



# Australian BPD Foundation Limited

*Support Promote Advocate  
for Borderline Personality Disorder*



**Annual Report 2019 - 2020**



## 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  
42 years' 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.

### **Mrs Estelle Malseed**

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

### **Mrs Geri Taylor**

BHA, MPH, FCHSM, FIML & MAAG  
Career in health administration and senior policy roles in Government and regional health authorities with understandings across general and some mental health issues.

### **Ms Jo Farmer (Appointed 20 December 2019)**

BA(Hons) Modern History and Politics (Oxford); Grad Cert in Evaluation (Melbourne)  
Lived experience of mental illness; Evaluator and policymaker in the mental health sector

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

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

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

LLB, BPPE  
Mental health advocate and law graduate



# Australian BPD Foundation Limited

*Support Promote Advocate  
for Borderline Personality Disorder*

## 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/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/carers. The Foundation also supports clinicians, health care personnel and researches 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 with BPD and their families/carers.
- Provide high quality and accessible education and support for families/carers of people with BPD
- Provide high quality appropriate education for clinicians and frontline workers providing treatment and care for people with BPD and their carers/families.
- Promote a positive culture for those 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 with BPD and their families/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/carers and clinicians in 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 2019/20. Despite the challenges we have all experienced during 2020 in so many diverse ways we have continued our vision to advocate for everyone impacted by BPD. We feel that 2020 has been an especially challenging year for those impacted by BPD which has helped the Board to remain focussed.

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

This year we have continued our advocacy with the **VICTORIAN Government Royal Commission into Mental Health** (<https://rcvmhs.vic.gov.au/>) through personal conversations, being invited to submit a witness statement (<https://tinyurl.com/yyruakxo>), and to participate in an interview with one of the Commissioners Dr. Alex Cockram. The Commission is charged with inquiring into and reporting on how Victoria's mental health system can most effectively prevent mental illness, and deliver treatment, care and support so that all those in the Victorian community can experience their best mental health, now and into the future. We hope the Victorian Government honours its promises to implement all the Commission's recommendations. Each time I have spoken with the Commissioners, or their staff, I have found them to have a good understanding of the many challenges experienced trying to access services for BPD.

At the time of writing we are awaiting the public release of the **Productivity Commission** report and to hear the Governments' response.

**Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality & Safety** (<https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/> )

We applied to present at a hearing of the commission in Melbourne and unfortunately were not given the opportunity

Our submission is available <https://bpdfoundation.org.au/advocacy.php>

Board members have also taken part in:

- Department of Health's Consultation Paper – Service Model for Adult Mental Health Centres.
- National Safe Spaces Network Scoping Study Consultation by KPMG on behalf of the Department of Health - to explore stakeholder perspectives on the concept of a national Safe Spaces network, including the need for such a network and its potential operation in the Australian context. Safe Spaces are intended to offer non-clinical support for people at risk of suicide

- Developing a more supportive emergency department for mental health presentations - Enhancing outcomes and experiences through architectural design
- Informing a national strategy to reduce stigma and discrimination towards people with mental illness that is poorly understood in the community (funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health).
- SANE Australia's 'Our Turn to Speak' Stigma Report Card

As we continue to work towards compassionate, trauma-informed, strengths-based, recovery-oriented supports and treatments we have also contacted a couple of websites and a book publisher highlighting what we consider to be inappropriate portrayals of those with BPD. This is definitely a 'work in progress'.

### **Mental Health Australia**

We have been accepted as a voting member of Mental Health Australia which allows us a greater opportunity to participate in numerous Policy Forums and considerably increases the reach of our advocacy. <https://mhaustralia.org/>

### **Survey**

The Foundation, in joint collaboration with Spectrum Personality Disorder Service, have launched a survey asking Australians living with BPD about their experience of mental health services during the imposition of restrictions due to the pandemic as well as their general well-being and seeking to explore the value (or otherwise) of services offering telehealth in the new COVID-19 'norm'. We invite everyone who (i) currently resides in Australia and (ii) identifies with having a BPD diagnosis or traits.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BPDfoundation>

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

Over the last 12 months the Foundation has been consulting with a number of individuals and organisations with the aim to prepare a shared call to action for Governments to fund evidence-based services for people living with BPD - a united voice for change. This will be open for further discussion at our AGM

### **Petition "INCREASE to 40"**

Due to COVID-19 we delayed presenting Greg Hunt our petition to increase Medicare funded Better Access initiative to 40 visits for Borderline Personality Disorder and other complex mental illnesses.



It was good to hear of the increase to 20 funded visits under the Better Access Scheme, however we are well aware this is a short term initiative and still falls far short of what people with BPD need to be able to access the care they require. It is our intention to finalise our

Consensus Statement and deliver both the Statement and Petition to Greg Hunt at the same time. Sign online <https://tinyurl.com/increaseto40> or request a paper petition form to be emailed to you.. Thank you to everyone who has signed to date.

## Within the Board

Dr Sherilene Carr retired, we wish her well in her new endeavours, and we welcomed three co-opted members – Jo Farmer, Milo Goldacre and Salmaan Ali. Their skill sets contribute significantly to the Board's ability to do the work we are charged to do. Already, all three have played a positive contribution in helping us to meet our objectives. 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

## Awards



Congratulations to our Vice President A/Prof Sathya Rao (Spectrum Executive Clinical Director) who recently received the RANZCP Victorian Branch Meritorious Award.

The award recognises his contributions towards understanding and treating people living with BPD. 'Sathya has...transformed our approach to personality disorders from nihilism to hopefulness'. In Sathya's acceptance speech he says 'While this award carries personal significance for me, I see it more as recognition to the patients and the field of borderline personality disorder itself'.

Congratulations, too, to our Patron A/Prof Jo Beatson on being awarded the College Citation in honour of special services to psychiatry especially in the field of personality disorders.

## 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.

Last, but certainly not least - a thank you to you - our members, who give us a louder bargaining voice. Also a huge THANK YOU to our donors who help support our work.

Our membership continues to grow and on 1st November we had nearly 900 members.

I have outlined some of our major activities. Members of the board and branches also continue with regular speaking opportunities and promotions at mental health events. Enquiries for information about services for treatment and support by phone and email come daily and indicate how challenging it is for many to access the help and support they need. We try to provide the people who contact us with some information that will hopefully assist them to find something that works for them. We are not qualified to offer counselling. These contacts reinforce to us the importance of continuing to advocate for appropriate treatment and support to be readily accessible when needed.

## National BPD Training & Professional Development Strategy

**Stage 1** – The webinars continue to be a valuable resource accessed via our website

<https://bpdfoundation.org.au/national-training-strategy.php>.

**Stage 2** - Developed by Project Air Strategy for Personality Disorders in NSW in partnership with the Foundation and Spectrum, this is a series of 5 online eLearning modules titled *'Effective Psychological Treatment for BPD: an eLearning program'*. It is designed to support mental health workers and service providers access the knowledge and skills to provide evidence-based treatment and support to the person with BPD and their family/carers.. This continues to be a well utilised resource.

<https://bpdfoundation.org.au/learning-modules.php>

**Stages 3 and 4 – Face to face “Core Competency for working with BPD” workshops across Australia, ‘Train the Trainer’ workshops and ongoing supervision and support for the life of the project**

The Australian BPD Foundation has partnered with Spectrum Personality Disorder Service to complete Stages 3 & 4 of the National BPD Training and Professional Development Strategy (Strategy). The overall aim of the Strategy is to upskill and engage clinicians working with people with borderline personality disorder (BPD) and their families. As of October 2020, the BPD Core Competency Curriculum and associated training materials have been developed as a 2-day workshop of ten core competencies to enable clinicians to work therapeutically with people with BPD and their families.

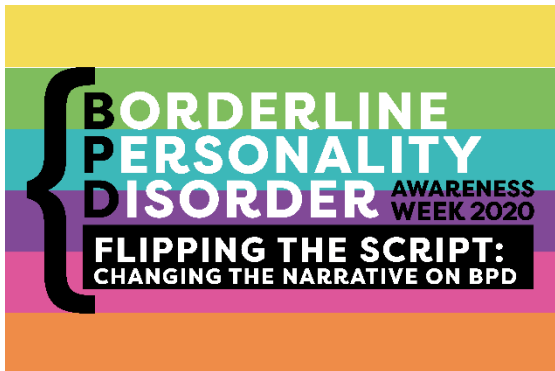
The core competencies are based on the commonalities shared by both specialist and generalist treatments for BPD, also known as the ‘common factors’ in psychological treatment. The curriculum was developed with the expertise of the clinical, research and workforce development team within Spectrum and Australian BPD Foundation using the latest published Australian and international literature and advice from people with lived experience.

Unfortunately, due to the Australian wide COVID-19 restrictions, the delivery of the face-to-face BPD Core Competency workshops has been postponed. We have received a 6-month project extension by the National Mental Health Commission to deliver the workshops in 2021. This will maintain the face-to-face model of delivery which provides opportunities for participant interaction in activities and role plays, indepth group discussions and immediate feedback from trainers.

The Train the Trainer workshops and post training support program are planned to coincide with the delivery of BPD Core Competency workshops in 2021. If COVID-19 restrictions are still in place in January 2021, the face-to-face workshops will be redesigned to be delivered online in a format that will maintain participant interaction and trainer feedback opportunities.

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

## BPD Awareness Week 2020 and 10<sup>th</sup> Annual National BPD Conference



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

Our ambassador this year was Emeritus Professor Henry Jackson from the University of Melbourne. You can view his

message at [www.bpdawareness.com.au/](http://www.bpdawareness.com.au/)

This year's campaign and conference theme, 'Flipping the Script: Changing the Narrative on BPD' aimed to change the way we think and talk about borderline personality disorder.

It encourages people living with BPD to be mindful of the way they think about themselves, allow others to see their challenges, move towards strengths-based self-talk and to celebrate their strengths.

It also challenges families, supporters and people working with those living with BPD to change the way they speak and write about people living with BPD, to encourage and promote the individual's strengths, reframe their challenges into strengths-based language, educate themselves by accessing new research, and to amplify the voice of lived experience.

I wish to acknowledge the work of three people in particular - Mahlie Jewell, a graphic designer and a national advocate for BPD who once again designed all the resources for the 2020 campaign, Kris Murphy who revamped the BPD Awareness Week website and Karen Bailey who coordinated the campaign. Last, but certainly not least, all of you who helped us to develop the content and responded to one of our surveys.

Mahlie's resources are available for free download <https://www.bpdawareness.com.au/resources/>.

Follow the campaign on:

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

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

Twitter: [twitter.com/BPDawarenessWK](https://twitter.com/BPDawarenessWK)

Where COVID-19 restrictions had eased face-to-face events were able to take place – ACT and WA held outdoor events and SA held a physically distanced event at Flinders University with a focus on the often neglected topic of men and BPD.

### Conference:

Due to the online format this year we were able to include presentations from other states and internationally, with a variety of 'live' and pre-recorded sessions. Many sessions generated a huge interest from around Australia and even from overseas.

Most of the presentations have been uploaded to our Conference Archives at <https://bpdfoundation.org.au/conference2020.php>



Presentations included:

**“Treatment for BPD: A Common Factors Approach”**

Presented by Lois Choi-Kain (Director of the Gunderson Personality Disorder Institute USA)

**‘Coz of COVID: Survival Strategies from people with lived experience of BPD’**

Lived Experience advocates around Australia talk about the tools, skills and strategies they have used to maintain wellness during the COVID-19 pandemic. Advocates include: Mahlie (NSW); Carissa (WA); Aaron (SA), Tia (ACT) and Holly (Vic).

**‘P.A.W.S. Pets Assisting Wellness Session’**

Pets were invited to a zoom session to meet other pets who assist in the wellness of a human and to talk about all the great things they do to keep their humans happy and healthy.

**‘What is Family Connections? The top 5 skills and how they can help you and your family’**

A webinar for families and carers presented by NEABPD Australia

**‘An overview of using Sensory Modulation with people with Borderline Personality Disorder’**

Presented by Carolyn Fitzgibbon and Julie O’Sullivan

**‘Latest Australian Research in borderline personality disorder’**

Six researchers from diverse areas discussed recent research:

- ‘Stigma perpetuation at the interface of mental health care: a review to compare patient and clinician perspectives of stigma and borderline personality disorder (BPD)’ Daniel Ring
- ‘Research into Mother/Infant DBT’ A/Prof Anne Sved-Williams
- ‘Assessment of peer led Workshops for carers (family, friends and partners) supporting a person with a diagnosis (or possible diagnosis) of BPD’ Rita Brown and Jo Veltkamp
- ‘How does research benefit from co-authoring people with lived experience?’ Dr. Fiona Ng and Mahlie Jewell

**‘Early Intervention for borderline personality disorder’**

A panel discussion with:

- Prof Andrew Chanen - Head of Personality Disorder Research at Orygen
- Susan Preece - Family Peer Support Officer at Orygen
- Natasha - Member of the Youth Participation Team at Orygen
- Rita Brown - President Australian BPD Foundation

**‘Q & A Session for General Practitioners for Working with People with BPD’**

Presented by Spectrum Personality Disorder Service

**‘The Latest Treatment Options for Borderline Personality Disorder’**

Professor Andrew Chanen, Dr Yogendra Agrawal and Carissa Wright

**‘Men with Borderline Personality Disorder’**

A panel discussion flipping the common misconception that BPD is predominantly a female condition and encouraging clinicians to be aware that BPD presents in men in similar proportions to women. With -

- Jake Hodgman - Lived Experience
- Aaron Fornarino - Lived Experience
- Brodie Boswell - Lived Experience Performer - Brodie has written a hip-hop song on BPD and performed it live

- Tony Greenrod - Carer & MC
- Kimberley Gilson - Forensic Psychology registrar, Senior clinician BPD Collaborative
- Sharon Bax - SA Prison Health

We wish to acknowledge the support of the following organisations for their support in hosting events or sponsorship: BPDco; MHPN; NEABPD; Orygen; Prevention United, SANE Australia and Spectrum Personality Disorder Service

## **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 1800. 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**

After the challenges experience during 2020 we hope that 2021 will be less challenging and we see further advances for people with BPD being able to access timely and appropriate service when needed from a suitably skilled workforce.

We will continue to diversify the skill set of the Board and consolidate our financial integrity and our position as a national voice for BPD across Australia

I wish to thank our membership our volunteers and especially the Board Members for their support to help us achieve what we have to date and to assist us to reach our priorities listed above.

*“If we work for social change - and it is good to do such things - let us always do it with an awakened heart big enough for all. There is no enemy; there is only ignorance. There is no one to hate, only many to love.” John Kehoe*

## State Branch Reports

Our local branches continue to support our work in their respective states and to advocate for services and supports in their own states.

### New South Wales

2020 has been a quiet year for the NSW Branch and we hope to reinvigorate the branch within the next 12 months. Some members of the branch led the BPD Awareness Week Activity **P.A.W.S. Pets Assisting Wellness Session** where pets were invited to a zoom session to meet other pets who assist in the wellness of a human and to talk about all the great things they do to keep their humans happy and healthy.

Thanks to Skylar (a pug), Clarence the lamb and Quentin Tabbytino the cat and Halle (also a pug) supported by Mahlie, Laura and Karlen.

### Queensland

2020 has been a challenging year for the committee in Queensland. The resource guide to services is nearly completion and we hope to have it available by the end of the year.

### South Australia

SA Branch of BPD Foundation meets monthly. There are 11 members that include Lived Experience, Carers and clinicians. We have a detailed work plan that is reviewed and updated quarterly and a task list that is updated at each monthly meeting.

Prior to COVID-19 we had planned to have a guest speaker bimonthly, and this will reconvene as soon as possible. We have had two guest speakers - Professor Nicholas Proctor (Uni SA) updating research being on BPD, and the Medical Director from Medstar, South Australian Ambulance Services (SAAS) who has a specific interest in mental health.

Members attend meetings at BPD Co, MHPN BPD Clinical Network and coordinate services with Sanctuary and Family Connections. Members contributed to the BPD Pathways consultation and are also working collaboratively with non- government organisations (NGOs) such as Headspace, Sonder and Skylight.

We held **The Lived Experience of Men with BPD** event for BPD Awareness Week in October (which overlapped with Mental Health Awareness week) and are reviewing how to improve the profile of the branch and our associated affiliations.

We are looking at reaching Lived Experience and Carers through platforms such as Twitter and Instagram to meet the needs of our younger audience.

Lynne Doherty  
(Chair - SA Branch) October 2020

## Victoria

The Victorian Branch of the Foundation continues to work with the Mental Health Professionals Network to provide quarterly training for mental health professionals. Thank you to our presenters this year.

- Working with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) and Sexual Diversity: Presented by Julian Nolan
- An overview of using Sensory Modulation with people with Borderline Personality Disorder: presented by Carolyn Fitzgibbon and Julie O'Sullivan.

Where possible these presentations are made available on our website <https://bpdfoundation.org.au/mhpn-victorian-bpd-network.php>

## Western Australia

The Western Australian Branch committee continues to meet regularly.

The year:

- The co-chair, Sharon Karas, resigned early in the year. We wish her well in her new endeavours and say 'thanks' to Samantha Scott for taking on the role of Chair
- Mental Health Professional Network meetings have been delivered
- Fundraising and donation of \$300 from Grill'd Applecross
- The WA Branch have liaised with the WA Mental Health Commission Personality Disorder Sub-network committee
- Branch planning meeting with the committee setting some strategic goals
- During BPD Awareness Week a picnic was held which was open to all.

Samantha Scott MIFWA

Chairperson (Interim) BPD Foundation WA Branch