



KEEPING YOU IN TOUCH WITH NEWS & OPPORTUNITIES IN WA FAMILY LAW

January 2024

Greetings from the Chair

by Tucker Christou

Happy New Year and welcome to 2024.

As we step into the pages of our January ebulletin, I extend a warm welcome to our dedicated members and legal professionals within the WA Family Law Pathways Network.

It is my privilege to serve as your chairperson, and I am thrilled to connect with you through this edition.

Family is at the heart of our legal practice, and the invaluable support and expertise within our network make a profound impact on the lives of those we serve.

The monthly bulletin is a testament to the strength of our community, a space where knowledge is shared, connections are fostered, and to our collective commitment to excellence in family law.

In the spirit of collaboration, I encourage you to delve into the insightful articles, legal updates, and member spotlights featured in this issue.

Our aim is to provide you with a valuable resource that not only informs but also inspires.

We also welcome any contributions you would like to send in on behalf of your agency.

As we navigate the intricate landscape of family law, let us continue to support one another, share our expertise, and champion the principles that define our network.

Your dedication to the practice of family law is truly commendable, and I look forward to the continued success and growth we will achieve together.

Thank you for being an integral part of the Family Law Pathways Network.

Warm regards,
Tucker



Save the Date

**WAFLPN
ANNUAL
CONFERENCE 2024**

**7 & 8 May
2024**

**ticketing opens
Monday 26 February**

AGENCY UPDATES



Change of name for Anglicare WA's, "Mums & Dads Forever" Program

The program will now be known as "Family is Forever" to demonstrate an inclusive use of the term "family" and one that is defined through the eyes of the child.

When people caring for children are in conflict, it negatively impacts on the wellbeing of the child and takes the focus off the child and onto them.

It is our responsibility to the children in our lives, to work together in a safe and child focused way, regardless of whether your family consists of a Mum and Dad; two Dads; Grandparents; Aunts; birth Mum, step-Mum and Dad; and so on.

The Family is Forever Program embraces difference, whilst continuing to support people to understand the impact their conflict is having on the children and young people they care for.

It is designed to build skills in conflict resolution and assertive communication and to focus carers on the best interests of the children in their lives.

Through a Diversity and Inclusion lens, Anglicare is in the process of reviewing their documentation and content they deliver and look forward to sharing more with you in the future.

practice.

Each day participants will learn key skills to assist with implementing the Safe & Together Model into their practice.

The classroom training is focused on the following foundational practice areas: Assessment, Interviewing, Documenting & Case Planning.

[request flyer](#)

[book here](#)



Safe and Together CORE Training

Stopping Family Violence has been delivering Safe and Together training since 2016 and are excited to announce their next Safe & Together CORE training.

This training will be held in Bentley from the 18th to 21st of March 2024.

Safe & Together CORE training is a four-day training designed to provide a skills-oriented foundation for domestic violence-informed

For participants working in Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations expressions of interest are now open for a limited number of places on the Safe & Together CORE training, funded by the Department of Communities.

[apply here](#)

AGENCY UPDATES



Relationships Australia WA opened its doors to their 4th Child Contact Service in Midland in January 2023.

The Child Contact Service (CCS) is a safe and supportive way for children to remain connected with significant people in their lives, shielded from conflict and abuse following parental separation;

- transition between separated parents/carers (supervised changeovers) for a few hours or overnight, or,
- maintain a relationship with the parent and other family members they do not live with (supervised contact visits).

Over time the aim is to help parents develop their own ways of managing contact arrangements that are in the best interests of their children.

RAWA provide:

- staff who are professionally trained, friendly and child-focused
- separate assessment interviews with parents/carers
- separate entrances and drop off times for parents/carers
- orientation visits for children as required
- secure and comfortable centres with toys and games for children to enjoy

- observational reports which help determine parenting arrangements

How does the service start?

Both parents are required to contact the service – to maintain their independence RAWA does not initiate contact with parents/carers.

Due to high demand there are waiting periods; as of January 2024, wait times for supervised changeovers are 2 weeks, and approx. 4 weeks for supervised contact time.

To allow more families to use the service, supervised time generally occurs fortnightly, for a maximum of two hours.

At intake each parent/carer is required to sign a Service Agreement outlining the requirements for using the Child Contact Service. This includes encouraging children to have a positive relationship with the other parent.

A copy of the current Court Orders/parenting agreement is required, and, if applicable, any Restraining Orders.

Operating hours:

Midland Child Contact Service Supervisors conduct intake assessments on weekdays during business hours (part time).

Supervised visits and changeover times are Saturdays (9am - 5pm) and alternate Sundays (2:30 - 5:30pm).

Fridays are negotiable.

Service contact details:

To speak to staff, call to discuss appropriate referrals or for clients to register for the waitlist, call (08) 6164 0620 or

[email the office](mailto:info@relationshipsaustralia.org.au)

This service is subsidised by the Federal Government, however fees apply based on income.

www.relationshipswa.org.au



REGIONAL NEWS



Children's Matters Stakeholders Forum



On Tuesday 30 January the network attended the Geraldton Childrens Matters Stakeholders Forum, It Ain't the Brady Bunch - blended... but not so splendid; new partners and blended families in the family law space, alongside Magistrate Andrew Mackey and associates, Kerrie Smith A/g Assistant Director from the Community Grants Hub and Debbie Bignell, Team Leader DSS CGH.



There were over 60 attendees who enjoyed networking throughout the evening.

After David welcomed everyone we were treated to a poem recited by Indigenous Australian poet Charmaine Papertalk Green. The main presenter was FDRP Natalie Walsh wooing the audience down memory lane to the tunes of the Brady Bunch.

Nat's presentation began with the merging of the Brady Family: 3 boys, 3 girls, like for like – except for Mike who comes with Alice the family maid/servant/query paid help.

There is no mention of Mrs Brady's ex with the assumption being he's deceased (obviously – why else should she be single?).

We looked at some separation statistics, reasons for divorce in 2023 and the topic of new partners and their involvement in parenting (or not).

Interestingly, Magistrate Mackey said a major issue of contention that presents time again in the court room is the way in which previous partners find out about new partners – either through the children or social media.

The Geraldton FRC practitioners are working to incorporate conversations into their sessions with clients to hopefully give them the tools to be able to navigate these issues not if, but when they arise.



EVENTS

Moving forward together - ensuring a bright future for our children



'Supporting children's positive mental health during family separation is a vital prevention and early intervention strategy for the wellbeing of children and families, now and into the future.'

Recent amendments to the Family Law Act provide family law practitioners with an enhanced opportunity too hear the voice of children in separating families and promote children's social and emotional wellbeing and mental health.'

Registrations:

This year's annual conference will be held over two days in May.

Tuesday the 7th and Wednesday the 8th.

The event will be livestreamed to regional areas **on Day 1 (7 May) only** - to a venue in each location of

Albany
Bunbury
Geraldton
Kalgoorlie

Regional practitioners wishing to attend the event will be required to attend in person - there will not be a livestreaming option due to increasing costs

incurred to provide this service.

Ticketing is scheduled to be opened Monday 26 February and close Monday 29 April 2024 - without exception.

Invoicing

The network welcomes bulk registrations from partnering agencies.

Contact us for a registration template here

[request template](#)

Registrations received via the ticketing platform or registration template must have a valid work address.

Please use individual names and email information when registering multiple staff members. This enables us to personalise sign in sheets, name tags and CPD forms, and also satisfies Occupation Health and Safety requirements for the event.

More information coming soon.

CONFERENCE MAY 2024



Family Law
PATHWAYS
NETWORK

WESTERN
AUSTRALIA

The Family Law Amendment Bill 2023 passed both Houses of Parliament on 19 October 2023 and received Royal Assent on 6 November 2023.

Most measures in the Family Law Amendment Act 2023 (Cth) will commence on 6 May 2024 and will apply to all existing and new proceedings, other than proceedings where a final hearing has commenced.

The Amendment Act introduces a safer and simpler framework for making parenting orders by:

- repealing the commonly misunderstood presumption of equal shared parental responsibility, making it clear the best interest of the child is paramount
- simplifying the list of factors that are considered in determining the best interests of children in parenting arrangements
- introducing a requirement for Independent Children's Lawyers (ICLs), when they are appointed, to meet directly with children
- ensuring the court considers the right of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children to maintain their connection to their family, community, culture, country and language

- simplifying the enforcement of parenting orders to make the consequences of non-compliance clear, and
- establishing a legal power to regulate family report writers.

The Family Law Branch has published two factsheets online, for parents/ parties and family law professionals, as well as updated the content on the department's website to advise the community of the upcoming changes to the family law system.

The factsheet for parents provides a simple guide which focuses on the changes to the parenting framework, whilst the factsheet for family law professionals provides more technical details on all schedules of the Amendment Act.

WA's Honourable Justice Rick O'Brien strongly suggests that all practitioners read the Convention on the Rights of the Child done at New York on 20 November 1989, and bring a copy of the new Family Law Act Amendments to Court with them.

Attorney-General's Department's Children and Family Law Website

[visit website](#)

Factsheet for parents and parties

[download here](#)

Factsheet for family law professionals

[download here](#)



Australian Government

Attorney-General's Department

READ



8 tips to help your child manage back-to-school anxiety

It's normal for children to feel nervous about starting or returning to school. With new teachers and classmates to meet, new environments and routines to get used to, and new skills to learn, each term can bring with it a sense of change and uncertainty.

The good news is, there are lots of things you can do to help your child manage back-to-school anxiety and reduce its impact on their mental health, learning and wellbeing. Get started with these eight tips for helping your child manage back-to-school anxiety:

1. Look for signs your child might be feeling anxious.
2. Create time and space to talk with your child.
3. Ask open-ended questions.
4. Listen and acknowledge your child's feelings.
5. Get organised together.
6. Help your child to come up with a list of ways to manage their anxiety.

7. Find ways to help your child feel excited about going to school.

8. Acknowledge your child's efforts and praise them.

[continue reading](#)



Australian Relationships Love, Marriage, and Divorce in a Modern Nation

Supported by 2022 census data this is the most comprehensive review into legal relationships in Australia, what impacts them, societal attitudes, and our legal frameworks.

Described as living in the 'era of divorce,' driven to a large extent by extended lockdowns and the rising cost of living, more and more pressures are impacting modern day love.

This report delves into the reasons Australians are choosing to separate, as unprecedented strain exacerbates relationship issues.

[download report](#)



Supporting Parents of pre teen children with mild-to-moderate anxiety

Pre-teen children (9-12 years) experience lots of changes; in physical appearance, friendships, school environment and family relationships.

Children at this age tend to have a heightened awareness of local, national and global events/concerns, and increasingly use social media to connect with others.

Parents often seek guidance about parenting during this time. Practitioners in generalist services can play an important role in promoting children's health and wellbeing.

By being aware of anxiety in the pre-teen years and responding early to their experience of anxiety, practitioners may prevent pre-teens from developing severe and/or persisting anxiety or other mental health concerns in the future.

[continue reading](#)



WATCH



How to support positive peer relationships among young people in online spaces

Presenters: Dr Riley Scott, Casey Thorpe, Hue Dwyer and Dr Mandy Truong

Date & time: Wednesday 21 February, 2024

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM AWST

Given young people interact so much online, practitioners should develop ways to promote healthy online experiences, including ways to encourage positive peer relationships.

In doing so, practitioners can play an important role in promoting positive mental health and wellbeing.

This webinar will help you:

- understand the similarities and differences between online and offline peer relationships and interactions
- understand the benefits of online peer relationships for young people and some of the

challenges they experience while navigating them, including their impacts on mental health and wellbeing

- develop insight into how to support young people to develop positive peer relationships in online spaces and how families can encourage these positive relationships.

[register](#)



Webinar: Elder Abuse, EPOAs and Other Family Law Issues

Join the FLPN (ACT & Region) and Relationships Australia for a free Webinar this March.

Families experience change throughout the lifespan.

Older family members influence and impact the dynamics within and between families in a range of ways.

These intergenerational impacts can be profound and complex.

This webinar will examine some of the influences of older family members and the legal challenges that are

to families with parents or grandparents of older age.

Kathryn Price and Jodie Commens, are the Canberra team of the Senior Relationship Service.

This is an older person-centred service that supports families to address family conflict the drivers, risks and experiences of the abuse of older people, also known as elder abuse.

Kathryn is a FDRP and Jodie is a specialist Older Persons Social Worker with a deep understanding of the aging process and age-related conditions.

Each have around twenty years' experience in their fields, and this makes them an impressive team in this space.

DATE

Wednesday 6 March 2024 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM (UTC+11)



Scan the code or

[register here](#)





NOTICE BOARD

Around town

If you or your organisation has something to announce, pin it on the board! Submit an article for the notice board by emailing: WA.FamilyPathwayNetwork@relationshipswa.org.au

Register your service

The FLPN [Service Directory](#) is an online referral tool and easily accessible database containing information on government funded and organisation-run services which work with families who are separating.

Follow us on LinkedIn

Follow [WA FLPN](#) on LinkedIn for the latest information and interesting articles relating to family law.



*Working Together
in the
Family Law System*

wafpn.org.au

Service Wait Times

Find waiting periods for WA Family law services on our website [here](#)



More Training & Events

Check out the 'Resources' section on our website for more relevant training and events.
[WAFLPN](#)

Feedback

If you have any suggestions on how to improve our ebulletin, please email them to annette.marie@relationshipswa.org.au

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