

## CHAPTER NEWS

### WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Hi All, things are going great in WA. The Chapter is really buzzing after the successful 2005 conference. Our bimonthly Discussion Forums have been so successful that we have recently moved to bigger premises. The Convener of the Forums' sub-committee, Jennie Connolly, is doing a fantastic job lining up a diverse and interesting range of speakers to appeal to all ASTSS members and non-members. We often have one or two new people sign up as members at these events. Jennie is to be congratulated on the way she has taken this position and increased interest and momentum for ASTSS in WA and Australasia. You too could take the opportunity to become involved in our dynamic committee and Chapter.

Likewise, the bimonthly Newsletter, sent to members only, has developed into a very professional means of communication. By alternating Newsletters with the Discussion Forums interest and information has been maintained and increased. Previously non-active members are coming forward and volunteering to be part of the various sub-committees we have formed, to spread the workload amongst committee members. The Newsletters provide: reviews of Discussion Forums; information about local and Australasian ASTSS events; book reviews; articles on topical issues; and an Events calendar for related happenings in Perth. We have developed a collaborative relationship with several organisations with similar aims, and this has helped promote ASTSS.

Our main event this year, a 2 day workshop/seminar by Associate Professor Warwick Middleton *Trauma, Dissociation and Psychoses: Conflicting Realities* (Friday 14<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> July) has attracted delegates from several states and Singapore. The demographics for this event are Psychiatrists, Psychologists, and Allied Mental Health workers, with a small but pleasing representation from Justice and Legal. Dr Oleh Kay, Consultant Psychiatrist, is chairing this event and we are delighted to have attracted the interest of so many Psychiatrists, Registrars and Trainees. We had hoped this would be the case as the topic is pertinent to medical and non-medical mental health workers alike.

The WA Chapter is determined to develop student interest and facilitate student input into the events we run locally. We have been pleased at the number of students who attend the Forums at a student discount price. In keeping with our acknowledgment of the importance of students for the future of the Chapter and ASTSS in general, we provided a scholarship, in the form of full registration to the July seminar. Applications were based on financial difficulty attending this event without assistance; current academic research or an essay on the topic showing the interest of applicants; and finally how attending this event will potentially positively influence their post graduate career. We were surprised at the number and quality of applications received. A Scientific Committee selected Ms Julianne Beel to receive the scholarship. We wish her the very best with her current studies and we are sure this seminar will assist her career in the future. Students are strongly encouraged to attend the Forums and become ASTSS members, to benefit from the upgraded website when it is complete, as well as discounts to ASTSS events.

We are slowly but purposefully moving toward starting our Rural Workshops. The WA Chapter is committed to bringing the latest information to practitioners who face significant obstacles attending conferences etc. Besides the cost of travel, the issue of finding a locum prevents rural practitioners accessing up to date information and exposure to different treatment approaches. We are identifying local people to form a committee to work, on the ground, getting local council, corporate and media sponsorship and coverage. The fledging organisation related to Disaster Response, which emerged from the Disaster convention following the Annual 2005 conference, is slowly developing. Although very clearly a separate entity from the WA Chapter, this organisation is attending the rural workshops and organising speakers on the topic of post disaster intervention.

The WA Chapter is approaching its AGM and election of committee members. Nominations were officially called for last week. We are sorry to see our hard working Secretary, Gail Green, standing down, but fully understand having held this position from the time we were a

Special Interest Group. Gail will continue to be the Newsletter Editor, and hopefully remain on the Committee in a less demanding role. Being Secretary is demanding, but it is also very exciting to be at the hub of the decision making process and I strongly encourage WA ASTSS members to consider standing for this position. Please e-mail me if you are interested, I will be pleased to hear from you. Other positions desperately need filling, including a Student representative. Please don't feel you have to be a mature age student to be on the Committee! We do want to hear the ideas and needs of current students so that we can work toward meeting these needs and increase their learning experience (as we also increase our own!).

WA members are strongly encouraged to attend the ASTSS 2006 conference. This looks like a fantastic event with high quality speakers in a diverse and in-depth program. Get in before early bird registrations close! And we look forward to seeing you at the next Discussion Forum:

**Pip Brennan, "Reclaiming Voices (a collective voice for women surviving the trauma of sexual assault)".** Sexual Assault can be an alienating experience for Victims/Survivors, both in the short and long term. Dealing with the aftermath of assault can raise complicated issues which may cause confusion, isolation and despair. RECLAIMING VOICES is the brainchild of a group of Australian women, who realised the value and importance of forming a network of strong, like-minded women as a vehicle for regaining personal strength and empowerment in the aftermath of sexual assault. The group holds regular meetings at Citiplace Community Centre and comes recommended to us by SARC. Anglicare - Geoffrey Sarnel Centre, 23 Adelaide Tce, East Perth (entry via the underground carpark, parking in new housing development opposite). Time: 6:00 for 6:30 p.m.  
Cost: Members \$10, Non-members \$15, Students \$10

See you all at the Forum or at the Seminar in July. Don't miss out on these great opportunities - and don't forget the Annual Conference in Adelaide in September!



Elizabeth Sachse  
ASTSS WA, Chair and Events

## WESTERN VICTORIA

In March the Western Victorian Chapter organised a full day conference on the legal processes in connection with child and family sexual abuse. It was well attended and feedback suggested it was a helpful day for all participants. Quite a number travelled from Melbourne and Bendigo for the event. It was well catered for and the local Chapter made a modest profit. The team of local ASTSS members who organised the event worked hard and were well rewarded with praise for the venue and the way the day unfolded. Caroline did a marvellous job fielding questions from lawyers and police, and sensitively engaging in a most difficult topic with courage and clarity.

Our next venture is not so modest although we may have a few seminars in between. We are setting up the annual ASTSS Conference on September 21 and 22 of 2007. This is a going to be a community effort and the small group of local ASTSS members are making enquires about the venue, key overseas and local speakers as well as making the two days exciting and productive for those who travel to Ballarat. We are also making arrangements for the world acclaimed light and sound production "Blood on the Southern Cross" to be included as part of the Conference dinner on the Friday evening.

While our endeavours to set up a worthwhile conference in one of the most historic centres of Australian history are in their infancy, we are also reminded of the trauma suffered by families during the only "armed conflict" at Eureka Stockade in Australia's short history. Ballarat has also played a central role in the understanding of the conflicts in East Timor because of the links with local people, and we hope to have representatives from that struggling nation at the ASTSS conference and their supporters in Australia to take us through some of the traumatic moments in their growth as a "new country" so close to our borders.

We also hope to focus on several major local tragedies and the impact on local rural communities - the multi deaths of students run down in Mildura in 2006, and the ravaging Grampians bushfire in our 2006 summer. Of course, the above is only the conference. Ballarat is also there to be enjoyed. There will be more details as we get closer to the event.

 Daniel Torpy  
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## NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand ASTSS members are encouraged to contact Greg Corman (Development Officer) via email [nags@nags.org.au](mailto:nags@nags.org.au) to further develop the New Zealand Chapter.

USA and UK, and from the medical, nursing, social work, psychology, epidemiology and education disciplines.

Professor Raphael spoke of the uniqueness of the book and is great value as a resource for practitioners, researchers and students from a wide range of health disciplines. She noted that the book addressed a range of topics from children who live in domestic violence situations to indigenous families and violence, to violence amongst same sex couples. Critiques of current research show that very few interventions appear to be effective with victim/survivors of domestic violence, but evidence shows that social advocacy is likely to be an effective intervention. Hence the collaborative effort of ASTSS and the Domestic Violence advocacy service, and the title of the book launch, "Domestic Violence and Health Professionals; Building Partnerships

## VICTORIA

The Victoria Committee has held discussions on projects for the year but as yet these have not been put into action due to various other commitments. Our Study Discussion Group continues to meet on a fortnightly basis at a city campus on Tuesdays at 7pm. We are currently reading from Le-Doux "The Emotional Brain" and welcome new participants. The Victoria Chapter web site is in the process of being updated in line with other changes to the ASTSS web site. We welcome all newly joined Victoria members and will keep you posted with future activities.

As always we would like to hear from members, your views, ideas and assistance would be appreciated. CONTACT: Felicity May on 9523 5965 or [fmair@ozemail.com.au](mailto:fmair@ozemail.com.au)

Felicity May  
On behalf of Vic. Chapter Committee.



## QUEENSLAND

On March 24, a well attended event in Brisbane, co-sponsored by the Qld Chapter of ASTSS and the Brisbane Domestic Violence Centre (a community agency which advocates for victim/survivors of domestic violence) launched the recently published, 'Intimate Partner Abuse and Health Professionals: New Approaches to Domestic Violence'. The evidence based text is co-edited by Gwenneth Roberts (Chair of Qld ASTSS), Kelsey Hegarty (General Practitioner, Melbourne University), & Gene Feder (General Practitioner, Centre for Primary Care Research, Queen Marys and Barts, London). Dr Kelsey Hegarty was keynote speaker for the seminar that preceded the launch by Emeritus Professor Beverley Raphael (University of Qld), now University of Western Sydney, founding President of Central ASTSS. The contributors to the book are equally represented from Australia,

with Community", a consistent theme throughout the book. In launching the book, Professor Raphael called it a scholarly and compassionate text. For more information about this book which is now available in Australia, please contact Gwenneth Roberts [gwen.roberts@uq.edu.au](mailto:gwen.roberts@uq.edu.au).

Our Secretary of Qld ASTSS, Andrea (Gayle) Cullinan, has take a position as Asia Staff Care Coordinator for Tsunami Relief in Indonesia, based in Banda Aceh. Andrea has this position for one year, and we look forward to hearing news from her regarding the progress of the work in that area. In the meantime Qld ASTSS is without a Secretary, so we welcome any volunteers for the job which is not arduous. Please contact Gwenneth if you are willing.

Gwenneth Robert  
Chairperson, QLD ASTSS

