

President's Message



AWCH has reorganised itself into a national incorporated body to better pursue its advocacy for improved care for children and young people in all health settings. AWCH sees this as an opportunity to build on and strengthen its national organisation so that it can:

- consolidate its achievements, particularly in improving the psycho-social care of children in all health settings
- expand its advocacy for children into community health care settings
- contribute to the broader policy framework governing the health and wellbeing of all Australian children, young people and their families
- form productive links with state health systems, federal health officials and relevant non-government health organisations.

A key achievement of AWCH is the AWCH 2005 National Survey Report: The Psychosocial Care of Children in Hospital. This Report notes trends in hospital care provided to children since the first survey in 1992, and in effect, sets out the expected standards hospitals should be working towards in their care of children and young people, and in supporting their families.

AWCH considers this report a good starting point for the next phase of its work, which will include:

- An expansion of its work into non-hospital settings, particularly as fewer children are treated in hospitals, and those that are admitted are hospitalised for shorter periods and often require follow-up care in the community
- A renewed understanding of what is most important to children, young people and their families in their experience of health care, and the particular needs of those from different cultures
- Encouraging active involvement by health systems and health professionals in defining and applying evidence-based practice for both hospital and non-hospital care of children and young people and support for their parents, noting some of the downward trends in the 2005 survey
- Taking into account new challenges for providers of children's and young people's health care arising from increased incidence of mental illness, suicide, misuse of drugs etc
- Taking into account evidence about the need for investment in the early years for children's health and wellbeing in the provision of health services, including perinatal services.

I would encourage you to join with AWCH and its board by supporting the Association by becoming an [AWCH Member](#) and in that way become part of the collaboration of parents, children, young people, community members and professionals who, together, can advocate effectively for much needed changes in the health system. We all share the responsibility to be strong advocates for child health.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Bennett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

A/Professor David Bennett
AWCH President