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

JUNE 2020

Greetings from the Chair

by Rod West



Hello from WAFLPN!

It is hard to believe that this is the last time I am introducing an issue of the eBulletin as Chair of WAFLPN. It

has been an honour to serve as the Steering Committee Chair for the past two years, and I am extremely proud of everything that WAFLPN has achieved during this time. At the same time, I am excited to hand over the reins to someone who will be able to bring new ideas and perspectives to the role.

The WAFLPN Steering Committee is now faced with some important decisions. One is the matter of electing the new Chair, who will be officially announced in next month's eBulletin once the decision is finalised. The second involves planning for the year ahead, a task which has been made much harder by the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the Steering Committee makes plans for the year ahead, we turn to you, our members, for guidance. Due to the then-emerging COVID-19 crisis earlier this year, WAFLPN had to make the difficult decision to cancel our Annual Conference scheduled for May 2020. We would now like your input about whether we should organise an Annual Conference or pursue an alternative travelling roadshow event format in 2021.

Please [complete our short survey](#) and indicate your preference for a full day large-scale conference in the Perth metropolitan area similar to previous years or a new format in a travelling roadshow consisting of smaller events held in various parts of WA (including one in the Perth metropolitan area).

We would like to note that the format and logistics of either option will depend on the latest advice from the Government with regards to participant safety – for example, the conference may need to be held virtually rather than face-to-face. Additionally, circumstances permitting, we plan to continue holding webinars and/or other events throughout the year. If there are any other projects that you would like us to take on, please let us know in the survey as well!

Reflecting on the past two years, WAFLPN has made a lot of progress. We have organised more events than ever before across the entire state of Western Australia, a feat that would not have been possible without the tireless work of our Regional Representatives. We took on an ambitious project of creating a family law service directory for WA, which is now in its final stages of development. We braved the COVID-19 crisis and adapted so that we could meet our members' needs in new ways.

I would like to thank my Steering Committee, who have made my time as Chair a real pleasure; Kathryn Lawrence, my deputy Chair, who has diligently taken over my duties on more than one occasion; Neil Anderson, for all his hard work during his brief time as my co-Chair prior to his appointment as a Magistrate of the Family Court; Kate Jeffries, former Chair of WAFLPN, for her support and guidance; WAFLPN Network Development Officer Sofia Kouznetsova and Administration and Events Officer Kristen Soon, for all the work they do behind the scenes to ensure the Network operates efficiently; and last but not least Kevin Hanavan, for his leadership in organising the Annual Conference.

Once again, thank you to all WAFLPN members for your ongoing support and your willingness to provide feedback over the years. It has been a real pleasure working with you and having you attend our events both in-person and online. I hope to continue working with you, both as a member of the WAFLPN Steering Committee and in my role with Centrecare. And of course, I hope to see you all at future WAFLPN events!

SPOTLIGHT

Spotlight on Catherine Lynch, one of the WAFLPN Regional Representatives for Albany

In this feature, we shine the spotlight on the amazing people who volunteer their time and skills to WAFLPN. These include members of our Steering Committee, our valued Regional Representatives, and other professionals and organisations who generously donate their services to our Network.

In this eBulletin, WAFLPN would like to shine the spotlight on **Catherine Lynch**, a registered psychologist and Team leader of the Albany Intensive Family Support team at the Department of Communities. As one of WAFLPN's Regional Representatives for Albany, Catherine works closely with Michelle Gonsalves from Legal Aid WA to represent and support our members in the Great Southern region.

Catherine was born and attended school in Albany, but her work and travels have taken her all across the country. After travelling around Australia, she graduated from the University of Western Australia with a Master of Psychology, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) and a Graduate Diploma in Education.

After completing her studies, Catherine moved to the Northern Territory, where she worked in the Top End Mental Health Service for six years servicing Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) requirements for Darwin, Katherine, Tiwi Islands and Arnhem Land. She then relocated to Brisbane to manage a specialist CAMHS team working with children in out-of-home care with complex psychiatric disorders for Queensland Health. Whilst in Queensland Health, she took over the management of the CAMHS team and CAMH Emergency Department service in conjunction with the specialist Children in Care CAMHS team.

Catherine finally returned to Albany in 2013 as she wanted to be closer to her family. She took on a Specialist Practice Development role at the Department of Child Protection and Family Support (presently the Department of Communities) in Albany working across all teams. In 2017, she moved into the Team Leader role in the new Albany Intensive Family Support team, with a focus on keeping vulnerable or abused children safely at home. Catherine remains in this role and loves it.

When she is not working, Catherine enjoys walking, spoiling her dog, exploring the beautiful Albany coastline, spending time with her family and op-shopping.



Catherine Lynch



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.wa.org.au

Webinar with Judy Small AM The Power of Stories: Advocating for Justice

"Our stories are the keepers of our history, the celebrations of our present and the change makers for our future. Listening to someone else's story gives us perspective and understanding." - Karen Bryant, CEO Midsumma Festival

Judy Small AM will be presenting a 40-minute webinar which will address how people's stories can empower their subjects, educate in ways that cut through intellectual defences, and teach us about ourselves and our culture so that we can advocate for justice that is truly for all. It will draw on the various work experiences of the presenter: as a psychologist; as a folksinger/songwriter; as a family lawyer; and as a Federal Circuit Court Judge sitting in the family law jurisdiction. It will address subjects such as personal and cultural self-esteem; community and family violence; and resilience in the face of adversity – all through the telling of stories.

30 June 2020
11:00am-11:40am
Online Webinar
Free of charge, registrations essential
[Register here](#)

More information available on the [WAFLPN website](#).

Save the Date - Webinar with Nathan Wallis: Anxiety & Depression in Children & Adolescents

Following the success of the National FLPN Webinar Series, FLPNs across Australia jointly present this webinar on Anxiety and Depression in Children and Adolescents. Early childhood teacher, child therapist, social service manager, university lecturer and neuroscience trainer Nathan Wallis provides professional development reflecting the latest neuroscience discoveries and their practical implications for everyday practice. In this session, Nathan will discuss the way the brain works, the human stress response system and the changes to the brain in the teenage years. He will also share techniques for managing stress, anxiety and depression. These issues will be considered in the context of family breakdown.

22 July 2020, 11am
Online Webinar
Free of charge, registrations essential

Further details will be emailed to members and made available on the [WAFLPN website](#) soon.



Working Together in the Family Law System

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MORE TRAINING AND EVENTS

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

<https://wafpn.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

The views of Australian judicial officers on domestic and family violence perpetrator interventions

This project aimed to support the development of judicial information and guidance to enhance the effective use of perpetrator interventions in Australian state and territory courts. The research revealed that judicial officers hold mixed views on the effectiveness of perpetrator interventions in DFV matters. Judicial officers reported having little access to information about which (if any) perpetrator interventions have been previously used with a perpetrator when a DFV case is before them. Judicial officers also expressed a lack of knowledge about perpetrator program referral options, in relation to both the availability and nature of the programs. The report recommends the development of guidance on making use of a perpetrator's history of interventions in all DFV matters, including in sentencing; the possibility of a centralised register of perpetrator intervention programs; and further consideration by courts and judicial education bodies about the role of judicial officers in creating system accountability regarding perpetrators of DFV.

[Download research report.](#)

Fitz-Gibbon, K., Maher, J., Thomas, K., McGowan, J., McCulloch, J., Burley, J., & Pfitzner, N. (2020). The views of Australian judicial officers on domestic and family violence perpetrator interventions. ANROWS Research report 13/2020.

When Coercive Control Continues to Harm Children: Post-Separation Fathering, Stalking and Domestic Violence

This article reveals how children and young people can experience coercive control post-separation. Coercive control can include violence, threats, intimidation, stalking, monitoring, emotional abuse and manipulation, interwoven with periods of seemingly 'caring' and 'indulgent' behaviour as part of the overall abuse. Three themes emerged regarding children's experiences: (1) dangerous fathering that made children frightened and unsafe; (2) 'admirable' fathering, where fathers/father-figures appeared as 'caring', 'concerned', 'indulgent' and/or 'vulnerable-victims' and (3) omnipresent fathering that continually constrained children's lives. Dangerous and 'admirable' fathering describe the behaviours of coercive control-perpetrating fathers/father-figures, while omnipresent fathering occurred in children as a fearful mental and emotional state. Perpetrators could also direct performances of 'admirable' fathering at professionals and communities in ways that obscured their coercive control. Implications for policy and practice are discussed.

[Read full article.](#)

Katz, E., Nikupeteri, A., & Laitinen, M. (2020). When Coercive Control Continues to Harm Children: Post-Separation Fathering, Stalking and Domestic Violence. *Child Abuse Review*. DOI: 10.1002/car.2611

Responding to the 'shadow pandemic': practitioner views on the nature of and responses to violence against women in Victoria, Australia during the COVID-19 restrictions

The COVID-19 global pandemic has increased women's vulnerability to all forms of gender-based violence. This Report presents the findings from a qualitative and quantitative survey of 166 practitioners from Victoria, Australia. The findings reveal the concerns of Victorian practitioners that the pandemic has led to an increase in the frequency and severity of violence against women alongside an increase in the complexity of women's needs. Other findings examined include the emergence of new forms of intimate partner violence relating to social isolation as well as relating to the threat and risk of COVID-19 infection, practitioner recognition that for many women experiencing violence during this period there was a reduction in the ability to seek help, and the identification of numerous challenges to providing supports, undertaking effective risk assessment and carrying out safety planning during the COVID-19 restrictions phase. The research also draws attention to the wellbeing considerations for those practitioners working remotely to support women experiencing violence during the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to develop worker supports as restrictions ease.

[Download research report.](#)

Pfitzner, N., Fitz-Gibbon, K. & True, J. (2020). Responding to the 'shadow pandemic': practitioner views on the nature of and responses to violence against women in Victoria, Australia during the COVID-19 restrictions. Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre.

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

New Fact Sheet from CAB and WAFLPN: The interaction between Family Law and Succession Law

The Citizens Advice Bureau of WA (CAB) and WAFLPN have produced a new fact sheet about the interaction between Family Law and Succession Law. Drawing on real-life examples and commonly asked questions about cases where Family Law and Succession Law both come into play, this fact sheet highlights the close relationship between these two areas of law. This fact sheet aims to educate service providers about the area of intersection between Family Law and Succession Law, help answer some common questions clients might have, aid practitioners in recognising when clients need to seek legal advice and guide them to make appropriate referrals.

[Download fact sheet.](#)



This fact sheet can also be accessed on the [WAFLPN](#) and [CAB](#) websites.

Contribute to the WAFLPN Work Plan for 2020/21- Decision about 2021 Annual Conference

WAFLPN is seeking feedback from our members to help us plan for 2020/21. After the cancellation of this year's Annual Conference due to COVID-19, the WAFLPN Steering Committee is considering whether to organise an Annual Conference in 2021 as in previous years or to pursue a new travelling roadshow format.

For more information about the options under consideration and to have your say, [complete our short survey here.](#)

Notice from the Gosnells Community Legal Centre - Referrals for FDR

The Gosnells Community Legal Centre (GCLC) currently has 0 days waiting period for FDR. GCLC is able to take on any clients who would like quick mediations and welcome referrals from other services. Assistance can be provided to clients all over Western Australia and a fee waiver is available to those in financial hardship.

Please view the [flyer](#) for more information including fees.

GCLC can be contacted at (08) 9398 1455 for questions and FDR referrals.

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER

Follow [@FamilyPathwayWA](#) on twitter for the latest information and interesting articles relating to family law

New Resource: Helping children in care stay in contact with their birth families during COVID-19

The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) has published a new resource outlining how out-of-home care caseworkers can support contact between children and their birth families during social restrictions. This short article provides suggestions consistent with good practice principles for how caseworkers can help children in care stay connected with their birth family from a distance. Beginning with an overview of good practice principles for supported contact, it outlines how these principles have been applied to help families stay connected.

[View resource.](#)

MORE COVID-19 RESOURCES

Visit waflpn.org.au/resources/covid-19-resources to access a compilation of relevant COVID-19 resources

FEEDBACK

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