



11th May 2020

Dear Human Development Researchers and Members of the Australasian Human Development Association (AHDA),

As the President of AHDA, it is my pleasure to welcome you to our first Newsletter of 2020! In this issue, we'll look back at 2019 and provide you with some highlights of the year, update you on changes to our membership guidelines, and provide a preview of some of the new directions we have in store for AHDA, and information about how you can get involved.

However, before turning to our newsletter, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the challenges to all facets of our daily lives that we have faced during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. On behalf of the Executive Committee, I would like to wish you all well during these unprecedented times and take a moment to remind you to be kind to yourself as you work through the new and competing challenges this time brings. We hope that this newsletter provides you with a welcome distraction and some things to look forward to in our society's future.

Perhaps the most significant event from 2019 was our **first online-only conference**, hosted by our previous President, Professor Paul Jose. Six months on from the conference, we have had time to reflect on our achievements. Despite trepidations of the organisers, who had never hosted such a meeting, the conference went off without any major technical glitches, and feedback suggests that the conference was successful! [Please see this link to review the key highlights.](#)

The year 2019 also brought some **changes in our Executive Committee** with long-term officers Michelle Hood (Treasurer), Levina Clark (Newsletter Editor) and Paul Jose (President) stepping down from their roles. These changes allowed us to welcome long-time member and co-organiser of AHDA's 2015 conference in Wellington, Jaimee Stuart, as our new Treasurer. We have also recruited PhD Candidate, Riley Scott (Griffith University) as our new Communications Director and of course, I joined the team as the new President. Fortunately, we are not a completely new Executive Committee as our Secretary, Susan Walker, has retained her position. On behalf of the membership, I would like to extend heartfelt gratitude to past and present Executive Committee members.

We held our **2019 AGM** as part of the online conference. Please follow [this link](#) to view the meeting minutes. Here are just a few highlights from our discussion:

- Our Treasurer provided the financial report of our association. Although we hold an adequate amount of funds in reserve, it was clear from the report that we needed to take steps to improve the sustainability of the society. One solution that we agreed on was that we would introduce a modest **annual membership fee**. As a starting point, the fee will be \$20 per year. Students and postdocs will continue to be able to join AHDA for free. With the introduction of this fee, we hope to be able to provide members with a platform for connecting with the society, learning more about AHDA, and serving as a financial platform for launching annual conferences.

- We thanked our **Regional Representatives** (new, returning, and exiting) for their contributions to AHDA and noted that we look forward to working with them in the future.
- Our **upcoming conferences** were also discussed. I made a call for interested parties to indicate interest in hosting the **next in-person conference (planned for 2021)** and we are still seeking Expressions of Interest from members who may want to host this conference. Our last AHDA in-person conference was in 2015 at the Victoria University of Wellington, Wellington, NZ (hosted by: Paul Jose and Jaimee Stuart).
- To sustain the momentum gained from the 2019 online conference, the Executive Committee agreed to explore members' interest in **a second online conference to occur in 2020**. Given the current pandemic of COVID-19, this type of conference is the only type that will be allowed to happen, at least for this year.

Please reach out if you would consider hosting or joining an organising committee for an online conference this year, or for our 2021 in-person conference. International Conference hosting is an extremely valued contribution to the field and is a great way to build networks with like-minded researchers in Australasia.

AHDA's 2020 Vision

Your current Executive Committee is committed to increasing our presence and enhancing connections among our human developmental colleagues across Australasia. The addition of an online conference in our "off year" is one way that we hope to do this, but we are currently discussing other ways to accomplish this goal too.

First, we are developing a new document outlining the structure of AHDA's Executive Committee, Regional Representatives, and other Committees (e.g., Conference Committee). As part of this process, we have identified a key gap in our committee membership; we do not have formal roles for members at different stages of their career to participate outside of the traditional official positions. In response, we have decided to add: 1) two members-at-large; and 2) two junior members-at-large to the Executive Committee. The two junior level members-at-large can be either early career researchers (within 2 years of receiving the PhD) or current PhD students. We invite self-nominations (i.e., volunteers) at this time, so please be in touch with us if you would like to know more, or join our society's administrative team in either of these two capacities: AHDAmembers@gmail.com

We are regularly enhancing our website with information relevant to our diverse membership and will soon be adding a new **Membership Portal** for our members to access members-only resources. We have recently created a new [AHDA Facebook Page](#) where we hope to highlight current advances in our field and to highlight the work done by our members. We hope that our members will engage with our content and take the time to suggest exciting and interesting information to post via our email. If you would like to contribute material for our Facebook page, please get in touch with us.

Finally, you may have noticed that we now have our own Gmail address (AHDAmembers@gmail.com). **Please feel free to email us with any comments, questions or suggestions for future newsletters, such as job alerts and opportunities for AHDA members.**

In conclusion, thank you for being a part of AHDA, we hope that you are just as excited as we are for what the next decade is going to bring for our society, and for human developmental research in Australasia and beyond.

Sincerely,
Annette Henderson, on behalf of the 2020 AHDA Executive

Annette Henderson, President, AHDA
Paul Jose, Outgoing President, 2019 Conference Organiser, AHDA
Jaimee Stuart, Treasurer, AHDA
Susan Walker, Secretary, AHDA
Riley Scott, Communications Director, AHDA