



# LEADERSHIP AUTHORITY & ORGANISATION

Exploring  
Creative  
Disruption

20-24 Nov 2017

**NIODA**  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ORGANISATION DYNAMICS AUSTRALIA

## INTRODUCING NIODA'S 2017 GROUP RELATIONS CONFERENCE

### *An Invitation to Explore*

The National Institute of Organisation Dynamics Australia (NIODA) is a not for profit institute with the primary purpose of delivering education for those specifically interested in understanding, applying and developing systems psychodynamic approaches to the improvement of work organisations. This Group Relations Conference (GRC) is sponsored by NIODA. It is offered as part of the Master of Management – Organisation Dynamics and is open to the public.

The conference is created as a temporary learning organisation. It offers members and staff a unique opportunity to enquire deeply, to learn from experience and to transform habitual ways of making sense of group dynamics and organisational life. As one past member described it, *'the GRC experience is like clearing several layers of cobwebs from in front of my eyes; to make visible so much that can seem obscure and mysterious in the experience of taking up a role, leading and following in organisations. I now have so many more insights and resources to draw upon in how I go forward as a leader'*.

This GRC is designed in the Tavistock tradition and is essentially an invitation to examine your experiences of relatedness (both conscious and unconscious) in organisations: between yourself and your role; between you and your co-workers; as between groups within the organisation; within the organisation as a whole and between the organisation and the wider community and global context in which it exists and operates.

### THE THEME – creative disruption

In recent years, the word 'disruption' has become a contemporary 'buzz' word. It is predominantly used to refer to a positive force – a creative interruption or innovation that challenges established norms: 'the way we do things around here'. Whether in the domain of economics, politics, technology, the sciences, the arts or organisational management, the word 'disruptive' seems to speak to a latent desire, a readiness, an appetite for transformational change and new paradigms. By definition, disruptors break up existing patterns of behaviour.

Of course disruption is not only a force of positive change and adaptation. When a plane is flown into a building or a truck driven into a crowd, this is unquestionably a disruptive act; one that challenges our sense of safety and so many of the shared assumptions that make it possible for large communities of people to live together.

In the organisational context, disruption challenges old assumptions about how we experience, receive and take up authority and how we go about our work. By its very nature, disruption disturbs something. How can we know if this disturbance is creative or destructive? How do we adapt and take risks? How do we challenge others' and our own assumptions? How do we lead for creative disruption?

This global and networked society creates turbulence and with it, an imperative for the invention of new ways of working: new ways of collaborating; new ways of solving problems; new ways of leading and being led. What might this mean for our customary ways of being an organisation? What might it mean for hierarchy and lines of authority? What might it mean for me and how I take up my role at work?

This working conference is designed to enable a free and in-depth exploration of these and many more questions. Within the temporary learning organisation of the conference, participant members and staff have the opportunity to learn from experience and to study self, group and organisation as a co-creative process.

## THE PRIMARY TASK OF THE CONFERENCE

The Primary Task of an organisation was originally described by the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations as the work the organisation must do if it is to survive. It defines its nature and reason for existing. This GRC is created to enable learning from experience about conscious and unconscious dynamics that exist in the temporary organisation of the conference. The aim is to discover new insights and promote understanding of 'back home' work phenomena.

Participants will join with conference staff to work on the Primary Task: **with a spirit of enquiry, to explore and study the exercise of authority and leadership in the taking up of roles through the interpersonal, intergroup and institutional relations that develop within the conference as an organisation in its wider context.**

## WHO IS THE CONFERENCE FOR?

The conference is for those who wish to grow their understanding and practice of working with, leading and following others. You may be a leader, manager, consultant, educator, researcher, clinician administrator, student, service provider, professional or technical worker who seeks to promote organisational creativity, health and productivity through thoughtful action and reflective learning.

Previous experience of an experiential conference is not a requirement for attendance. The conference design caters for all levels of experience.

\*We advise applicants who are undergoing significant personal stress to postpone attendance, as Group Relations Conference can, at times, be an intensive emotional experience.

## WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT TO EXPERIENCE AND LEARN ABOUT?

In this conference you will experience a learning model that is different from any other kind of conference. There are no 'conference presentations' as such. You will be engaged in various organisational learning tasks in groups with different configurations. Learning happens within these scheduled events, and in the spaces between events in the interactions with others. The learning is participative, immediate and continues long after the conference is over.

### YOU WILL EXPERIENCE AND LEARN ABOUT:

- The roles you take up in various work groups and contexts.
- How you exercise and respond to leadership and authority in exploring creative disruption and the dynamics as they emerge in the conference.
- Conscious and unconscious dynamics in groups at work.
- The systemic forces in play within an organisation.

## CONFERENCE DESIGN

The conference is offered in the tradition of a Tavistock-style Group Relations Conference where members are invited to work in a range of system structures to study group dynamics.

### SUB-CONFERENCES

**Entry sub-conference:** for members for whom this is a first experience of a group relations conference.

**Furthering sub-conference:** for members who have previously attended a group relations conference and who wish to further their learning and understanding of group relations.

### CONFERENCE EVENTS

The conference is structured as a series of events where all members participate and learn from their experiences. Each event aims to build awareness of conscious and unconscious dynamics in role and authority relations through experiencing oneself as a member of groups of different sizes within the learning organisation as it is co-created.

The events include: discussion plenaries, 'here-and-now' events for studying small, large, inter-group and whole-of-organisation dynamics, and spaces to reflect and review one's experiences and to apply one's learning to 'back home' work roles.

## STAFF

### DIRECTORATE

The Director, Associate Director, Director of Administration and the Associate Administrator (in addition to their consultancy roles) constitute the Conference Directorate.

### CONFERENCE DIRECTOR

**Brigid Nossal** PhD MEd(Policy&Admin) DipEd BA(Psych), Socioanalyst, Deputy CEO and Director, NIODA Consulting, Faculty NIODA, Doctoral Supervisor MIECAT; Board Member ISPSO, Member, GRA, ODA

### ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

**Rosemary Viswanath** BSc (Hons) Mathematics, PGDM (Business Management), Organisation Consultant, Member Indian Society for Applied Behavioural Sciences, Managing Trustee Group Relations India

### DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION

**Rob Ryan** BSc Ed, B.Ed, Grad Dip Bus (Org, Change & Dev) Psychoanalytic Consultant, NIODA Consulting, Member ISPSO, GRA, OPUS

### ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR

**Fred Wright** MAppSci(OD) MSW GradDip(Crim) BA Public Sector Manager, Mediator, Criminologist; Member GRA.

### CONSULTANT STAFF

Will be drawn from the following:

**Nuala Dent** MAppSci(Org Dyn), Organisational Consultant, Faculty NIODA; Member ISPSO, GRA, PhD Candidate

**Caroline Farmer** MAppSci(OD) BAVisArts(Hons) Organisational Consultant, Teaching staff NIODA; Member ISPSO, GRA

**Susan Long** PhD MEd BA (hons); Socioanalyst; Director Research and Scholarship, NIODA; Visiting Professor INSEAD; Associate Melbourne Business School; Past President and member ISPSO; founding President GRA; Member research advisory Board Comcare; Past board member JCV

**Brigid Nossal**

**Rob Ryan**

**Allan Souter** BA, DipSocStuds Individual, group and marital psychotherapist; consultant in Social Dreaming; Member ISPSO; viticulturist.

**Rosemary Viswanath**

**Fred Wright**



## THE ROLE OF STAFF

The staff work collaboratively with participants on the Primary Task of the conference, from their roles as collective management and consultants. They are informed by their own experiences and offer interpretations and hypotheses about what is happening in the 'here and now' experiences of the conference events. These experiences include the hidden, unconscious processes in group interactions. As a collective management, staff manage the boundaries of time, task and territory. Their roles are always open for examination.

## VENUE AND FEES

### DATES

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> – Friday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2017  
(Registration 9 am Monday, Departure from 5 pm Friday)

### VENUE

**Conference: Ian McLennan House**, International House, 241 Royal Parade, Parkville, Melbourne, Australia.

**Accommodation:** We have negotiated affordable accommodation rates with International House, a residential college of The University of Melbourne. While it is not obligatory to stay on-site during the conference, there are many advantages in doing so for participants' learning. For example, the opportunity to immerse yourself completely in the learning experience without the distraction of back home relationships and obligations. ***We strongly recommend you stay on-site if you are able to do so.***

### FEES

Registration includes participation in the conference, lunch, morning and afternoon teas each day, and two evening meals. Accommodation is an additional cost and separately booked. All fees are GST inclusive. Credit card payments incur a 3.5% administration fee to cover bank charges. Some bursaries are available to assist those on low incomes - please contact the Conference Administrator if you would like to discuss these.

### Conference Registration: (fees per person)

Early Bird Fee, pay in full by 30th June 2017	\$2,400
Two or more employees from the same organisation	\$2,400
Group Relations Australia Associates and Members	\$2,400
<b>Full Fee</b>	<b>\$2,650</b>

## FEES continued

### Accommodation

The following rates are for 4 nights, bed and breakfast, per person:

Single room with shared bathroom	\$272
Single bedroom with shared bathroom, kitchen & lounge (8 only available)	\$320

Other accommodation is also available at Carlton Vibe Hotel, Royal Parade, Parkville.

## APPLICATION AND REGISTRATION

Apply and register online at: [www.nioda.org.au](http://www.nioda.org.au)

A Tax Invoice/Receipt will be issued following successful registration.

## CANCELLATION POLICY

**Conference cancellations:** Before 11 Aug 2017: 100% refund, less booking fee of \$100;  
Before 20 Oct: 50% refund; After 20 Oct: No refund.

**Accommodation cancellations:** Before 18 Sep: 50% refund. After 18 Sep: No refund.

## ENQUIRIES

**Rob Ryan, Director, Administration**

m: 0417 051 843 e: [rob.ryan@nioda.org.au](mailto:rob.ryan@nioda.org.au)



## MORE ABOUT GROUP RELATIONS CONFERENCES

'A group relations conference is an accelerated learning experience or 'real time' learning laboratory and reflective space, designed to enable participants to understand in greater depth the factors behind the exercise of effective leadership and to broaden and deepen their own leadership capacity and the leadership potential of others, by generating management goodwill and employee buy-in, and understanding their own and their organisation's resistance to change.' (*The Tavistock Institute, London.*

[www.tavistock.org/what-we-offer/group-relations/](http://www.tavistock.org/what-we-offer/group-relations/) )

## FURTHER READING

- What is a Group Relations Conference?  
[www.tavistock.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/about-Group-Relations1.pdf](http://www.tavistock.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/about-Group-Relations1.pdf)
- Stein, M. (2004) 'Theories of experiential learning and the unconscious', in Gould, L. J., Stapley, L. F., and Stein, M. [Ed.] *Experiential Learning in Organizations: Applications of the Tavistock Group Relations Approach*. London, Karnac Books, pp. 19-36.

## CONFERENCE SPONSOR

### National Institute of Organisation Dynamics Australia Ltd (NIODA)

In 2016 NIODA achieved registration as a Higher Education Provider and accreditation of the Master of Management – Organisation Dynamics. This is a three year, part-time Masters course and conference participation counts towards the degree.

NIODA also offers various workshops, including the well known and loved 'Insightful Leadership: a role analysis approach' workshop. NIODA Consulting offers system psychodynamic-oriented consultancy to organisations, and NIODA Research and Scholarship supports the research capability in the academic and consulting arms of the institute.

For detailed information about the institute visit [www.nioda.org.au](http://www.nioda.org.au)

