

# HISTORY OF FAMILY THERAPY IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

In early 2006 professionals in the Family Therapy field in Western Australia met and formed the Western Australian Family Therapy Interest Group (WAFTIG). This was following a period of approximately six years when the Western Australian Family Therapy Association (WAFTA) did not exist as a body in Western Australia (1982 – 2000).

In April 2006, Aldo Gurgone and Roxanne Garven hosted a meeting, which attracted approximately 40 people interested in working with families. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an update on developments in the field of family therapy in Australia, specifically to discuss the development of an Australian Association of Family Therapy (AAFT) and to determine whether there was sufficient interest to set up a group or an association here in WA. It was decided in 2006 to become WA Family Therapy Interest Group and initially there were eight members on the Committee.

At the April 2006 meeting, there were conversations about what people wanted from such a group and below are some of the responses:

- Regular professional development meetings with guest speakers
- A route to publicising information and to increase the profile of family therapy
- Linking to national initiatives
- Opportunities to meet others working with families
- Providing a forum for innovation
- Exploring the different ways of working with families
- Supervision register
- Support for research and publications

In 2007, the Committee decided to revive the WA Family Therapy Association. Both Aldo and Roxanne are involved in family therapy training and were on the working party of the Australian Association of Family Therapy. The Australian Association of Family Therapy is expected to come into existence at the Australian Family Therapy Conference in Tasmania in September, 2007. The committee has decided to wait until the formation of this and then, based on how that Association sees the way that state associations can become affiliated, we will decide the format for WAFTA. ( I am not sure if that date of 2007 is correct? Amazing how long it all takes!)

From 2006 until 2012 bi-monthly meetings were held which had both a short “business” component, and a longer “clinical” component. As well as:-

- Regular professional development meetings with guest speaker four times a year
- A quarterly newsletter to publicize WAFTA information and to increase the profile of family therapy
- Linking to national initiatives. Aldo Gurgone and Roxanne Garven have been the WA representatives on the National working party to establish a National Association of Family Therapists. Roxanne Garven also represents WA on the ANZ Journal of Family Therapy.
- Establishing state membership with the ANZ Journal Subscriptions

There were 100 on the email list and 26 members receiving the ANZJFT. Today there are 38 Associate members and 15 Clinical Members.

From 2016, the WAFTA Committee has agreed to rename as the WA Branch of AAFT. Sue Clapton and Anne Holloway have been the main State Representatives of the transition of AAFT into a National Body and now the integration of State Branches of AAFT. Currently there continue to be 8 Committee Members in the WA Branch. In the past couple of years we have reduced to four meetings per year with Professional Development Presentations. However as State Representative, there is going to be a request to have a smaller sub-committee in 2016 to focus on Professional Development, Website

information for AAFT, assist in recruiting Colincila members and advertising interest in Family Therapy. This sub-committee will meet bi-monthly as previously.

Since its beginnings' in 2006 WAFTA has hosted 2 Symposiums; in 2011 and 2015 and the Annual AAFT Conference in 2012. All three were very successful in terms of numbers and finances.

There are two Accredited courses in WA:-

William Street Family Therapy Centre

Director| Aldo Gurgone

Systemic Consultation Centre

Director| Roxanne Garven

Anne Holloway

WA State Representative