



Association for Psychoanalytic
Psychotherapy of Western Australia

APPWA Public Lectures 2025

WELCOME TO APPWA

APPWA is pleased to announce two public lectures on 23rd August 2025.

Can psychoanalytic thinking contribute to repairing cultural and social desolation?

Dr. Allan Shafer

Breaking Open: An ecopsychanalytic exploration of denial and possibility.

Rebecca Purchon

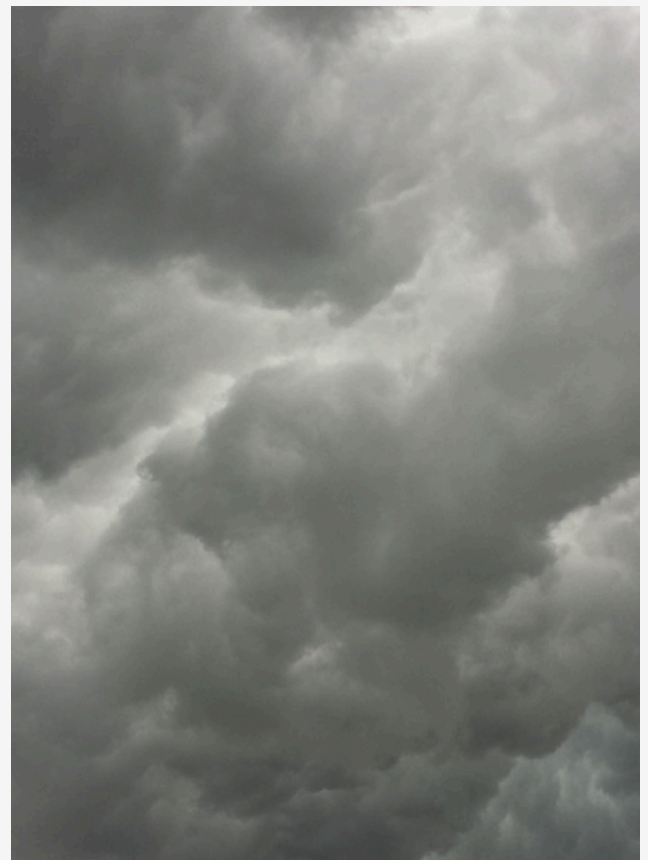
Please join our 2 presenters, APPWA members and trainees in an engaging discussion of these 2 important papers.

Morning tea will be provided.

*If you would like further information, or have difficulty with online registration, email admin@appwa.org.au

*Cancellation policy: Refunds will not be possible for registrations cancelled after 15th August, 2025.

Register ***[here](#)***



APPWA PUBLIC LECTURES

Date: **Saturday 23rd August 2025**

Time: 8:30am Registration and coffee

Paper 1: 9:00-10:30am

Paper 2: 11:00-12:30pm

Venue: St. John of God Subiaco Hospital,
Level 3 Conference Centre
Auditorium, 12 Salvado Rd
Subiaco WA 6008

Cost: \$130 before 11th August, 2025

\$150 from 11th August, 2025

(APPWA Members and Trainees - free)



APPWA Public Lectures 2025

Can psychoanalytic thinking contribute to repairing cultural and social desolation?

"Everywhere you look the cruelty of the human spirit is on display." — Julianne Schultz, 2023

"I imagine," said James Baldwin, "one of the reasons people cling to their hates so stubbornly is because they sense, once hate is gone, they will be forced to deal with pain."

In this paper, I will explore the pervasive atmosphere of deep pessimism, anxiety, and sadness—what I call "social depression"—and its impact on social cohesion. I will consider whether psychoanalytic insights and what I call psychoanalytic activism can help transform this into a more creative and constructive "social depressive position," where we can acknowledge, confront, and repair the damage we've caused—and are continuing to cause.

A key focus will be on the divisive and paranoiagenic role of hate amidst rising violence: racism, homophobia, transphobia, domestic abuse, child exploitation, climate crisis, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, fundamentalism, and fascism. How does hate hinder thought and understanding?

Can psychoanalytic thinking penetrate these dynamics? And ultimately, can it contribute to strengthening social bonds?

Join us for a vital conversation on the potential of psychoanalytic thinking to heal and unify our fractured world.



Dr. Allan Shafer
MA (Clinical Psychology), D Litt et Phil

Dr. Allan Shafer originally trained as a Clinical Psychologist and has over 45 years experience as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist and supervisor. For a significant period he has also been a socioanalytic consultant to organisations, predominantly in the mental health sector.

He is a clinical member of the Victorian Association of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapists and has served as a past President of APPWA, as well as a director of its training program. Dr. Shafer was an executive member of the Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Association of Australasia. He is a founding member and former president of Group Relations Australia.

His group relations experience includes directing and consulting on psychoanalytically-informed group relations experiential conferences in Australia, the UK, India, China, Israel, Poland, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Notably, he was the associate director of the 2019 "Leicester Conference" of the Tavistock Institute, London and he has been appointed Honorary Consultant to Group Relations Taiwan.

Dr. Shafer has contributed extensively to conferences and publications in both psychoanalytic psychotherapy and socioanalysis. He has conducted seminars and workshops in the UK, New Zealand, Singapore, India, Taiwan, the USA, and throughout Australia. He has a passionate interest in applying psychoanalytic thinking to the consulting room and to the socio-political world.



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Breaking Open: An Ecopsychanalytic Exploration of Denial and Possibility

"As long as Death keeps himself out of sight in our hot dark future, we need not face facts." — William T. Vollmann

As we enter the Anthropocene, we are faced with increasingly alarming news relating to global warming and climate change. This paper explores the nexus between the historical position of psychoanalysis and the current geopolitical unconscious processes and apathy in facing the climate crisis. Of particular interest are the influences of neoliberalism and Weintrobe's (2021) concepts of exceptionalism and the culture of 'uncare', as well as the different types of denial, disavowal and 'silencing'. Finally, Kassouf's (2022) work and therapeutic implications for practice are discussed.



Rebecca Purchon
B.Psych, M.Psych. (Clinical)

Rebecca Purchon is a Clinical Psychologist and psychoanalytic psychotherapist and has been a member of APPWA since 2023. She currently serves as the APPWA Treasurer.

Rebecca has over 28 years of psychotherapy experience. Her background includes clinical roles in forensic services, child protection and government mental health. She has been in private practice for 23 years.

Rebecca is very interested in how we manage the complexity of our own feelings, experiences and convictions, as well as our patients', within the troubled times of climate change.

Her paper was the winner of the 2024 John Mark Davis Award for the best essay that year by a PPAA psychoanalytic psychotherapy training program candidate.