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Foreword to the 'Hoarding' special issue

Jennifer Lehmann, Adjunct Senior Lecturer

La Trobe University, Rural Health School, Bendigo, Australia

Foreword

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It is our great pleasure to present this Special Issue of Children Australia which would not have been possible without the generous support and extensive work of our Guest Editors, Suzanne Chabaud, Eric Storch and Jordana Muroff. Their dedication to inviting authors to contribute, organising the reviewing of papers, assisting authors with revisions and constantly liaising with me without delays is something I have never before experienced in my professional career. Indeed, this is even more remarkable because they have completed this work and maintained their passion for the production of this Issue during the months of the pandemic, providing caring communication with all those involved, all of whom have been affected in some way by Covid-19. And so have our authors, all of whom worked with enthusiasm to prepare and submit their work and who have responded to my many emails as we worked through the processes so essential to getting a Special Issue ready for publication.

Hoarding, and particularly the impacts on children and young people, and family life, is a topic that has been given scant attention in the child welfare-related literature and even less in welfare services for children and young people. While there is some support and counselling available, depending on location and capacity of services to respond, this is minimal and often a side issue after children have been removed from parental care or are old enough (and with the financial means) to seek counselling for themselves. With the pandemic, we have increased concerns about what is happening to the children and young people in hoarded homes.

This Special Issue of the journal aims to highlight the issues facing children and young people with the purpose of informing professional and practice staff who may have the opportunity to respond to those in hoarding circumstances. We hope that you will find the papers, commentaries and personal accounts both moving and informative. Awareness of the particular issues faced by minors, and preparedness to go the extra mile to assist them, is an important first step to getting services to recognise and include these children and families in programmes. Further to this, we need policy and programme changes to ensure these children are included in service delivery.

In closing, I would like to express my deep appreciation of the amazing work of Suzanne, Eric and Jordana. A simple 'thank you' is hardly sufficient. May you stay safe and well through these difficult times and continue your work for all those who have been affected by hoarding.

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