



Family Law
PATHWAYS
NETWORK

WESTERN
AUSTRALIA

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

JULY 2020

Greetings from the Chair

by Karen Barker

Hello from WAFLPN!

My name is Karen Barker and it is my absolute pleasure to be appointed as Chair of the WA Family Law Pathways Network.

I am honoured to take over this role from Rod West, who has done an exceptional job of leading the Steering Committee over the past two years. Rod will continue to represent Centrecare on the WAFLPN Steering Committee and will be supporting me to transition into this role.

I would now like to take this opportunity to briefly introduce myself. I am currently the Practice Consultant Family Law Services at Anglicare WA, although I have undertaken a number of different roles over the years within Anglicare WA and across the broader social services sector. I have worked with children and families in a variety of settings from early childhood to family support, youth services and refugee settlement.

I have a Bachelor of Social Science in Children Studies and a Graduate Diploma In Family Dispute Resolution. During my time in Family Law Services, I became a strong advocate for the participation rights of children and young people. I undertook a Master's in Childhood Studies at the Centre for Children and Young People. My research thesis explored how the socially constructed notion



of childhood contributed to or prevented the participation rights of children. I was lucky enough to be supervised by Associate Professor Nicola Taylor who holds the Alexander McMillan Leading Thinker Chair in Childhood Studies. Nicola has a Bachelor of Social Work (Hons) degree, a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) degree, a PhD, and has been admitted as a Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand. Having access to such a great thinker helped me to explore and deepen my understanding of the nexus between the social science and the family law sector as we navigate the complex world of family separation and the impact on children.

I first became involved in Family Pathways in 2006 following the changes to the *Family Law Act* and the Equal Shared Parental Responsibility amendments. It was an exciting time

to be involved in the Family Law Sector. As General Manager of Family Law Services for Anglicare WA, I was involved in leading service delivery across several Family Law Services. I opened three FRCs across WA and Regional FDR, implemented the Supporting Children after Separation Program and Parenting Orders Program and four Children's Contact Services across the state.

I am passionate about this sector and the work we do to promote and strengthen family relationships post-separation. Aside from representing Anglicare WA and now chairing the WAFLPN Steering Committee, I also sit on the national board of the Australian Children Contact Services Association and am an active member of Family Relationships Services Australia.

I look forward to working with the Steering Committee, Regional Representatives and members of WAFLPN to improve the level of support we as a sector can provide to separated and separating families.

I hope you enjoy our upcoming webinar with Professors Harry Blagg and Vickie Hovane on 6 August. We will also be announcing more webinars soon, so keep an eye on your emails for updates from WAFLPN.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Free WAFLPN Webinar with Professors Harry Blagg and Vickie Hovane

Understanding the Role of Law and Culture in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities in responding to and preventing family violence

Thursday 6 August 2020 11:00AM (AWST)

Family violence within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities attracts considerable attention in policy, research and practice. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have advocated for community-led approaches to family violence that are culturally safe, involve Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander justice models and recognise Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Law and Culture. Despite colonisation, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people retain a connection to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Law and Culture. A strengths-based approach embedded in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Law and Culture does not mean returning to "traditional" ways, but is an approach that recognises the ways in which culture is living and dynamic, and adapts.

Join Professors Harry Blagg and Vickie Hovane in this one hour webinar where they will be presenting their research, key findings and recommendations on the [recently published ANROWS report "Understanding the role of law and culture in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities in responding to and preventing family violence"](#).

WHEN: Thursday, 6 August 2020 at 11:00AM (AWST)

WHERE: Online webinar

TICKETS: Free, [register here](#)

About the presenters



Harry Blagg is Professor of Criminology and Associate Dean of Research at the Law School, University of Western Australia. Harry has a national and international reputation as a leading criminologist specializing in Indigenous people and criminal justice, young people and crime, family and domestic violence, crime prevention, diversionary strategies, policing and restorative justice.



Vickie Hovane is an Adjunct Associate Professor at the Law School, University of Western Australia and holds a First Class Honours Degree in Psychology and completed a PhD which investigated the role that Culture has in informing the cultural dimension in psychological theories of sex offending. Vickie is a registered psychologist and an experienced consultant and practitioner having worked in several areas of social welfare, legal, victim, offender and child protection services, research projects and advisory roles over the past 37 years.

More information at waflpn.org.au

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@relationshipsqa.org.au

Intro to parenting, property settlement and mediation

Gosnells Community Legal Centre is proud to present an introduction to Family Law Webinar which will give you a basic understanding of parenting, property and mediation. Learn how property is settled post separation, what the court considers when making arrangements for children and what is mediation and how can it help. This seminar is a good foundation of Family Law and Mediation for separated couples or caseworkers working with separated families.

21 August 2020
3:00pm-4:00pm
Online Webinar (Webex)
Free but donations welcome
[Register here](#)

MORE TRAINING AND EVENTS

Check out the 'Resources' section on our website for more relevant training and events.

<https://waflpn.org.au/resources/other-relevant-training-and-events>

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

How does domestic violence influence the likelihood of settlement in mediation? New data answers old questions

This study seeks empirical evidence to answer critical questions surrounding domestic violence (DV) and mediation: Are survivors of DV being coerced into reaching unfair and unsafe agreements? Do all DV behaviors have the same impact on settlement? Does stalking predict impasse less than a history of physical violence? Do survivors feel safe in mediation compared to adjudication or attorney negotiated settlement? This study answers these critical questions in order to understand which cases are likely to benefit from mediation. This research empowers screeners, mediators, court employees and attorneys to better discern which cases are most likely to benefit from mediation.

[Read full article.](#)

Raines, S. S., Indovina, V. (2020). How does domestic violence influence the likelihood of settlement in mediation? New data answers old questions. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, 37(3), 195-205.

Raising strong, solid Koolunga: values and beliefs about early child development among Perth's Aboriginal community

There is a paucity of published information about conceptions of Aboriginal child rearing and development among urban dwelling Nyoongar/Aboriginal people in Australia. This article details the unique findings from an Aboriginal early child development research project with a specific focus on the Nyoongar/Aboriginal community of Perth, Western Australia. This research significantly expands the understanding of a shared system of beliefs and values among Nyoongar people that differ in important ways from those of the broader Australian (Western) society. Consistent with the findings of research with other Aboriginal groups in Australia, and internationally, this work challenges assumptions underpinning a range of early childhood development policies and highlights the implications of cultural biases and misunderstandings among non-Aboriginal professionals in child and family services, education and other settings.

[Read abstract or purchase article.](#)

Scrine, C., Farrant, B., Michie, C., Shepherd, C., & Wright, M. (2020). Raising strong, solid Koolunga: Values and beliefs about early child development among Perth's Aboriginal community. *Children Australia*, 45(1), 40-47.

The prevalence of domestic violence among women during the COVID-19 pandemic

This paper presents the findings from an online survey of 15,000 Australian women about their experience of domestic violence during the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the three months prior to the survey, conducted in May 2020, 4.6% of women who responded to the survey experienced physical or sexual violence from a current or former cohabiting partner. 5.8% of women experienced coercive control and 11.6% reported experiencing at least one form of emotionally abusive, harassing or controlling behaviour. For many women, the pandemic coincided with the onset or escalation of violence and abuse. Two-thirds of women who experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former cohabiting partner since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic said the violence had started or escalated in the three months prior to the survey. Many women, particularly those experiencing more serious or complex forms of violence and abuse, reported safety concerns were a barrier to help-seeking.

[Download research report.](#)

Boxall, H., Morgan, A. & Brown, R. (2020). The prevalence of domestic violence among women during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Statistical Bulletin no. 28*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.

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

Introducing Keeping Kids in Mind

Keeping Kids in Mind (KKIM) is a course for parents experiencing conflict after separation. The course is designed to:

- Assist parents to see through their children's eyes the experience of parental separation
- Develop greater understanding about how to support children following family separation

The course runs over five weeks and looks at themes of grief and loss, attachment, resilience, communication and conflict resolution, and future planning. The course is psycho-educational in nature, utilising therapeutic moments with skilled facilitators to elicit change. Metaphors are used throughout the program to provide a shared language that allows complex issues to be discussed and understood.

Participants will be parents in the process of separation or already divorced and experiencing on going low to medium conflict.

The course aims to have a mixture of mothers and fathers in each course, to enable all parents' perspectives to be experienced. Both separated parents are not enrolled in the same course at the same time.

For further information on referral to this innovative parenting support program, please contact Communicare Parenting and Family Services on 9251 5777 or parenting@communicare.org.au

New 'amica' online service to assist couples to separate amicably

'amica' is a secure online tool that helps separating couples reach amicable agreements about parenting and property. amica was created by National Legal Aid and Australian's Legal Aid Commissions, including Legal Aid WA. It was designed and tested using feedback from everyday Australians who have been through family law disputes.

amica can be used by a broad cross-section of people who require family law information and assistance. It guides people through a step-by-step process and offers information and support along the way to help them reach agreements about parenting issues and property settlement.

Until 1 January 2021, couples can use the amica service for free. From 1 January 2021, a nominal fee (between \$165 and \$440 per couple) will be charged to fund ongoing maintenance and development of the service.

For more information visit www.amica.gov.au

FCWA Notice to Solicitors - Mandatory eLodgment

As part of its digital strategy, the [Family Court of Western Australia](http://www.familycourt.wa.gov.au) is introducing a phased approach leading to a digital Court file. The first phase includes the mandatory eLodgment by solicitors of all documents that can be eLodged via the Commonwealth Courts Portal.

As from 1 September 2020, all documents that can be eLodged via the Commonwealth Courts Portal must be eLodged, if they are lodged by a solicitor.

[Download Notice to Solicitors - Mandatory eLodgment](#)

2020 Edition of the National Domestic and Family Violence Bench Book Released

The 2020 edition of National Domestic and Family Violence is now available. Funded by the Attorney-General's Department and the Australasian Institute of Judicial Administration, the Bench Book is a publicly available resource containing background information, research and related resources designed to assist judicial officers in their decision-making and judgment-writing in cases involving domestic and family violence.

[View the Bench Book.](#)

Perth to host National Family Law Conference in 2022

The 20th National Family Law Conference (NFLC), hosted by the Family Law Section of the Law Council of Australia, will be held in Perth in October 2022.

The NFLC is the largest legal conference in Australia and is the largest specialist family law related conference in the world. It is the premier national legal education event for family lawyers and family law related services, consisting of professional sessions that aim to update and inform delegates on recent cases and developments in family law, explain topical areas of family law, and provide "big picture" ideas for reform and improvements. It also provides an opportunity for family lawyers and family law related services from around the country to meet, discuss problems, and build and develop networks across all sections of family law services.

If you would like to be involved in the Local Organising Committee, please contact Nicola Watts at nwatts@osullivandavies.com.au