terms to be staggered, so that at every Annual General Meeting (AGM), there would be an opportunity for half of the Board to change.

Therefore this initial Board (elected in 2015 at the AGM in Melbourne) needed to have half the Board serve for two years and half for three years. Thus at the AGM later this year, half of the Board members elected in 2015 will step down, and half will serve another year. (Elected Board members can however serve up to two terms in a row).

However, we have had three resignations from the Board since 2015, initially Peter Azzopardi, and more recently Jasmine Smithers and Angela Agostini. This has left casual vacancies, and additionally we have co-opted two other members (our Constitution allows for up to three Co-opted Directors, nine Elected and one Ex-Officio Director).

This degree of movement on the Board might seem destabilizing, but in fact six of the nine Elected Directors from 2015 remain on the Board at this point in time, and all new Directors have brought fresh energy, new ideas, practical help and have invigorated our work.

At the AGM this year (November, date TBA), there will be vacancies for three elected positions (current Directors can re-nominate), and two of the casual vacancies that have been filled will also come to an end (these Directors can also nominate for elected positions). The newly elected Board of Directors can also co-opt a further two directors.

The current AAAH Board members are:

Office Bearers:

- Melissa Kang (NSW, President, and Elected Director in 2015 AGM, until 2018 AGM)
- Geraldine Dyer (Qld, Vice-President, and Elected Director in 2015 AGM, until 2018 AGM)
- Marc Zen (Vic, Company Secretary and Elected Director in 2015 AGM, until 2018 AGM)
- Jessica Harper (NSW, Co-opted Director and Acting Treasurer in January 2017, until January 2019)

Board Directors:

- Angela Grant (Vic, Co-opted Director in June 2017, until June 2019)
- David Perez (Tas, Elected Director in November 2016 filling casual vacancy, until 2017 AGM)
- James Williams (Vic, Young Person, Elected Director in 2015 AGM, until 2018 AGM)
- Meagan Hunt (Vic, Elected Director in 2015 AGM, until 2017 AGM)
- Michelle Telfer (Vic, Elected Director in 2015 AGM, until 2017 AGM)
- Rachel Bienenstock (NSW, Elected Director in June 2017 filling casual vacancy, until 2017 AGM)
- Rohan Borschman (Vic, Elected Director in June 2017 filling casual vacancy, until 2017 AGM)

- Susan Sawyer (Vic, Ex-Officio member, Oceania representative of the International Association for Adolescent Health)



Upcoming Event: The International Association for Adolescent Health 11th World Congress on Adolescent Health

The International Association for Adolescent Health (IAAH) 11th World Congress on Adolescent Health: 'Investing in Adolescent Health - the Future is Now' will be held in **New Delhi, India** from **27-29 October 2017**! For further details, please [click here](#)!

AAAH is a proud member of IAAH!



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