**Melissa Connell - Nomination Statement**

**Nominated by: Ludi Van Bouwel**

**Seconded by: Julie Kipp**

I am a clinical psychologist working in the area of substance use, trauma, and psychosis research and treatment. I also work in private practice and as manager developing and implementing of model of Trauma Informed Care and Practice for a public health Alcohol and Drug Service in my region. Over the last 10 years I have worked in a range of mental health settings but have largely focused on working with young people with psychosis. I have been working with other researchers, clinicians and people with lived experience to try to understand more aboutthe relationship between trauma, psychosis or extreme states, substance use, distress, suicidality and non-suicidal self injury. We are hoping we can use this knowledge to inform approaches that can assist people to cope more effectively with these experiences.

I am also a founding member and the national convenor of the Australian Psychological Society’s Psychosis and Psychology Interest Group. Psychological approaches play an integral role in both the understanding of how psychosis develops and how it is treated.  Research has consistently shown that psychological treatments offer improved outcomes for people with psychosis despite the paucity of psychological treatment that is available. This group seeksto support psychologists who may have an interest in this area and we aim to improve the communication, knowledge and resources for psychologists who work with people with psychosis.

In 2012, I joined with other Australians who were passionate about psychological and social approaches to psychosis to form the Australian chapter of ISPS. Since that time, we have worked to present a range of workshops, training and seminars and have also held a 2 day conference. I was chair of ISPS Australia for two years and have recently move to the positions of treasurer and secretary. I have been working with our board to establish governance for the organisation, a website, and of course education and training for service users, families and mental health professionals. I believe that it is vital that we look beyond the medical model in our understanding of psychosis and allow more space for people who experience these extreme states to make sense of their experience and manage it effectively. I see ISPS as an organisation that brings together people from all areas of life with an interest or stake in psychological and social approaches to psychosis.The dialogue between these different sectors can contribute towards breaking down silos that create divisions and ultimately undermine the recovery of people with psychosis. I think that finding ways of working together and opening up ideas and knowledge around psychosis should be our ultimate goal. I would like to see ISPS continue to grow and gain greater recognition so that people who experience these extreme states can be better supported.