



Family Law
PATHWAYS
NETWORK

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AUSTRALIA

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

NOV/DEC 2020

Greetings from the Chair

by Karen Barker

Hello from WAFLPN!

Welcome to the last issue of the eBulletin for this year - and what a year it's been! Nevertheless, the family law sector in WA has managed to come together to adapt to the changing circumstances and continue providing services, though often in new ways, to separated and separating families.

In this issue of the eBulletin, we reflect on some of the events WAFLPN has been involved in over the past couple of months. The National FLPN Webinar Series, organised jointly with other FLPNs across Australia and streamed live to family law sector workers across the nation, has been a new initiative that started during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Although we have now resumed many of our in-person events, we are still planning to continue delivering webinars based on the positive feedback received from our members. You can read about the highlights from our more recent events in the next few pages of this eBulletin.

Although we were sadly unable to proceed with our annual conference this year due to the coronavirus pandemic, we will be bringing back the conference in 2021 with all the necessary precautions and contingency plans in place to deliver the event in a COVID-safe manner. Stay tuned for an official announcement early next year!



Last but not least, I would like to wish everyone a peaceful and happy holiday season. Coming off the back of the 16 Days in WA - Stop Violence Against Women campaign (25 November - 10 December) and amidst [emerging concerns about family violence rates increasing during the post-COVID Christmas period](#), I am aware that this can be a particularly tumultuous time of the year for families and those working to support them. However, it is my hope that all our members get to enjoy a well-deserved break and some quality time with their loved ones.

That's me signing off for the year - enjoy the holidays and see you in 2021!



*Working Together
in the
Family Law System*

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REVIEW OF PAST WAFLPN EVENTS

Keep Em Safe Diverse Parent Group Resource Kit Overview Seminar



Participants had the opportunity to get some hands-on experience using the highly portable Keep Em Safe Diverse Parent Group small story cards on a lanyard.

This seminar organised by the WA Family Law Pathways Network and Legal Aid WA on 14 October 2020 marked one of our first returns to in-person events after many months of webinars and predominantly online interactions with our members.

This seminar provided an overview about the *Keep Em Safe Diverse Parent Groups Child Protection Legal Resource Kit*, a new resource designed for legal and community service providers working with diverse parent groups engaged in child protection matters in the Perth metropolitan area of WA.

Jane Stewart, Director of Legal Practice Development at Legal Aid, and Sandi Wendel, a duty lawyer working at Children's Court Protection Services, delivered a highly engaging information session with practical demonstrations of the many uses of the resource kit. As the presenters shared the different creative ways that professionals have been utilising the resource kit and adapting it to different contexts, participants were left blown away by the numerous possibilities offered by what appears on the surface to be a simple resource.

Attendees were given the opportunity to practice using the story cards and other tools included in the resource kit to explain the key legal concepts and processes around child protection, with activities involving the story card stickers proving to be a major hit among the workshop participants.

The story cards, posters and fact sheets can be accessed on the [Legal Aid WA website](#).

Additional resources from the kit including the manual, process maps, and stories for use in CLE activities can be accessed through the login on [this page](#). If you don't have a log in please email cle@legalaid.wa.gov.au to obtain one.

If you are interested in purchasing a copy of the kit, [the order form can be accessed here](#). Please note, due to rising costs the price of the kits has gone up.

Bunbury Circuit Twilight Networking Event

On 17 November 2020, WA Family Law Pathways Network travelled to Bunbury to host our first in-person regional circuit event since COVID-19 brought most events to a halt.

The Family Court Circuit twilight event was held at the Quality Lighthouse Hotel Glass room overlooking the Indian Ocean and featured a presentation by Shivaun Hughes, a senior solicitor in Legal Aid's Family Advocacy Support Service (FASS), on the newly launched online platform amica.

The attendees were given a walk-through of the user experience and were able to gain a better understanding of the agreements, asset division and consent orders generated by amica. It was highlighted that amica can be used by a broad range of people but is best suited to couples who have a reasonably amicable relationship and a willingness to communicate online.

Following the presentation, attendees enjoyed the opportunity to network and ask more questions on the dispute resolution feature with Shivaun.

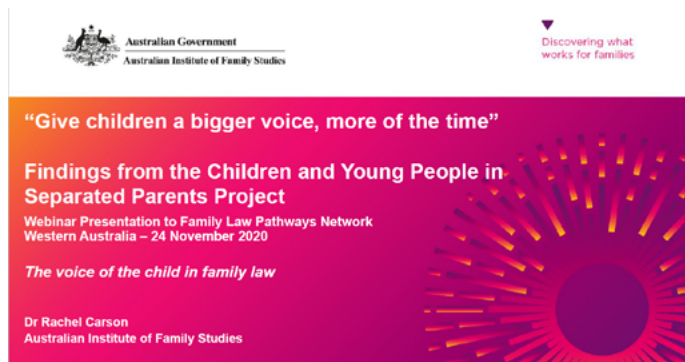
amica's dispute resolution feature will remain free until January 2021, after which a nominal fee will be charged for this feature (between \$165 and \$440 per couple) but it will be waived for users who receive a Centrelink income support payment.

[A summary of key information about amica is available on the WAFLPN website.](#)

Webinar with Dr Rachel Carson

On 24 November 2020, Dr Rachel Carson from the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) presented 45-minute online webinar on the key findings from the [Children and Young People in Separated Families Project](#).

This presentation explored the rich insights from participating children and young people about the issues that are important to them in making parenting arrangements, and their experiences with, and reflections on, family law system services.



The presentation slides from this webinar are available on the [Member Area](#) of the WAFLPN website. Membership is free and available to all professionals working with separated and separating families in Western Australia.

Walk in Their Shoes Tours of the Family Court

Our highly popular bi-monthly Walk in Their Shoes tours, which had been canceled since April this year as a result of the pandemic, resumed on 21 October 2020. The final tour for 2020 took place on 3 December, with 2021 dates set to be announced soon.

The Covid-19 situation has necessitated a further reduction in attendee numbers as well as additional social distancing and precautionary measures.

However, feedback from the tours has remained overwhelmingly positive, with the panel discussion featuring a Magistrate, Family Consultant, Legal Aid Lawyer and a representative from the Department of Communities being consistently named a highlight by the attendees.

2021 tour dates will be released at the beginning of next year and are expected to book out quickly. Please note that due to the restriction in numbers, limits of **1 ticket per organisation** will apply based on a first come first served basis. Thank you in advance for your patience and understanding.

National FLPN Webinar Series

The National FLPN Webinar Series emerged in response to the coronavirus pandemic, with FLPNs across Australia coming together to present free high quality webinars to our members and providing an opportunity for professionals from the family law sector all over the nation to share knowledge on how to deal with these unprecedented circumstances.

Following the success of the webinar series held earlier in the year, five more joint webinars were organised and took place between September and December 2020. These included:

- 'Child Inclusive and Developmentally Focused Dispute Resolution' by Professor Jennifer McIntosh on 2 September
- 'Re-imagining just and safe outcomes for child and adult victims of domestic violence in the family law system in Australia' by Angela Lynch on 23 September
- 'Views of Australian Judicial Officers on DFV Perpetrator Interventions' by Professor JaneMaree Maher on 20 October
- 'Restoring our Family Structures', which featured a screening of 'The Kinchela Boys' short film followed by a discussion with the Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation, presented in November as part of NAIDOC Week 2020
- 'Untested Allegations of Sexual Abuse in Family Law Proceedings' by Vincent Papeleo and Ben Jones on 10 December

Those who registered for the December webinar would can still watch a recording of the session **until 24 December 2020** (2 weeks after the livestream date).

The close collaborative relationships that have been established between the different FLPNs as part of this process have been really valuable in facilitating knowledge sharing on an even larger scale. This is definitely something that we will continue to build on going forward.

We are currently in the process of organising more webinars in 2021, so stay tuned for more information coming soon!

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@relationshipsqa.org.au

The Second National Survey on Technology Abuse and Domestic Violence in Australia

In 2020, WESNET with the assistance of Dr Delanie Woodlock and researchers from Curtin University, repeated the 2015 national survey of domestic and family violence practitioners. Results from the 2020 Telstra-funded survey of 442 domestic violence (DV) practitioners highlight significant increases in technology-facilitated abuse in Australia. Since the 2015 ReCharge survey, there was a 244.8% increase in practitioners reporting perpetrators' use of GPS tracking of victim-survivors, and 183.2% increase in the use of video-cameras. Findings show perpetrators use technology alongside broader patterns of violence and abuse, with high levels of stalking, emotional, sexual, and financial abuse co-occurring. Although not the focus of the survey, the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on perpetrator's use of technology-facilitated abuse was also evident.

[Download full report.](#)

Woodlock, D., Bentley, K., Schulze, D., Mahoney, N., Chung, D. & Pracilio, A. (2020). Second National Survey of Technology Abuse and Domestic Violence in Australia. Canberra: WESNET.

Working across sectors to meet the needs of clients experiencing domestic and family violence

Domestic and family violence victims/survivors often have complex and multiple needs that cannot be met by one service. Integrated approaches bring services together in formal and informal ways to work collaboratively to meet the needs of clients. Integrated approaches also have the potential to reduce risk, including the risk of secondary victimisation caused by inappropriate service responses Australian governments at all levels have recognised the potential for cross-sector work to cost-effectively reduce risk and improve outcomes for victim survivors. Evidence supporting collaborative offers many lessons about the risks and barriers associated with integrated approaches. Risks to client privacy and confidentiality stand out as a key consideration that must be addressed in any integrated response. This paper synthesises what we know about what works, and what doesn't for collaborative practice. It collates existing ANROWS research recommendations into a useful resource for policymakers, practice designers and practitioners interested in establishing an integrated response, with links provided to proven resources. Brief case studies are included to help identify the unique challenges and benefits of different approaches to integrated service provision.

[Read full article.](#)

Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety. (2020). Working across sectors to meet the needs of clients experiencing domestic and family violence (ANROWS Insights, 05/2020). Sydney: ANROWS.

Integrating the Family Wellbeing Program Into Practice: A Conceptual Model

The experience of trauma in childhood can have lifelong consequences. For Indigenous people the effects can be overcome through protective factors such as connection to family and country, and feeling empowered by having more control over their lives in the socio-political environment in which they are living. There is growing evidence for trauma-informed social and emotional wellbeing (SEWB) interventions that foster a sense of empowerment and enable positive personal- and community-level outcomes. However, in the face of challenges such as short-term funding cycles, such programs are hard to sustainably implement and evaluate over time, even where they demonstrate promise. This article reflects on a successful experience of integrating the Family Wellbeing empowerment program into an existing child and family support organisation. It presents the essential elements for integrating a SEWB program as a conceptual model and highlights the implications for sustainable implementation of promising SEWB programs in new settings.

[Read abstract or purchase article.](#)

Onnis, L., Moylan, R., Whiteside, M., Klieve, H., Smith, K. & Tsey, K. (2020). Integrating the Family Wellbeing Program Into Practice: A Conceptual Model. *Australian Social Work*, 73(4), 435-448.

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

Change of Name: Women's Council now Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing

The Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (WA) has officially changed its name to the Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing Inc.

This recognises that the organisation will be the WA state Peak for DFV services, Sexual Assault services, Women's Community Health centres and gender equity programs.

Please note that the new general email is info@csws.com.au.

A new logo and website will be launched in 2021.

Survey Now Open: Family Violence Perpetrator Focused Screening and Risk Assessment

The Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre invites all services providers who work with men to complete a short 5-10 minute survey about your screening practices for domestic and family violence (DFV).

Led by Associate Professor Silke Meyer and Dr Kate Fitz-Gibbon, this survey examines current practices and future directions for screening, identifying, assessing and managing men's risk of DFV perpetration across specialist men's and mainstream services in Australia.

The research project aims to:

1. Address the current knowledge gap surrounding DFV screening and risk assessment practices among services responding to identified DFV perpetrators
2. Identify current screening, risk identification and referral practices for DFV in men accessing non-DFV specific services
3. Examine current risk assessment practices for men identified as DFV perpetrators and critically examine how this translates into information sharing and coordinated risk monitoring and management, and
4. Develop policy and practice guidelines and recommendations to inform better perpetrator screening, risk assessment and management practice across Australian state and territory jurisdictions.

[Link to survey.](#)

[More information about the research project.](#)

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 wafvpn.org.au/resources/service-wait-times

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