



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

February 2024

## Greetings from the Chair

by Tucker Christou



Hello from WAFLPN!

February has passed us by and here at head office planning for the annual conference is building up with the opening of [registrations](#) this week.

Please bear with us while we work on the program to bring on board speakers who are experts in the field of child mental health and wellbeing, coupled with being knowledgeable in family law.

We want to be able to satisfy the curiosity of all our members especially with the Family Law Amendment Act (FLAA) changes coming into effect in May.

We also appreciate our members who have been lobbying us for hands on information relating to the changes, and staff have been working tirelessly with the Federal Attorney-General's Family Law Section.

The outcome is good news in the form of four webinars, commencing on 25 March.

Details on how to register can be found on pages 6 and 7 in this edition.

Further to the webinars staff are working with Jacki Brady and the team at Family and Relationships Services Australia to produce tangible information like a pamphlet or flyer that can be passed on to clients.

We are also actively listening out for information sessions relevant to the changes that are happening in the sector and will endeavour to publish what we can in the eBulletin.

If you know of anything, please send the information through to be shared in the sector.

An update from our Steering Committee is that we recently welcomed members Dion Dosualdo, CEO of the Citizens Advice Bureau, Helen Howard from Stopping Family Violence and Dragana Blackwood, Senior Associate from Lavan Legal, on board to compliment our team of twenty agencies proudly representing the WA network.

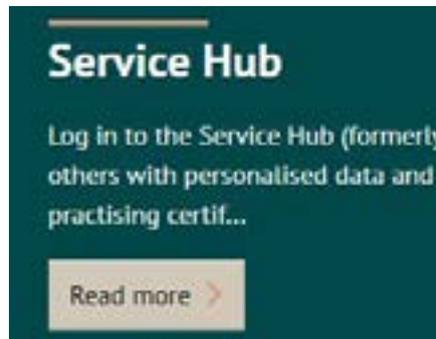
It's always a great honour to count women in and in celebrating International Women's Day, I would like to acknowledge all women who work in and alongside the family law system and celebrate their valuable contributions.

Thank you all for the richness you bring to our work life.

Warm regards,  
Tucker



AGENCY UPDATES



The organisers are hoping for as many responses as possible to give the best possible basis for statistical analysis and are aiming to hear back from approximately 700 participants from WA to help complete the survey

**New era for Legal Practice Board Website**

The WA Legal Practice Board published their new internet site in February.

So far, the new site appears to be more user friendly and visitors can expect a significant improvement to their online experience with the Board.

Information on how to use the new site is available under the Resource icon on the front page.



[access the survey](#)



**Lawyer Wellbeing Survey**

This is a research study to look at lawyer wellbeing, workplace culture and ethics from a multidisciplinary team of researchers from the Australian National University and the University of Melbourne.



Finding your individual home page is still a bit tricky, and requires a user to scroll down the home page, click on the *Read more* text in the Service Hub box to bring you to the Manage My Hub page.

The research will provide new insights and inform future initiatives, and is focusing on lawyers practising in the three states operating under the Uniform Law scheme.



## AGENCY UPDATES



### Communicare's new service supporting men and women who use violence and abuse

The Safer Communities program is a fee for service program providing an opportunity for both men and women, to access timely and affordable therapeutic support regarding their use of abusive behaviours in their intimate and family relationships.

Safer Communities is a behavioural change program supporting people who choose to use violence, through psychoeducation and therapeutic support, to increase their understanding and awareness of family and domestic violence and abuse (FDVA), and the impacts these behaviours can have on relationships.

The service is person-centered, integrated with access to practical supports, trauma informed and strength-based.

This includes utilising flexible and responsive approaches with a focus on family safety, whilst holding the individuals accountable for their use of abusive behaviours.



The program is delivered over 7 weeks and includes:

1. Assessment and Intake – includes the production of an assessment report
2. Individual case management & counselling support with a behaviour change focus. (5 sessions)
3. Completion session - includes Outcomes Star, safety planning and administration of Core 10

Safer Communities provides strategies and techniques to individuals to assist them improve relationships, make appropriate decisions, manage emotions safely and develop safe conflict resolution skills with the aim of reducing the risk of further FDVA and keeping families and communities safe.

[request brochure](#)



Join the Family Inclusion Network (FIN) and other parents to chat about how to navigate the child protection, legal and out-of-home care systems. Hear how parents gained support, addressed their child protection concerns, and became more included in the lives of their children. (This is not run by the Department of Child Safety).

Tea time for parents who have/had:

- » children in care, or
- » an intervention with parental agreement, or
- » been reunified with children

**Date & time: Tuesday  
19 March 2024**

**08:30 AM - 10:00 AM AWST**

*Please note: this event is in Queensland - and there is an option for clients to join via Zoom*

[request online link](#)

## EVENTS



**Registrations  
Now Open!**

**CONFERENCE MAY 2024**



**WA Family Law Pathways Network 2024 Annual  
Conference**

**Moving forward together - ensuring a bright future for our children**

**Tuesday, 7 May 2024 | 8:00am to 5:30pm**  
**Wednesday, 8 May 2024 | 8:00am to 5:00pm**

Participants can attend one or both days, or watch the day one presentations at a regional location

**WHERE**

Burswood on Swan  
1 Camfield Dr, Burswood WA

**OR**

via a Regional venue for day one

[secure your tickets here](#)



ATTORNEY-GENERAL

FAMILY LAW AMENDMENT ACT CHANGES from May 2024

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.

**Community of Practice: Family Law**

Experts from the Peninsula Community Legal Centre & Southside Justice are collaborating with the Bayside Peninsula Integrated Family Violence Partnership to discuss the new Family Law amendments

**Date & time: Monday 25 March 2024**

**06:15 AM - 08:30 AM AWST**

Join these experts and forward your questions at registration to discuss everything you need to know about the new Family Law amendments and how this impacts the family violence sector.

[book here](#)

WEBINAR SERIES

**Family Law Amendment Act Changes from May 2024**

**Date:**

1. Monday 25 March 2024
2. Wednesday 10 April 2024
3. Wednesday 17 April 2024
4. to be advised

**Time:**

10:00 AM - 11:00 PM AWST

[register here](#)

**Australian Treaty Series 1991 No 4  
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE  
CANBERRA**

**Convention on the Rights of the Child**

**(New York, 20 November 1989)**

[read it here](#)

**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**

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

FAMILY LAW AMENDMENT ACT CHANGES from May 2024

## Family Law Amendment Act Changes from May 2024



The National Family Law Pathways Networks in collaboration with Attorney-General's Department invite you to participate in our upcoming webinar series.

The Attorney-General's Department will facilitate a series of webinars on the Family Law Amendment Act 2023 (Cth), in the lead up to the commencement of important changes to the parenting framework and other key provisions on 6 May 2024.

### SEMINAR 1

**Monday 25 March 2024, 10:00 AM AWST**

In the first seminar of the series, Rebecca Mills, Ag/Assistant Secretary, Family Law Branch, will provide an overview of the legislation with a focus on what family law professionals now need to know when considering parenting arrangements and the child's best interests.

Attendees will be invited to submit their key questions on the practical implications of the reforms to be discussed and answered by a panel of experienced judges, registrars, legal practitioners and family dispute resolution practitioners later in the series.

### PRESENTER



Rebecca Mills has worked in various senior roles for the Australian Government Attorney-General's

Department, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and the Department of Home Affairs since 2010.

Her current role focuses on the family law system, including responsibility for administration of and reforms to the Family Law Act 1975, and managing delivery of a suite of family relationship services nationwide that support separating couples to resolve disputes outside the courts.

Her previous roles have included leading development of Australia's Modern Slavery

Act 2018; engagement with the states and territories to commence development of the National Principles on Coercive Control in 2020, and work on the review of the response to serious incidents in the Parliamentary Workplace in 2021. Prior to her work in the Australian Public Service, Rebecca was an Adviser to the former Assistant Minister for Pacific Island Affairs, the Hon Duncan Kerr SC.

[register here](#)

READ

READ

WATCH

## Family Violence Within LGBTQ Communities in Australia: Intersectional Experiences and Associations with Mental Health Outcomes

Prior research has documented intimate partner violence and family of origin violence experienced by LGBTQ communities at rates at least comparable to heterosexual and/or cisgender populations, little knowledge exists of how this experience occurs within intersections of these communities and who is most at risk.

This study utilised data from a from a large nationwide Australian survey of the health and wellbeing of 6835 LGBTQ adults aged 18 + years.

[read / download](#)

Amos, N., Hill, A., Donovan, C. et al. Family Violence Within LGBTQ Communities in Australia: Intersectional Experiences and Associations with Mental Health Outcomes. *Sex Res Soc Policy* 20, 1316–1327 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13178-023-00822-2>

## Coercive Control in the Courtroom: the Legal Abuse Scale (LAS)

Intimate partner violence survivors seeking safety and justice for themselves and their children through family court and other legal systems may instead encounter their partners' misuse of court processes to further enact coercive control.

To illuminate this harmful process, this study sought to create a measure of legal abuse through developing a list of 27 potential items on the basis of consultation with 23 experts, qualitative interviews, and existing literature.

After piloting these items, they were administered to a sample of 222 survivor-mothers who had been involved in family law proceedings.

[read / download](#)

Gutowski, E.R., Goodman, L.A. Coercive Control in the Courtroom: the Legal Abuse Scale (LAS). *J Fam Viol* 38, 527–542 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-022-00408-3>

## An Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorder and Family Law Considerations

**Date & time: Wednesday  
13 March 2024**

**10:00 AM - 10:30 AM AWST**



Engage with Renee Carter (pictured above), Counsellor and Consultant, for a presentation that will include:

Features of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Challenges and strengths for some Autistic people.

Strategies for successful communication with Autistic people.

Considerations for developing parenting plans, co-parenting and managing transitions.

Supporting Autistic children and young people to thrive in separated families.

This webinar will equip legal and non-legal practitioners with the tools to work effectively with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families.

[book here](#)

WATCH



Australian Government  
Australian Institute of Family Studies



**How developmental evaluation can be used to develop and adapt social services programs**

**This is a pre-recorded interview with Relationships Australia Victoria’s Lead Evaluator, Sandra Opoku**

**Date & time: Wednesday 13 March 2024**

**10:00 AM - 10:30 AM AWST**

Evaluation is quickly becoming a necessary part of service delivery and decision making in child and family services.

Traditional forms of evaluation can take a long time to produce the results needed to enhance service delivery.

In contrast, developmental evaluation involves learning as you go, meaning evaluators can test new approaches, track program implementation and design initiatives that are responsive to context and need.

This makes developmental evaluation useful for

providers working in dynamic environments that require responsive interventions.

This webinar will explore how Relationships Australia Victoria used developmental evaluation to adapt their Men’s Behaviour Change Program (MBCP) to online delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic, and will give you:

- an understanding of how to design and implement a developmental evaluation
- insight into what evidence a developmental evaluation can generate
- an understanding of what developmental evaluation can and can’t be used for.

[register](#)



**How to support clients exposed to technology-facilitated coercive control**

In technology-facilitated coercive control, various forms of technology are used

to extend the perpetrator’s ability to monitor and maintain surveillance of the victim-survivor.

Technology also provides avenues to harass, threaten and shame victim-survivors, manipulate their social relationships and ensure compliance with demands.

Victim-survivors commonly experience a combination of technology-facilitated and face-to-face psychological, physical, sexual and/or financial abuse.

An important consideration for practitioners is that victim-survivors may not know that what they are experiencing is abuse and may not have the ability to access support because they are being monitored.

Drawing on the latest research and practitioner insights this webinar:

- \* Describes what technology-facilitated coercive control looks like in practice.
- \* Provides examples of the different ways that victim-survivors might experience technology-facilitated coercive control.
- \* Suggests strategies for face-to-face and telehealth practice.

[watch 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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto:annette.marie@relationshipswa.org.au)

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