



WAfamily pathways network

WA Family Pathways Network eBulletin

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

FEBRUARY 2016

Greetings from the Chair

by Kathryn Lawrence

Hello from WAFPN! 2016 is kicking into full swing over here and we have a few exciting announcements in this month's eBulletin.

I am pleased to announce the keynote speakers for our annual conference. The theme this year is 'Are you hearing me? Listening to the voice of the child in the family law system'. We are lucky to have two distinguished national speakers to lead the discussion on this topic, National Children's Commissioner Megan Mitchell, and child psychiatrist and single expert witness Dr. Peter Krabman. You can read more about our keynote speakers in the next section of this bulletin.

This is an exciting topic which is of interest to us all, and I am looking

forward to hearing all the excellent discussion and ideas to come out of this event. The date for the conference is Thursday, May 26 and the venue this year is the stunning University Club of Western Australia. Registrations are not open yet, but we expect to open in the coming weeks, keep an eye out for an email from Jane.

Also next week we will be running a twilight seminar presented by Leanne Sinclair of Victoria Legal Aid titled 'Working with Lawyers to keep Perpetrators in View', in regards to working with lawyers who are representing perpetrators of family and domestic violence. For more details on this seminar see the events section of this eBulletin.



WAFPN Annual Conference

Are you hearing me? Listening to the voice of the child in the family law system

WA Family Pathways Network is pleased to announce the date and theme for our 2016 annual conference.

WAFPN invites you to join us to discuss ways we can ethically and effectively hear the voice of the child whose parents are experiencing separation.

Hearing the voice of the child and ascertaining their needs is certainly topical, and brings forth a number of questions. While it is generally agreed that we should be listening to children's voices, what is the best way to do this in the best interests of the child?

This year's conference venue is the beautiful UWA University Club in Crawley. Earlybird registration will be \$100, and full registration \$120. Registration is not yet open, we will announce the opening of registrations in the coming weeks.

Keynote Speakers

WAFPN is pleased to announce our keynote speakers for the conference, child psychiatrist Peter Krabman and National Children's Commissioner Megan Mitchell.

Dr. Peter Krabman

Dr. Peter Krabman is a child, adolescent and family psychiatrist, in private practice in Sydney.

He spent seven years as medical director of Coral Tree Family Service, which is a statewide program providing intensive family interventions for the families of children with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Dr. Krabman prepares single expert reports in family law matters. In addition to his general clinical work, he has a particular interest and expertise in the provision of



therapy to parents and children in the context of current family law proceedings, or of the requirement to adapt to final orders.

He serves on the Professional Advisory Group to the Children's Court Clinic in NSW. He has a background in research, addiction medicine and military medicine.

He enjoys meeting with troubled and troubling children, and the adults charged with protecting, nurturing and raising them.

Megan Mitchell

Megan Mitchell is Australia's first National Children's Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission, appointed on 25 February 2013.

Megan has extensive experience in issues facing children and young people, having worked with children from all types of backgrounds, including undertaking significant

work with vulnerable children. She has practical expertise in child protection, foster and kinship care, juvenile justice, children's services, child care, disabilities, and early intervention and prevention services.



In her role as Commissioner, Megan focuses solely on the rights and interests of children, and the laws, policies and programs that impact on them. In 2014, Megan presented her statutory report on children's rights to the Federal Parliament, in which she examined intentional self-harm, with or without suicidal intent, in children and young people under 18 years old. This year, the 2015 statutory report will examine the impact of family and domestic violence on children.

WA Family Pathways Network Conference 2016
'Are you hearing me? Listening to the voice of the child in the family law system'
 26 May 2016
 8.30am-4.30pm
 UWA Club, University of Western Australia
 Earlybird registration \$100
 Registration opening soon

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.gov.au

‘Are you hearing me? Listening to the voice of the child in the family law system’ WAFPN Annual Conference 2016

WAFPN is excited to announce that our 2016 annual conference will be held on **May 26 at University Club of Western Australia**.

The theme for the conference will be ‘Are you hearing me? Listening to the voice of the child in the family law system’.

We are pleased to announce our keynote speakers, child psychiatrist and single expert witness Dr. Peter Krabman, and National Children’s Commissioner Megan Mitchell

Registration for the conference will be opening in the coming weeks.

26 May 2016

8.30am-4.30pm

University Club of Western Australia, Crawley

Earlybird registration \$100

Full registration \$120

If you have any queries in regards to the 2016 conference, please contact Jane Azzopardi

jane.azzopardi@relationships.wa.gov.au

Twilight Seminar: Working with Lawyers to keep Perpetrators in View

WAFPN presents a twilight seminar featuring Leanne Sinclair of Victoria Legal Aid (VLA). This session will cover the recent work of the VLA’s family violence program in relation to working with lawyers who assist clients who use violence in their relationship. The session will discuss the professional constraints of lawyers working with clients who use violence and how lawyers can work within a framework to strengthen perpetrator accountability. The aim of the session will increase inter-professional understanding of lawyer’s roles and ways in which lawyers can work to reduce family violence. The audience will primarily be FRC staff, counsellors, men’s behaviour change programs, police and child contact centres.

24 February 2016

4.30pm-6.00pm

Legal Aid WA

32 St Georges Tce, Perth

To register visit

<http://www.trybooking.com/KLNB>

How to recognise and responding to family and domestic violence in a health setting

Presented by the Education and Training team at the Women’s Health Clinical Support Programs (WHCSP), Women’s and Newborn Health Service. An introductory course on family and domestic

violence for WA Health workers. This training will equip participants with the basic skills, knowledge and understanding to effectively identify a client who may be in an abusive relationship and respond appropriately. This course will address the role of WA Health professionals in identifying and responding to FDV.

22 February 2016

8.30am-12noon

King Edward Memorial Hospital

15 Loretto Street, Subiaco

For more information and to register visit

http://www.wnhs.health.wa.gov.au/health_professionals/WHCSP/fdv_training.php

WALK IN THEIR SHOES TOURS

WAFPN’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.

REGISTER YOUR INTEREST TO ATTEND

jane.azzopardi@relationships.wa.gov.au

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@wa.relationships.com.au

Relational Autonomy and Family Dispute Resolution: How a Feminist Approach Can Improve Service Delivery in the Context of Family Violence

In the Australian family law system, separating parents must attempt to mediate their parenting disputes before they are able to seek court orders. The legislation does offer possible exemptions, including for cases involving family violence. Yet research shows that such cases frequently undergo family dispute resolution (FDR). This can expose victims and their children to serious safety risks, both during FDR and in post-mediation agreements. However, findings suggest that when family violence is identified and handled appropriately, FDR can be a rewarding and empowering

experience for victims. Therefore, it is important that we continue efforts to develop specialised models and improve service delivery across Australia. With this goal in mind, this paper will critique the use of FDR in the context of family violence using a feminist theory of relational autonomy. Given the central role of feminist theorists in the

development of mediation theory and practice, ongoing feminist critique remains crucial to the development of best practice in the context of family violence. Feminist theories of relational autonomy also offer a useful tool for analysing a process dependent on one's ability to advocate for one's own interests in relation to those of an ex-partner. It is hoped that such analysis will, like the work of feminists in the last decade, contribute to the improvement of the use of FDR in the context of family violence.

Link to abstract:

<http://ssrn.com/abstract=2720094>

Dobinson, S. (2016). Relational Autonomy and Family Dispute Resolution: How a Feminist Approach Can Improve Service Delivery in the Context of Family Violence. UNSWLJ Student Series, (16-04).

View from the Bench: Parental Mental Health and Child Custody

Family courts are confronted with an increasing number of custody or visitation disputes where a parent suffers from a mental illness. In fact, when making a custody determination, most state statutes include parental mental health as a factor to consider in a best interests analysis. This article presents best practices from the perspective of a family court judge when it comes to handling cases involving parental mental health and custody, including a discussion of the nexus between parental mental health and the parent's relationship to the child and the weight given to custody or forensic evaluations.

Full article:

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/fcre.12199/full>

Dane, E. M. and Rosen, J. A. (2016), View from the Bench: Parental Mental Health and Child Custody. Family Court Review, 54: 10–17.

COMMUNITY 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.org.au

ICYMI: Geraldton Inquest

An inquest into the deaths of two young girls who were killed by their mother in 2010, in a murder/suicide incident, took place in early February.

The older sister of the two girls, who was not present at the time of their deaths, made a statement at the inquest in regards to her and her sisters' experience of the family law system. You can read her statement [here](#).

The Family Court of WA has published on their website the details of the case and a response from Chief Judge Stephen Thackray, available here http://www.familycourt.wa.gov.au/files/Publications/Judgment_in_the_matter_of_Cuzens_and_Glendenning.pdf

Free Professional Development opportunities for your team

The Sexual Assault Resource Centre (SARC) offers free professional presentations at your workplace.

The presentations are facilitated by experienced trainers and are free of charge.

Presentations include the following.

- The Impact of Trauma (1 hour)
- Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Violence (1 hour)
- Trauma Counselling- Where to Start (1 hour for workers in counselling roles)
- Managing Vicarious Trauma for Workers (2 hours)

To reserve a presentation for your team, contact SARCTraining@health.wa.gov.au

Follow WAFPN on Twitter!

If you want to keep up to date with info and articles we find interesting, follow WAFPN on Twitter: [@FamilyPathwayWA](https://twitter.com/FamilyPathwayWA)

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FEEDBACK

If you have any suggestions on how we could improve this bulletin please email them to jane.azzopardi@relationships.org.au



Our Aim

Improve collaboration and coordination between organisations operating in the Family Law system

To assist separating families obtain appropriate services