

By Maree Foley (Chair of the Affiliates Council), Wellington, New Zealand

[maree.foley@xtra.co.nz](mailto:maree.foley@xtra.co.nz)

and Anna Huber (Affiliate Council Representative), Canberra, Australia  
[annahuber.marymead@gmail.com](mailto:annahuber.marymead@gmail.com)

Greetings to all WAIMH Affiliates. This column includes updates about: The WAIMH 2016 Congress; the WAIMH social media initiative; and initiatives within the Affiliates Council (AC) to continue to build connections with emerging and established affiliates. It also provides a brief update concerning the voting process within the AC and the WAIMH by-laws regarding the requirement for each affiliate to be comprised of a minimum of 10 WAIMH members.

## The WAIMH Congress 2016

Over the last couple of months you will have received news from our President Miri Keren about changes to the location and title/theme for the next WAIMH Congress in 2016. First, this Congress, which was planned to have been held in Tel Aviv, will now be held in Prague. It will be hosted by the Israeli and Palestinian Infant Mental Health Associations. Second, a new focusing title has emerged for the Congress: Infant Mental Health in a rapidly changing world: Conflict, adversity, and resilience.

The AC look forward to working closely with the Israeli and Palestinian 2016 Congress team as they navigate their way through this creative solution to a remarkably complex, challenging and frightening time.

## Social Media

You will have received a recent email from the WAIMH office inviting you to participate in the WAIMH social media initiative. This initiative aims to develop of a social media voice between WAIMH members and a voice from which to communicate with our partner colleagues and associated organisations and groups. Please do consider sharing any time you might have spare to support this initiative.

## Making Connections with each other

The AC aims to connect affiliates with each other. Over the past years this function is steadily growing and we invite you to continue to reach out to each other with your good news as well as sharing the challenges you may be facing. Furthermore, we have noticed that enquiries for help and support are typically both unique to the affiliate while also sharing much in common with other affiliates. For example issues such as: working effectively with teams of professionals in a volunteer context; wondering how to access resources/ training for affiliate members; and what to do when energy, motivation and membership numbers dwindle.

We are in the process of trialling a new way to respond to individual requests to the AC by inviting a small group of Affiliates to gather on-line to listen, reflect and respond. The goal of this approach is to use the technology available to us to create pathways for affiliates to talk with each other about shared issues using skype or go-to-meeting, for example.

If you have a special issue or a question regarding your affiliates needs, please direct these to Anna Huber, AC Representative ([annahuber.marymead@gmail.com](mailto:annahuber.marymead@gmail.com))

## “WAIMH Study groups” for groups that are in the process of becoming a WAIMH Affiliate

A core task of the AC involves identifying and meeting the needs of affiliates at varying stages of their development. In response, the WAIMH Board suggested that new groups who as yet do not meet the criteria to become an affiliate, but who are in the process of developing their membership will be able to be part of WAIMH as a “WAIMH study group”. This initiative provides emergent groups, such as China, with an identity within WAIMH as they develop into an affiliate.

In developing this idea the AC has invited an emerging group to participate in a trial program which entails being helped to create and implement a plan for their group that:

1. Takes a structured step by step process over time to gradually meet the criteria for Affiliate status;
2. Outlines a time frame to create a sense of purpose and focus to the group's efforts; and
3. Provides opportunities for existing affiliates to provide pockets of specific support and encouragement to the emerging group.

If you are an emerging group and you would like to be part of this structured trial please contact: Maree Foley, AC Chair. ([maree.foley@xtra.co.nz](mailto:maree.foley@xtra.co.nz))

## Update in the voting process: A recommendation for the 2018 election

Since 2010, the AC have been working together to refine the original voting system of members to the roles of Affiliate Council Chair and Affiliate Council Representative. To date an iterative process of reflection has included identifying the diversity of types of Affiliates, such as:

- a) Affiliates that represent a whole country, such as New Zealand;
- b) Affiliates that represent a number of countries, such as the Nordic Affiliate; and
- c) Countries that are represented by a number of state based affiliates, such as the USA.

The process has also involved an online survey with the AC members, discussions at the AC meetings, and WAIMH Board meetings.

As a result the following recommendation is proposed:

*When voting for the election of AC officers: each affiliate will receive one vote except in cases where:*

*An affiliate is made up of more than 1 country. In this instance, each country within that affiliate (up to 5 countries) will hold one vote each; and*

*In countries where there are a more than 1 affiliate. In this instance, the country will receive 1 vote per affiliate, up to a maximum of 5 votes, irrespective of whether or not that country is comprised of more than 5 affiliates.*