



# Australian BPD Foundation Limited

*Support Promote Advocate  
for Borderline Personality Disorder*



**Annual Report 2020 - 2021**



## THE BOARD

### **Mrs Rita Brown - President**

B Pharm  
Lived experience as a carer for a person with BPD  
Carer Consultant

### **Associate Professor Sathya Rao – Vice President**

MBBS, MD, DPM, DNB, FRANZCP  
29 years' experience as a psychiatrist

### **Mr Keith Warren - Treasurer**

Institute of Chartered Accounts  
Over 40 years of experience as a principal in his own public accounting practice

### **Ms Karen Bailey – Secretary**

BA Library & Info Mgt, Grad Dip Bus (Admin Mgt)  
Experience as a carer of a person with BPD  
Lived Experience (Carer) Project Officer

### **Mrs Estelle Malseed OAM**

BA Diploma Social Studies (Melbourne)  
60+ years' experience as a social worker and mental health carer

### **Mr. Salmaan Ali (Appointed 10 June 2020)**

Member of Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand.  
20+ years' experience in Finance and Accounting.

### **Mr Milo Goldacre (Appointed 10 July 2020)**

LLB, BPPE  
Mental health advocate and law graduate

### **Ms Victoria (Vikki) Ryall (appointed 10 February 2021)**

### **Dr Alison Asche (appointed 29 March 2021)**

Master of Education, Master of Counselling & Human Services;  
Doctor of Philosophy (Psychology and Public Health)  
25+ years in Suicide Prevention and Mental Health

### **Ms Natasha Swingler (appointed 21 April 2021)**

5<sup>th</sup> year Bachelor of Law/Psychological Science student  
Lived experience of borderline personality disorder, complex mental illness  
3 years as a consumer worker



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## VISION

The **vision** of the Foundation is that people with BPD are acknowledged as having a mental illness that requires access to appropriate treatment and support for themselves and their families/friends/carers.

## MISSION

The **mission** of the Foundation is to promote a positive culture to support the recovery journey of people with BPD and their families/friends/carers. The Foundation also supports clinicians, health care personnel and researchers working in this field and acknowledges everyone who works towards a better recognition of BPD.

## AIMS

The Foundation **aims** to support and promote services which:

- Provide high quality accessible, timely, responsive and appropriate services, treatment and care for people living with BPD and their families/friends/carers.
- Provide high quality and accessible education and support for families/friends/carers of people living with BPD
- Provide high quality appropriate education for clinicians and frontline workers providing treatment and care for people living with BPD and their families/friends/carers.
- Promote a positive culture for those living with BPD and to advocate for accessible and appropriate services provided by highly skilled professionals offering choice within an environment of hope and optimism
- Improve the well-being of people living with BPD and their families/friends/carers and clinicians and others in the community who assist them.
- Provide high quality scientific research about all aspects of BPD

## VALUES

- **Respect** - for those the Foundation intersects with and all those in its' constituent base
- **Honestly** - & Integrity: we walk the talk openly and consistently
- **Tolerance** - for those who disagree with our positions and opinions and beliefs
- **Loyalty** - to the Foundation's causes
- **Humility** - in the manner we accept our failures and celebrate our successes
- **Acknowledge** - the value of those with lived experience and the value and the contribution of families/friends/carers and clinicians supporting them





## Report from the President: Rita Brown

Dear Members

On behalf of the Board of the Australian BPD Foundation I am very pleased to present our Annual Report for 20120/21.

When I was writing my report last year little did I imagine that again we (at least in Victoria) would be spending most of another year in lockdown. For many it has been an extremely challenging year and I wish to acknowledge and thank all board members for their enormous contribution during the year – including that of retiring board members Jo Farmer and Geri Taylor. Both have contributed invaluable to the Foundation and have worked extremely hard to assist us to further our goals. I wish them every success in their new ventures. I would also like to welcome 3 new board members co-opted during the year – Vikki Ryall, Alison Asche and Natasha Swingler and we value the diversity of skills they bring to the Board.

I would like to begin by thanking YOU - our members, both individual and organisations, supporters and partners for your ongoing support.

I also want to acknowledge and thank our Patron Dr Peggy Brown who also retired, and for her wise counsel over the years. We hope that when her current role concludes that she will feel able to return to support us as Patron again.

We wish to congratulate inaugural Board Member Estelle Malseed for receiving a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the years Queen's Birthday Honours List in recognition of her lifetime's work in the field of community (mental) health as both a carer and a (retired) social worker. Estelle gives freely of her time and energy to improve the lives of people touched by mental illness in particular borderline personality disorder. CONGRATULATIONS Estelle. This award is certainly well deserved.

### **Advocacy**

Our advocacy for members and everyone impacted by BPD continues with various consultations and organisations and includes:

- numerous contacts with the media around insensitive reporting of BPD
- ANZACATA (Australian, New Zealand and Asian Creative Arts Therapies Association)
- Various research projects and publications where we consider the approach and/or questions to be inappropriate
- Consultations with Mental Health Australia regarding their draft advice to the National Mental Health Commission on development of their National Stigma and Discrimination Reduction Strategy.
- Supporting a consortium of organisations applying for a grant to roll out a MiDBT (mother Infant DBT) programs across Australia. Unfortunately, the application was unsuccessful.



- Supporting the Mental Health Professionals Network (MHPN) to organise professional training.
- Providing training to clinicians and support workers in the NFP Sector.

It is becoming obvious that this is an area of increasing need as we seek to minimise the structural and systemic stigma that is so prevalent.

### National Consensus Statement by, with and for people impacted by borderline personality disorder



We finalised our National Consensus statement, which has been endorsed by 19 organisations in the Australian mental health sector.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions we were unable to present it to Greg Hunt MP in person. We will continue presenting it to Federal, state and opposition Ministers for Health and other key organisations.

With Federal elections due to be held soon we feel this is an ideal opportunity for our members to contact their local federal MPs and promote our Consensus Statement which calls on all

governments and elements of the service system to work together to make our vision a reality through:

- endorsement of a national model of care for people with BPD
- an accompanying national framework for the family and carers of people with BPD
- a national training framework for health professionals
- establishment of a BPD Centre of Excellence in each state and territory of Australia.

The statement can be downloaded from <https://bit.ly/BPDConsensusStatement>

In addition, we now invite YOUR support to add your voice to ours as we advocate for everyone with BPD (and their support network) to access timely and equitable access to treatment and support from an appropriately skilled workforce <https://bit.ly/BPDConsensus>. Thank you to everyone who has already added their voice. The voice for change is loud and strong. Thank you!

### Petition 'INCREASE to 40'

We also presented our petition to Greg Hunt seeking to increase Medicare funded Better Access initiative to 40 visits for borderline personality disorder and other complex mental illnesses. We collected 1487 signatures on paper and 16931 online. A huge thanks to everyone who signed and/or collected signatures. Unfortunately, we feel the response to the pandemic has overshadowed the petition, however, we will keep advocating.

### Collaborations

The International Society for the Study of Personality Disorders (ISPD) has launched a chapter for the Australasian region to raise the international profile of the work being done in our region. I am honoured to have been nominated as an inaugural Board member.

The Board is working with Goodwill Collective a pro bono volunteer-based consultancy which provides specialist skills and expertise to charities, social enterprise and not-for-profit groups. They are assisting in developing our financial strategy to support our growth into the future. Additionally, the Board is working to finalise our Strategic Plan for 2022-25. Exciting times ahead.

BPD Awareness week in Australia is the first week in October. To continue the awareness of BPD throughout the year, and in support of the USA and UK BPD Awareness Month we partnered with Emotions Matter (New

York) and hosted a presentation by Dr Carla Sharp from the University of Houston. She presented 'BPD in Adolescents: Myths, Identity & Treatment' available here <https://bit.ly/BPDinAdolescents>.

We received our Fundraising Licence for Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia. These recognise our Charity status and ensure that any money raised is spent on supporting our purpose.

I have outlined some of our major activities. In addition, members of the board and branches also attend regular speaking opportunities and promotions at mental health events.

Enquiries about services and support come daily by phone and email, indicating how challenging it is for many to access the help and support they need. We are not qualified to offer counselling, but we try to provide information that will hopefully assist them to find something that works for them. These contacts reinforce the importance of advocating for appropriate treatment and support to be readily accessible when needed.

I am indebted to all the Board who are always supportive with a 'can do' attitude and a small, dedicated, and energetic group of volunteers who support us and the Foundation in the other states. Whilst we have achieved a lot over the past year, we realise that we cannot sit back and 'pat ourselves on the back'. There is still much to do

### **Acknowledgments**

We owe a huge debt of gratitude to Statewide Services (Eastern Health) in providing us with office space and support. We are exceedingly grateful. We are also indebted to Price Gibson Chartered Accountants who generously audit our Annual Financial Report on a pro bono basis. Thank you to both organisations.

Also a huge THANK YOU to everyone who has donated to us this year. Your donations are vital for us to continue our advocacy work. All donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible.

Last, and certainly not least - a special thank you to YOU - our members, who give us a louder bargaining voice. Our membership continues to grow and on 1st October we had nearly 1300 members.

## **National BPD Training & Professional Development Strategy to upskill and engage clinicians working with people with BPD and their families.**

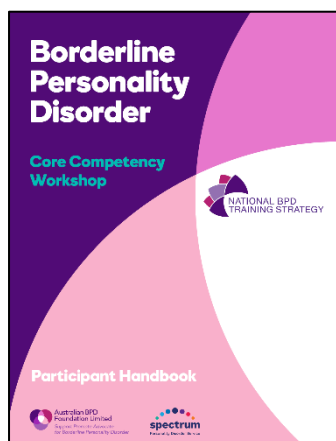
### **Stage 1 – Webinars**

The webinars continue to be a valuable resource accessed via our website <https://bpdfoundation.org.au/national-training-strategy.php>.

### **Stage 2 – eLearning Modules**

The second stage of the Strategy concluded during the year and the eLearning modules will remain on our website for people to complete whenever convenient. <https://bpdfoundation.org.au/learning-modules.php>. As of 30 April 2021 approximately 1,121 health professionals from around the world had completed the modules - Australia 666; USA 45; UK 5; NZ 3; Canada 2; India 1; France 1; Saudi 1; Singapore 1; and the remainder did not respond to the question. Feedback provided was extremely positive. We acknowledge the work of Prof Brin Grenyer and his team from Project Air Strategy in developing these modules.

## Stages 3 & 4 – Workshops, Train the Trainer & Supervision



Stage 3 has now been completed, consisting of 2-day workshops based on the 'Core Competency Manual for BPD' developed by Spectrum and our Foundation. The core competencies are based on the commonalities shared by both specialist and generalist treatments for BPD, also known as the 'common factors' in psychological treatment.

Over 300 clinicians attended the 'Borderline Personality Disorder Core Competency Workshops' in face-to-face sessions across the country, despite the difficult task of working with constantly changing COVID-19 lockdowns and travel restrictions.

The Foundation is indebted to the training team for this project - Lukas Cheney, Cathryn Pilcher, Sathya Rao, Peter Smith, and Marianne Weddell and the project manager Dimitra Petroulias. We commend them for their commitment and passion in delivering the workshops across the country during very challenging circumstances. Despite huge challenges the team ran all but two of the workshops in person. Participants, especially those in regional areas, highlighted the value of participant interaction in activities and role plays, in-depth group discussions and the provision of immediate feedback from trainers. It also provided opportunities to address misinformation and stigma about BPD and shift any of the participants' hesitancy to work with people with BPD.

The trainers commented to me that it was encouraging to witness the changing attitudes of the clinicians and an increased willingness to treat people with BPD post the workshop.

Interest far outstretched our capacity to deliver, and we hope to receive ongoing funding so that we can continue to provide this training.

Stage 3 also included two Train-the-Trainer workshops to upskill participants to provide the Core Competency training in their local areas. These were delivered online with participants from all states and territories. I found it rewarding to see these new trainers practise their new skills. I joined in the training on the final day and was impressed both with the unique training and the skillsets of participants.

Stage 4 includes professional development and supervision to help embed theory into practice and will continue until mid-2022. Expressions of Interest will be advertised via our eBulletin and website.

We are also seeking collaboration with colleges and organisations to adapt the curriculum for their specific requirements. Please contact me via [rbrown@bpdfoundation.org.au](mailto:rbrown@bpdfoundation.org.au) if you can assist us with any connections.

We wish to acknowledge the financial support of the National Mental Health Commission for the Training Strategy.

In addition, we have provided Professional Development training to various organisations. We generally deliver this in a team of 3 presenters to be inclusive of the lived experience (consumer and carer) and clinician voices.

## BPD Awareness Week 2021



Due to uncertainties around holding face-to-face events and travel restrictions, we reconfigured our conference to be a series of predominantly online events during BPD Awareness Week.

We collaborated again this year with a group of organisations and individuals to organise a campaign for BPD Awareness Week which runs from 1-7 October.

I was honoured this year to be asked to be the ambassador for BPD Awareness Week. My message is available on [www.bpdawareness.com.au/](http://www.bpdawareness.com.au/)

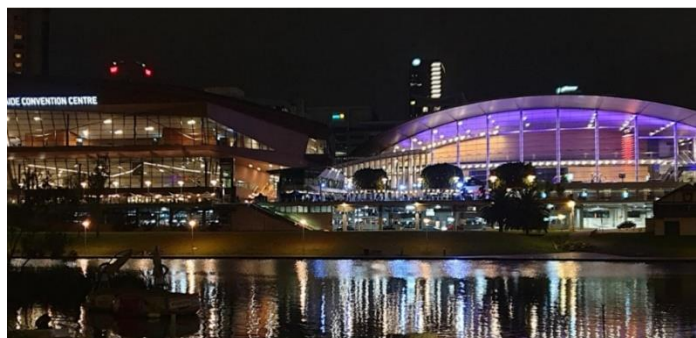
This year's theme built upon the 2020 campaign of *'Flipping the Script: Changing the Narrative on BPD'* which identified a gap in treatment programs addressing a person's complex sense of self, self-stigma and negative self-narrative.

The message for this year's campaign was *'Discover Creative Wellbeing'*. It aimed to encourage thinking beyond the conventional concept of 'therapy' - to consider creative therapies and explore creative ways to promote positive outcomes:

- **For people experiencing the symptoms of BPD**  
How can access to creative methods of expression and communication be increased, supporting visual and audio practices, peer support and thinking outside standard verbal therapeutic approaches?
- **For supporters/carers/families**  
How can they encourage and instil more creative thinking and ways to approach wellbeing?
- **For people working with people living with BPD**  
What can be done to support thinking outside the box in terms of treatment practices and methods. How can more creative thinking and ways to approach wellbeing be encouraged? This could include for example exploring expression and communication in creative ways such as song writing, music, poetry, letter/journal writing and non-verbal communication such as prompt/strengths cards.

The purpose-built website makes all resources available for free download – we just ask that you don't edit these resources and that you acknowledge the source. I would like to acknowledge the work of our graphic designer Mahlie Jewell, a lived experience advocate who combines her artistic skills, life experiences of having BPD and her advocacy in such a unique way. Chloe from SA joined the team this year and we value her artistic skills and her support of the team.

I also wish to acknowledge the work of Karen Bailey who coordinated the campaign and was successful in negotiating to get the lights of the Adelaide Convention Centre switched on in purple on the 1<sup>st</sup> October. Last, but certainly not least, all of you who joined us in one of online or in one of the in-person events held in Adelaide and Perth.





Other events, held online included:

- ‘Circles of Support and Strength’ an online art-based activity that encouraged us all to look at who and what supports helped us to stay strong, connected and living well.
- Mahlie and Rita were invited to present to the Australian College of Mental Health Nursing
- A/Prof Sathya Rao presented an online forum on the divisive topic of ‘BPD and Trauma’.
- Dr Charlotte van Schie (a researcher from Project Air in NSW) and Mahlie Jewell presented to about 150 mental health professionals from around Australia on ‘Supporting recovery through understanding on neural mechanisms of BPD’. We hope to make this presentation available soon on our website
- Mahlie, Chloe, Karen and I presented on ‘BPD Awareness Week in Australia’ to the International Society for the Study of Personality Disorders (ISSPD) Family Day congress which was well received. It is fantastic to see our resources being shared world-wide, and we had two organisations reach out to us afterwards who were interested in collaborating and sharing the campaign to their networks.
- The South Australia branch held a BPD Awareness Week Picnic - Creative Wellbeing through Nature. Unfortunately, this needed to be held indoors due to the inclement weather. About 70 people attended and participated in a large variety of activities.
- Similarly, the Western Australia branch held a picnic in the park.
- Many other organisations hosted a variety of events and we thank them for their support.

Mahlie’s resources designed for Awareness Week are available for free download (illustrated below):

<https://www.bpdawareness.com.au/resources/>

Follow the campaign on:

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/BPDawarenessweek/](http://www.facebook.com/BPDawarenessweek/)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/bpdawarenessweek/](http://www.instagram.com/bpdawarenessweek/)

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BPDAwarenessWK>

The postcards are available for sale – if you are interested, please send us an email to

[admin@bpdfoundation.org.au](mailto:admin@bpdfoundation.org.au).



## eBulletin and ‘BPD Advocate’

Our monthly ‘eBulletin’ provides up-to-date information about events, training opportunities, research and other relevant information, and quarterly ‘BPD Advocate’ newsletter shares interviews and articles by people with lived experience, carers, clinicians and researchers, and other relevant BPD news in greater depth.

These two publications now have a distribution of nearly 2000. I wish to acknowledge and say thanks to Karen Bailey, our editor, for the detailed and demanding work involved in seeking and collating relevant information. Researching for the eBulletin has highlighted the fragmentation of services, the lack of services outside the capital cities and the challenges accessing treatment and support *when* needed. Thank you to all our contributors who provide us with relevant information for inclusion.

## Future Directions

The Board plans to finalise its Strategic Plan for 2022-25 before the end of the year and use this to guide us as we grow and consolidate our position as a national voice for BPD across Australia. Meeting these objectives requires us to ensure our financial viability and capacity. To assist with this, we will continue to diversify the skill set of the Board.

After the extra difficulties experienced by everyone during 2020 and 2021 we will continue the challenging task of advocating for further advances for people with BPD and their family/friends/carers being able to access timely and appropriate service when needed from a suitably skilled and supported workforce.

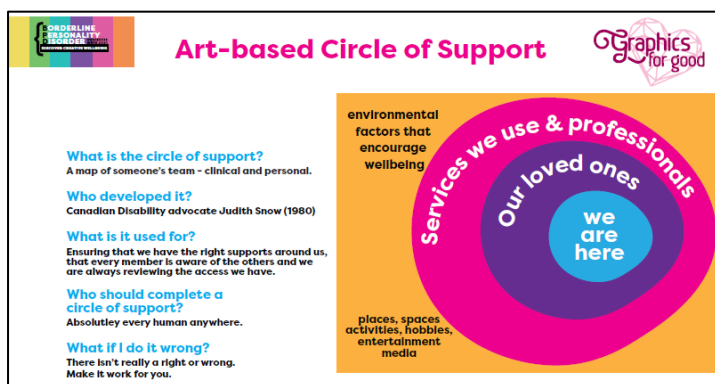
I wish to thank our membership, volunteers and Board Members for their support to help us continue our innovative work and achieve many successes in pursuing our goals.

*“Doing the best at this moment puts you in the best place for the next moment.” — Oprah*

## State Branch Reports

It’s been a relatively quiet year for the branches.

### New South Wales



The infographic is titled 'Art-based Circle of Support' and features the 'Graphics for good' logo. It includes a central diagram of three concentric circles: an inner blue circle labeled 'we are here', a middle purple circle labeled 'Our loved ones', and an outer pink circle labeled 'Services we use & professionals'. To the left of the diagram is a list of questions and answers: 'What is the circle of support?' (A map of someone's team - clinical and personal.), 'Who developed it?' (Canadian Disability advocate Judith Snow (1980)), 'What is it used for?' (Ensuring that we have the right supports around us, that every member is aware of the others and we are always reviewing the access we have.), 'Who should complete a circle of support?' (Absolutley every human anywhere.), and 'What if I do it wrong?' (There isn't really a right or wrong. Make it work for you.). To the right of the diagram are two text boxes: 'environmental factors that encourage wellbeing' and 'places, spaces activities, hobbies, entertainment media'.

The NSW branch and ‘Graphics for Good’ hosted an event during BPD Awareness Week titled *Circles of Strength and Support* facilitated by Mahlie and Em, both lived experience advocates. The art-based activity was formulated on ‘the circle of support framework’ which was first developed by disability activists Judith Snow and ally Marsha Forest (1980). The activity used art-practice and processes to creatively describe, express

and depict further how we all may access and how to build strengthen the supportive connections and circles around us.

## Queensland

Momentum is increasing in Queensland to reinvigorate the Queensland branch. An initial group has worked hard to develop a Strategic Plan for the State. The development of the *Resource Guide for Services in Queensland* has been a major focus this year with the draft Directory ready to go to the Graphic Designer and printer. Much of the information is already available on our website.

## South Australia

The SA Branch has currently met on four occasions in 2021. There were 11 members at the commencement of 2021 however seven members have left during the year for various personal reasons throughout the year. Some reasons for leaving the branch are to be celebrated and include: a Lived Experience member graduated with a Law Degree and commenced work in a Law firm, and two members retired; a carer retired after many years of raising awareness and providing support to the community, groups and individuals; and a clinician retired after 50 years of service to the community and healthcare profession. The Secretariat position was also vacated however the person is still a member. As such, with members leaving/reducing duties, this has affected the overall capacity of the Branch from previous years. Unfortunately, we currently have no lived experience members and despite many ongoing efforts to recruit a person a First Nation's person, we have been unable to fill the position to date.

We were very fortunate to have A/Prof Sathya Rao join us for our March branch meeting which was very well attended. Significant discussion ensued in relation to the findings of the Royal Commission into mental Health Services in Victoria. Other highlights of the year include the review of the Annual Workplan which while current membership has reduced capacity, the remaining members have been consistent with advocacy and raising awareness for BPD ongoing in both carer and clinical capacities. We also held an event in BPD Awareness Week in collaboration with Sanctuary BPD Carer Support Group and the BPD Collaborative (BPD Co), at a picnic on 3<sup>rd</sup> October. Bandana sales have been reported as steady and in October we reached the break-even point of cost versus income.

Members attend meetings at BPD Co, Sanctuary and Family Connections and continue to work collaboratively with both government and non- government organisations (NGOs). Members have been providing a range of education specifically related to BPD and connecting with people in both mental health community, Intermediate Care and Prison Health/Department of Correctional Services settings throughout 2021.

The December 2021 meeting will focus on improving membership in 2021 and it will be vital for lived experience people to join and have a voice moving forward and provide balance to membership.

Lynne Doherty  
Chair

## Victoria

The Victorian Branch of the Foundation continues to work with the Mental Health Professionals Network (MHPN) to provide high quality training for mental health professionals. One session was offered this year as a part of BPD Awareness Week presented by Dr Charlotte van Schie and Mahlie Jewell on '*Supporting recovery through understanding on neural mechanisms of BPD*'. I feel the highlight was Mahlie's presentation illustrated by her artwork. Unfortunately, MHPN no longer allows us to record these presentations. We hope to record separately as soon as possible and upload to <https://bpdfoundation.org.au/mhpn-victorian-bpd-network.php>

## Western Australia

The Western Australian Branch committee continues to meet regularly.

This year:

- The committee enjoyed a live theatre performance by Evelyn Snook which explores their personal experience of living with BPD.
- Mental Health Professional Network meetings have been delivered
- The WA Branch have liaised with the WA Mental Health Commission Personality Disorder Sub-network committee. It's pleasing to hear of the finalisation of a State-wide Model of Care for people with Personality Disorders. Available from <https://www.mhc.wa.gov.au/media/3579/pd-report-jan-2021.pdf>
- During BPD Awareness Week a picnic was held which was open to all.

Rita Brown (October 2021)

