This special issue has as its focus the promotion of mental health and wellbeing in children and adolescents. It is also noteworthy that all lead authors are early career researchers.

In February 2012, a 4-day Early Career Researcher Training School focusing on ways to promote the mental health and wellbeing of children and adolescents was conducted at Edith Cowan University (ECU) in Western Australia. This capacity-building initiative formed part of one of ECU's Collaborative Research Network (CRN) subprojects addressing the mental health and wellbeing of children and adolescents, funded by the Department of Innovation, Industry Science, Research and Tertiary Education. This subproject was conducted in close collaboration with senior researchers from the University of Western Australia (Professor Steve Zubrick and Associate Professor Michael Rosenberg), the University of Melbourne (Professor George Patton), Queensland University of Technology (Professor Marilyn Campbell), Flinders University (Professor Phillip Slee), and the University of South Australia (Dr Barbara Spears), with assistance during the training school from Professor Debra Pepler from York University in Toronto Canada.

The training school aimed to foster networking and collaboration between Australian and international senior and early career researchers (ECR) and to build the ECR's research capacity through the sharing of scientific knowledge and expertise in children's mental health and wellbeing. Twenty-seven ECRs with a demonstrated interest in children's and adolescents' mental health and wellbeing research were invited to attend this first CRN training school that aimed to enhance their peer-review publication writing skills. The authors of five of the eight papers in this special issue of *The Australian Journal of Guidance and Counselling* were among the 27 ECRs who attended this first CRN training school.

Given that half of the young Australians with mental health problems experience onset prior to age 14 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2009), the articles in this issue focus on ways students' relationships with teachers, other students and their parents, as well as their responses to different forms of bullying, can promote their mental health and wellbeing. The Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) National Action Plan for Mental Health 2006–2011 identifies as its first Action Area 'the promotion, prevention and early intervention' of mental illness. In the first of the ECR articles, Anticich, Barrett, Gillies, and Silverman discuss research advances in early childhood interventions to address children's anxiety. This paper highlights the major gaps in empirical research related to the mental health of young children and the importance of prevention and intervention as early as preschool. This review found that brief early intervention and prevention programs for young children aged 3 to 7 years appear to be an effective means to reduce anxiety and associated risk, but conclude that while some programs show some promise, much is still unknown about how to prevent or intervene to reduce anxiety among young children.

The Lester, Dooley, Cross and Shaw article uses longitudinal data to also focus on students' internalising problems, but in this paper the focus is on adolescents who experience bullying and are also transitioning from primary to secondary school.

This victimisation appears to contribute uniquely and directly to mental health problems among young people, and the consequences can be severe and long-lasting (Arseneault, Bowes, & Shakoor, 2010). The authors found that anxiety was both an antecedent and precedent for victimisation among both males and females. Depression was also found in to be both a precedent and antecedent for victimisation for males through transition, but for females it was found to be an antecedent only. This study reinforces the recommendations made in most of the articles in this issue, but especially the paper by Anticich et al., of intervening as early as possible to identify and support children and adolescents at risk of internalising problems (and implementing strategies to prevent these problems) and to reduce the likelihood of students experiencing peer relationship problems, such as bullying. Pre-adolescence is clearly a critical time to intervene to minimise the long-term impact of mental health problems.

The article by Waters, Lester, Wenden, and Cross also examined the impact of transitioning from primary to secondary school on adolescent social and emotional health. Data were collected from students at two timepoints, immediately following their transition to secondary school, and at the end of the first year in this new school environment. While it was found that two thirds of the students experienced a positive transition, one third of students did not. For those who experienced a poor transition, many problems continued to the end of their first year in secondary school. This paper encourages school staff to continue to invest heavily in secondary school transition preparation strategies for all students, while simultaneously identifying those students at higher risk socially and emotionally prior to transition and to enhance their coping and resilience skills.

Two of the articles in this issue address actions schools and their staff can take to support the wellbeing of students. Barnes, Cross, Lester, Hearn, Epstein, and Monks quantitatively examine in their paper some of the difficulties schools experience in identifying and responding to covert bullying. Young people suggest covert bullying is bullying that goes unnoticed or unseen by adults, such as relational bullying (Cross et al., 2009). The authors report that while most of the 400 teachers surveyed felt personally responsible for supporting students who are bullied, most also reported that their school had many ineffective whole-school responses to bullying and that their staff needed more training to prevent and intervene to reduce this type of bullying.

The skills of school staff also received scrutiny in Cardoso, Thomas, Johnston, and Cross's qualitative research paper. The authors investigated the types of services students have access to, find useful, and use to support their health and wellbeing. While students reported they were aware of the pastoral care services available at their school, they felt staff were not always committed to helping. Indeed, students wanted the staff to build rapport and show they were concerned about the students' wellbeing. This study suggests students who are experiencing difficulties need to feel staff are approachable before they seek their help.

In somewhat of a contrast, through the lens of parenting professionals, the article by Locke, Campbell, and Kavanagh suggests that parents can be too supportive or 'overparent'. Over a half of the 128 psychologists and school guidance counsellors surveyed listed examples of overparenting actions that also may be related to

certain parent beliefs and outcomes. Hence, somewhat similar to the school staff recommendations from Barnes et al. and Cardoso et al., Locke et al. suggest that more needs to be done to help and educate parents to effectively support the social and emotional development of their children.

Finally, in a new section of the journal for practitioners we have two papers. The first is Toshack and Colmar's article that provides an overview of one of the first (albeit limited) primary-based cyberbullying intervention studies conducted in Australia. Cyberbullying presents some unique challenges for children and adolescents' mental and social development, given the intense role technology can play in their lives. While this small-scale study found an increase in the girls' knowledge of cyberbullying and ways to prevent and respond to this behaviour, significantly more experimental research is needed to understand how best to support school staff, parents and their children to reduce the impact of cyberbullying on their health and wellbeing. The systemic and complex nature of mental health problems among young people means that single-level programs such as classroom-only programs are unlikely to be as effective and sustainable as multidisciplinary interventions involving the whole-school community.

The other practictioner's article in this new section is by Bowen and Bowen, providing an overview of Acceptance Commitment Therapy (ACT). This very practical paper provides a 'how to' of ACT and is exemplary of the papers we wish to provide in this section of the journal. We hope to receive many more practitioners' papers to include in this section.

Collectively, the majority of these eight papers recommend the need for further research to better understand the primary targets of future interventions; for example, school staff, psychologists/counsellors, parents and/or students. The findings of most papers also suggest that more research is needed to better understand what mechanisms and interventions need to be used, at what ages and delivered by whom, to promote and protect the health and wellbeing of children and adolescents. The eight ECR articles in this issue also demonstrate the high-quality quantitative and qualitative methodological skills of the next generation of senior researchers who will lead new initiatives to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and adolescents.

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