



Family Law PATHWAYS NETWORK

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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

MARCH 2019

Greetings from the Chair

by Rod West

Hello from all of us at WAFLPN! Having celebrated International Women's Day on 8 March this month, WAFLPN would like to show our sincerest appreciation to all the women who have made positive contributions to the family law sector in Western Australia.

We have been busy gearing up for our annual conference, which is now just two months away! [Register before 29 March](#) to take advantage of the early bird discount.

The WAFLPN Steering Committee is also excited to announce that we are commencing consultation for the development of a directory of post-separation services in WA. In line with our objective of 'promoting awareness of services', WAFLPN hopes to develop a resource that will help service providers access useful information about family law services to facilitate more efficient referral mechanisms.

To find out more information and to provide your input towards the development of this project, please complete our [short anonymous online survey](#). We really appreciate you taking the time to provide feedback so that we can create something that is tailored to the needs of our community.

Read on for a review of our events last month and the latest updates about what's happening in the family law sector. Big changes may be on the horizon after the ALRC Review of the Family Law System Report is delivered to the Attorney-General on 31 March.

As usual, keep an eye on your emails and check [our website](#) regularly for the latest news and announcements from WAFLPN.

That's all from me for this month, please enjoy this eBulletin!



Family Law
PATHWAYS
NETWORK

WA FAMILY LAW
PATHWAYS NETWORK
ANNUAL CONFERENCE

No One Is Perfect:

Exploring the connection between parenting capacity and children's wellbeing

THURSDAY 30 MAY 2019

**ONE DAY WORKSHOP
FRIDAY 31 OF MAY 2019**

waflpn.org.au



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REVIEW OF PAST WAFLPN EVENTS

Children's Matters Stakeholders Forum

WAFLPN was proud to co-host the Children's Matters Stakeholders Forum with the Geraldton Family Relationship Centre on 12 February 2019.

Around 45 enthusiastic guests from community stakeholders attended the event which was held at the Mary Ryan Centre, including very special guests Magistrate Kaeser and Family Consultant Kevin Hanavan from the Family Court of Western Australia.

The evening kicked off with an Acknowledgment to Country by Julie-Anne.

Kevin's presentation on "Fathering & Attachment" was very informative and generated many comments and questions from the audience.

The evening was a great success and received many positive comments from the attendees. WAFLPN would like to thank all the staff members at the Geraldton Family Relationships Centre who helped organise this fantastic event.



Julie-Anne and Kevin at the Children's Matters Stakeholders Forum

Family Violence Amendments Training

On Friday, 15 February, Consumer Protection Senior Policy Officer Trish Blake spoke at the State Library of Western Australia about the family violence-related amendments to WA's tenancy laws. These important changes to the Residential Tenancies Act and the Residential Parks (Long-stay Tenants) Act are likely to come into effect in mid-April 2019 after being passed in Parliament on 19 February 2019.

The training session with Trish Blake was very well-attended, with audience members being engaged throughout the highly informative and comprehensive session. Attendees were also eager to ask questions and raise potential issues related to this law change.

In order to facilitate widespread training about the tenancy law changes, a video recording of the session held on 15 February has been made publically available on the [WAFLPN Members Section](#) and the [Consumer Protection Website](#), alongside other useful resources.

[View video footage of the training session.](#)

Separation and Same-Sex Parented Families Workshops



Dr Luke Gahan about to begin his workshop in Busselton

WAFLPN had the privilege of having Dr Luke Gahan present his workshop on Separation and Same-Sex Parented Families in Perth on 20 February and in Busselton on 22 February.

The workshops generated lively discussion from the participants and everyone walked away with a better understanding of same-sex parented families and full of ideas on how to better engage this client base.

If you were unable to attend this training or would like to review some of the content covered during the workshop, videos from the Perth workshop and other useful materials from the training session are now available on the [Members Section of our website](#).

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

2019 WAFLPN Annual Conference & Post-Conference Workshop

Registrations are now open for the 2019 WAFLPN Annual Conference. Titled "No One is Perfect: Exploring the connection between parenting capacity and children's wellbeing", the conference will feature keynote speakers Rose Cuff, Statewide FaPMI (Families where a Parent has a Mental Illness) Coordinator at the Bouverie Centre; and Dr Margaret Spencer, University of Sydney lecturer with a research interest in Disability and Parenting.

Dr Margaret Spencer and Rose Cuff will also present a special one-day workshop on 31 May 2019, where they will delve deeper on the concepts discussed at the conference.

Please see the conference flyer on the next page for more information.

To view the conference program and to register for the conference and/or the post-conference workshop, visit [our conference website](#).

Conference: 30 May 2019
9.00am-5.00pm
University Club of Western Australia, Crawley
Early bird tickets from \$100

Workshop: 31 May 2019
9.00am-4.00pm
University Club of Western Australia, Crawley
Tickets: \$75

Strangulation Prevention Training

The Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services and the Red Rose Foundation are organising a 2 day conference with international speakers on the topic of non-fatal strangulation, featuring acclaimed specialist trainers from the San Diego Institute on Strangulation Prevention, Dr William Smock, MD and Gael Strack, Esq.

1 & 2 April 2019
9.00am-5.00pm
University Club of Western Australia
Tickets: \$550.00 + GST

[View event flyer.](#)

For more information, contact info@redrosefoundation.com.au

What's New in FDV Interventions

On Monday 8th April Stopping Family Violence will provide an update on what's been happening in the FDV intervention space in Western Australia over the past 12 months. From the implementation of the first Caring Dad's program, in WA, to Safe and together training and the development of a pilot program as part of the Kimberley plan. This one day showcase will be an opportunity to keep up to date with new research and programs and ask questions around report findings and the impact new programs are having on perpetrators and to keep women and children safe.

8 April 2019
8.30am-4.30pm
South of Perth Youth Club,
Coffee Point Applecross
Tickets: \$550.00 + GST

To view the agenda and to register, visit the [Stopping Family Violence website](#).

WALK IN THEIR SHOES TOURS

WAFLPN's popular family court tours fill up fast! This is a fantastic opportunity to experience the pathways families take when attending the Family Court of WA.

<https://wafpn.org.au/en/events/walk-in-their-shoes>

MORE TRAINING AND EVENTS

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

<https://wafpn.org.au/FPNWA-Resources/Other-Relevant-Training-and-Events>



*Working Together
in the
Family Law System*

wafpn.org.au



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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 WAFPN members please contact us to have it included in our eBulletin

WA.FamilyPathwayNetwork@relationships.wa.org.au

Family-based approach to the child welfare system: an integration of Bowen family theory concepts

The purpose of this article is to apply Bowen family systems theory to work with families involved in the child welfare system. An overview of family systems theory is provided, and then specific tenets of Bowen family systems theory are presented. The authors highlight incidents within the child welfare setting that can be conceptualized through Bowen family therapy terms and concepts. A case study is used to highlight how this theory could be applied in practice. Furthermore, recommendations for child welfare practice and policy implications are discussed, utilizing the lens of a Bowenian family systems approach.

[Read abstract or purchase article.](#)

Thompson, H., Stevenson Wojciak, A. & Cooley, M. (2019). Family-based approach to the child welfare system: an integration of Bowen family theory concepts. *Journal of Family Social Work*. DOI: 10.1080/10522158.2019.1584776

Children's and parents' involvement in care order proceedings: a cross-national comparison of judicial decision-makers' views and experiences

This paper presents the views of judicial decision-makers (n = 1794) in four child protection jurisdictions (England, Finland, Norway, and the USA (California)), about whether parents and children are provided with appropriate opportunities to participate in proceedings in their countries. Overall, the study found a high degree of agreement within and between the countries as regards the important conditions for parents' and children's involvement, although the four systems themselves are very different. There was less agreement about children's involvement than parents', and the court decision-makers from Norway and Finland were more likely to express doubts about this. Nevertheless, the main message from the judicial decision-makers is that they are relatively satisfied as to how parents' and children's involvement is handled in their countries. Whether or not this confidence is justified, the emphasis on achieving effective involvement of children and parents in court proceedings is likely to grow, with major implications for the workers, decision-makers and agencies involved.

[Read abstract or purchase article.](#)

Berrick, J., Dickens, J., Pösö, T. & Skivenes, M. (2019). Children's and parents' involvement in care order proceedings: a cross-national comparison of judicial decision-makers' views and experiences. *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*. DOI: 10.1080/09649069.2019.1590902

Separated parents' adaptive responses and states within intractable parental disputes

Drawing on interviews with separated parents (N = 40) this Australian qualitative study explored dissonance within intractable parental disputes. The mature defense mechanisms of altruism, suppression, anticipation, and humor emerged as potential adaptive responses to dissonance. The mature defense mechanism of sublimation did not emerge as a potential adaptive response to dissonance within intractable parental disputes. Anxiety was the predominant state reported by separated parents. This study theorized that mature defense mechanisms might partially support the reduction of recurring dissonant states within intractable parental disputes. Those in clinical practice might find it useful to explore defense mechanisms, and the clues they provide, in further understanding and supporting separated parents enmeshed within intractable parental disputes.

[Read abstract or purchase article.](#)

Francia, L., Millea, P., & Sharman, R. (2019). Separated Parents' Adaptive Responses and States Within Intractable Parental Disputes. *Journal Of Divorce & Remarriage*. DOI:10.1080/10502556.2019.1586229

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

Launch of Family Violence Law Help

National Legal Aid has just launched [Family Violence Law Help](http://www.familyviolencelaw.gov.au/help), a new website for people affected by domestic and family violence, educators and front-line workers. The website uses illustrations to make information engaging and easy to understand. It is available in 23 languages and is designed as a starting point to give simple, clear information on domestic and family violence, family law, child protection and family violence protection orders.

Family Violence Law Help has illustrated factsheets that can be printed out and given to people specific to their legal problem. The website also provides practical tips and links to where people affected by domestic and family violence can get help with legal advice, emergency housing, money and more in WA and Australia wide. A handy printable guide to key referrals in WA is available at www.familyviolencelaw.gov.au/get-help.

**Amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act passed in Parliament**

The Residential Tenancies Legislation Amendment (Family Violence) Bill 2018 is an important piece of legislation which will provide more options and greater support for those experiencing family and domestic violence (FDV) and their children. These changes to the Residential Tenancies Act and the Residential Parks (Long-stay Tenants) Act passed in Parliament on 19 February 2019 and are likely to come into effect in mid-April 2019.

The amendments are aimed at giving the victim better choices, including whether to stay in the tenancy or move to safer accommodation, or remove tenancy-related concerns, which are barriers to leaving a violent relationship.

The new laws for victims include:

- Being able to terminate a tenancy agreement within seven days by providing the landlord with evidence of domestic violence, such as a restraining order or a letter from a medical professional, removing the need to go to Court;
- Being able to stay in the home if they choose - they will be able to apply to the Court to have the perpetrator's name removed from the tenancy agreement;
- Being able to change the locks immediately, without permission from their landlord; Being able to install CCTV security at their rental home, at their own cost; and
- Provisions to deal with property damage, unpaid rent and disbursement of the bond to ensure the victim does not carry the financial burden after a tenancy ends.

[View the latest media release here.](#)

[View video footage from WAFLPN's Family Violence Amendments Training on 15 February 2019.](#)

More information and future training opportunities will be posted on the [Consumer Protection website](#).

Vale Karen Merrin

The WA Family Law Pathways Network acknowledges with sadness the passing of Karen Merrin.

Karen was the project officer responsible for the establishment of the Northern Suburbs Community Legal Centre (NSCLC) in Mirrabooka and was appointed as the inaugural manager in 1996. She stayed with NSCLC until her retirement just a few weeks ago. Karen was always willing to share knowledge and resources. She was a mentor to many within the sector. Her empathy for people and her passion to assist all people to live their lives as successfully as possible were the hallmarks of her character.

She will be greatly missed.



Photo of Karen Merrin, courtesy of [Community Legal Centres Association \(WA\)](#)

State Government consultation to reduce family and domestic violence

The Department of Communities has commenced State-wide consultation to inform development of a strategy to reduce family and domestic violence in the Western Australian community over the next 10 years.

There is a range of ways people can get involved and have their say including:

- an on-line survey;
- written responses to a consultation paper;
- a short 'Message to the Hon Simone McGurk, MLA Minister for Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence'; or
- face to face forums and workshops (dates and locations to be announced in early 2019).
- Tailored face to face engagement, and other on-line formats, will also be used to support access and engagement for people with disability, or from diverse cultural backgrounds or geographic locations.

For further information and to have your say, go to www.communities.wa.gov.au/fdv

If you have any questions please direct them to FDVStrategy@communities.wa.gov.au

Family Dispute Resolution Evaluation - An Outcome Measurement Tool Development Project

The Department of Social Services commissioned the Centre for Family Research and Evaluation to develop and trial a suitable, evidence-based tool to measure the impact and effectiveness of family dispute resolution services for clients. This project was the first of its kind in developing outcome measurement tools for the Family Law Services programs.

The project report, as well as the outcomes measurement tool that was developed through this process, can be accessed via [the Attorney-General's Department website](#).

Although the project did not deliver a final product that could be implemented across the sector, organisations may voluntarily use the tool as a base model that can be tailored and adapted to their service delivery models.

The final report of the Australian Law Reform Commission review of the family law system, due in March 2019, will assist in informing any future development of an outcome measurement tool for family dispute resolution and family law services generally.

Information about My Health Record for those affected by family and domestic violence

Learn how those affected by family and domestic violence can protect and control the information about themselves and their children on My Health Record.

[View instructions on the My Health Record website.](#)

[View family safety information brochure.](#)

Provide Feedback: WA Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs Services Plan 2015-2025 Update 2018

The Mental Health Commission is seeking feedback on [the draft Western Australian Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drug Services Plan 2015-2025 \(Plan\) Update 2018 \(Plan Update 2018\)](#).

Responses to the community feedback process will inform the further refinement of the draft Plan Update 2018 by the Commission, prior to its finalisation and release.

Comments can be submitted prior to the closing date of **5pm, Tuesday, 9 April 2019**.

[View guide on how to provide feedback.](#)

Seeking Participants: Research on self-represented litigants in Australian family law proceedings involving allegations of family violence

Dr Jane Wangmann, Dr Tracey Booth and Miranda Kaye from the University of Technology Sydney are seeking participants for their ANROWS-funded research project.

[View flyer.](#)

For more information or to be involved in the research project, call or text 0423 552 565 or email selfreps@uts.edu.au.

Australian Law Reform Commission Review of the Family Law System

On 9 May 2017, the Turnbull Government announced its intention to direct the ALRC to conduct the first comprehensive review into the family law system since the commencement of the Family Law Act in 1976, with a view to making necessary reforms to ensure the family law system meets the contemporary needs of families and effectively addresses family violence and child abuse.

Review of the Family Law System: Discussion Paper (DP 86) was released on 2 October 2018.

[View Discussion Paper.](#)

The report will be delivered to the Attorney-General on 31 March 2019.

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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