



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

JUNE/JULY 2021

Greetings from the Deputy Chair

by Marnie Williams

Hello from WAFLPN!

For those of you who may not know me, I am Marnie Williams, Managing Solicitor at Aboriginal Family Legal Services (AFLS) in Kalgoorlie. I am also the Regional Representative for Kalgoorlie and the current Deputy Chair of the WAFLPN Steering Committee. As you would already be aware from Karen's message in the [previous eBulletin](#), WAFLPN is currently in the process of electing a new Steering Committee Chair. Look forward to an announcement introducing our new Chair soon!

On behalf of the WAFLPN Steering Committee, I would like sincerely thank everyone who attended the 2021 WAFLPN Annual Conference and Workshop Day. After the unfortunate cancellation of the 2020 conference, it meant a lot to be able to come together with other like-minded professionals for two days of learning and stimulating discussion.

For those who completed the post-conference online evaluation form, we appreciate your time and honesty in providing us with valuable feedback. We hear you, and your responses are guiding us as we begin planning the 2022 Annual Conference. If you have any further feedback or suggestions for next year's conference, please contact us and let us know.



In this issue of the eBulletin, we provide a recap of the Annual Conference, reflect on some recent events and introduce one of our Regional Representatives. If you consented to being photographed, you may even find pictures of yourself and your colleagues featured in the next few pages!

In the coming weeks, you can expect to receive more updates regarding the WAFLPN Service Directory and other projects we have on the horizon.

Now, without any further ado, please enjoy this content-packed issue of the WAFLPN eBulletin.



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in the
Family Law System*

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PHOTO GALLERY: 2021 ANNUAL CONFERENCE & WORKSHOP DAY



Shaun Nannup



L to R: Magistrate Anderson, Justice Moncrieff and Registrar French (FCWA)



Marilyn Metta



Kate Jeffries



Professor Victoria Hovane



L to R: Magistrate Hughes, Sean Woods and Melisa Cox (Children's Court)



Stopping Family Violence Panel



WA Men's Behaviour Change Program Network



REVIEW OF PAST WAFLPN EVENTS

Recap: WAFLPN Annual Conference

With the theme of *'Shaping the Future of Family Law in 2021: Ideas, Innovation and Inspiration'*, the WAFLPN Annual Conference took place on 25 May 2021, followed by a post-conference Workshop Day on 26 May. Held at the beautiful Burswood on Swan venue in Perth, the conference saw over 300 delegates attending in person, tuning in online or joining one of the conference livestream events organised by our Regional Representatives in Bunbury, Albany, Kalgoorlie, Carnarvon and Geraldton.

Shaun Nannup kickstarted the first day of the conference with a beautiful and inspiring Welcome to Country. Tying the conference theme in with National Reconciliation Week, Shaun's message about reconciliation, connection and healing trauma left a lasting impression on attendees and set the scene for the next two days.

Rod West performed a short opening speech on behalf of the WAFLPN Steering Committee, acknowledging outgoing Chair Karen Barker's contributions to the Network and welcoming delegates to the conference. The energetic MC Malcolm Dix proceeded to run through housekeeping instructions and before introducing the first presentation of the day.

The first session was presented by a panel from the Family Court of Western Australia, consisting of Magistrate Neil Anderson, Registrar Simon French, and the Honourable Justice Simon Moncrieff presenting in lieu of the Chief Judge. Magistrate Anderson reflected on his involvement in the Djidji Nyitti (Martu words for 'Little Children') initiative, a simplified and accessible family law service for Aboriginal people that was piloted in Newman. Registrar French spoke about the mediation pilot program conducted between 15 July 2019 and 30 June 2020, which offered litigants the opportunity to participate in a Pre-Trial Conference to see whether their dispute could be settled or narrowed, resulting in an impressive saving of 334 days of court time.

During the morning tea which followed, delegates at the Burswood on Swan venue caught up with colleagues over some fresh fruits and hot drinks, with many taking the opportunity to step outside and enjoy the beautiful view of the Swan River.

It was then time to hear Marilyn Metta's personal story of living with intimate abuse and coercive control and her experience navigating the family court system over 15 years ago. Marilyn's story of her enduring trauma clearly struck a chord with many of those in attendance as she left the stage to a standing ovation.

Following on from Marilyn's presentation, Kate Jeffries proceeded to discuss what an FDV-informed family law system would look like, and the steps that need to be taken to achieve this. If you missed or would like to review the content of Kate's presentation, she has kindly made a copy of it available through the [Member Area](#) of the WAFLPN website.

It was then time to break for lunch, where delegates continued to network and build on their learning from the conference thus far.

After lunch, Professor Victoria Hovane delivered a highly impactful presentation based on her research on the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Law and Culture in responding to and preventing family violence. She made a strong point about the incompatibility between the 'white law' of the family law system and Aboriginal law, and how reforming the response to Aboriginal children in the Family Court needs to involve both these laws 'talking' to each other. The presentation definitely left the audience with a lot to think about, with many later citing Professor Hovane's presentation as a highlight of the conference for them.

Following a quick afternoon tea break, it was time for the final presentation of the day. The panel from the Children's Court consisting of Magistrate Wendy Hughes, Sean Woods and Melisa Cox sharing about their involvement in the therapeutic Pilot Court. The panel's energy and passion for their work was clear, ending the conference on an inspiring note.

At the end of the day, conference speakers and delegates were invited to join the WAFLPN Steering Committee for a sundowner overlooking the beautiful Swan River.

Many of the delegates returned the following day for the two-part FDV Informed workshop. The morning session consisted of sharing by members of the WA Men's Behaviour Change Program Network, who talked about emerging findings as well as their own experience and learnings working across the perpetrator intervention system in WA.

After lunch, the team from Stopping Family Violence spoke about FDV-Informed Family Assessments and engaged the audience in an open discussion about family violence and the family law system.

As a token of appreciation, all conference speakers were presented with gift boxes from Mettle, an Australian social enterprise that employs women who have experienced homelessness as a result of domestic and family violence. Delegates also left with their own lanterns - a reminder to keep lighting the way towards a brighter future in family law.

PHOTO GALLERY: 2021 ANNUAL CONFERENCE & WORKSHOP DAY



Photos by Ezra Alcantra Photography

REVIEW OF PAST WAFLPN EVENTS

Bunbury Conference Livestream

Cathy Mills from Anglicare WA was one of the WAFPLN Regional Representatives who hosted a conference livestream event. Family law professionals in Bunbury came together at Quality Lighthouse Hotel to tune into the conference. Despite some technical difficulties, the conference delegates at Bunbury reported having a great day. They have shared some photographs with us, which we have included below with permission.



Geraldton Children's Matters Stakeholders Forum

After the cancellation of the February event, the Geraldton Children's Matters Stakeholders Forum was able to go ahead on 15 June, featuring guest speaker Dr Carolyn Jackson. WAFLPN is proud to partner with the Geraldton FRC to support this longstanding event series, so as to enable networking and discussion of important issues between family law professionals located in Geraldton and those travelling from Perth on the Magistrates circuit of the Family Court of Western Australia.



Anthea Shaw (Manager Geraldton FRC); Dr Carolyn Johnson (Guest Speaker); Julie-Anne Berg (FDRP Geraldton FRC); Carole-Anne Burton (Manager Children's Contact Service); Christina Mallett (Client Liaison Officer, Geraldton FRC)



Neil Hofmeyr (Aboriginal Family Law Services); Julie French (Senior FDRP Geraldton FRC); Julie-Anne Berg (FDRP Geraldton FRC); Rayleen Counsellor (Barrowa Consultancy)



Chloe Samuels (Legal Aid); Family Consultant Linda Biffen; Magistrate Andrews

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

FDV Conference 2021 - Bringing Children and Young People into View

[External/non-WAFLPN event]

Join Stopping Family Violence and the Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing at this important three day event in September 2021, which will bring together non-government community services, the government sector and the broader community to critically examine, discuss and explore policy and practice responses to better support the safety and wellbeing of children and young people experiencing family, domestic and sexual violence.

13-15 September 2021
8.30am-5.30pm
Crown Perth, Burswood WA
Tickets starting from \$125

For more information and to register, visit fdvconference.com.au



BRINGING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE INTO VIEW

National FLPN Webinar: The new Family Law Court - How will it be different?

The changes to the federal Family Law Courts have been a topic of significant interest across the sector since the introduction of the merger bill in 2019. With the launch date of the Federal Circuit and Family Law Court of Australia set for 1 September 2021, the Family Law Pathways Networks are pleased to provide an opportunity for our membership to learn about the changes being implemented as part of the restructure.

This webinar will be presented by:

- Lisa O'Neill (Senior Registrar & National Registrar – Risk Policy and Family Violence)
- Anna Parker (Senior Registrar & National Operations Registrar – Judicial Case Management)
- Janet Carmichael (Executive Director, Court Children's Services)

The speakers will speak to:

- the new Court structure and case management pathways,
- the role of the Lighthouse Project in the new Court and other risk screening and assessment mechanisms, and
- the role of the Court's Children Services from the 1st of September 2021.

There will be an opportunity for the audience to ask questions during the webinar using the 'chat' function.

Registered participants will be emailed a link for the webinar within 24 hours of the scheduled start time and will also have access to a recording of the webinar for a period of time following the live stream.

Wednesday, 15 September 2021
11.00am-12.30pm AWST
Online webinar
[Register here](#)

Note: The Family Court of Western Australia (FCWA) is the only state Family Court in Australia, however the changes occurring at the federal level would still be of interest to many of the WAFLPN members.

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

Evaluation of an On-line Parenting and Divorce Course: Effects of Parent Knowledge and Skills among Court-mandated Parents of Divorce

There are very few evidence-based parent education programs focused on divorce even though more and more state court systems are requiring them. This study builds the evidence-base by using a population of parents who were court-mandated to take a parenting class as part of their divorce proceedings. With over 800 parents in the study, we found the on-line parent education program increased parent knowledge of skills in effective communication and parenting immediately after the course, and parents retained their knowledge and skills 30-days after the course. Qualitative analysis indicated parent-reported changes in their behavior after the course as well.

[Read abstract or purchase article.](#)

Yamaguchi, R. & Randel, B. (2021). Evaluation of an On-line Parenting and Divorce Course: Effects of Parent Knowledge and Skills among Court-mandated Parents of Divorce. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 62(6), 431-449

Trauma then and now: Implications of adoption reform for First Nations children

Currently, Aboriginal children are significantly over-represented in the out-of-home-care system. Drawing on Aboriginal trauma scholarship and decolonizing methodologies, this paper situates the contemporary state removal of Aboriginal children against the backdrop of historical policies that actively sought to disrupt Aboriginal kinship and communities. The paper draws on submissions to the 2018 Australian Senate Parliamentary Inquiry into Adoption Reform from Aboriginal community controlled organizations and highlights four common themes evident throughout these submissions: (i) the role of intergenerational trauma in high rates of Aboriginal child removal; (ii) the place of children within Aboriginal culture, kinship and identity; (iii) the centrality of the principles of self-determination and autonomy for Aboriginal communities and (iv) Aboriginal community controlled alternatives to child removal. Acknowledging the failure of both federal and state reforms to address the issues raised in these submissions, the paper reflects on the marginalization of Aboriginal voices and solutions within contemporary efforts to address the multiple crises of the child protection system and the implications for the future of Aboriginal children.

[Read abstract or purchase article.](#)

Turnbull-Roberts, V., Salter, M., & Newton, B. J. (2021). Trauma then and now: Implications of adoption reform for First Nations children. *Child & Family Social Work*, 1-10

Exploring separated fathers' understandings and experiences of 'home' and homemaking

This paper considers fathers' understandings and experiences of home after relationship separation through interviews with four separated fathers conducted as part of a larger qualitative study. Key themes to emerge were: the significance attached by participant fathers to home and homemaking through their focus on everyday interactions; the concern that their home might be viewed by children as secondary; and a sense of the vulnerability and transience of home arising from their children's presence and absence. Viewed overall, the fathers in this study conveyed their determination to offer their children a loving, stable, and secure home life as a fundamental dimension of their commitment to post-separation fathering while also describing key challenges they experienced in doing so.

[Read abstract or purchase article.](#)

Campo, M., Fehlberg, B., Natalier, K. & Smyth, B. M. (2021). Exploring separated fathers' understandings and experiences of 'home' and homemaking. *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, 43(3), 291-306.

SPOTLIGHT

Spotlight on Sharon Collier, WAFLPN Regional Representative for the North West

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.

Based in Broome, **Sharon Collier** is the Coordinator of Family Law Services at Anglicare WA. With Family Relationship Centres (FRCs) operating in Kimberley and Kununurra, Anglicare WA offers Family Law Services in Broome, Karratha, Kununurra, Fitzroy Crossing, Derby, Wyndham and Halls Creek.

"Anglicare WA offers many programs to support the communities of the North West," says Sharon. "Within these diverse settings, we seek to offer services that will meet the needs of the communities."

Sharon is an accomplished practitioner in the family law sector with a background in psychology. She has over 10 years' experience as a Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner (FDRP) and has previously worked as a Child Inclusive Consultant and as part of the Parenting Orders Program. She has also managed a regional FRC, Regional Family Dispute Resolution, counselling service and refugee program.

Sharon came on board as the WAFLPN Regional Representative for the North West in January 2021 and quickly became an integral part of the Steering Committee. She has also been working on the ground to build relationships and create stronger networks between family law sector professionals based in the North West.

"I'm enjoying connecting with other services within the region that support families through separation and to share the learning and networking opportunities that WAFLPN offers," she shares.

When she isn't hard at work, Sharon loves to keep fit, spend time with family and get out into nature.



Sharon Collier



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@relationshipsqa.org.au

Information Sharing Between the Family Law and Family Violence and Child Protection Systems

The Attorney-General's Department has released its Consultation Paper on Operationalising the National Strategic Framework for Information Sharing Between the Family Law and Family Violence and Child Protection Systems.

The purpose of this paper is to inform and seek feedback from non-government stakeholders about the development of the National Strategic Framework for Information Sharing between the Family Law and Family Violence and Child Protection Systems (the National Framework).

This paper builds on the paper 'Coordinated approaches to family safety: supporting information sharing between the family law and criminal justice and child protection systems' that was circulated to a number of stakeholders in October 2020, as a basis for feedback and continued discussion.

[Read the consultation paper here.](#)

New AIFS Survey of Parents and Carers: Compliance with and Enforcement of Family Law Parenting Orders Project

The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) has been commissioned by Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) to undertake research in relation to the compliance with and enforcement of family law parenting orders. The research will involve multiple studies, including a survey of parents and carers.

Parents or carers who have had family law parenting orders made in the past 5 years are invited to participate in this survey. We encourage you to share this information with your client base if you feel that it would be of interest.

This research will help us to understand whether parents comply with parenting orders, how the enforcement process in the Family Law Act operates, and how well it works.

Please see the link to the participant information sheet and survey here: <https://tinyurl.com/cefpo-wa>

Join the Aboriginal Reference Group for the 2022 WAFLPN Annual Conference

Based on member feedback, the theme of the 2022 WAFLPN Annual Conference will be focused on working with Aboriginal families and planning will be led by the newly formed Aboriginal Reference Group.

WAFLPN invites members and sector professionals who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders to join the Aboriginal Reference Group and contribute to shaping this important event.

Participation in the Aboriginal Reference Group is voluntary. It is anticipated that the group will meet on a monthly basis in the Perth CBD, with opportunities to join via video conferencing (webex). Professionals based in regional areas of WA are encouraged to apply.

Please email expressions of interest to WAFLPN Network Development Officer at sofia.kouznetsova@relationshipsqa.org.au

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FEEDBACK

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