

AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE OF MENTAL HEALTH NURSES

Annual General Meeting

23 November 2022

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It is with pleasure that I present my President's Report to the 2022 Annual General Meeting of the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses (ACMHN). A high priority for the Board in 2022 has been to move the College towards greater stability, improved services for members and enhanced reputation, by strengthening our financial situation, improving efficiency and prioritizing initiatives that will increase our influence and generate income.

Financially, a small deficit for 2021/22 will be offset against a very significant surplus from the recent International Conference on the Gold Coast. It was a great pleasure to catch up face-to-face with colleagues and friends at the conference and planning is already well underway for what is likely to be an even more successful conference to be held in Melbourne in 2023.

In my President's Report at last year's Annual General Meeting, I noted that when the current Board took up its responsibilities in 2020, the ACMHN faced declining membership numbers, a poor financial situation, limited capacity to provide services to members and communication systems that for the most part, were not fit for purpose. A number of our Special Interest Groups were inactive, and our professional development activities were on the wane. We had recently deferred the International Conference but were hopeful of it going ahead in 2022. What a difference a year makes! In 2022 the situation has improved, in some instances considerably, in all these areas.

There are many people to acknowledge and thank for this improvement in the fortunes of the ACMHN. To begin, I would like to thank our CEO Stephen Jackson and the staff in the National Office for their tireless work and boundless good humour. The extent of work that is required to keep an organization such as ours functioning is considerable, and doing so with very modest staffing resources is quite a challenge – the College staff have been up to that challenge!

I would like to thank all colleagues which have served or are currently serving as Directors. On average the Board has met monthly throughout the year and plan to continue doing so in 2023. In particular, I would like to acknowledge and thank the Vice-President Professor John Hurley. Out of necessity, I had to give John and the Board very short notice that I was temporarily stepping aside from the role of President due to ill-health early this year. John immediately took on the role of Interim President. I am very grateful that he did so and thank the Board for their understanding and support during the time in which I had to step aside. I am very pleased to have been able to resume as President at the Gold Coast Conference.

I would also like to thank those members who have continued with or have recently taken on positions of leadership in the ACMHN Branches and the special Interest Groups (SIGs). In 2022 we have seen a consolidation and expansion of activities in the College Branches and SIGs, including the restoration of some branches that had gone into abeyance and the creation of new SIGs. This is already paying off in terms of new members, increasing influence and actual and potential income generation.

Finally, I would like to thank all members for your ongoing support for and contribution to the ACMHN and the wider profession of mental health nursing. I was reminded of the importance of this at the recent conference and was especially heartened by the number of first-time presenters and younger nurses who had clearly decided mental health nursing was for them. For me, as a person who has been a mental health nurse for over 40 years, this was a highlight of what turned out to be a wonderful conference experience. I am very much looking forward to the Melbourne conference next year

Members would be aware that the ACMHN has recently appointed a new Chief Executive Officer, who will commence in early 2023. Adrian Armitage brings an impressive track record of high-level success and well established professional and industry connections to the position, and I am very much looking forward to working with him from 2023 onwards. In welcoming Adrian, I want to again acknowledge and thank Stephen Jackson for his leadership in steering the ACMHN through what I am sure turned out to be a more challenging job than he could have imagined when he agreed to take up the position on an eight-week temporary basis some three years ago. Stephen has made an enormous contribution to the ACMHN during his time as CEO and on behalf of the Board

and members of the ACMHN, I would like to extend sincere thanks for a job well done and best wishes for whatever the next stage of life brings.

I am looking forward to working with the Board and all members of the ACMHN in 2023 and wish you and your families a peaceful and joyous festive season.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MHazelton', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Conjoint Professor Mike Hazelton

President

Australian College of Mental Health Nurses