



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

Sept/Oct 2022

Greetings from the Chair

by Mark O'Hare

I am in awe of the collegial and collaborative relationships the WA Family Law Pathways Network makes when we partner with other Agencies to deliver events into the regional communities.

The Geraldton Family Relationship Centre [partnered with WA Family Law Pathways Network](#) to run the Children's Matters Stakeholders Forum on the evening of Tuesday 1 November.

This forum is run during the family court circuit three times a year. It attracts the visiting Magistrate, court staff, lawyers and various community services.

The topic this time was: The Father Hunger: Father Absence in the Family Law Space.

Natalie from the Family Relationship centre provided a powerful presentation on why fathers become absent and the impacts this has on children.

We then heard from Keith Read (Father Inclusive Services Practice Leader, Ngala) about how they work move men from 'Fathers' into 'Dads'.

Family Court Magistrate Walter talked about how the Family Court works with Dads within the family law act.

Liam Sorrell from the Australian Dad's network about an online men's chat group which now has over 3000 members. He has created a successful space for men to talk about anything from daily parenting difficulties to separation issues.

Centacare staff Alex (Men's Hub) and Sandy (Family Counsellor) presented from their experiences of working with Dads in their community.

It was a great night for all and a huge success. We look forward to their next forum, which will discuss parenting and incarceration.



November is traditionally recognised as [Movember](#), a time for the growing of moustaches and focuses in on men to raise awareness of their health issues, such as prostate/testicular cancer, and suicide.

Movember aside, if you know of any man struggling around you [Beyond Blue](#), [Lifeline](#) and [MensLine Australia](#) are just a few handy resources to keep in mind for them.

All the best,
Mark.



EVENTS



National Conference Report - Family Law Section - Law Council of Australia

After 4 changes of date and a pandemic delay of two years, the 19th National Family Conference was finally held in Adelaide between 14 and 17 August 2022 – and what a conference it was.

The sheer sense of joy and relief of nearly 1,100 delegates who were finally able to meet up again was palpable from the Opening Drinks at the Adelaide Oval with the theme “United at Last”.

The conference sessions opened, as they always do, with the State of the Nation with Chief Justice Will Alstergren AO and Attorney General Mark Dreyfus QC (now KC) updating the profession with the achievements and issues of the last few years and plans for the future.

FLS’ Chair Di Simpson then spoke on the role of the profession during the pandemic.

Over the next few days we were treated to an astounding program with a few highlights being the Peter Nygh Memorial Lecture delivered by the Hon Justice Michelle Gordon AO of the High Court, a wellbeing

session focused on coping as a family lawyer moderated by Fran Kelly, a mini debate moderated by the Hon Justice Rick O’Brien on the “Death of Contributions” between Sheridan Emerson and Robin Smith, and some lessons learnt from other jurisdictions from New Zealand’s Lady Deborah Chambers QC (now KC), the Hon Sir Nicholas Mostyn, Judge of the High Court of Justice in the UK and the Hon Madam Justice Marriott from Alberta in Canada.

When we weren’t being stimulated by the program the delegates had a multitude of social events to attend culminating in the Gala Dinner “United in Glitter”

And whilst West Australian delegates enjoyed the success of the 19th National Conference enormously, what we were really doing was gathering information and waiting for the Adelaide Conference to be over and done with, as “our conference”, the Perth conference is next.

The 20th National Family Law Conference will take place at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre between 30 October and 1 November 2024.

The last time FLS’ National Conference was in Perth was in 2006 and whilst we acknowledge the Adelaide Local Organising Committee

have now set the standard for National Conferences, we fully intend to outshine them.

The Perth Local Organising Committee is currently putting together a thought provoking program and social events that you will enjoy and talk about for years.

So please mark your diaries and join us as we show off our wonderful city and state to the family lawyers of Australia.

If you would like to become involved or have any ideas for speakers or topics that might be of interest please contact nwatts@osullivandavies.com.au



20th National Family Law Conference

30 October – 1 November 2024

www.familylaw2024.com.au



SPOTLIGHT



Parenting After Separation – Putting Children First

Parenting After Separation is a new 5-week course that aims to support separated parents adapt and work through the challenges of separation with a particular focus on supporting and maintaining the well-being of their children.

Areas covered include:

- * Children's reactions to parental separation and how to help them adjust.
- * The distress of grief and loss and how it affects each family member differently.
- * The impact unresolved parental conflict has on children and how to minimize conflict.
- * How emotional triggers contribute to disputes and how to navigate disagreements.
- * How to guide children's transition through the various stages of separation.
- * Ways to support the parent-child relationship and children's wellbeing.

This course is ideal for parents struggling with separation or starting the process of separation.

[For more information and enquiries visit](#)

Family Violence is Not an Anger Management Problem.

Family Court data shows that 64% of parties allege they have experienced family violence and 57% allege a child has experienced family violence.

To address the issue of family violence, Relationships Australia WA (RAWA) runs Men's Behaviour Change groups (MBC). We also separately run Anger Management groups. RAWA would like to stress to Family Law practitioners that these groups are not the same and are not interchangeable. There are significant differences when comparing family violence and anger.

Family violence is not a result of impulsive or angry incidents but comprises premeditated actions designed to gain power and control in a relationship.

With family violence, abuse is largely restricted to partners.

Anger Management, on the other hand, is only appropriate for perpetrators of violence towards strangers or non-intimate partners, road rage and workplace violence or abuse.

Anger management fails to account for the premeditated controlling behaviours

associated with FDV, where men use 'anger' as another excuse for their abuse, much as they blame alcohol, stress, or other people.

Therefore, the primary aim of a MBC group is to achieve change in men's abusive attitudes and beliefs by making them accountable and responsible for their abusive actions.

An inappropriate referral to an anger management group leads to the wrong assumption that FDV is being "treated", thus placing women and children at risk.

Therefore, we ask family law practitioners not to advise or refer their clients who have used family violence (i.e., anger directed towards family members) to our Anger Management group. These referrals will not be accepted.

Men who use family violence need to be referred to an MBC program. However, in order to be accepted into an MBC group, men must display some acknowledgement of having used abusive behaviours and a willingness to consider more respectful behaviours. They will not be accepted on a 'without admission' basis.

Also, attendance letters will be provided for MBC groups but not for the Anger Management groups.

[Visit Relationships Australia WA](#)

WHAT'S NEWS

Compliance with and enforcement of family law parenting orders.

In Australia and overseas, there has been longstanding controversy about the enforcement of family law parenting orders.

There is no recent Australian research on contravention applications and the operation of the enforcement regime in the Family Law Act 1975 (Cth) (FLA).

The legislative context for making parenting orders has also changed significantly over the past 15 years, with the implementation of the 2006 shared parenting reforms and the 2012 family violence amendments to the FLA.

In its recent review of the Australian family law system, the Australian Law Reform Commission documented a range of persistent concerns about compliance with parenting orders in general, and the operation of the legislative framework where contravention occurs in particular (ALRC, 2019).

This project has addressed this gap in the evidence base and supported greater understanding of the enforcement regime and the factors that do or do not support compliance with parenting orders.

[Read More](#)

[Download the research report](#)

[Download the Final report](#)

Carson, R., Kaspiew, R., Qu, L., De Maio, J., Rhoades, H., Stevens, E., Horsfall, B., Press, L., & Dimopoulos, G. (2022). Compliance with and enforcement of family law parenting orders: Final report (Research report, 20/2022). ANROWS.

Australian Institute of Family Studies: Invitation to a webinar on 30 November 2022.

Non-compliance with family law parenting orders arises from a complex range of

personal and systemic dynamics.

Recent research has highlighted the role that negative interpersonal dynamics, including family violence and safety concerns, play in difficulties with the implementation of parenting orders.

These difficulties can be compounded by limitations in identifying, assessing and responding to risks in the family law system.

The Compliance with and Enforcement of Family Law Parenting Orders Project examined the drivers of non-compliance with parenting orders and the operation of the parenting order enforcement regime in Australia.

This webinar explores some key insights from this research with lead AIFS researchers, Dr Rae Kaspiew and Dr Rachel Carson.

[Details and registration link here.](#)



Australian Government
Australian Institute of
Family Studies



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY



Get Involved

Be a part of a global social movement to eliminate gendered violence in your community.



32nd Annual Silent Domestic Violence Memorial March

This year's Annual Silent Domestic Violence March will take place in Forrest Chase. [Information here](#)



Helping Men and Boys

International Men's Day celebrates worldwide the positive value men bring to the world, their families and communities.

[read more](#)



The Midland March That Matters

Download the poster [here](#) to share with your networks. (check the downloads on your computer)

16 Days in WA
25 November – 10 December **2022**

For 16 days in November and December, the community is invited to take a part in encouraging change to stop violence against women.

[How you can get involved](#)

KEY DATES	
NOVEMBER	
18	White Ribbon Day
19	International Men's Day
25	16 Days in WA
29	Annual Silent Domestic Violence Memorial March
DECEMBER	
8	Midland March that Matters

Kambarang

First spring

October-November

Season of birth

Longer dry periods



NOTICE BOARD

What’s happening 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

Service Wait Times

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

NATIONAL WEBINAR

WHY PEOPLE LIE?

The Psychology of Attribution in Family Law with Dr Phil Watts.



DID YOU MISS OUR NATIONAL WEBINAR

[View it here](#)

[Download Slides](#)

Walk in Their Shoes Tours



The next tour will take place on 07 December 2022 at the Family Court Register [here](#)

Register your service

The FLPN Service Directory is an online referral tool. It is an easily accessible database containing information on government-funded & organisation-run services which work with families who are separating, or have separated Register your service [here](#).

Disclaimer

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[WAFLPN](#)

Feedback

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

