



Equality

Contents

President's foreword	2	Making an impact	29
CEO's report	4	Evaluation and social impact	31
Our 2022–23 year	6	Research	33
What we do	9	Our people and culture	35
Client-centred services	12	Financial performance	40
During separation and divorce	13	Working with First Nations peoples	42
Supporting children and families	15	Diversity, inclusion and equity	44
Safety: Preventing and responding to family violence	18	Professional training and development	48
Prioritising mental health	21	Our locations	50
Specialist services	24		
New, innovative services	27		



We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways of Australia. We support Aboriginal people's right to self-determination and culturally safe services. We are committed to encouraging a culturally safe and supportive environment for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who access our services or engage with our organisation.

We recognise the lifelong impacts of childhood trauma. We recognise those who had children taken away from them.

We are committed to inclusivity and providing safe, inclusive and accessible services for all people. We welcome members of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual and other sexually or gender diverse (LGBTIQ+) communities to our organisation.

We acknowledge the funding we receive from the Australian and Victorian governments.

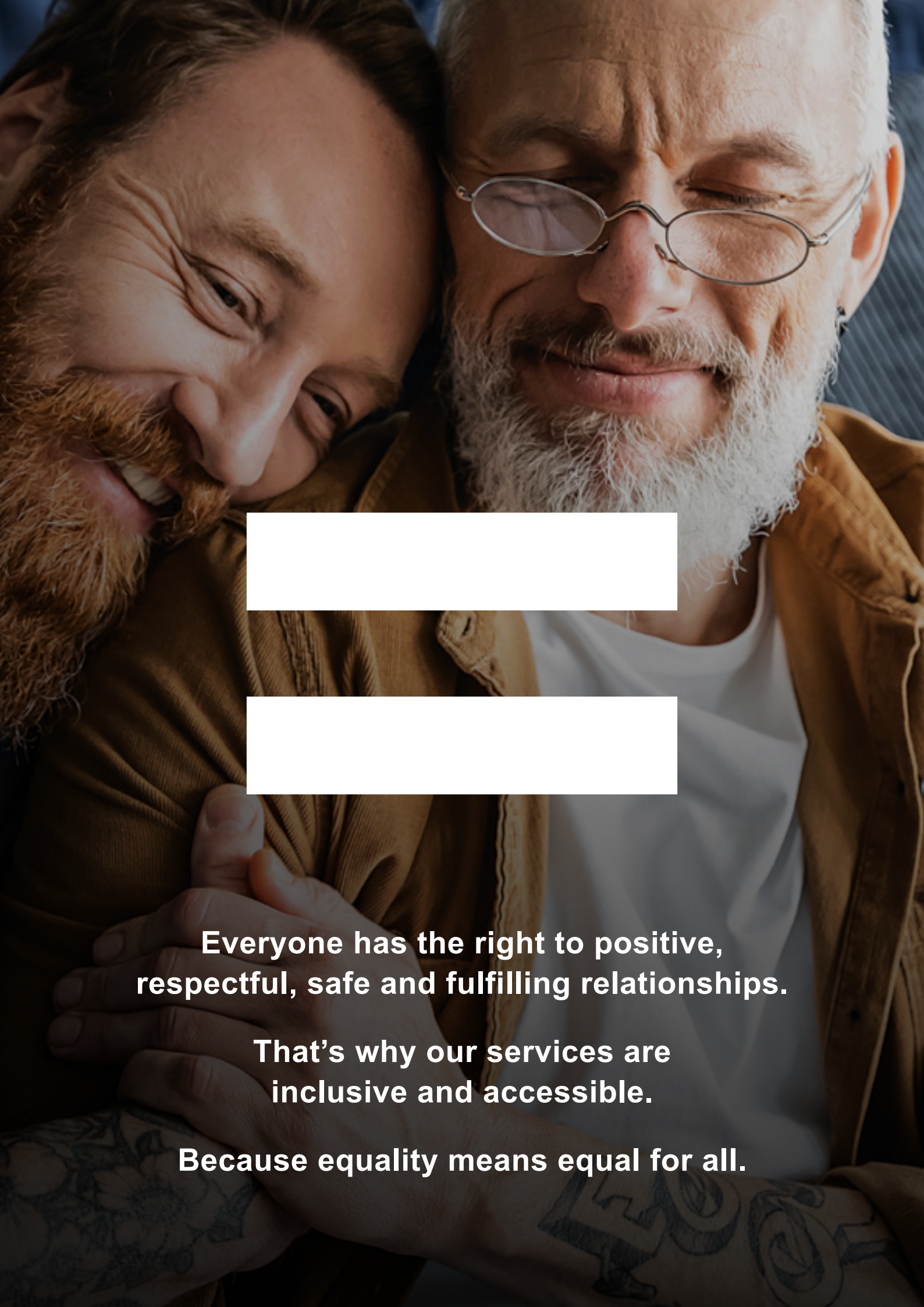
We use some stock photos in this report and advise that they are for illustrative purposes only. No association between the person/s pictured and the subject matter of the report is intended.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this report may contain images of people who may have since passed away.

Acronyms and initialisms

ASIST	Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training
FDR	family dispute resolution
FRC	Family Relationship Centre
LGBTIQ+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and other sexually or gender diverse people
MARAM	The Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework

MBCP	Men's Behaviour Change Program
PASS	Parenting After Separation Seminar
RAV	Relationships Australia Victoria
YAG	Youth Advisory Group



[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Everyone has the right to positive, respectful, safe and fulfilling relationships.

That's why our services are inclusive and accessible.

Because equality means equal for all.

President's foreword



As we approach the 75th anniversary of Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV), I have been reflecting on not only the past financial year but also what has been achieved across three-quarters of a century by our organisation.

Since our inception in 1948, RAV has achieved significant growth in scale, income and the diversity of services we offer. We have transitioned from a volunteer-based initiative primarily focused on marriage education and counselling in Melbourne to a professional organisation delivering 119 unique programs and services across Victoria, with some services extending nationally. This transformation exemplifies our culture of adaptability and innovation to meet the evolving and emerging needs of our clients and society. The common thread binding all our services together is the recognition that positive, respectful, safe and fulfilling relationships are fundamental for mental health and wellbeing.

Our 2022–23 year once again produced a strong financial result, with further growth across our services and workforce. You can find highlights of some of our new services on page 27, while a statement of our financial position is provided on page 40. These outcomes are a testament to the astute management and strategic planning of our leaders and dedicated Board members.

Our Board members have a depth of skills and knowledge that span the areas of governance, strategy, finance, clinical practice, family law, education, workforce, information technology and business. The contributions that these members make through the Board are significant in driving the organisation's strategy and success. This includes through its standing committees on governance, finance and clinical governance, and working groups on family law, mental health and the digital landscape.

I would like to express my appreciation to my Board colleagues, as well as our CEO, Dr Andrew Bickerdike, for his strong leadership, and his management team for their commitment and expertise. Their collective dedication, skills and expertise ensure our operations remain efficient, our governance remains robust and our future remains secure.

The contributions of employees are integral to the success of any organisation. RAV's nearly 400 staff members bring their expertise and unwavering commitment to not only the delivery of services but also to research and evaluation activities, as well as advocacy aimed at enhancing service quality and informing policy development both within and beyond RAV.

For instance, we know that safe, stable and nurturing parent and family relationships are the most important protective and preventive factors for the healthy development of children and young people. With this knowledge, we advocated in our submission on the Australian Government's Early Years Strategy for a universally integrated preventive approach to child wellbeing. This aligns with our new strategic plan, which was developed following a collaborative planning day in March with our Board and Senior Management Team, and will be launched in the upcoming months.

Looking ahead to 2023–24, planning is underway to mark RAV's 75 years of dedicated service. Having been involved with RAV for over 30 years, I have personally witnessed the changes and innovations that have shaped our recent history. I take immense pride in the accomplishments and the often-challenging decisions that have been made along the way. We have strategically chosen to embrace risks, diversify our services and take on new challenges. There are countless people in RAV's past who have demonstrated the wisdom and courage to make these decisions, and with the support of our clients and stakeholders, they have led RAV to become the successful organisation it is today.

With our rich history, dedicated workforce and outstanding leadership, we find ourselves in an enviable position with a bright future. I am confident that RAV will continue to be a trusted, respected and effective services organisation for Victorians for many years to come.

Lyn Littlefield

Professor Lyn Littlefield OAM
Board President

Vision

Positive, respectful, safe and fulfilling relationships for all Australians.

Focus

Providing high-quality, effective and accessible services for people with complex relationship issues, and delivering prevention services that lead to system-wide change that reduces the incidence of relationship problems.

Values

- Inclusivity
- Respect
- Integrity
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Effectiveness
- Innovation
- Compassion

CEO's report



I want to take a moment to reflect on the profound impact that relationships and connections can have on our lives. Over the past three years, the world has faced unprecedented challenges. Despite restrictions and lockdowns, it was our relationships and a sense of community that helped Victorians, and indeed people around the world, to navigate such difficult times.

Throughout this time, when Victorians needed support – whether with their relationships with their partners, family, friends or themselves, or with issues affecting these relationships, we were there to help. I am proud to be able to say that throughout the pandemic, across all 3 years, we kept our services accessible every single day. We did so because we know that when people reach out for help, especially in their times of greatest need, the right support can make a meaningful, long-term difference.

Today, we finally find ourselves in a post-pandemic world that has gradually regained a sense of normalcy. It coincides with RAV's approaching 75th anniversary later in 2023. Three-quarters of a century is an extraordinarily long time for any business or organisation to exist, but it is particularly remarkable when you consider our modest beginnings and original purpose to help couples and families stay together. Our history also serves as a foundation for our future and our new Strategic Plan that will be launched in the coming months.

We have come a long way from being providers of primarily couples' counselling, and we now provide a remarkably diverse suite of services for individuals, couples, families, schools and communities (see page 9). In addition to tertiary services, we deliver prevention and early intervention responses, because we know that these approaches can significantly alter the course of peoples' lives for the better.

We actively seek opportunities to share our knowledge and experience. In the past year, we have made valuable submissions to both the National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality and the Australian Government's Early Years Strategy (see page 29). Additionally, we have participated in roundtable consultations on Early Years and Child Mental Health in Victoria.

In our submission on gender equality, we emphasised the need to address individual and societal attitudes towards gender inequality and violence against women, along with the institutional and structural inequalities that perpetuate gender inequality. Equality is one of our core values at RAV, and this year's report showcases some of the ways we have embedded this value into our services and workforce culture.

Our dedicated staff are the heart of our organisation, and they live our values every day. I would like to echo the sentiments of our Board President, Professor Lyn Littlefield OAM, in thanking all staff for their hard work and commitment. I also wish to acknowledge our Board members for their exceptional

leadership, and offer my thanks to Professor Littlefield for her wise counsel and continued support.

As I look back on the 2022–23 financial year, I will highlight some of our most significant achievements and outcomes:

- Our income surpassed \$40 million for the first time, reflecting our significant growth over the past 3 years.
- Both the Australian and Victorian governments provided appropriate indexation and supplementation on our funding grants, which we are grateful for, as it enables us to manage the increasing costs of operating and to pass on salary increases to our staff who, like much of the community, are encountering cost of living challenges.
- We received funding extensions for a number of programs in Gippsland, including our headspace sites, Connect Me program and our Frontline Emergency Distress and Trauma Counselling service.
- Our investment in dedicated research, evaluation and social impact teams enhanced our ability to demonstrate the evidence base of our services, incorporate lived experiences into service design, improve practices and innovate new services. Our inaugural Social Impact Report will be launched in late 2023.
- In recognition of the fact that family law proceedings can be incredibly stressful, and that family violence often intersects with other challenges, we commenced a new mental health support service as part of Victoria Legal Aid's Family Advocacy and Support Services.
- We introduced trauma-informed family violence counselling to provide a holistic service response tailored to the needs of our clients, including Family Safety Contact service clients.
- We embarked on two new partnership projects aimed at promoting gender equality and preventing family violence, through collaboration with sporting clubs.

Our new initiatives reflect our adaptability and commitment to meeting the needs of our clients and society – even as those needs change and develop. You can find more detailed information about our new and existing services later in this report.

In the year ahead, we will remain focused on ensuring that our clients feel heard, supported and empowered. We will work to support clients to be better equipped to navigate life's challenges and to have positive, respectful, safe and fulfilling relationships. We strongly believe that such relationships are key to health and wellbeing, and they are a right that everyone deserves, equally.

Thank you for your continued support.



Dr Andrew Bickerdike
Chief Executive Officer

**As human beings, we should all
have the same rights, be given the
same respect and have access to
the same opportunities.**

Our 2022–23 year

Our clients

20,899

clients



867

headspace clients



5,147

Family Relationship Centre (FRC) clients



3,312

Open Place service users



35.2%

with mental health-related needs



662

First Nations people



3,324

aged 18 years and under



35.9%

with family violence-related needs



142

countries of birth



1,271

aged 65 years and over



83

languages spoken



34.4%

of headspace clients identified as LGBTIQ+



‘ I feel like I have a mini epiphany every time I attend a session. It just makes so much sense.’

early matters client

Our organisation

Our workforce

381

staff members



75.0%

of our managers are women



33.0%

of staff worked with us for 5 years or more



Income

\$42.4m



Our impact

Our service reach

694



Men's Behaviour Change Program (MBCP) participants

1,464



family dispute resolution (FDR) clients

3,688



headspace sessions

57



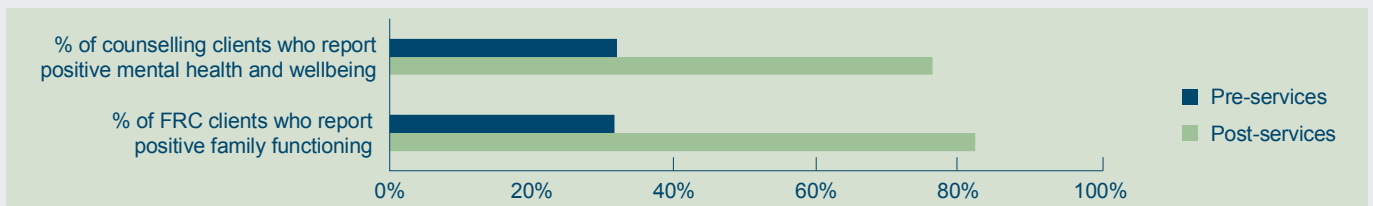
individual services

53



professional development and training offerings

Client circumstances



Service satisfaction

'The service listened to me and understood my issues.'

91.0%



of counselling clients agreed

95.4%



of FDR clients agreed

90.7%



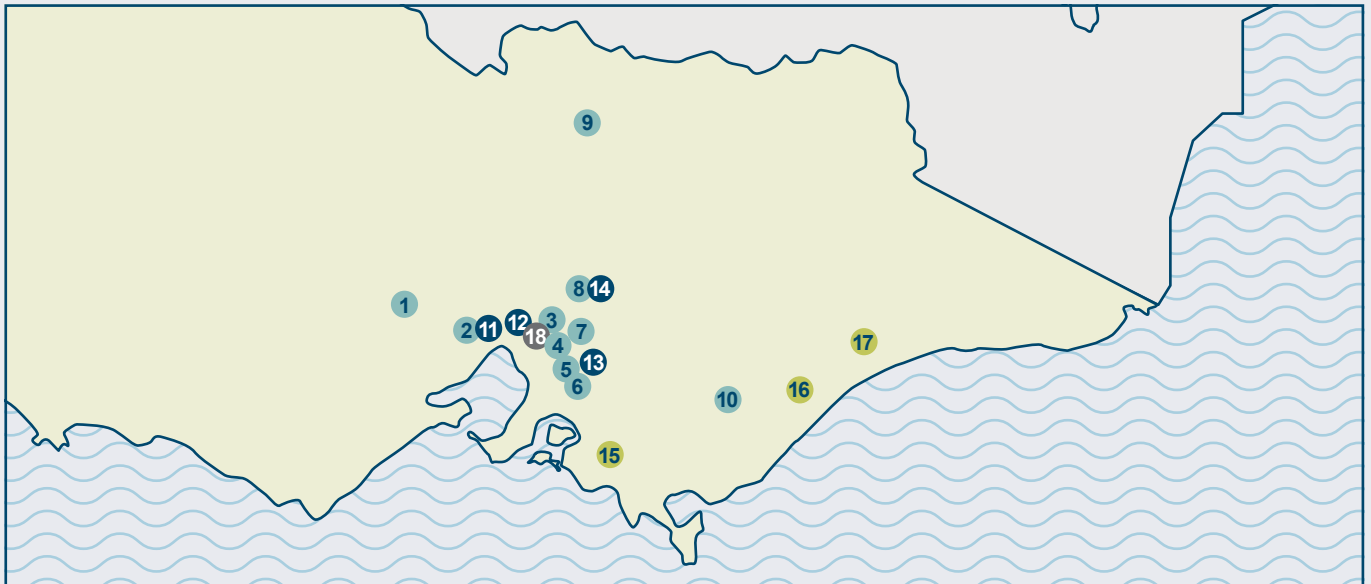
of FRC clients agreed

Our centres



Key

● RAV ● Family Relationship Centre (FRC) ● headspace ● Open Place



- | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Ballarat | 6 Cranbourne | 11 Sunshine FRC | 15 headspace Wonthaggi |
| 2 Sunshine | 7 Boronia | 12 Melbourne FRC | 16 headspace Sale |
| 3 Kew | 8 Greensborough | 13 Berwick FRC | 17 headspace Bairnsdale |
| 4 Camberwell | 9 Shepparton | 14 Greensborough FRC | 18 Open Place Richmond |
| 5 Cranbourne North | 10 Traralgon | | |

‘ I couldn’t recommend Relationships Australia Victoria more; everyone deserves their very own little book of knowledge and that is what the counsellors at Relationships Australia Victoria are.’

Counselling client

What we do

Our services and programs

Connect Me

A free therapeutic case management, counselling and support program for children in Gippsland aged 4 to 11 years.

Counselling

For individuals, including children, couples and families.

Disability Counselling and Support

For people who have had violence, abuse, neglect and/or exploitation perpetrated against them, and those impacted by the Disability Royal Commission.

early matters

A free healthy and safe family relationships service for families in Ballarat and Sunshine, including:

- **ATTUNE and ATTUNE Plus** – antenatal and postnatal programs for expectant and/or new parents
- **Circle of Security Parenting™** – an emotional needs and relationship-building program for parents
- **Parenting Support Service** – short-term, needs-focused interventions
- **Ready Set Kids** – a 4-week program for kindergarten and young primary school aged children
- **Tuning in to Kids®** and **Tuning in to Teens™** – emotional intelligence parenting programs.

Family dispute resolution (FDR)

Mediation for parenting and property matters, including:

- AccessResolve property dispute resolution
- at the Royal Children's Hospital
- child-inclusive and enhanced child-focused FDR
- co-mediation
- court-ordered dispute resolution
- legally assisted FDR
- lawyer-inclusive FDR
- shuttle mediation.

Family Relationship Centres (FRCs)

Information, referral, FDR and programs for parenting and property matters, to support couples and families experiencing relationship difficulties, including separation.

Family Safety Contact

Support, safety planning, and risk and needs assessments for family members, partners and children of men participating in MBCPs, men's case management and post-MBCPs.

Family Safety Model

Holistic support for the partners and family members of men attending our men's behaviour change, men's case management and post-MBCP.

Family Safety Navigation program

Enhanced safety and wellbeing support for FDR clients who are impacted by family violence or have other complex needs.

Family therapy

For families experiencing relationship challenges or changes.

Family violence counselling

Trauma-informed support for children, young people, women, transgender and non-binary people who are victim-survivors of family violence.

Focus on Kids

A webinar to support parents to understand their child's experience of separation and the associated conflict.

Forced Adoption Support Service

Free counselling, emotional and practical support and information for people affected by past forced adoption policies and practices.

Frontline Emergency Distress and Trauma Counselling

Free counselling and support for people, including children, impacted by the East Gippsland bushfires, including:

- Play Therapy
- Teleplay Virtual Wellbeing Rooms.

headspace services

Free or low-cost, early-intervention mental health services for young people aged 12 to 25 years, including mental health, physical health (including sexual health), alcohol and other drugs, or work and study support. Specific groups include:

- **AMPLIFY** – an LGBTIQ+ project/social group that plans and delivers social activities for LGBTIQ+ young people
- **Drumbeat** – an emotional-regulation skills group for disengaged students (in partnership with i-Connect)
- **Games group** – for young people with autism spectrum disorder
- **social-space** – a social connections support group
- **Unique but United (UBU)** – an LGBTIQ+ social group
- **Youth Advisory Groups (YAGs)** – young people who provide vital input into the operation of headspace sites.

i-Connect

A free, early intervention Family Mental Health Support Service for children and young people aged 18 and under in East Gippsland, including:

- **Caring-Go-Round** – a therapeutic schools program.

I like, like you

A healthy and respectful relationships, and family violence prevention program for primary and secondary schools.

Intercountry Adoptee and Family Support Service

Free support for intercountry adoptees and their families.

Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCPs)

For male perpetrators of family violence.

Men Being Well

A men's health and wellbeing promotion program.

Men's Case Management program

Individual support for men who want to stop their violent behaviour and are struggling with other challenges that are making this change difficult.

Open Place

A free support service for Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers.

Opening the Doors

A free support group for women who have experienced family violence.

Parenting After Separation Seminar (PASS)

An online program providing parents with key information and strategies to support children to adjust to separation.

PREPARE/ENRICH

Relationship counselling for couples that have decided to marry or make a long-term commitment to each other.

Redress Support Services

Free emotional and practical support for anyone making, or considering making, an application through the National Redress Scheme.

Repair-enting

A parenting program for fathers who have used violence in their relationships and completed an MBCP and wish to rebuild their relationships with their children.

Right Now

A group for women who have experienced interpersonal trauma.

Support for Fathers

A national project supporting dads/father-figures and their families, and professionals who work with fathers, including:

- **DadStuff** – free workshops for dads and father-figures
- **Dads in the Workplace** – a nationwide program to help employers and businesses to support dads in workplaces
- **Working with Dads** – workshops for professionals and service providers.

Sustain

A program to reinforce behaviour change for men who have completed an MBCP.

Tuning in to Kids®

An emotional intelligence parenting program, including specialised groups for:

- dads, with a dedicated program for Afghan dads
- Afghan women
- Vietnamese parents.

Tuning in to Teens™

An emotional intelligence parenting program, with specialised groups for culturally and linguistically diverse parents.

Victoria Legal Aid Family Advocacy and Support Services Mental Health Support

Free, strengths-based support for people with family court matters who are affected by family violence.

Women Making Choices

A program for women who are affected by controlling and abusive behaviours.

Workplace support services

Employee assistance program counselling, conflict resolution and post-incident debriefing for employees and workplaces.

You Are Not Alone

A support group for women who have been impacted by family violence.

Professional development and training

Accredited training

- Registered Training Organisation RTO 21977
- CHC81115 Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution
- CHC81015 Graduate Diploma of Relationship Counselling (Responding to Family Violence)

Accredited programs: Other

- Mediation Training Course (CHCSS00110 Mediation Skill Set and National Mediator Accreditation System)
- Specialist Course in Integrative Couple Therapy

Customised training workshops

- Advanced Property Family Dispute Resolution Training
- Child Inclusive Practice for Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners
- DadStuff
- Family Violence Prevention
- Grief-Related Vicarious Trauma
- Healthy Relationships for Couples
- Healthy and Respectful Relationships
- Leading Difficult Conversations
- Leading Teams Through and Setting Professional Boundaries
- Managing Challenging Behaviours
- Managing Vicarious Trauma
- Mental Health in the Workplace
- Professional Boundaries and De-escalation in the Workplace
- Responding to Family Violence
- Responding to Family Violence in the Workplace
- Single Session Contact in Therapeutic Practice
- Strengthening Families
- Supporting Staff and Teams Experiencing Vicarious Trauma
- Vicarious Trauma
- Vicarious Trauma for Leaders and Managers
- Working with Dads

Professional development webinars

- Aboriginal Mental Health
- Conflict and Dispute Resolution in the Funeral Industry
- Effective Strategies When Working in Brief Client Contact
- Online Counselling – Issues and Considerations
- Parental Bereavement Experience of Children Loss: An International Systematic Review
- Working with a Correctional Cohort and Leading Groups
- Working with Young People – CARE Schools: An Alternative to Jailing Our Kids

Professional development workshops

- The Accidental Mediator
- Advanced Property Family Dispute Resolution Training
- Attending Court and Writing Reports
- The Casual Counsellor
- Managing Challenging Behaviours
- Mediating with Rainbow Families
- Strengthening Families
- Supporting Separated Families
- Transitioning into Leadership
- Working with Clients in Single Session Contacts
- Working with Dads

Self-paced courses

- Conducting Family Dispute Resolution Online
- Professional Boundaries in Therapeutic and Care Work
- Property and Financial Matters in Family Dispute Resolution
- Working with Dads

Specialist programs

- ATLAS – for facilitators of workshops in correctional facilities.
- Diffuse – a 6-week healthy and respectful relationships pilot program for men in correctional facilities.
- LINCS – psychoeducational workshops for people who are subject to community correction orders, including specialist programs for First Nations men.
- LINCS in Families – psychoeducational workshops for people who are subject to family violence orders.

Client-centred services

Relationships across our lifetime

Counselling

For couples, families and individuals, including children and young people

Respect, good communication and healthy conflict resolution are associated with satisfying and fulfilling relationships, and better health and wellbeing. With that knowledge, we provided counselling to support clients with not only challenges, but also to strengthen relationships in prevention and early-intervention ways.

This statewide service was delivered through our network of centres and outreach locations, and via telephone and video (telepractice).

Services after extreme climatic events

Responding to the needs of local communities

We welcomed a funding extension from Gippsland Primary Health Network to provide free and confidential Frontline Emergency Distress and Trauma Counselling for people affected by the 2019 and 2020 East Gippsland bushfires.

It is often difficult for people living in rural and remote communities to access face-to-face support due to their location and distance from services; however, our frontline service offers both face-to-face outreach and telehealth options. Our partnership with the Royal Flying Doctor Service Victoria has enabled the service to span a broad geographic area encompassing towns including Omeo, Mallacoota and Lakes Entrance. These supports extend to schools, enabling access to services may it may otherwise be challenging.

Open Arms

Support for Australian Defence Force personnel

Through our partnership with Open Arms Veterans & Families Counselling, we continued to provide therapeutic couple counselling to past or currently serving members of the Australian Defence Force. The service focuses on providing timely support to veterans, and their partners and families, to enhance their relationships and their ability to manage their mental health, including post-traumatic stress disorder.

Using a trauma-informed approach and our knowledge of relationship dynamics and mental health, our counselling staff are uniquely placed to offer this specialist service through our network of centres across Victoria. This critically important work recognises the extraordinary contributions of current and former serving Navy, Army or Air Force members, and supports them to maintain support networks and healthy relationships and resolve challenges when they arise.

In 1948, our organisation was started to respond to the needs of returning Second World War veterans and their families.

Today, we're proud to again be supporting veterans by providing effective and trauma-informed counselling, through Open Arms.

“ My husband and I started to attend because we were having issues at home communicating effectively with each other and our children. I was very reluctant to attend as it wasn't something my family ever spoke about or did themselves, so I wasn't sure what to expect. My husband and I learnt new ways of communicating with each other and our kids, we built our relationship up again and were able to manage the ups and downs of marriage and life.”

FDR and Focus On Kids client

We work across the state, so that all Victorians can access support near them – through our centres, outreach locations or telepractice.

During separation and divorce

Separation and divorce can be one of most stressful times in life. The right information, referrals and services can help to reduce the impact of this stress.

Family dispute resolution (FDR)

Supporting separating couples and families

Our FDR service supports separating couples and families to resolve disputes about parenting and property matters. For parenting matters, it helps parents to agree on their children's living arrangements, travel and special holidays, as well as parents' communication and shared expenses. Our Family Safety Navigation program assists clients of our Melbourne and Sunshine FRCs who are affected by family violence.

Focusing on kids

Prioritising the best interests of children

Our focus is always on safety and the best interests of children. In enhanced child-focused FDR, a child-inclusive practitioner represents the interests of children based on relevant development research. In our child-inclusive FDR, the practitioner engages with children through conversations, drawings and other activities that provide insight into the children's experiences. These insights are reflected to parents, for consideration during the FDR process. Our Focus on Kids webinars gave parents the opportunity to explore what the experience of separation or associated conflict looks like through the eyes of their child.

Similarly, we have been delivering post-separation parenting programs since the 1990s. Our online Parenting After Separation Seminar (PASS) involves a combination of self-paced learning, a facilitated workshop, and referrals and support. It provides parents with key information and strategies to help their children successfully adjust to separation by focusing on 3 key areas: communication with co-parents, self-care and children's needs. It also helps to normalise some of the challenges many separated parents face, and helps others to identify issues or challenges they can focus on changing.

With a focus on children's best interests, Focus on Kids offers preventive strategies to promote a more equal and healthy future for our children.

Family dispute resolution

94.1%

of clients were satisfied with the services they received



774

property-related sessions provided through our FRCs



Focus on Kids

89.0%

of participants had an improved understanding of what they could do to make things better for their children



Parenting After Separation Seminar

92.4%

of participants were satisfied with the program



89.6%

of participants learned new skills to use in their co-parenting relationship



89.0%

of participants had a greater understanding of their children's behaviour and emotions



Mediation helped us to settle our finances and parenting amicably without the need to involve family court and hefty solicitor costs. [The] course taught us what our marriage breakdown and fighting were doing to the kids. That was an eye-opener and pivotal moment for both of us. We both took on board what was taught, turning our attention to our kids, making sure they were anchored in love despite what was happening between us.'

FDR and Focus On Kids client

Legally assisted and inclusive FDR

Engaging lawyers in mediation

Our Sunshine FRC's partnership with the Brimbank Community Legal Centre and Monash Law Clinics enabled us to deliver legally assisted FDR. Lawyers offered legal advice and support during FDR, as well as advice about what outcomes clients could expect, should they proceed to court. Such support can be particularly helpful to enable vulnerable parties to participate in FDR, and in situations involving a specific legal issue or when the conflict will likely proceed to court without an agreement. We are currently evaluating this service (see page 33).

For many years, we have also offered legally inclusive FDR. Informed by our valued Lawyers' Panel, it enables separating couples to attend dispute resolution with private lawyers. In response to *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth) changes that promote mediation for clients who are already engaged with the court, this year we established new pathways to support access to the service both after, as well as before, filing matters in court.



AccessResolve

Timely and accessible property settlements

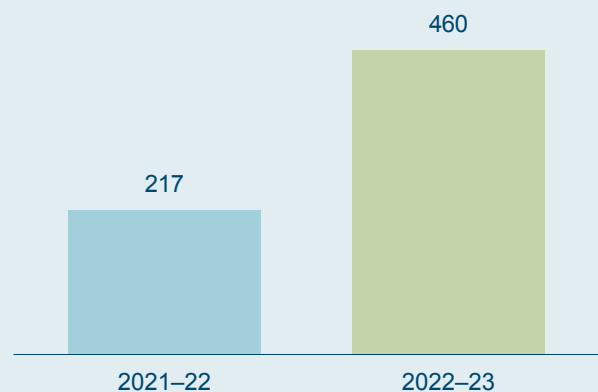
For over 11 years, we have been providing court-ordered clients of the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia with timely property dispute resolution. The service has been primarily focused on providing people in regional Australia with timely and accessible access to justice, using a lawyer-assisted conciliation model. Experienced and qualified FDR practitioners deliver the service, and many practitioners are also practising lawyers, barristers and solicitors.

Having achieved consistently high settlement rates, this year we responded to the Court's request to extend AccessResolve to a cohort of clients from capital cities in eastern Australia who had been engaged with the Court for extended periods of time. We also delivered 95 additional mediations to clients who were originally scheduled for a hearing through the Court's internal conciliation conference. While many of these parties represented themselves or were supported by solicitors who had not worked with AccessResolve, our service still achieved a high settlement rate of 60% for the year. The results of our recent research conducted into clients' service satisfaction and outcomes were published in a new research summary (see page 34).

AccessResolve

A timely, free and accessible service that supports clients from remote areas of Australia who may not be able to access legal advice, to resolve their property disputes.

Mediations delivered



I'm very grateful that there is this process... it has reduced a lot of nastiness, a lot of time and a lot of expense.'

AccessResolve client

Supporting children and families

Parent and family relationships are the most important protective and preventive factor in the healthy development of children and young people.

early matters

Strengthening protective factors for families

Our early matters prevention and early intervention program works with families and children aged 12 years and under in areas of Ballarat and Sunshine. It provides education and support at key transition points, to strengthen protective factors. The service has 5 key aims: to improve child wellbeing and early development, enhance parents' confidence and skills, strengthen positive family relationships, and promote social and emotional competencies.

Like many of our programs, a high proportion of early matters clients are affected or have been affected by family violence, and so our final program aim is a critically important one: to promote gender equality and reduce violence against women.

With a strong focus on partnerships and providing programs within existing service settings, including in hospitals and maternal and child health centres, we welcomed one of many collaborative opportunities this year, to work with a local primary school.

We delivered a range of parenting programs onsite and offered additional online sessions to cater to parents' work schedules. We were also pleased that we could continue to extend availability of some of our online programs to clients across Victoria, when they were otherwise unable to access a parenting support service in a timely way.

In March 2023, we welcomed an extension of our funding that will enable us to deliver early matters for a further 3 years, to June 2026.

ATTUNE and ATTUNE+

Antenatal and postnatal education sessions for first-time parents on topics such as relationships, emotions, parenting, attachment, self-care and help-seeking.

Tuning in to Kids® and Tuning in to Teens™

Evidence-based, emotion-coaching parenting programs that support the development of emotional intelligence, enhance parent-child relationships, and in turn prevent and reduce mental health difficulties.

Circle of Security Parenting™

An evidence-based parenting program that helps parents to meet their child's emotional needs, develop secure attachments and improve their relationships with their children.

Tailored, individual family support

Focuses on healthy child development, positive parenting practices and strengthening family relationships.

Our early matters service has five aims, the fifth of which is to promote gender equality and reduce violence against women.



I was able to implement changes in my approach immediately and noticed changes [with the kids] almost straight away. I will be forever grateful to the team in my town – not just for offering these programs but providing their ongoing support to our family.'

Circle of Security Parenting™ program participant

I like, like you

Starting a lifetime of healthy relationships

This year marked 10 years since we developed our innovative 'I like, like you' primary prevention program for schools, and we completed a broad review of the program (see page 32). The program focuses on mental health promotion and respectful relationships during the transitional period of early to mid-adolescence – because we know that the building blocks of healthy and safe relationships develop early. It strongly focuses on gender equality in relationships, as research shows that an understanding of gender equality is strongly correlated with a reduced risk of unhealthy relationships and family violence.

Over 4 sessions, we work to build young people's social-emotional competencies, particularly their self-awareness, social awareness, resilience and relationship skills; skills that help to prevent negative mental health outcomes and promote long-term positive mental health. With our knowledge of the impact of using a whole-of-school approach to early adolescent education, we also engage parents and teachers through information sessions and videos.

'I like, like you'

845

Victorian school students participated



150

teachers attended information sessions



600+

parents had access to our online information session



Support for Fathers

Promoting the positive involvement of dads

The positive involvement of fathers in families is associated with wide-ranging and enduring benefits for children, partners and for fathers themselves. Despite fathers' needs for support, options are limited for dads seeking assistance to adjust to their role as a father, and for managing the ongoing emotional and interpersonal challenges many parents face.

Our Support for Fathers program is designed to address barriers fathers encounter in accessing relevant support, and that services face in designing and delivering father-inclusive services, and in engaging fathers.

We work to provide dads and father-figures with better access to relevant support, to understand how important their roles as parents and partners are, and to have and model healthy and respectful relationships. We also enable support services to work with dads and families more effectively through our professionals' toolkit and training workshops. Our aim is for dads to thrive in their roles as parents and partners, which benefits dads, kids, families and communities.

The Support for Fathers project commenced in 2018 and is being delivered with funding from the Australian Government Department of Social Services. We were pleased to be notified this year of a further extension to our funding until June 2024.

Support for Fathers

195

professionals trained



231

dads and father-figures supported



22

workshops delivered



I will be able to deal with all my relationships better with the knowledge of my feelings and others.'

Year 8 participant of 'I like, like you'

'I like, like you' strongly focuses on gender equality in relationships, as research shows that an understanding of gender equality is strongly correlated with a reduced risk of unhealthy relationships and family violence.

Yarra Communities That Care

Collaborative, place-based family support

The middle years of childhood are a transformative time as children move into their teenage years. What happens during this stage can significantly impact long-term health and wellbeing outcomes. As a result, and in response to identified local needs in the City of Yarra, we are a proud partner of the Yarra Communities That Care project.

As one of 24 partner agencies, we work to support the healthy development of children and young people by building the emotional literacy of and connection between children, young people and their families. This approach is based on our knowledge of the association between parenting strategies that encourage young people to understand and accept their emotions, and improvements in relationships and mental health. Yarra Communities That Care also aims to strengthen connections between children and parents, support school engagement and, consequently, improve adolescent mental health.

Through our Melbourne FRC, we coordinate a network of 26 practitioners from 10 agencies to deliver the evidence-based Tuning in to Teens™ parenting program. This is part of the ‘Strengthening Families’ priority area, whose evaluation we are leading. This year, we also delivered webinars and information sessions on taming teen anxiety, keeping connected with teens and handling tricky friendship days. These activities are helping to develop a local community of practice whereby practitioners better understand other services and referral pathways, provide consistent emotional wellbeing approaches for families, and strengthen ties to wellbeing and cultural liaison school staff.

We delivered the Tuning in to Teens™ program to parents in Collingwood from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Planning is underway to extend such programs by working closely with community leaders and training bilingual facilitators to deliver the program in-language and in culturally sensitive ways.

‘This collaborative, place-based initiative is contributing to systemic change in the community.’

Community Liaison Officer, Melbourne Family Relationship Centre

‘I would recommend this program to any parent or caregiver. It really changes the way you think about your children’s emotions – and your own. It gives you concrete strategies for engaging with your kids and building stronger relationships with them at this tricky life stage.’

City of Yarra parent

After Tuning in to Teens™

100%

of participants were doing things differently as a parent



88%

of participants had a stronger connection with their child



98%

of participants were more confident to respond to their child’s emotions



Yarra Communities That Care

We deliver our programs in different ways to meet different needs: in person, online and tailored for families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Safety: Preventing and responding to family violence

The safety of our clients, children, young people, families and the community is paramount, as is the safety of the staff who work with us, and family safety is embedded into every facet of our organisation.

Our services are delivered using whole-of-family, child-inclusive and trauma-informed approaches. We are responsive to the safety and wellbeing needs of clients with individual or complex needs, including First Nations clients; clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; LGBTIQ+ clients; children and young people; people with disability; and clients experiencing housing, mental health, or drug and alcohol issues. In keeping with our children and young people safety commitment and code of conduct, our sites have spaces that are welcoming for children and young people.

By collaborating, sharing information and innovating, we provide responsive services that allow us to best support our clients and proactively address the complex issue of family violence. The Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework underpins our work, to ensure the identification of safety concerns, including family violence, and safety and referral planning.

To effect lasting change in relation to family violence and safety, work is needed across 3 levels: individual, organisational and sector reform. Individually, this year we worked to provide safety directly to those affected by violence and emphasise responsibility to those who use violence. We provided a comprehensive range of services for those who use violence, and to support people affected by family violence.

At an organisational level, we continued to adapt our approaches to align with current research and best practice in the field, ensuring program participants received services that are at the forefront of innovation and safety. We also undertook research and evaluation activities to inform practice improvements across our services and sector.

Finally, at a sector reform level, we worked to enhance the visibility and awareness of family violence and safety. We welcomed the Victorian Government's announcement in January 2023 that all 227 recommendations from the Royal Commission into Family Violence (Victoria) had been implemented. In 2022–23, our activities included:

- collaboratively engaging with key stakeholders across the state, including The Orange Door, Family Safety Victoria, No to Violence, local community health centres, women's and children's services, and courts
- participating in regional and metropolitan family violence working groups and partnerships, as well as consultations and forums
- welcoming an invitation to sit on the Melbourne Magistrates' Court Stakeholder Reference Group
- engaging in significant awareness campaigns such as the annual Safe Steps Walk Against Family Violence. We proudly walked in solidarity alongside Respect Victoria, other family violence services and community members from across Victoria, to collectively raise awareness of the impact of family violence with the goal of ending gender inequality and family violence.



RAV staff members at the 2022 Walk Against Family Violence.

At our core, we believe that to address family violence and safety, and achieve lasting change, we need multifaceted approaches across individual, organisational and sector reform levels.

Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCPs)

Holding men accountable for their behaviour

We welcome the increasing emphasis on those who use violence taking responsibility for their behaviour. This focus has resulted in increased demand for our MBCPs, and an innovative, responsive change from closed to 'rolling' MBCP groups. This model enables men to join an MBCP at more regular intervals, and consequently, for partners and children who are experiencing violence to also have more immediate access to our Family Safety Contact support service. The rolling model provides men who have had experience in the group to mentor and lead men when they join a group.

Men's case management

A wrap-around approach

Not all people who use violence have the capacity, willingness or ability to initially take responsibility for their actions. Recognising this, we offer a strengths-based, solution-focused service to help address the complex needs of men who use violence. Specialised case managers provide a personalised approach to deliver individual sessions and brokerage support for assistance with drug and alcohol issues, mental health issues, housing, language barriers, cultural needs, cognitive impairment, health concerns or unemployment. At the same time, case managers challenge men in relation to their use of violence and support them to make safe choices.

75

MBCPs delivered



694

MBCP participants



294

men's case management clients



‘ I thought I hadn't done anything wrong... this course showed me how I went wrong.’

MBCP participant

Repair-enting and individual sessions

Extending our support of behaviour change

We embedded new group programs that provide the opportunity for men who have completed an MBCP to reinforce their behaviour change. Fathers who were parenting children or wanting to redevelop a relationship with their children accessed our online Repair-enting program. Over 10 sessions, participants learnt healthy parenting skills and how to build a secure relationship with their children after the trauma of family violence. We also provided individual sessions for men to ingrain the behaviour change that occurred during the MBCP journey and for those who weren't able to participate in groups. This program is an extension of MBCPs, with a focus on sustainable change.

Family safety, and the needs and experiences of children who are impacted by the violence, are central to both programs.

Family Safety Contact

Prioritising the safety and wellbeing of all family members

Partners of men who were participating in an MBCP or our men's case management program were supported through a dedicated partner contact service for victim-survivors. Family safety practitioners engaged regularly with partners to prioritise safety, wellbeing and safety planning, and provide referrals, information about the impact of family violence and support to engage with appropriate services.

Flexible support packages were also accessible to partners who were facing additional financial or other pressures. These packages enabled clients who were re-establishing themselves after family violence or experiencing additional other pressures to financial or material access related to mortgage repayments, utility bills, school necessities and furniture.

‘ The program] has shown me that:

- I own my lot and I am responsible for MY actions;
- my poor choices and poor actions were MY fault and no one else's;
- those actions and choices affected those around me, especially the children.’

MBCP participant

Our MBCPs emphasise the importance of respect and equality in all relationships. Our facilitators work to challenge and change patterns and ingrained thinking that lead to inequality and violence.

To my past self: a letter from an MBCP participant

Dear past self,

I am writing to you from the last week of the Men's Behavioural Change Program that I have attended. I want to tell you about my experience and the important lessons that I have learned, which I hope will help you in your life as well.

Firstly, I want to acknowledge that I know you are struggling with your emotions and your behaviour towards your family. I know you love them, but your actions are not reflecting that love. You may be feeling frustrated, angry, or overwhelmed, but it's important to understand that there are better ways to deal with these feelings. The way you are behaving is not acceptable and is causing harm to those you love.

When I first started the program, I was reluctant and defensive. I didn't want to admit that I had a problem, and I didn't want to change. But as I went through the program, I began to see the impact of my actions on my family and how my behaviour was contributing to the cycle of violence. I realised that I needed to take responsibility for my actions and make a commitment to change.

Through the program, I learned to identify my triggers and to develop healthy coping mechanisms. I learned how to communicate effectively with my family and how to express my emotions in a healthy way. I learned to take responsibility for my actions and to recognise the impact that my behaviour has on others. Most importantly, I learned to respect the boundaries of others and to never use violence as a means of control.

Looking back on my past self, I know that I was struggling and feeling lost. But I want you to know that there is hope and that change is possible. It's not an easy journey, but it's a journey that is worth taking. I hope that you can learn from my experience and take the steps to change your behaviour for the better.

Sincerely,

Yourself after the program

Family Safety Navigation

Supporting family violence-affected FDR clients

The Family Safety Navigation program at our Sunshine and Melbourne FRCs provided specialised support and referrals to FDR clients who were perpetrators of or impacted by family violence. Qualified family safety practitioners provided an additional contact point during FDR, as well as education, referrals and advocacy, ongoing risk and safety assessments for clients and their children, and information and assistance on managing the FDR and family court processes.

Clients have commonly sought support for issues relating to children's wellbeing, intervention orders, mental and emotional support, and legal and financial needs.

Women's support groups

Trauma-informed services

We delivered various support and education programs for women impacted by family violence during the year. Our online You Are Not Alone group supported women with a connection to the City of Knox and was extended to other areas following the success of the first program.

In western Melbourne, our 8-week Opening the Doors group focused on healing and recovery through access to information, resources and strategies to strengthen emotional wellbeing, and connection with others and sharing of experiences in a safe environment.

Victim-survivors in eastern Melbourne attended Women Making Choices, an educative, therapeutic and supportive group that provided the opportunity for women to share their experiences, enhance their understanding, and offer support to other women in the group.

Prioritising mental health

Our dedicated support services support the mental health of people in different circumstances and at different stages of life.

headspace

Vital support for young people across Gippsland

As the lead agency for headspace sites in Bairnsdale, Sale and Wonthaggi, we worked collaboratively with our valued consortia to deliver mental health services for young people in Gippsland and East Gippsland. Our 3 sites provided holistic and early intervention mental health support to young people aged 12 to 25 years across 4 core areas: mental health, physical (including sexual) health, work and study support, and alcohol and other drug services.

Across our sites, we worked to reduce the barriers that young people sometimes encounter when seeking professional help, by ensuring that young people inform the centre's operations through our Youth Advisory Groups (YAGs). YAGs meet regularly and provide expertise and advice about the centres' operations and services. We value their contributions, including in planning local campaigns and activities, and their strong advocacy for headspace and the needs of young people in their local communities.

Our centres marked headspace Day with a community 'pause, reflect and reconnect' event in Bairnsdale, and headspace Wonthaggi's first ever excursion. In Bairnsdale, the YAG organised and ran a coffee van and chill out-space, which was well attended by the community members and supported by local services. headspace Wonthaggi's YAG enjoyed a guided tour of the Wilson's Promontory boardwalk and the opportunity to photograph the beautiful local wildlife, plants and views, and take time to stop and listen to the sounds of nature.

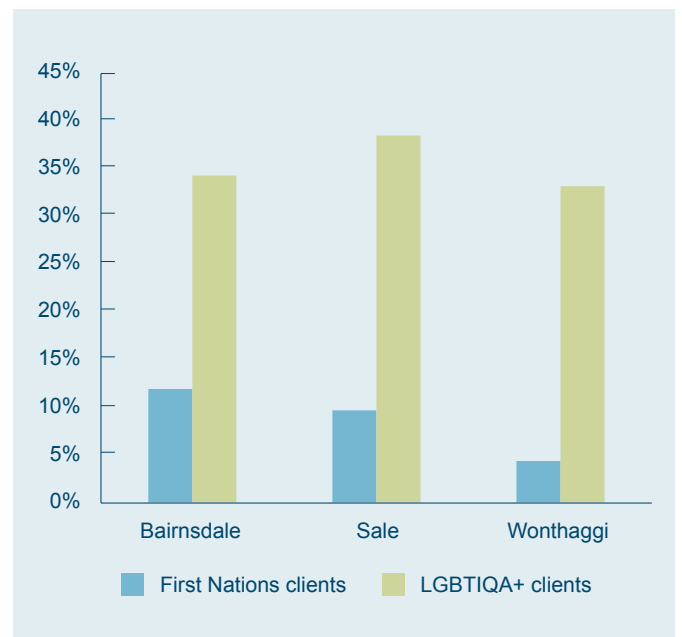
Our headspace services are funded by the Australian Government Department of Health. Administration of funding is carried out by Gippsland Primary Health Network.

Our headspace services

867
clients



3,688
sessions



Everyone is welcome at headspace. We're committed to being responsive to the needs of young people, and actively welcoming and accepting of all young people, irrespective of culture, language, gender, sexuality, lifestyle, values and beliefs, abilities, appearance or socio-economic differences.

headspace Bairnsdale and Sale

In addition to providing counselling services, our headspace centre in Bairnsdale and a satellite site in Sale delivered health promotion activities and psychoeducation presentations to ensure that well and at-risk young people could identify and seek support for their mental health and wellbeing. We engaged with secondary and higher education students across Wellington and East Gippsland, including through pop-up activities, presentations, and wellbeing and resilience activities. In partnership with RAV's i-Connect Family Mental Health Support Service in Gippsland (see page 23), headspace delivered a fortnightly drumbeat program for local, disengaged year 10 secondary school students.

Our engagement and health promotion activities also focused on supporting priority groups of young people to access services. We provided a 'chill out zone' at the East Gippsland Rainbow Ball; supported 3 Pride Picnic school holiday events with opportunities for physical activities, craft and connection; and attended both IDAHOBIT awareness day activities at a local secondary school.

Thanks to a First Nations Healing and Wellbeing Grant from headspace National, 25 participants of a Bairnsdale Secondary College program for girls participated in an excursion to the Buchan Caves. With support from Parks Victoria, young First Nations women enjoyed lunch, traditional weaving and a mindfulness walk, while learning about headspace National's Take A Step initiative for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Other key activities with young people, families and communities included an Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation's Children's Week stall, a photo booth at the Koori Youth Summit, activities at a local music health festival, and participation in NAIDOC Week celebrations.

Our outreach work engaged with young people, family and friends in rural and remote East Gippsland, including through a health promotion stall at Tennis Victoria in Orbost, attendance at the Mallacoota Family Fun Day, activities at the High-Country Masquerade Ball in Omeo, and support of an orienteering and caves day in Buchan.

In addition to our existing social groups for young people with autism and LGBTIQ+ young people, we developed a new 'social-space' support group for young people wanting to make social connections post-COVID-19.

Our headspace Bairnsdale and Sale sites are accredited with the internationally endorsed Communication Access Symbol. This means all young people, including those with communication difficulties, can feel confident that our staff will treat them with dignity and respect, and be able to communicate successfully.

155

young people accessed headspace Bairnsdale services for the first time



Most common presenting issues at headspace Sale

- Anxiety symptoms
- Depressive symptoms
- Stress-related
- Trauma
- Difficulty with personal relationships
- Sexual assault

‘ I love to attend as a form of self-care, to challenge my social anxiety and have fun with other people.’

headspace Bairnsdale social-space group member

‘ Having a place, particularly in more rural areas, for young people to be able to go where they won't experience judgment is incredibly important for allowing them to feel not only safe and secure, but also to help them feel welcomed in their community and validated in their identity.’

headspace Sale YAG member



headspace Sale YAG member creating a tranquil garden in the centre.

headspace Wonthaggi

Our individual support interventions were supported by our outreach activities, and by the work of our YAG and AMPLIFY group. An example of our responsive outreach includes a Maternal and Child Health group for new young mums aged 17 to 25 years, to introduce them to headspace and how we can support young families.

Our youth-led AMPLIFY group worked to plan and deliver fun and educational community events to empower LGBTQIA+ young people and provide opportunities for connection. In 2022–23, some of their engaging activities included a film screening, an art and talent show, and a drag queen show and a queer youth panel discussion involving members of the group and a local transgender elder. The group was proud to again receive a Healthy Equal Youth Grant from the Victorian Youth Affairs Council in 2023.

In August 2022 we welcomed headspace National CEO, Jason Trethowan, to headspace Wonthaggi. Following a guided tour, Jason joined staff, YAG members and our CEO to talk about challenges being faced in the community and the impact of the centre's services for young people.

94.1%

headspace Wonthaggi client satisfaction



i-Connect

Family mental health support in East Gippsland

Approaching its 10th year of service delivery, i-Connect continued to support children aged under 18 years at risk of developing mental health issues. Through free, tailored programs, we worked to meet individual and family needs relating to behaviour, mental health risks, family violence, social connection and self-esteem. Our service worked collaboratively with local primary and secondary schools, providing group programs and supporting students who were disengaged from education. i-Connect is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

We extended our Caring-Go-Round program, which was developed in response to children returning to school with high anxiety, stress and behavioural issues after the Black Summer fires in 2019 and 2020. The program was delivered to additional schools including those in remote high-country areas of the state, to support children to manage trauma and stress, and to self-regulate their emotions.

This year, our service relocated to new premises in Bairnsdale. Our new office is co-located with another community support service, enabling us to provide our clients with indoor and outdoor engagement activities, as well as counselling services and telehealth paediatric appointments.

Our i-Connect service is well-used and well-regarded in the broad geographic area in which we operate, and we work to ensure that it remains accessible.



Jason Trethowan (headspace National CEO), Dr Andrew Bickerdike (RAV CEO) and YAG members Rose, Lu, Evvelyn and Kane at headspace Wonthaggi

Connect Me

Supporting the mental health of children in East Gippsland

Connect Me is a free counselling and case management service for children aged 4 to 11 years in the Latrobe, Baw Baw, Bass Coast, South Gippsland, East Gippsland and Wellington areas of Victoria who are at risk of minor to moderate mental health issues. Following the program's success in delivering outreach counselling support, we are pleased to have had our program funding extended by Gippsland Primary Health Network until 2025.

The program supports children who may be experiencing challenges as a result of events such as COVID-19, the 2019 to 2020 East Gippsland bushfires, family financial pressures, family violence, cultural diversity or challenges relating to family structures. It supports children presenting with feelings of anxiety, stress, loss or anger, or with sleeping difficulties, negative memories affecting their daily activities, or withdrawal from usual activities.

The predominantly face-to-face outreach services are provided onsite in schools and early education settings. In addition to counselling, Connect Me offers case management to help children and families connect with education, personal, physical or community services. This service is funded by the Gippsland Primary Health Network, which is leading the primary mental health and suicide prevention stepped care response of Gippsland.

Men Being Well

A mental health, wellbeing and resilience program

Research indicates that 'being well' is enhanced by social connection, psychoeducation, personal reflection, and commitment to meaningful change. We also know that positive changes for individuals contribute to positive changes with partners, children and communities. For those reasons, we developed our Men Being Well program in 2022.

This year, 92 men participated in the program to talk about challenges and issues in their lives, learn from other men about wellbeing and mental health, focus on healthy relationships and share stories with other men.

Run in partnership with Life Is... Foundation, we hosted monthly drop-in sessions, online events and quarterly all-day workshops in a retreat setting that incorporated self-reflection activities.

Specialist services

Our diverse specialist services are designed to meet the varying and complex needs of specific client groups, including Forgotten Australians, people impacted by past forced adoption policies and practices, people with disability, and people engaging or considering engaging with the National Redress Scheme.

Therapeutic services

Trauma-informed and compassionate support

The needs, experiences and backgrounds of clients who access our Forced Adoption Support Service, Redress Support Services and Disability Counselling and Support Service are diverse and complex. We work with clients to identify appropriate services by assessing their circumstances and needs in relation to social and emotional issues, family violence, diversity, trauma, physical and mental wellbeing, relationships, resources and significant life events. We aim to provide free, trauma-informed and compassionate support, as well as strengths-based tools and strategies to assist clients in their therapeutic journey.

Having identified heightened needs for connection and support as a result of COVID-19, extended lockdowns and limited opportunities for social connection, we provided much-needed counselling in different settings. We established new processes to work in correctional facilities, and with clients and communities facing barriers to service access.

Forced Adoption Support Service

More than 10 years have passed since the National Apology for Forced Adoptions, which acknowledged the mothers, fathers, children and families across Australia who were impacted by past forced adoption policies and practices. In March, we joined and supported some of our clients at events in Canberra to mark the anniversary, and reflect on the ongoing trauma, grief and loss experienced by so many as a result of the historical forcible removal of babies and children from their mothers and fathers.

Throughout the year we provided counselling and emotional support, information and referrals, advice on adoption-related issues and help to search for records and family members. We also assisted mothers to apply for exceptional circumstances payments – a Victorian Government initiative introduced to support mothers while a redress scheme is being designed. Through our small grants program, we supported creative expressive therapy workshops that were designed and delivered by VANISH (Victorian Adoption Network for Information and Self-Help). The workshops are

We recognise the lifelong impacts of childhood trauma.

We recognise those who had children taken away from them.

We would like to acknowledge the lived experiences of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples of the Stolen Generations and those who had child sexual abuse perpetrated against them in an institution.

We acknowledge those who may have been affected by violence, abuse, neglect and/or exploitation.

We welcome all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples seeking the support of our services.

‘ It has been a good journey. You have amazing skills. I have been able to speak to you about things I couldn’t share with anyone else and I have gotten so much out of our sessions.’

Forced Adoption Support Services and Redress Support Service client

one of many projects and activities that we provide small grants for, to build the capacity and enhance support for people affected by forced adoption.

Forced Adoption Support Services are funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

Redress Support Services

Our free and confidential statewide service supported people making or considering making an application through the National Redress Scheme: the Australian Government's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Redress provides acknowledgement and support as an alternative to seeking compensation through the courts. It can involve 3 components: counselling, a redress payment and/or a Direct Personal Response (an apology) from the institution/s responsible for the abuse. Redress Support Services are funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

We delivered counselling, and emotional and practical supports for our clients, with the principles of accessibility and adaptability central to our work. Some clients elected to appoint us as their nominee for redress, enabling us to be a point of contact and interact with the scheme on their behalf. This is a very important service offering as it responds to the ongoing distrust that many clients have of governments or institutions.

This year an increased number of clients wanted to proceed with a Direct Personal Response as part of their redress application and outcome. In response, we enhanced the expertise of our team to support clients through what are individual and nuanced redress processes.

Disability Counselling and Support

The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability began in April 2019 and will end in 2023 before a final report is released in September. While final submissions to the Royal Commission closed in December 2022, we continued to provide free counselling and support for people with disability who have had violence, abuse, neglect and/or exploitation perpetrated against them.

Knowing that people with disability often face barriers to accessing services, we extended our reach to individuals, communities and groups who were less able to access or be aware of our service, such as people in prisons, schools and supported care facilities. We partnered with Leadership Plus, Your Story Disability Legal Support and drummond street's 'Your Way Through' service to participate in a 'Disability Matters' roadshow across country Victoria. We also co-hosted an information stand at the Melbourne Disability Expo for the third consecutive year.

After the COVID-19 lockdowns ended, we were able to see an increasing number of clients face-to-face, and by offering video and telephone support we remained inclusive and accessible.

RAV is one of the 2 organisations in Victoria providing a counselling and support service for people affected by the Royal Commission. drummond street services is the other organisation.

Through simple and more complex systemic changes, we're working to provide for accessibility and inclusivity not only in one service, but across our organisation. We're focused on helping to create an inclusive society that supports people with disability to be independent and live free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Today, I was feeling as though life wasn't worth living and I felt instantly lighter speaking to you. It's a blessing. I have felt so lost in the world and isolated as an Indian woman with no family support and now I am feeling safe, protected and inspired for the next steps in my career.'

Disability Counselling and Support Service client

Intercountry Adoptee and Family Support Service

Free, confidential and specialised counselling and casework support

We offer specialised support for intercountry adoptees and their families, including young adoptees, adult adoptees and adoptive parents. Many intercountry adoptees face unique developmental challenges during their lifetime, having been displaced not only from their family of origin but also their culture, language and country. Recognising this, the service provides attachment-informed and trauma-informed counselling, case management, therapeutic groups, parenting support, a small grants and bursaries scheme, referrals and education for professionals. We aim to include and empower intercountry adoptees in the work that we do.

We support adoptees to identify and explore their challenges as an adoptee, and make sense of sometimes conflicting experiences, including related to identify, grief and belonging. Parenting support is designed to educate and empower adoptive parents, and provide skills and knowledge that promote regulation skills in families. The service is delivered on behalf of Relationships Australia South Australia, and in consultation with Intercountry Adoptee Voices.

Open Place

A support service for Forgotten Australians (Pre-1990 Care Leavers)

Demand continued to increase for our Open Place service for Forgotten Australians (Pre-1990 Care Leavers), in part due to increasing living costs, word-of-mouth referrals and the potential of a Victorian Government redress scheme. 'Forgotten Australians' refers to the estimated 500,000 children and child migrants who experienced time in institutions/orphanages or out-of-home care in Australia during the 20th century. Our services support people who spent more than 6 months in institutional 'care' in Victoria before 1990. Other eligibilities can also apply. Welcoming, non-judgemental and free of charge, Open Place provides a space for people to connect with each other and access support.

Our programs in 2022–23 included counselling, help to apply for the National Redress Scheme, support with records searching and family reunions, funding for health services, advocacy, community education and general support for day-to-day challenges. Central to Open Place is our Drop-in Centre in Richmond and our monthly social support groups which operate across Victoria, enabling people to come together for meals, activities, information exchanges and outings. We facilitate 13 social support groups around the state, from Frankston to Warrnambool, and from Shepparton to Sale. For many, a highlight of the year was the return of our annual Christmas party for the first time since COVID-19 lockdowns. Over 300 people enjoyed a Christmas lunch, DJ, photo booth, raffles, spot prizes and dancing, and importantly, the opportunity to reconnect.

This year we also officially launched a new Open Place website, providing mobile-responsiveness, enhanced accessibility, a welcoming design, and enhanced access to information for service users and stakeholders.

Open Place is funded by the Victorian Government Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and the Australian Government Department of Social Services.



Open Place service users and Social Support Group members at the 2022 Open Place Christmas party

‘Many people have told us that the positive outcomes of our service – including advocacy around legal information, assistance with utility bills, support to access mobility aids or social connection – can be life changing.’

Michelle McDonald,
Senior Manager Open Place

At Open Place, we work to address inequality by providing practical support, and advocating for access and changes to the services to which Forgotten Australians are entitled. Forgotten Australians encounter a range of barriers to accessing mainstream services, and we work to break down these barriers, increase understanding and reduce discrimination.

New, innovative services

Responding to emerging needs and societal changes

Family violence

Trauma support for children and adults

In 2022–23, we introduced a trauma-informed family violence counselling support service for children, young people, women, transgender and non-binary people who are victim-survivors of family violence. This is an important addition to our existing suite of family violence services, providing a holistic service response to meet clients' needs, including Family Safety Contact clients who have experienced trauma.

Client-led sessions partners and family members

We introduced information sessions for partners, former partners and family members of men participating in our MBCPs in south-east Melbourne. Each month, MBCP facilitators and family safety practitioners offer information about MBCPs, available supports and the opportunity for those impacted by family violence to tell us about the behaviour of the person in the MBCP.

Healthy relationships and equality through sport

We commenced as lead agency in a partnership with Melbourne City Football Club, the Victorian Amateur Football Association, Women's Health in the North and SBS to deliver Healthy Clubs, Healthy Relationships: Preventing Family Violence through Sport. The project is designed to promote the links between gender equality, respectful relationships and prevention of violence against women, children and gender diverse people, with clubs and leagues across Victoria.

Our Healthy Clubs, Healthy Relationships program is focused on addressing intersecting forms of inequality as we know that gender inequality cannot be separated from other forms of inequality.

Using a whole-of-sport approach, we are working with people at all levels of club hierarchies, from supporters through to executives, to ensure that changes are universal across clubs.

This year, we developed healthy relationship workshops that focus on key issues such as gender roles, building healthy and respectful relationships, resilience building and bystander actions. Delivery of the workshops will commence in July 2023, alongside work to support clubs to develop gender equity action plans for clubs' culture, recruitment, leadership, participation and facilities. In addition, the project has a strong focus on intersectionality, cultural diversity and developing culturally safe content, and promoting different forms of masculinity by supporting men's transitions into and during fatherhood.

Healthy Clubs, Healthy Relationships is delivered with support from the Victorian Government's Preventing Violence through Sport Grants Program.

We also joined a new partnership to develop and deliver Man Up! Creating Respectful Relationships. With funding from the Victorian Government and led by Melbourne City Football Club and its charitable arm, City in the Community, the program uses football as a vehicle to support respectful relationships between young people across south-east Melbourne. Its aim is to encourage gender inclusion and equality, improve mental health and, ultimately, contribute to creating safer communities.

In collaboration with other program partners, our role is to develop research and evidence-led program content on healthy relationships, building resilience and coping strategies, mental health, being a leader, and gender equality and the impact of expectations on gender roles. In 2023–23, we developed course materials that were implemented in schools in Melbourne's south-east, starting in March 2023. We also delivered training for young leaders who are involved in facilitating the respectful relationships program, and participated in the project's advisory group.



Dom Alford, RAV Programs Leader presenting as part of the Healthy Clubs, Healthy Relationships: Preventing Family Violence through Sport project

Mental Health

Family Advocacy and Support Services

In October 2022, we began providing a new, free, strengths-based mental health support service as part of the Victoria Legal Aid’s existing Family Advocacy and Support Services. These services assist people who are affected by family violence and are involved with or will soon be involved in family law proceedings through the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia, in recognition of the intersectionality of family law, family violence and mental health issues.

We offer clients telephone and in-person support, including in court in Melbourne, Dandenong and across 7 regional locations, to manage stress, participate effectively in the court process and respond when court orders are made. We also undertake risk assessments and safety planning, where appropriate; provide relevant referrals; and deliver brief intervention supports, including crisis counselling and advocacy in adjacent service systems.

Integral to our work are our collaborative relationships and referral pathways between family violence and legal services, judges, lawyers, independent children’s lawyers and other judicial members. In regional locations, we collaborate with local family violence services to deliver locally informed, responsive services for victim-survivors as well as (alleged) perpetrators of family violence. There has been strong uptake of the services by clients since their introduction.

686

clients who were engaged with the courts received mental health support through the Family Advocacy and Support Services



Neighbours Every Day

In October 2022, the Relationships Australia federation celebrated the launch of Neighbours Every Day. This national, year-long campaign promotes the benefits of social connection and empowers Australians to build respectful and supportive relationships with their community, every day.

Neighbours Every Day is the next evolution of Relationships Australia’s Neighbour Day social connection campaign, which has existed in Australia for over 20 years.

“ I was really worried about coming to court on my own, I’m so happy to know that there are nice people here to help me.”

Family Advocacy and Support Services client

“ When people connect with their communities, they have a greater sense of belonging, which leads to improved mental wellbeing and a reduction in loneliness.”

RA National Executive Director, Nick Tebbey

Making an impact

Actions to enhance our services, sector and community

We are committed to delivering accessible, effective and evidence-informed services, and evaluating the outcomes and social impact of these services. In addition to measuring impact and ongoing evaluation, we also seek opportunities to participate in research projects to identify client and societal needs, enhance the evidence base for our services, and contribute to the sector-wide continuous improvement.

We are committed to:

- enhancing our knowledge base
- translating evidence into practice
- embedding the client voice to inform service design and evaluation
- demonstrating service outcomes and impact
- contributing to program development and innovation.

In 2022–23, we expanded our research and evaluation teams, enabling us to progress key projects focused on the evidence base of our services and practice frameworks, and embedding routine outcome measurement into our systems and practice.

Hearing our clients' voices

Embedding our clients' views, opinions, needs, experiences and outcomes into our program design and evaluation is a strategic priority for our organisation. Their voices, combined with practice knowledge and evidence, provide us with important insights into the quality, effectiveness and impact of our work, and opportunities for continuous improvement and innovation.

‘As a society, we do not place enough value and importance on the equal role men and fathers should play in raising children and promoting women’s independence and participation in the workforce.’

Our submission on the National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality

We hear our clients' voices through a tiered participation continuum of informing, consulting, involving, collaborating and empowering.

One example is our collaborative headspace YAGs (see page 21), through which young people contribute to the design and delivery of the centre's operations and services. Through our research and evaluation activities, we also engage with specific cohorts of clients in developing and evaluating programs, including through focus groups, surveys and client interviews.

Sector engagement

During the year we provided submissions on the Australian Government's Early Years Strategy and the National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality.

In our early years submission, we advocated for a universally integrated preventive approach to child wellbeing. This is based on evidence that overwhelmingly shows parent and family relationships are the most important protective and preventive factor in the healthy development of children and young people, particularly in the early years of life.

In our response to the gender equality strategy, we advocated for a national strategy to address the individual and societal attitudes to gender inequality and violence against women, as well as the institutional and structural inequalities that perpetuate gender inequality. We also highlighted the role that community organisations can have in delivering and evaluating family violence prevention and response services.

We welcomed opportunities to participate in the Australian Government's Community Roundtable on the Early Years and the Centre for Community Child Health's Prevention Roundtable for Child Mental Health in Victoria: Strategy to Action.

In considering the establishment of the National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, we advocated for change across 4 areas – the promotion of children's mental health and wellbeing, responses to early emerging mental health concerns, an integrated and seamless service pathway for children and families, and equity for all children and families – with consideration and incorporation of individual needs including culture, religion, sexuality, family structure, disability and socioeconomic status.

With our understanding of the strong link between mental health and healthy, safe and respectful relationships, and our suite of mental health services, we were proud to be accepted during the year as an Associate Member of Mental Health Australia, the national peak advocacy body for the mental health sector.

Our Lawyers Panel continued, involving 16 lawyers who have expertise in family law, and a strong understanding of and support for FDR services. The panel engaged in discussions on family law matters and their impacts for RAV's FDR and related services, contributing to service enhancements and innovation.

Across Victoria, we participated in working groups and stakeholder meetings related to our services and clients, including in family violence, child protection, forced adoption, redress, the Disability Royal Commission, First Nations peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and LGBTIQ+ people.

In February 2023, we welcomed representatives from the Japanese public broadcaster, NHK, to our Melbourne FRC to discuss shared parental care of children, FDR for parenting matters, and safety approaches for clients experiencing high conflict.

The segment was in response to proposed changes to Japanese family law that would provide the option of joint custody for separated parents for the first time. The visit enabled us to promote the value of FDR and practitioners' skills in helping separating parents to reduce acrimony, increase communication, reach agreements and, where safe to do so, co-parent their children after separation.

Submissions

Relationships Australia Victoria (2023) *Submission on the Australian Government's Early Years Strategy*, RAV, accessed 28 April 2023.

Relationships Australia Victoria (14 April 2023) *Submission on the National Strategy to Achieve Gender Equality*, RAV, Victoria.

Podcasts

Burns A & Keeble B (hosts) (17 May 2023) 'Dom Alford – Support for Fathers' [podcast], *Dads Group Podcast*, Spotify, accessed 9 June 2023.

Kendall, J (host) (14 November 2022) 'The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on divorce rates in Australia' [radio program], *Mornings*, ABC, accessed 14 November 2022.

Presentations

Alford D (16 May 2023) 'Engaging fathers in the first 1000 days' [conference presentation], *FRSA National Conference*, Queensland.

Bickerdike A (18 November 2022) 'The "unheard": children of separating parents', *ANU Family Law Research Symposium*, Canberra.

Creek M (30 November 2022) 'Parenting orders: Research on compliance and enforcement and insights from practice' [webinar], *AIFS and ANROWS webinar series*, Australia

Goldstein A (27 July 2022) 'The challenges for engaging men who use violence' [conference presentation] *ANROWS Focus on Men Who Use Violence Conference*, Victoria.

Goldstein A (2 March 2023) 'Working with clients to promote behaviour change', *Mental Health Professionals Network meeting*, Caulfield, Victoria

Heard G and Bickerdike A (November 2022) 'Failure to launch: barriers to initiating property FDR,' *ANU Family Law Symposium*, Canberra.

Heard G, Lindstrom J, Velasquez-Tan M, Hayes L, Moran C, Tom L and Bishop L (16 May 2023) 'Lawyer-assisted family dispute resolution: addressing barriers to participation through a partnership model' [conference presentation], *FRSA National Conference*, Queensland.

Heard G, Irving M, Althor G, Smyth B and Payne J (3 November 2022) 'Post-separation parenting smartphone apps: Can they help families avoid conflict?' [webinar], Relationships Australia.

Moore R (16 May 2023) 'FDR services and mental health', *Mental Health Professionals Network meeting*, Online for professionals across Australia.

Opoku S, Laidlaw B & Gilbert N (20 June 2023) 'A collaborative approach to strengthening family relationships in the City of Yarra', *OPEN Forum*, Victoria.

Plavljanic D and March A (16 May 2023) 'Mediating with rainbow families' [conference presentation], *FRSA National Conference*, Queensland.

Plavljanic D (17 May 2023) 'Working with a correctional cohort: Maintaining healthy and respectful relationships' [conference presentation], *FRSA National Conference*, Queensland.

Smyth BM, Althor G and Heard G (17 May 2023) 'Post-separation parenting smartphone apps: risks and benefits' [symposium], *FRSA National Conference*, Queensland.

Evaluation and social impact

Measuring outcomes and enhancing services

'The service listened to me and understood my issues.'

91.0%
of counselling clients agreed



After FDR:

90.3%
of clients reported positive personal and family safety



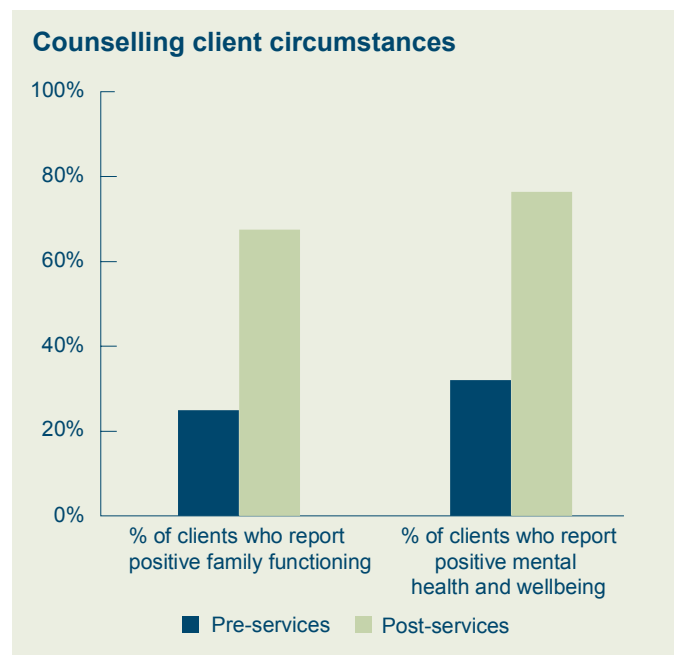
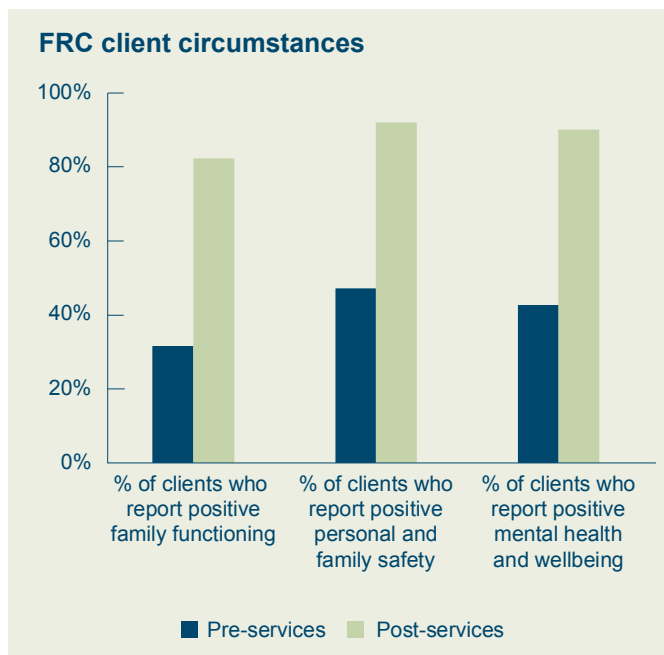
95.4%
of FDR clients agreed



91.3%
of clients reported positive mental health and wellbeing



90.7%
of FRC clients agreed





Family violence interventions

We routinely evaluate our family violence services. MBCP participants identified the most significant change for them and their families because of the program, and then rated how significant this change was on a scale of 1 to 10. The most significant changes were in the areas of increased awareness of what constitutes family violence (9), emotional regulation (8.8), empathy (7.8) and personal insight (7.4).

We proudly partnered on a Victorian Government-funded research project, led by Monash University, designed to enhance the evidence base in Victoria on perpetrator attrition and engagement strategies, and inform service delivery and best practice. As a project partner, we participated in the co-design of data collection and provided program attrition data, and commenced recruiting MBCP participants and affected family members to participate in research. We will soon engage practitioners to join focus groups and provide their professional perspectives, and we will contribute to developing evidence-based engagement guidelines.

‘ We know there is a sector-wide gap in research and knowledge on perpetrator engagement, and this project will allow us to directly contribute to best practice and better understand effective engagement strategies.’

Sandra Opoku, Manager of Evaluation and Social Impact on the perpetrator attrition and engagement strategies research project being undertaken by RAV and Monash University

FDR costs and benefits

We commenced a project to undertake a cost-benefit analysis of our FDR services (see page 13). This comprehensive and evidence-based method will provide valuable information on the economic, social and environmental impacts of FDR. Combined with our existing outcome measurement and qualitative data, this project will enhance how we communicate with our clients, the public and the sector.

‘I like, like you’

We reviewed our ‘I like, like you’ (see page 16) program’s logic, evidence base and delivery model, and facilitated a focus group led by year 8 students who had completed the program. The results are informing further program improvements, including an increased focus on social and emotional competencies.

Yarra Communities That Care

We continued to participate in an evaluation of the collaborative, placed-based Yarra Communities That Care initiative (see page 17), which seeks to achieve systemic change for young people and families in the City of Yarra. Key actions this year included developing a placed-based theory of change, completing 2 focus groups and interviews with facilitators and partner agencies, and a social network analysis.

Read more about our research and evaluation activities on our website:

rav.org.au/about/research-evaluation/

Research

Our targeted research projects inform policy and practice development in our organisation, as well as across the sector. We also participate in external research projects to gain client and expert practitioner perspectives.

Post-separation parenting apps

We completed our Australian Research Council Linkage Grant-funded research on ‘Post-separation co-parenting apps: Can they help families avoid conflict?’, led by academics at the Australian National University and University of Wollongong.

The study found 3 broad potential benefits of the app functions: accountability, convenience and containment. These same app functions, however, also pose a variety of potential risks, including for technology-facilitated abuse.

In this final year of the study, we focused on consolidating and communicating findings from across the multi-stage project within and beyond the sector. Three articles have been published in international, peer-reviewed journals: the *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, *Family Court Review* and the *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family*.

These 3 articles highlight the importance of family law professionals and separated parents having a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the benefits and risks of post-separation co-parenting apps and their features, particularly considering clients’ specific needs and circumstances.

Children’s advocacy

We embarked on the first stage of a Children’s Advocacy Project commissioned by our Family Law Working Group. Desktop research is examining the various practice responses and service models that have been developed in other jurisdictions to support children’s participation in family law disputes, and any evaluations of these models. The outcomes of this research will help inform the organisation’s future decisions in this area.

The outcomes of FDR

We continued to communicate findings from our national 2017 to 2019 FDR Outcomes Study, including through the presentation of a paper about barriers to initiating FDR for property matters at an Australian National University family law research symposium.

Legally assisted FDR

Our legally assisted FDR service is delivered in partnership with Monash Law Clinics and Brimbank-Melton Community Legal Centre, to reduce barriers to participation in non-adversarial dispute resolution services. The service has also been designed to support vulnerable clients and those experiencing power imbalances. We commenced a project to evaluate the outcomes of the partnership model, gain client feedback and identify the successful features of the model, through a client survey and interviews with clients and practitioners.

Preliminary findings suggest that this service model is an important element in RAV’s suite of alternative dispute resolution services, providing choice to vulnerable clients and enabling a greater number of separating parents to receive assistance needed.

“ I found that very helpful to get like actual proper legal advice, in terms of what we were coming up with and how it could possibly play out ... [that] gave me confidence.”

Legally assisted FDR client

Much of our research involves hearing from clients themselves, so that we can ensure our services meet their needs and are accessible for all.

Sharing our outcomes

This year, we launched a new series of resources designed to share the outcomes of key projects and initiatives relating to our services, clients and community needs. Our first 3 research summaries focused the impact of FDR at Relationships Australia, remote FDR during and after COVID-19, and our AccessResolve property dispute resolution service for court-ordered clients.

Relationship indicators

The results of the Relationships Australia Federation's latest Relationship Indicators research were launched in November 2022. Relationship Indicators is a nationally representative survey into the state of relationships in Australia. The research aims to capture the nuances of relationships and understand their importance across our lifespan, by exploring the 'most important, meaningful' relationships people have in their lives.

The research demonstrates the integral role relationships play in our health, wellbeing and happiness.

Additional findings:

- 60.0% of Australians said their partner was the most important, meaningful person in their life.
- 1.7 million Australians feel unsafe disagreeing with their most important person.
- 46.2% of Australians managed their relationship issues on their own.

The findings from this survey will inform the work of Relationships Australia to support all Australians to achieve healthy, safe and respectful relationships.

Publications

Heard G, Irving MA, Smyth BM, Payne JL and Althor G (2023) 'Risks and benefits of post-separation parenting apps: perceptions of family law professionals in Australia and New Zealand', *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, 45(2):143–164. <http://doi.org/10.1080/09649069.2023.2206225>.

Long KM, Casey K, Bhar S, Al Mahmud A, Curran S, Hunter K and Lim MH (2022) 'Understanding perspectives of older adults on the role of technology in the wider context of their social relationships', *Ageing & Society*, 1–24. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0144686X2200085X>.

Smyth BM, Payne JL, Irving M and Heard G (2023) 'Popular post-separation parenting apps: an examination', *Family Court Review*, 61(3): 563–585. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fcre.12738>.

Payne JL, Smyth BM, Irving M, Heard G and Althor G (2022) 'Family law professionals' views of post-separation parenting apps', *International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family*, 36(1). <https://doi.org/10.1093/lawfam/ebac029>

New research summaries

Free resources on our key research projects and initiatives, including:

- The impact of FDR at Relationships Australia: outcomes and evaluations for separating couples
- Remote FDR during and after COVID-19: client and practitioner perspectives
- AccessResolve property dispute resolution for court-ordered clients: satisfaction and outcomes

[Visit rav.org.au/about/research-evaluation/research-summaries/](http://rav.org.au/about/research-evaluation/research-summaries/)

Relationship Indicators research outcomes

3,140

respondents



Strong and reliable relationships improve wellbeing, loneliness and mental health. Specifically, people who could rely on one strong relationship:

- (for a variety of social supports) had better life satisfaction
- were 1.4 times less lonely than those who relied on many different relationships
- had better mental health over the past 6 months.

[Visit the Relationship Indicators dashboard at relationships.org.au/relationship-indicators/](http://relationships.org.au/relationship-indicators/)

Our people and culture

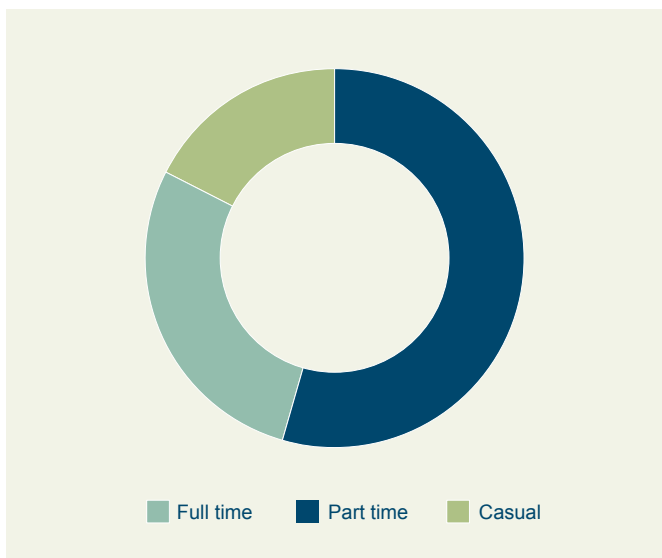
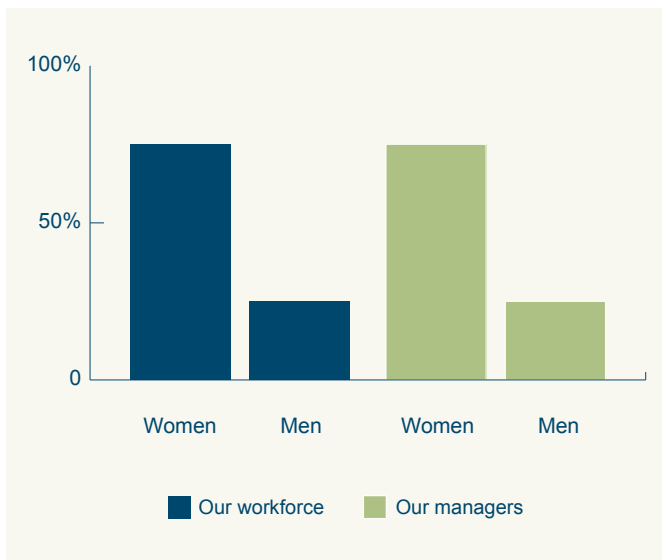
Our workforce makes us who we are

Our staff members make us who we are as an organisation – respectful, compassionate, experienced, client-focused and effective.

This year, our People and Culture and management teams focused on maintaining our organisation’s standing as an employer of choice, by fostering engaging, supportive, safe, connected, rewarding and flexible work environments.

‘The best thing about my role is the people I work with.’

Client Services Coordinator



381
skilled staff members



85
new employees



26
employees promoted



7.6%
growth in workforce



75%
of managers are women



1 in 3
employees have worked with us for 5 or more years



Reputation, innovation and improvement

As experienced by many in our sector and community, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect workforce recruitment and retention, underlining the importance of maintaining our reputation as employer of choice. The benefits of working with us are evidenced by the 85 new employees who joined our organisation, but also the 10% of staff who successfully pursued internal promotions, roles or responsibilities this year.

With more than half of our workforce employed on a part-time basis, we continued to offer hybrid and flexible working opportunities that promote employees' work-life balance in equitable and sustainable ways.

Working collaboratively with our staff, we supported opportunities for staff across centres, services and departments to connect, and in doing so, foster positive outcomes for our work. Digital and face-to-face initiatives enabled us to engage with staff and seek feedback on their experiences and work, and opportunities for innovation, change and improvement.

We continued significant projects during the year, adopting a new software solution to engage with staff and evaluate the culture of our organisation, and also extending and enhancing the use of our existing Human Resources Information System. We launched a new risk management platform during the year, and began developing and planning to implement 2 additional modules.

In response to staff feedback, we established designated work groups which involve health and safety representatives from each of our centres' regions, to ensure that employees working in similar positions have representation in relation to workplace health and safety issues.

We demonstrated our ongoing commitment to gender equality by completing a detailed assessment for the annual, nationally recognised Workplace Gender Equality Agency report, in relation to our strategies, processes, employment conditions, and improvements and initiatives to achieve gender equity.

Professional development and training

As an organisation, we invest in professional development, training and clinical supervision to support the careers and development of our staff, and ensure the ongoing high quality of the services we deliver.

We welcomed funding from Family Safety Victoria, under the Family Violence and Sexual Assault Traineeship Program, to advance the skills and qualifications of staff to promote family violence support and awareness. Over a 12-month period, 21 staff members participated in a range of diplomas, graduate diplomas and short-courses.

Following consultations with and feedback from staff, we developed and launched the first stage of a new workforce professional development framework, including a comprehensive program catalogue and a coordinated solution to manage and support staff learning needs. The framework supports professional development and training opportunities for staff across different roles, centres and areas of responsibility.

Sessions delivered this year included in coercive control, suicide prevention, de-escalation, the MARAM framework, child safety and the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST). We continued to provide a Core Inclusion Program for all staff, as well as access to a library of 22 research and evidence-informed webinars, delivered by RAV and presented by leading national and international professionals.

This year, our staff undertook

665

professional development programs



> 4,000

hours of training



The benefits of working with RAV

- Competitive, above-award remuneration packages.
- Flexible working conditions.
- Additional supplementary paid leave between Christmas and New Year.
- Access to an Employee Assistance Program.
- Additional leave entitlements, including paid parental, personal, compassionate, flexible, work-related and special personal extended leave for staff who have exhausted their leave accruals under special circumstances.

We provide 8 weeks' paid parental leave for both primary and secondary carers, as we recognise the importance of both parents being involved in parenting, and that the increased participation of fathers is linked to gender equality and improved child outcomes.

Leadership team



Dr Andrew Bickerdike

Chief Executive Officer



Shiranthi Sivarajah

Chief Business and
Financial Officer
Company Secretary



Amanda Goldstein

General Manager
Clinical Services



Carl Beeston

General Manager IT



Suzanne Ichlov

General Manager
Operations



Sharon Greenhill

General Manager
People and Culture



Anna Clarke

Senior Manager
Communications
and Marketing



Jo Huggins

Senior Manager
Operations South East



Chris Lye

Senior Manager
Operations North West



Donna Plavjanic

Senior Manager
Training and Development



Alyson La'Brooy

Manager Family Violence
Services



Sandra Opoku

Manager Evaluation
and Social Impact



Stefan Szarski

Manager Risk, Quality
and Compliance

Board



Professor Lyn Littlefield OAM

President

Member: Governance Committee, Clinical Governance Committee

Member since October 1993



Kaye Frankcom

Vice President

Chair: Clinical Governance Committee

Member since April 2016



Michael Hunt

Member: Audit and Finance Committee, Clinical Governance Committee

Member since January 2018



Ronda Jacobs

Chair: Governance Committee

Member since October 2018



John Lovell

Member since October 2008



Professor Helen Rhoades OAM

Member: Governance Committee

Member since July 2021



Professor Colin Royse

Member: Governance Committee

Member since October 2020



Michael Shaw

Chair: Audit and Finance Committee

Member since October 2018

Board Committees

Audit and Finance Committee

The role of the Board's Audit and Finance Committee is multi-faceted. Primarily, it monitors the organisation's financial health and performance, reviewing financial reports and statements to ensure the financial resources are utilised efficiently and effectively to achieve the organisation's shared vision, mission and strategic priorities. It works in a highly collaborative manner with senior executives, and oversees the annual audit process to ensure it is conducted independently and impartially. The Committee communicates financial matters as well as financial implications of strategic decisions to the Board and provides recommendations when necessary. It also develops, reviews and recommends financial policies and procedures to promote transparency, accountability and best practices in financial management. During the 2022–23 financial year, these items were achieved to a high standard which is, in part, reflected in the exemplary financial performance achieved by management and staff, and that places our organisation in an industry leadership position.

Clinical Governance Committee

The Clinical Governance Committee safeguards our organisation's responsibilities and compliance against clinical governance standards. This year, the work of the Committee focused on our compliance with National Child Safety standards, upskilling our workforce in relation to child and family mental health support, and the associated policies and

procedures. We revised and enhanced a range of risk management systems, processes and reports, as well as continuous improvement and effectiveness. The Committee has Board members and independently appointed members who together provide crucial expertise and industry insights in the ongoing development of organisational initiatives and service delivery models.

Governance Committee

Guided by a rolling annual work plan, the Governance Committee works across 4 areas. The Committee focuses on high-level organisational governance, including key policies and the constitution, as well as Board-level activities such as board evaluation, composition and education. An overview of CEO and senior staff development and succession planning is another area of responsibility, while the Committee's final focus area is risk management and compliance processes. During the year, we strengthened our risk review approach, with appropriate committees managing identified risks and a review of our reporting under the new organisation risk system. A key highlight of the year was the organisation joining the Board Observership program, through which an aspiring director with a diversity of skills and experience has been brought on to learn about Board responsibilities.

Management team*

Kylie Lancaster

Senior Manager Gippsland

Rose Byrnes

Senior Manager
Western Melbourne

Cate Chaiyot

Centre Manager
headspace Wonthaggi

Carolyn Last

Senior Manager Kew

Stuart Deagan

Manager Northern
Melbourne

Travis Nicholls

Finance Manager

Lisa Stockheim

Manager Melbourne FRC

Michelle McDonald

Senior Manager Open Place

Jayne Ferguson

Centre Manager Ballarat

Rosie Nugent

Manager, Office of the CEO

Shelley Watson

Manager Shepparton

Suresh Ramachandraiah

Senior Manager Southern
and Eastern Melbourne

Hayley Davidson

Centre Manager headspace
Bairnsdale and Sale

Sam Kaplan

Project Manager Technology

*As of 30 June 2023

Financial performance

Independent Audit Report to the Members of Relationships Australia Victoria Limited

We have audited the summarised financial report of Relationships Australia Victoria Limited comprising the Summary Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2023 and the Summary Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2023 in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards.

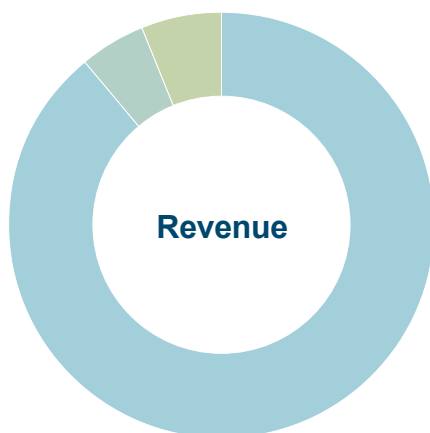
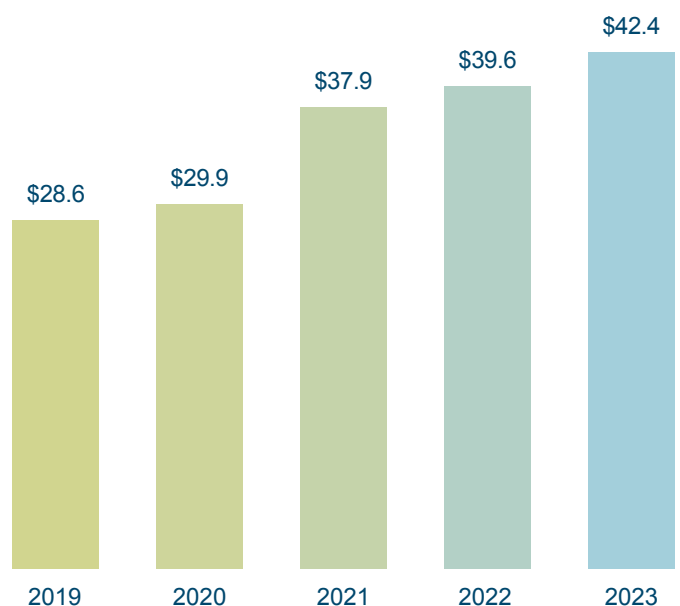
In our opinion, the information reported in the summarised financial report is consistent with the annual financial report from which it is derived and upon which we expressed an unqualified audit opinion in our report to the members dated 12 September 2023.

For a better understanding of the scope of our audit, this report should be read in conjunction with our audit report on the annual financial report.

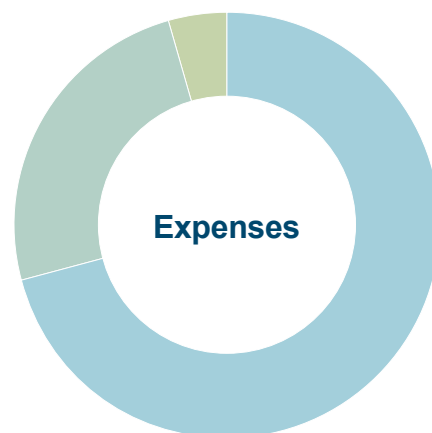
Grant Thornton Australia

Brock Mackenzie
Partner

Revenue growth (M)



	Grant funding	89.0%
	Client fees	4.9%
	Other income	6.1%



	Employee costs	71.0%
	Operating costs	24.8%
	Depreciation and amortisation	4.2%

Summary statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 30 June 2023

	2023 (\$)	2022 (\$)
Revenue		
Grant funding	37,825,164	36,357,239
Client fees	2,074,172	1,936,170
Other income	2,588,891	1,314,171
Total revenue	42,488,227	39,607,580
Expenses		
Employee costs	29,266,376	28,169,903
Operating costs	10,225,572	8,722,937
Depreciation and amortisation	1,727,905	1,725,397
Total expenses	41,219,853	38,618,237
Surplus	1,268,374	989,343
Other comprehensive income		
Net gain on revaluation of non-current assets	-	-
Total comprehensive income	1,268,374	989,343

Summary statement of financial position as at 30 June 2023

	2023 (\$)	2022 (\$)
Assets		
Current assets	31,330,943	27,231,706
Non-current assets	10,940,410	10,562,064
Total assets	42,271,353	37,793,770
Liabilities		
Current liabilities	18,323,908	15,602,202
Non-current liabilities	4,494,115	4,006,612
Total liabilities	22,818,023	19,608,814
Net assets	19,453,330	18,184,956

Working with First Nations peoples

Understanding, partnerships and trusted relationships

We are continually developing our understanding of how best to engage with First Nations peoples and communities, being always mindful of the importance of self-determination. Our centres engage with local Aboriginal communities in the regions in which we work, to develop deeper, trusted and more meaningful relationships that support community members accessing our services.

A second First Nations Engagement Specialist role joined our team this year to work with RAV staff, in partnership with local First Nations communities, so that we can understand local needs and how our services can provide culturally safe and appropriate support. We greatly value and appreciate the generosity of these communities in sharing their knowledge and insights into how we can enhance our services.

When working in partnership with Aboriginal organisations and/or groups, our approach is to add expertise or input when requested, as directed by the First Nations community or organisation that we are working with. We work to ensure that service delivery is flexible and adaptable, and that programs that are specifically for an Aboriginal cohort are developed and co-facilitated with an Aboriginal person.

In northern Melbourne one of our staff members participated as a committee member of the Barrbunin Beek Aboriginal Gathering Place. This space is run by the local First Nations community and delivers programs for community such as women's and men's groups, family dinners and food share activities. This connection with community enables our local centres to better understand how to walk alongside the local community to provide services when required.

Our headspace services support a significant cohort of First Nations clients, with 8.5% of our headspace clients identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples during 2022–23.

We welcomed funding from headspace National for our headspace centres to engage with and work with First Nations communities and their young people. The model for the funding is flexible, which has been ideal in enabling us to work together with the community in response to what is identified as a need by the community (see page 12).

Additional activities this year included:

- delivering a targeted psychoeducation program for young First Nations men in East Gippsland
- adapting our headspace Sale and Bairnsdale counselling model for First Nations clients to flexibly enable immediate engagement with the service
- partnering with a secondary school in East Gippsland, through which we provide case management for disengaged First Nations young people. This program commenced with a student-led activity that focused on listening to and connecting with what the young people want to do, and seeking permission from Elders at Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust to undertake these activities
- partnering with local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to co-facilitate a Drumbeat drumming program, men's groups and after-school program activities
- attending Preventing Family Violence Against First Nations Women and Children, which brought agencies from around Australia to discuss the nuanced nature of family violence in the context of Indigenous Australians
- organising a public webinar on Aboriginal mental health that was presented by Melinda Brown, a Ngunnawal woman who resides in the Northern Rivers Bundjalung Nation with a Masters in Indigenous Healing and Trauma (this was organised by our Training and Development team)
- participating in both the Northern and Whittlesea Local Aboriginal Networks, and membership of the Whittlesea Reconciliation Group
- celebrating NAIDOC Week, including the NAIDOC March, and the Victorian NAIDOC Gala Ball, which was attended by our CEO and senior and community liaison staff, alongside guests from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community
- attending an event to mark the 15th Anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations
- membership of the Relationships Australia Indigenous Network.



Members of RAV's 'Yarn-Up' group visiting the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service for a face-to-face yarning circle

Throughout the year, time and space was offered to all our staff to explore and understand the cultural practices of First Nations peoples in Australia through a monthly staff Yarn Up. In these yarning circles, staff come together in a space to have conversations and connect on a deeper level to discover how, as allies, to take action and advocate for First Nations people. Yarning sessions provide the opportunity to learn from a different perspective, and expand on knowledge and skills to become active allies to our First Nations employees, clients and community members.

In May, Yarn Up participants from across our centres in Victoria met on Wurundjeri Country in Ngár-go/Fitzroy together to listen and learn about First Nations culture and history. The group toured significant historical Aboriginal sites in the area before Terori Hareko-Avaivilla from Avaivilla Group led an incredible and informative Yarning circle.

‘The ‘Yarn Up’ was a fabulous safe place to ask the questions that needed asking. Without those conversations one may assume.’

Yarning circle participant



Federal Member of Jagajaga Kate Thwaites MP (third from the right) with Barrbunin Beek Aboriginal Gathering Place committee members Charles Pakana, Kristen Munro, Stuart McFarlane, Owen Butler and Jacinta Geary (RAV Community Liaison Officer)

In our ‘Yarn Up’ yarning circles, staff are allies: people who are not Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, but who work and take action to support First Nations people.

Diversity, inclusion and equity

We work to be inclusive –
and that's what we are

We know that families and communities are diverse, and we believe in strengthening families and supporting people from diverse backgrounds to have positive, safe and respectful relationships.

People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (see page 42), LGBTIQ+ people, and people with disability can experience unique and complex challenges, and encounter additional barriers to accessing support services. This can be due to language, cultural safety, beliefs and experiences, differences in laws and expectations, and service relevance and availability.

We work to promote equality, diversity and inclusion for all people – staff, clients and community members – of all ages, races, colours, sexual orientations, ethnic origins, marital and parental statuses, physical impairment, disability and religious beliefs.

This year, all our staff continued undertake Core Inclusion Training, to provide access to foundational skills and knowledge to support inclusive practice with a range of diverse communities. The full-day, online program includes modules on culture, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, disability, people who identify as LGBTIQ+, gender and age.





Our clients in 2022–23

142

different countries of birth



83

different languages spoken at home with English, Punjabi, Vietnamese, Mandarin, Hindi, Arabic, Sinhalese and Dari the most common languages spoken at home



‘ To create belonging is an opportunity to reflect. Belonging often doesn’t come easily. True inclusion and lasting connection take consideration and practice.’

RA National Executive Director, Nick Tebby

Driving cultural change across the organisation

In 2023, we established a Diversity Working Group involving staff from a cross-section of our organisation. While the needs of different groups are unique and varied, the working group aims to enhance the quality, effectiveness, inclusiveness and accessibility of our services.

Such cultural change is effected by consulting with staff with lived experience, increasing staff awareness and knowledge, providing relevant training, and providing appropriate resources, service information and services. The group also works to identify and implement employment pathways to increase RAV’s workforce diversity across all levels of the organisation.

Meeting the needs of diverse communities

Some of the diversity and inclusion-focused activities we undertook this year included:

- participating in Afghan Family Violence Consultation meetings with Afghan women, examining the gaps, challenges and insights related to family violence in the City of Casey’s Afghan communities
- presenting on healthy relationships, gendered violence and family violence collusion to men from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in south-east Melbourne

Our Diversity Working Group aim is to ensure equity of access to our services for all, with consideration of the inherent disadvantages and discrimination that some groups face when accessing support services.

- information sessions for parents from diverse cultural backgrounds on understanding and responding to children's behaviours and emotions, and supporting children's brain development through play – the sessions were delivered to participants of the Fitzroy/Carlton Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) program
- delivering Tuning in to Kids® in language for Vietnamese clients, as well as increasing the program's delivery with Afghan families in the City of Greater Dandenong, through Communities for Children funding provided by Mission Australia
- providing psychoeducational information on family violence and services to culturally and linguistically diverse women and families in western Melbourne
- taking part in a panel discussing family violence prevention and bystander actions, through the intersectional lens of cultural diversity, as part of the 16 Days of Activism campaign
- engagement with the multicultural Flemington Women's Group on topics including stress, anxiety and mental wellbeing, and for a 4-part series on parenting and child development. More than 25 women, most of whom have migrated with their families to Australia from the Horn of Africa, attended the sessions. The sessions were an opportunity to not only deepen knowledge and understanding, but also strengthen the relationships between the mothers so that they can support each other as they raise their children.

Vietnamese MBCPs

Culturally appropriate family violence programs that are delivered in-language

Delivery of our Vietnamese MBCP recommenced this year, providing a culturally appropriate family violence program to men from the Vietnamese community. Delivered by experienced bilingual facilitators, it supports men to take responsibility for their use of controlling, abusive and violent behaviour and learn new ways to manage their relationships without using violence. We welcome referrals from men themselves, as well as from family lawyers, the Sunshine Magistrates' Court and community corrections.

Facilitators deliver the program content in-language and with an understanding of Vietnamese customs and traditions, and the challenges commonly faced by migrants. In turn, this helps to build rapport and enhance men's engagement with program content, including about family violence and its impacts on women and children, healthy relationships, and relevant Australian laws and legal processes.

We focus on prioritising the safety of women and children, and a Vietnamese-speaking family safety practitioner contacts partners and former partners of participants during the program. This component of our Family Safety Model involves comprehensive risk assessments and relevant referrals to afford women and their children support and safety.



The session was amazing. All the women found it very beneficial. As a result, we feel more aware about understanding the effect of stress on our body which helps us to look after our mental health in more effective ways.'

Flemington Women's Group Coordinator



The Family Safety Contact process empowers women to recover from the damage of family violence and recognise that they have the right to be safe in their relationships.'

Vietnamese MBCP facilitator

Opportunity for Change

A collaborative family violence response for the Afghan community

In south-east Melbourne, we joined as a partner on a community consultation project to develop a culturally appropriate response to family violence in the Afghan community. The first phase of the collaborative project involved extensive consultations with the local community to understand their needs, and the programs, activities or actions we can take together to support positive change. These conversations are particularly important as people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds are less likely to report or seek support for family violence.

The outcomes of these and broader consultations with family violence sector staff have been collated and reviewed, and will inform the co-design of a strategy that addresses the needs of the Afghan community in the City of Casey. Our organisation's role is content expert in relation to MBCPs, with a senior practitioner and family violence practitioner from an Afghan cultural background on the project's reference group.

The project is run in partnership with TaskForce Community Agency and is funded through the City of Casey's Community Service Organisation Funding Program 2021–2024 in southern Melbourne.

LGBTIQA+ clients and communities

Prioritising inclusivity, accessibility and respect

Our organisation is striving to be a place where all people, including LGBTIQA+ staff, clients, stakeholders and others with whom we work feel safe, welcome and respected. We undertake a range of LGBTIQA+ inclusion-focused activities and processes to support ongoing cultural change, equity and safety.

Since the inception of our dedicated Rainbow Working Group in 2018–19, respect, equality, dignity and inclusivity have been at the core of what we do. Staff from across roles, centres and levels of responsibility work to ensure that RAV's practice is accessible, culturally responsive, safe, client-centred, inclusive and non-discriminatory.

A focus of the group has been to enhance the ways in which our centres visually demonstrate that they are safe and welcoming, including through the inclusion of pride, transgender and intersex flags. This year, we introduced the option of pronoun badges for staff and for distribution at community events.

The group also reviews and informs updates to policies, procedures, training and practice resources with an LGBTIQA+ lens. Staff training has been provided on 'Mediating with rainbow families', to support practitioners to grow their skills and confidence in working with rainbow families, learn about reflective practice skills and increase their capacity for inclusive mediation.

In 2022–23, our organisation participated in a range of LGBTIQA+ awareness and celebratory events and days of significance, including the family-friendly Midsumma Festival; Melbourne Queer Film Festival; International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT); and LGBT Domestic Violence Awareness Day.



RAV staff, including members of our Rainbow Working Group, at the 2023 Midsumma Carnival.

At Melbourne's annual queer arts and cultural event, Midsumma, we engaged with more than 450 people at a stall providing free resources and RAV-branded giveaways. Events such as these are a valuable way for us to celebrate the rich diversity of LGBTIQA+ people in our organisation and community, and learn from their stories and experiences.

To support us in further embedding LGBTIQA+ inclusive practices and cultivating lasting cultural change in our organisation, 2 management team members will soon participate in Rainbow Health Australia's How2 program. This is a preliminary step towards the organisation obtaining the Rainbow Tick Accreditation.

We also provided a wide range of programs and services for LGBTIQA+ young people through our headspace centres (see page 21).

Openly displaying your pronouns is one way to show that you understand the use of pronouns as a reflection of identity, that it is safe for others to be open about their pronouns, and that you will not make assumptions based on appearance or character.'

Rainbow Working Group member



Creating a place where everyone belongs takes more than a single day. We all have a part to play in ensuring RAV is a welcoming and inclusive space for LQBTIQA+ staff, clients and community members.

Professional training and development

Supporting professionals and workplaces to enhance their skills, knowledge and capacity

We have experienced significant growth in our professional training and development department in recent years, in response to the high demand for services that meet the needs of the community, social services, legal and corrections sectors. In response, we reviewed our operating framework, and increased the capacity and agility of our workforce to deliver new funded and contracted services, and customised training solutions, in addition to our public workshops, webinars and self-paced learning solutions.

Accredited training

As a Registered Training Organisation (RTO No. 21977), we delivered industry-recognised qualifications, including 2 intakes each of our CHC81115 Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution and CHC81015 Graduate Diploma of Relationship Counselling (responding to Family Violence) in Victoria. We also delivered each course in New South Wales, as part of a new partnership with Relationships Australia NSW, to deliver accredited as well as non-accredited training offerings in their state. We are now exploring other opportunities to support the growth and support of mediation, FDR, relationship counselling and family violence practice workforces nationwide.

For the first time, we offered a newly structured CHCSS00110 Mediation Skill Set and National Mediator Accreditation System (NMAS) packaged course solution, which attracted participants from across Australia seeking to gain the qualifications and skills needed to become a mediator. We delivered our Specialist Course in Integrative Couples Therapy, in partnership with Swinburne University, and launched a new, national Internship Network to extend our provider framework to support students on a counselling learning pathway.

Non-accredited training

We expanded our annual webinar, workshop and self-paced training programs with offerings on advanced family therapy, support group facilitation, and mediating with rainbow families. Leading national and international professionals facilitated our webinars, including Dr Lukas Carey, Melinda Brown, Rosie Batty AO, Dr Joanne Lukins, Dr Andy Ho and Greg Rooney. We also introduced a suite of self-paced learning courses including on working with dads and online FDR practice.

In 2022-23, we provided:

2

accredited mediation courses



6

graduate diploma intakes



24

public webinars and workshops



46

customised training packages



106

clinical supervision sessions



1,221

participants of the LINCSS and LINCSS in Families programs



I now have the skills to recognise stress and trauma in myself and in my colleagues, and ways to support myself and others.'

Australian Cemeteries and Crematoria Association Vicarious Trauma Workshop participant

Specialised contracts and services

This year, we provided:

- accredited mediation training, targeted workshops and supervision services to the Victorian Government's Department of Families, Fairness and Housing's Family Group Conferencing Project Pilot team over 3 years
- mental health and resilience workshops, group mentoring and individual supervision to leaders of 34 early childhood centres in Gippsland and Alpine Victoria impacted by the recent Victorian bushfires, with funding from the Victorian Government Department of Education. We completed an evaluation of this program, which demonstrated positive outcomes in relation to growth of leaders' knowledge and resilience planning capacity
- individual and group supervision services to Victim Services, Helpline and Redress teams of the Victorian Government Department of Justice and Community Safety through a 3-year contract
- 4 programs we designed, also for the Victorian Government Department of Justice and Community Safety, including our psycho-educational, strengths-based LINC'S and LINC'S in Families programs for individuals on correctional orders, and an expanded and refreshed ATLAS program for individuals on remand. We also commenced a 12-month pilot of our 6-week Diffuse family violence program, with incarcerated men in 4 correctional facilities in Victoria. The outcomes of the pilot has resulted in an expansion of the program across other correctional sites
- Support for Fathers (see page 16), Men Being Well (see page 23) and Healthy Clubs, Healthy Relationships (see page 27).

‘The men are stating this is one of the best programs they've completed whilst in prison. They get more out of this than any other program. They communicate better and walk away from conflict.’

Diffuse facilitator

Customised training

Over 50 tailored workshops were delivered to clients across Victoria, including Responding to Family Violence in the Workplace, Mental Health in the Workplace, Managing Challenging Behaviours, Vicarious Trauma and Professional Boundaries.

Through our partnership with the Australian Cemeteries and Crematoria Association, and informed by stakeholder consultations, we design and deliver an annual education and training program to the association's members. In 2022–23, we provided a program of training and support to meet the needs of the sector and employees in the cemetery and funeral sectors, including on vicarious trauma, professional boundaries, supporting grieving clients and managing challenging behaviours. As part of the association's annual seminar program, we also delivered a lived experience-informed full-day workshop on grief, trauma and boundaries, that was attended by over 70 participants from across Australia.

Our Professional Training and Development



Research and evidence-informed programs



Skilled, experienced and qualified facilitators



Online, face-to-face and hybrid learning options



Customised training to meet the needs of employees and workplaces



Delivered by an organisation with 75 years' experience

Our locations

Central Office

1183 Toorak Road
Camberwell
Ph: (03) 8573 2222 | enquiries@rav.org.au

Victoria-wide

Ph: 1300 364 277
www.rav.org.au

Social media

Facebook: [@RelAustVic](https://www.facebook.com/RelAustVic)
Instagram: [@RelationshipsVic](https://www.instagram.com/RelationshipsVic)
LinkedIn: [Relationships Australia Victoria](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Relationships-Australia-Victoria)
X: [@RelAustVic](https://twitter.com/RelAustVic)

RAV centres

Ballarat

1025 Sturt Street
Ph: (03) 5337 9222 | ballarat@rav.org.au

Boronia

83 Boronia Road
Ph: (03) 9725 9964 | boronia@rav.org.au

Cranbourne

2/199 South Gippsland Highway (corner William Street)
Ph: (03) 5990 1900 | cranbourne@rav.org.au

Cranbourne North

405 Narre Warren Road
Ph: (03) 5911 5400 | cranbournenorth@rav.org.au

Greensborough

Banyule Community Health, 3/25-33 Grimshaw Street
Ph: (03) 9431 7777 | greensborough@rav.org.au

Kew

46 Princess Street
Ph: (03) 9261 8700 | kew@rav.org.au

Shepparton

634 Wyndham Street
Ph: (03) 5820 7444 | shepparton@rav.org.au

Sunshine

1st Floor, Harvester Centre, 4 Devonshire Road
Ph: (03) 8311 9222 | sunshine@rav.org.au

Traralgon

59 Breed Street
Ph: (03) 5175 9500 | traralgon@rav.org.au

Family Relationship Centres

Berwick

38 Clyde Road
Ph: (03) 8768 4111 | enquiries@berwickfrc.org.au

Greensborough

79 Grimshaw Street
Ph: (03) 9404 7800 | enquiries@greensboroughfrc.org.au

Melbourne

379 Collins Street (enter via Queen Street)
Ph: (03) 8625 3666 | enquiries@melbournefrc.org.au

Sunshine

1 Clarke Street
Ph: (03) 9313 0444 | enquiries@sunshinefrc.org.au

headspace sites

headspace Bairnsdale

171 Main Street
Ph: (03) 5141 6200 | info@headspacebairnsdale.org.au

headspace Sale

453 Raymond Street
Ph: (03) 5184 5000 | info@headspacesale.org.au

headspace Wonthaggi

5b Murray Street
Ph: (03) 5671 5900 | info@headspacewonthaggi.org.au
4 additional outreach locations across
Bass Coast and South Gippsland.

Open Place

1/8 Bromham Place, Richmond
Ph: 1800 779 379 | info@openplace.org.au

Relationships Australia®

VICTORIA

— YEARS —



Accredited by HDAA. Achievement of Accreditation to ISO 9001:2015 provides service users with confidence that Relationships Australia Victoria has effective management systems in place that are reviewed annually.