



Family Law
PATHWAYS
NETWORK

WESTERN
AUSTRALIA

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

NOV/DEC 2019

Greetings from the Chair

by Rod West



Hello from WAFLPN!

Welcome to the last issue of the eBulletin for the year 2019. Here at WAFLPN, as we reflect on everything we have

achieved in 2019, we are already looking forward to the year ahead.

On behalf of the WAFLPN Steering Committee, I am incredibly pleased to announce that the WAFLPN Annual Conference will be taking place on 12 and 13 May next year. Every year, our annual conference brings together family law professionals from all across Western Australia to hear from a range of speakers and participate in a more in-depth workshop day. Mark the dates in your calendar as this event is not to be missed! Stay tuned for more details early next year.

The November-December period is an important time of the year for all of us working in family law and family and domestic violence. We are currently in the midst of the annual 16 Days in WA - Stop Violence Against Women campaign, which takes place from 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, to 10 December, which is Human Rights Day. Based on the global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign, 16 Days in WA is Western Australia's contribution to these efforts and aims to raise awareness, motivate positive

actions across Western Australia and advocate on behalf of organisations that oppose violence against women.

Over the past month, WAFLPN has focused on building professionals' capacity to respond to family and domestic violence in different contexts. Our webinar on non-fatal strangulation with Dr Maureen Phillips and Kedy Kristal helped raise awareness of a form of violence which often remains undetected despite its severe long-term consequences. This training has been especially timely with the WA State Government's recent announcement of a family violence law reform package that, among other changes, includes the introduction of a non-fatal strangulation criminal offence.

WAFLPN was also proud to work alongside Albany Family and Domestic Violence Action Group, Stopping Family Violence and Anglicare WA to support the Great Southern Family and Domestic Violence Conference. Additionally, we had the immense privilege of hosting a workshop on addressing violence against Aboriginal women with Professors Vickie Hovane and Harry Blagg in Kununurra. Read on for a full recap of our past events on the [next page](#).

I hope you find this issue of the eBulletin interesting and informative. Have a fantastic holiday season and see you again in 2020!

WA FAMILY LAW PATHWAYS
NETWORK ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

12 & 13 May 2020

REVIEW OF PAST WAFLPN EVENTS

Family Violence Restraining Order (FVRO): Walk in Their Shoes Tour

Following the success of the Walk in Their Shoes tours of the Family Court, WA Family Law Pathways Network and the Magistrates Court of Western Australia partnered for the Family Violence Restraining Order (FVRO): Walk in Their Shoes tour of the Perth Magistrates Court on 9 October. Tour attendees traced the footsteps of a client attending court to apply for an FVRO, which included a walk-through of the support services available at the court and an opportunity to sit in on a court case. Tour dates for 2020 will be announced soon.

Personal Cross-Examination Ban Information Session

On 31 October, WA Family Law Pathways Network and Legal Aid WA ran an information session on the family violence cross-examination scheme with Julie Jackson, Director Family Law Division at Legal Aid. Presentation slides and a video recording of the session are now available on the [Member Area of the WAFLPN website](#).

Child Inclusive Practice Workshop



Jon Graham presenting his workshop at Tompkins on Swan

On 12 November, WA Family Law Pathways Network hosted a full-day workshop on Child Inclusive Practice with Jon Graham. The workshop introduced the Meeting With Children approach developed by Jon Graham and Dr Lorri Yasenik.

Highlights for participants included taking part in the play therapy activity, learning about the Parent Readiness Scale and working through the Child and Youth Concerns Scale based on video case studies.

The workshop also sparked robust discussion among participants about the merits and practicalities surrounding the application of this approach to different practice contexts.

Workshop on Addressing Violence Against Aboriginal Women

Our first-ever workshop in Kununurra took place on 15 November and attracted 36 attendees. Informed by the self-identified training needs of the local community, the workshop featured a presentation on addressing violence against Aboriginal women by Professors Harry Blagg and Vickie Hovane based on the findings of their ANROWS report.



Professors Vickie Hovane and Harry Blagg with participants at the workshop in Kununurra

Participants greatly enjoyed the workshop, describing the speakers as “knowledgable”, “passionate” and “refreshing”. The workshop also sparked discussions about how local culture can impact the response to family and domestic violence, and how the research findings can be implemented on the local level.

WAFLPN would like to sincerely thank the team from the East Kimberley Regional Office of Legal Aid WA for their help in making this event a success. Based on the feedback received, we will also look to repeat this workshop in Broome in 2020.

Non-Fatal Strangulation Webinar

On 13 November, WA Family Law Pathways Network hosted a webinar on non-fatal strangulation in family and domestic violence with Dr Maureen Phillips and Kedy Kristal. Our Regional Representative Catherine Lynch organised a livestream of the webinar in Albany, although the event unfortunately ended early due to technical difficulties. Presentation slides have been made available on the [Member Area of our website](#).

WA Family Law Pathways Network was also proud to support the Great Southern Family and Domestic Violence Conference organised by the Albany Family and Domestic Violence Action Group, which took place the next day.

RESEARCH & PRACTICE

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 WAFLPN members, please contact us to have it included in our eBulletin.

WA.FamilyPathwayNetwork@relationships.wa.org.au

Practitioner perspectives on implementing an alternative response in statutory child protection: The role of local practice context and leadership teams in shaping practice

Despite the growing interest in alternative responses that divert families away from the courts and out-of-home care system, the crisis-driven nature of statutory child protection and the dominance of risk-adverse practice can inhibit practitioners' abilities to implement such interventions. In Queensland, 'intervention with parental agreement' (IPA) is an alternative response that allows the statutory child protection authority to work with families without a court order. Drawing on the perspectives of 30 practitioners recruited from the statutory child protection authority and tertiary non-government family support services, this paper explores the local factors that shape how IPA policy is implemented in practice.

[Read abstract or purchase article.](#)

Vernables, J. (2019). Practitioner perspectives on implementing an alternative response in statutory child protection: The role of local practice context and leadership teams in shaping practice. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 107.

Fathers who use domestic violence: Organisational capacity building and practice development

Although statutory child protection workers and other human service professionals now face strong injunctions to work with men who use violence, insufficient attention has been given to considering the processes for such interventions and the organisational context to support workers in refocusing their practice. Workers lack clear guidance, and organisations lack specific understandings of how to support workers in this complex area of practice. Australian research used co-design with professionals in Communities of Practice supported by the Safe & Together Institute to explore the organisational context required to work with fathers who use violence. This paper presents findings of qualitative data gathered from surveys, focus groups, and ethnographic notes of 30 Community of Practice sessions. Working together, practitioners and researchers identified four essential elements to support organisational development and improve practice: leadership by senior managers; recognition that domestic violence work needs to strengthen collaborative working; extensive training, supervising, and coaching; and enhanced worker safety. Worker perspectives are critical in developing practice principles and identifying organisational mechanisms that support practitioners to work safely and effectively with fathers who use violence.

[Read abstract or purchase article.](#)

Humphreys, C., Healey, L. & Heward-Belle, S. (2019). Fathers who use domestic violence: Organisational capacity building and practice development. *Child & Family Social Work*, 1-10.

Let's Talk Divorce - An Innovative Way of Dealing with the Long-Term Effects of Divorce through Parent-Child Relationships

Divorce often reveals the conflicts between couplehood and parenting. This paper discusses the influences of self-perception of the divorcee as "leaving" or "having been left", gender, and relationships on the ability to talk about the divorce and the resilience of members in the family. Despite the fact that changes due to divorce are so common, few tools exist that can help a parent, or even a therapist, to encourage discourse on the subject. The game "Let's Talk Divorce" was created with the intention of using the relationship between the adult and the child for the healing processes. It is designed as an instrument to help work through the issues of change, emotions, thoughts and behaviors, in an experiential way. Using a case study of a woman's therapeutic process two years after her divorce, this paper demonstrates how one may apply "Let's Talk Divorce" as a platform to create a space for dialog with children, and lead to a substantial improvement in feelings and relationships. This paper discusses the important potential of relying on the parent-child relationship, and how this tool can be used in clinics and/or in an individual or family therapeutic setting.

[Read abstract or purchase article.](#)

Oren, D. & Hadomi, E. (2019). Let's Talk Divorce - An Innovative Way of Dealing with the Long-Term Effects of Divorce through Parent-Child Relationships. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*.

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@relationships.wa.org.au

Family Violence Law Reform Package Introduced into WA Parliament

On 27 November, the WA State Government introduced the Family Violence Legislation Reform Bill 2019 into Parliament.

This family violence law reform package includes:

- two new offences under the Criminal Code, namely non-fatal strangulation and persistent family violence;
- new aggravated penalties for offences which commonly occur in circumstances of family violence;
- introduction of serial family violence offender declarations;
- expanded access to electronic monitoring for offenders;
- introduction of jury directions to counter stereotypes, myths and misconceptions about family and domestic violence;
- making it easier for evidence of family and domestic violence to be introduced in criminal trials;
- requirement for police to record every family violence incident; and
- a range of amendments to the Restraining Orders Act 1997 and Bail Act 1982 to enhance victim safety and make it easier for victims to obtain protection from violence.

[Read full media release.](#)

Submissions Open for Joint Parliamentary Inquiry into Family Law and Child Support

On 17 September 2019, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced that the Government will undertake a Joint Parliamentary Committee of both the House and the Senate to conduct a wide-ranging inquiry into the family law system.

The Select Committee aims to inquire and report by 7 October 2020 on specific areas where there may be scope for improvement in the family law system, the courts or other policy areas such as child support.

The Joint Select Committee on Australia's Family Law System was appointed by resolution of the Senate on 18 September 2019 and resolution of the House of Representatives on 19 September 2019.

The committee is currently accepting submissions, which can be provided via email to familylaw.sen@aph.gov.au or via the committee's online portal by using the 'Upload Submission' button on the [committee's website](#). The committee strongly encourages using the [submission template](#).

Submissions close 18 December 2019.

For more information, visit the [committee's website](#).

New CFCA Resource Sheet "LGBTIQA+ Communities: Glossary of Common Terms"

The Australian Institute of Family Studies have published a new resource sheet in November 2019, which includes glossary of common terms used within the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQA+) communities.

[View resource sheet.](#)

Child Protection and Care - Legal Proceedings

For a child or family involved in Protection and Care proceedings, the stakes are very high. A child may be made subject to Court Order that will mean that they are in the care of the CEO of the Department of Communities for the whole of their childhood. It means having a corporate parent, separation from parents, and potential separation from all of family and from culture. Tragically, Aboriginal families are most impacted, with Aboriginal children representing more than 50% of all the children in care - a result of the trauma suffered over so many years. Child Protection law has to be the area most impacting on a child and family, yet it is an area given little attention, resourcing and value.

A group of lawyers who practice in child protection have recently started to gather to share their combined experience and to learn from one another, sharing research, resources and knowledge to enable better representation of all involved in child protection proceeding with the aim of achieving better outcomes for the children involved.

If you practice in this area or have an interest in it and would like details of the group's meetings, feel free to contact Kathy Russell from the family law team at Aboriginal Legal Service WA via krussell@als.org.au.

Service Wait Times

If you are often referring to clients to family law services in your role, you may find the WAFLPN compilation of service wait times useful.

Each month, WAFLPN collates the wait times for government-funded family law services in the Perth metropolitan area and some parts of regional WA.

In the document you can find up-to-date waiting periods for services like children's contact centres, family dispute resolution, parenting programs and men's behaviour change programs.

To view the current service wait times on the WAFLPN website visit <https://waflpn.org.au/Resources/Service-Wait-Times>

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