



# WAADF Member Newsletter

[www.waadf.org.au](http://www.waadf.org.au)

Winter 2009



## From the Editor...

Hi Members,

I hope this Winter Edition of the WAADF newsletter finds you warm and well. I encourage you to read this newsletter with your diary at hand as there are many important dates to note: open and closing dates for WAADF board position nominations, conferences and workshops galore.

In this edition we have introduced a new feature, 'Spotlight On...' where each quarter we will turn the spotlight on a different WAADF member. We are hoping to facilitate a greater level of familiarity and interaction between members, and what better way to do this than by getting to know more about each other. Stay tuned, we may just be turning the spotlight on YOU in a future edition!

Cheers

*Teresa Davidson* Speech Pathologist

## 2009 Member Meetings

All current and prospective members are invited to WAADF quarterly meetings:

### 3 September (AGM)

### 3 December

Thursdays, 9 – 11am  
State Child Development Centre  
16 Rheola St, West Perth

Please invite your colleagues.  
Membership forms and payments may be submitted at meetings.

All memberships will be due for renewal at the September AGM.

Election of Board Members for 09/10 will also occur at the AGM.

## From the Chair...

Well its almost that time again ... WAADF's AGM and the opportunity to vote in Board Members for the coming year! Perhaps you are thinking of joining the Board yourself? **All nominations are welcome, just be sure that your forms are received by either myself or the WAADF Secretary by 6 August.** Members received Nomination Forms with their June 2009 Forum Minutes. Extra copies can be requested from the WAADF Secretary if needed.

I can hardly believe that it has been 5 years since WAADF was incorporated. A lot has been achieved in that time and WAADF's role in supporting and advocating for high quality, multidisciplinary ASD assessment and diagnostic practices in WA has been recognized not only within our state but also across the country. Of course these achievements have been the result of the vision, dedication, skill and passion of the many professionals working in this area, from the 1980s right through to the present. WAADF continues to both reflect and depend on these attributes and all of its members can be very proud of their part in its achievements. It is exciting to see the growing numbers of participants at the quarterly meetings and we look forward to seeing you in September!

Best wishes *Sarah MacDermott* WAADF Chairperson 2008-09

## WAADF BOARD NOMINATIONS (Closing 6 August 2009)

By the time this newsletter arrives in your inbox all positions on the WAADF Board will be open for nomination. Positions are voluntary and held for a term of one year (Sept – Sept). They include:

- Chairperson
- Vice Chairperson
- Secretary
- Treasurer

As well as several positions for 'Ordinary Members' to sit on the board.

The board meet about once every 6 weeks with meetings held either directly following member forums or after hours, usually at 5:30pm on Thursdays. By joining the board you will be able to have greater input into the direction of WAADF, increase your involvement in working parties and sub-committees formed by the board, contribute to planning of member forums and most importantly, ensure that WAADF continues to facilitate the professional identity of autism diagnosticians in Western Australia.

If you have not received a form to submit a nomination for a board position please contact the secretary on [waadfsecretary@iinet.net.au](mailto:waadfsecretary@iinet.net.au)

## Activ Library

As diagnosticians it is important that we are up to date with current knowledge and best practice in our field. The Activ Library is so much more than just a recommendation for parents at the end of a diagnostic report, it is one of Perth's best resource centres for clinicians as well as families.

Annual membership is just **\$22**, a bargain considering it gives you borrowing privileges in their extensive library as well as access to full-text articles from numerous journals.

Some recommended reading from the library catalogue for diagnosticians:

- Autism & Aspergers Syndrome – The Facts (Baron-Cohen, 2008)
- Australian Autism Handbook (O'Reilly & Smith, 2008)
- Beyond the Autism Diagnosis (O'Brien & Daggett, 2006) *including a section on 'demystifying assessment results for families'*
- The ADHD Autism Connection – A step towards more accurate diagnosis and effective treatment (Banks & Kennedy, 2002)

You can search the Activ catalogue online at [www.activ.asn.au](http://www.activ.asn.au) or call on 9387 0458. The library is open daily at 41 Bishop St, Jolimont. 9-3:30pm daily, open until 5pm on Tuesdays.

Check with your employer if your organisation is already a member

## Case Presentations

As clinicians we are often involved in assessments where we need to consider many variables in making a differential diagnosis. By sharing these cases at WAADF forums we can all increase our knowledge and assessment skills.

If you have been involved in a complex or interesting assessment and would be willing to present this at a member's meeting we would like to hear from you.

Guidelines can be provided if requested to help shape your experience into a presentation.

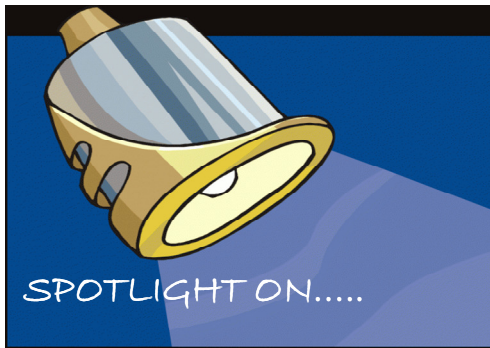
Please contact Ritu Campbell on [ritucampbell@bigpond.com](mailto:ritucampbell@bigpond.com)

## APAC 2009

Time is running out to register and book your flights to Sydney for the 2009 Asia Pacific Autism Conference.

The program runs from Thursday 20 August to Saturday 22 August at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre.

View the full program and download a registration form at [www.apac09.org](http://www.apac09.org)



## Introducing Jessica Adderley!

Jessica is a psychologist currently conducting autism assessments for Contextual Psychology Services and Disability Services Commission (Country). She has a Masters in Developmental Psychology and a Postgraduate Diploma of Education from the University of Western Australia. She worked as a therapy assistant at Mildred Creak Early Intervention Service before qualifying as a psychologist in 2003.

How long have you been an autism assessor?

I trained as an autism assessor at DSC while I worked for the Country Team of psychologists, where I've worked as a psychologist since 2004. I now supervise the assessment team, and I work in private practice doing both assessment and treatment at Contextual Psychology Services in Tuart Hill.

What has changed since you first trained as an assessor?

I've been pleased to see the movement towards a more objective, streamlined process of assessment and reporting. This has led to more accessible and accurate diagnosis for families, as well as a higher diagnostic standard than in the past.

What would you like to see added to the training requirements for new assessors?

I'd like to see all assessors confidently using well-supported, standardised measures such as the ADI-R and ADOS assessments. I think it contributes to achieving a better and more consistent standard of diagnosis across assessors.

What would be your best advice for clinicians new to autism assessment?

There's a lot to learn! I would suggest that they spend as much time around people with autism as possible, and also with typically developing children and children at different developmental levels, to get a sense of what behaviours can be expected. I'd also suggest getting as much supervision and reading information as possible to help with identifying tricky differential diagnoses, particularly attachment problems and language difficulties.

Jessica can be contacted at Contextual Psychology Services on 9345 1272 or [jessica@contextualpsychology.com.au](mailto:jessica@contextualpsychology.com.au)



## Professional Development Opportunities

Autism is firmly on the agenda at both a state, national and international level with many conferences, workshops and seminars available over the coming months. A selection are highlighted below. If you attend any professional development WAADF would love to hear your feedback, either through a presentation at a member's forum or in the newsletter.

### Local

#### CONFERENCE

Autism: The Whole Child  
Association of Independent Schools WA  
9 & 10 August 2009  
[www.ais.wa.edu.au](http://www.ais.wa.edu.au)

#### WORKSHOP

Piece by Piece: Putting the Autism Puzzle  
Together Using AAC Strategies  
By Dolly Bhargava  
18 September 2009  
[www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](http://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)

#### WORKSHOP

Autism Spectrum Disorders: Understanding,  
Treating & Managing Autism  
By Assoc Professor Jacqueline Roberts  
5 & 6 November  
[www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](http://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)

### National

#### SYDNEY, NSW

#### WORKSHOP

Key Elements of Good Practice in Autism Intervention for  
Speech Pathologists  
By Assoc Professor Jacqueline Roberts  
19 September 2009  
[www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](http://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)

#### MELBOURNE, VIC

#### TRAINING COURSE

Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) Training  
7 & 8 Oct (Introduction) 28-30 Oct (Research)  
[www.med.monash.edu.au/spppm/research/devpsych/ados](http://www.med.monash.edu.au/spppm/research/devpsych/ados)

### International

#### LONDON, UK

International Conference for Autism & Related Disorders  
23 – 25 October 2009  
[www.autismconference2009.com](http://www.autismconference2009.com)

#### FLORIDA, USA

National Autism Conference  
12 – 15 November 2009  
[www.nationalautismconference.org](http://www.nationalautismconference.org)

### 2009 WAADF Contact Details

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### Progress Continues in Finding the Elusive Autism Gene

A research team has connected more of the intricate pieces of the autism puzzle, with two studies that identify genes with important contributions to the disorder. One study pinpoints a gene region that may account for as many as 15 percent of autism cases, while another study identifies missing or duplicated stretches of DNA along two crucial gene pathways. Significantly, both studies detected genes implicated in the development of brain circuitry in early childhood.

Collaborating with researchers from more than a dozen institutions, including members of the Autism Genome Project (AGP), Hakon Hakonarson M.D., Ph.D director of the Center for Applied Genomics at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, led both studies which appeared in April 2009 in an online publication in *Nature*.

Read the full article at:

[www.autismspeaks.org/press/autism\\_genes\\_discovered\\_chop](http://www.autismspeaks.org/press/autism_genes_discovered_chop)