



# WAfamily pathways network

## WA Family Pathways Network eBulletin

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

DECEMBER 2015

## Greetings from the Chair

by Kathryn Lawrence

Hello and Merry Christmas from WAFPN! I can't believe the end of the year is here already, and it certainly has been a huge one for us!

2015 saw family and domestic violence high on the agenda for us, the sector and Australia as a whole. We ran a lot of events around FDV this year, it featured in our annual conference with keynote speaker David Mandel. We also hosted an FDV providers networking forum in January, a twilight session on VROs in February, and an overview of the NSW Domestic Violence Justice Strategy in July. And of course conference earlier this month, 'Bringing perpetrators into view', which had an excellent response.

We have already got the wheels in motion for a big 2016, with date and venue locked in for our annual conference. Join us on Thursday, May 26 at the University Club of Western Australia. This year we will be looking at issues around hearing the voice of the child in family law.

Thank you for your excellent support throughout 2015, to all who attended our events and provided feedback, engaged on Twitter or read and contribute to this bulletin. It has been great working with you all and I am looking forward to working with you once again in 2016.

Merry Christmas and have a great break!



# WAFPN family and domestic violence events

## Bringing perpetrators into view

It has been a huge year for work in family and domestic violence and WAFPN has hosted a number of FDV training and information sessions throughout 2015. On Tuesday, December 1, WAFPN hosted 'Bringing perpetrators into view: Developing a web of accountability', our first conference to look at perpetrator accountability in family violence. The conference was very popular, selling out within days and with over 130 attendees from across the WA family law sector. Speakers included Victorian based Elena Campbell and Rodney Vlais, as well as local government and non-government agencies.



Lesley Kirkwood (Women's Law Centre) and Helen Lawrence (Djinda Services)

Held at the beautiful City West Receptions, the conference was an excellent opportunity to look at the innovative ways in which the justice system and service providers are intervening with perpetrators, as well as explore new opportunities. Elena Campbell (Centre for



Rodney Vlais at 'Bringing perpetrators into view'

Innovative Justice, RMIT) and Rodney Vlais (No to Violence) each gave a thoughtful overview of the work and research they have undertaken, and the ways in which we can improve perpetrator intervention into the future.

## Great Southern family and domestic violence conference

On Thursday, November 26, in the midst of White Ribbon Week, WAFPN sponsored the Great Southern family and domestic violence conference: 'Mobilising the community to end family and domestic violence'. The conference was held at the Stirling Club in Albany, and opened with an inspiring presentation from Allan Wade. Featuring an address from Stephen Clarke of the Department of the Attorney General's Victim Support Service, a panel presentation and a range of short talks from local program providers, this was an exciting and thought-provoking event. Around 50 family law professionals attended from across the region. Well done to our Albany regional representative, Antonia Grasso and Anglicare Albany for organising the event.



Tori, Joanna, Antonia, Stephen and Merryn at the Great Southern FDV Conference

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Upcoming training and networking opportunities**

If you are running a training event and would like it included in our next eBulletin please contact

[WA.FamilyPathwayNetwork@relationships.org.au](mailto:WA.FamilyPathwayNetwork@relationships.org.au)

**Save the date! WAFPN annual conference**

WAFPN is pleased to announce the date and venue for the 2016 annual conference.

**WAFPN annual conference**  
26 May 2016  
The University Club of Western Australia

Please save the date and we will be in touch with more details in the New Year.

**The Family Law Section: 17th National Family Law Conference**

The Family Law Section of the Law Council of Australia hosts its 17<sup>th</sup> National Family Law Conference in Melbourne in October 2016.

The 17th biennial National Family Law Conference will be held at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre from 18-21 October 2016.

The three-day professional program starts on the Wednesday morning (19 October 2016) and continues until the Friday afternoon.

A diverse conference program will provide delegates with topical and practical information to take back to their daily family law practice, as well as sessions exploring new concepts and thinking about family law.

From the Welcome Reception on the Tuesday evening to the Gala Ball on the Friday night, delegates can also look forward to plenty of opportunities for networking, with the social program showcasing the world's most liveable city.

**18 – 21 October 2016**  
**Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre**

For more details visit  
<https://www.familylawsection.org.au/membership-information/conferences-seminars/event/17th-national-family-law-conference-21>

**WALK IN THEIR SHOES TOURS**

WAFPN's popular Family Court tours fill up fast! This is a fantastic opportunity to experience the pathways families take when attending the Family Court of WA.

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST TO ATTEND  
[jane.azzopardi@relationships.org.au](mailto:jane.azzopardi@relationships.org.au)

**Our Aim**

Improve collaboration and coordination between organisations operating in the Family Law system

To assist separating families obtain appropriate services



## The latest contributions to evidence based practice in family law

If you are undertaking research in the field of family law that you think may be of interest to WAFPN members please contact us to have it included in our eBulletin

[WA.FamilyPathwayNetwork@relationshipsqa.org.au](mailto:WA.FamilyPathwayNetwork@relationshipsqa.org.au)

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### Family violence in culturally and linguistically diverse communities: An evaluation of a family relationship centre

Federal legislative changes in Australia have sought to improve how family relationship centres (FRCs) can be more responsive to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities when addressing family disputes and family violence. Research on the prevalence of family violence against women from CALD backgrounds is sparse. This article seeks to contribute to the understanding of this issue by describing findings of an evaluation of the FRC at Broadmeadows conducted by the authors. The findings focus on family violence and the appropriateness of the services offered to three CALD community groups, namely Iraqi, Lebanese and Turkish. The final section provides reflections on these findings and offers suggestions about how FRC services might better cater to the family violence needs of CALD communities by developing more extensive partnerships with community groups and by expanding the range of processes they offer beyond mediation.

Abstract: <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/90470/>

Cleak, Helen, Vernon, Alikki, Ojelabi, Lola, & Fisher, Tom (2015) Family violence in culturally and linguistically diverse communities: An evaluation of a family relationship centre. *Australasian Dispute Resolution Journal*, 26(1), pp. 26-37.

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### Surviving Intervention: Grandparents' Struggle to Maintain Relationships with their Grandchildren Following Contact with Child Protection Services

Grandparents play an important role in families, contributing to the maintenance of intergenerational relationships. Recent literature has identified increased incidence of grandparents raising their grandchildren, often after family breakdown. Less evident is the literature highlighting Australian grandparents' experiences of reduced or lost contact with their grandchildren. Lost contact can result from many factors including family disputes, separation or divorce of adult children, or children being taken into State care. The primary aim of the Honours research project reported here, a component of a larger project, was to explore the lived experiences of Queensland grandparents who had reduced, lost or denied contact with their grandchildren after contact with child protection services. In recent years, almost 8000 Queensland children have reportedly been living in out-of-home care arrangements annually. In this qualitative study, in-depth interviews were conducted with a sample of seven (7) grandparents. An emerging key theme was that grandchildren were very important to grandparents, but that grandparents struggled to maintain contact with their grandchildren after families came to the attention of child protection authorities. These findings can help inform social work practice with families for the wellbeing of both grandparents and grandchildren.

Abstract:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/cha.2015.51>

Rigby, E., Gair, S., & Thorpe, R. Surviving Intervention: Grandparents' Struggle to Maintain Relationships with their Grandchildren Following Contact with Child Protection Services. *Children Australia*, 1-8.

## NOTICE BOARD

## VRO Walk in Her Shoes Tour Rockingham

The inaugural Rockingham Magistrates Court Walk In Her Shoes Tour took place on 3 December 2015 with over 20 stakeholders from a wide variety of agencies based in the Peel region, including the Lucy Saw Centre, Anglicare, Rockingham hospital and mental health service providers.

The tour was a joint initiative led by Stephen Clarke, Manager Family Violence Intervention Services, Department of the Attorney General and Tracey Collier, solicitor, SCALES community legal centre. The tour highlighted the experience of a victim seeking a violence restraining order in the magistrates' court.

Stakeholders met with court registry, Family Violence Service staff and Tracey Collier to see how these services can support victims prior to seeking a VRO. Stakeholders then entered court to hear from Magistrate Sue Richardson who explained how the court manages the interim VRO process.

Feedback from stakeholders was very positive with an overwhelming number saying that the tour helped to demystify the court process which would help to improve the support offered to clients.

## WAFPN Christmas closure

Please note the WAFPN office will be closed from Thursday, 24 December until Monday, 4 January. We will not

be able to respond to any enquiries during this time.

The WAFPN Kiosk at the Family Court of WA will reopen on Monday, 11 January.

## Ombudsman's report: Investigation into issues associated with violence restraining orders and their relationship with family and domestic violence fatalities

The office of the Western Australian Ombudsman reviews family and domestic violence fatalities, identifies patterns and trends arising from these reviews, and makes recommendations about ways that state government departments and authorities can prevent or reduce family and domestic violence fatalities.

In undertaking the family and domestic violence fatality review function, the Ombudsman decided to undertake a major own motion investigation into issues associated with Violence Restraining Orders and their relationship with family and domestic violence fatalities.

You can access the Ombudsman's report [here](#).

## Follow WAFPN on Twitter!

If you want to keep up to date with info and articles we find interesting, follow WAFPN on Twitter: [@FamilyPathwayWA](#)

## UNSUBSCRIBE?

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## FEEDBACK

If you have any suggestions on how we could improve this bulletin please email them to [jane.azzopardi@relationshipswa.org.au](mailto:jane.azzopardi@relationshipswa.org.au)