

Relationships[™]
AUSTRALIA • VIC

Relationships

→ are key

Annual Report 2024–25



Contents

President's foreword	2	More than service delivery	39
CEO's report	4	Latest publications	46
Our evolution	6	Family violence	50
2024–25 in numbers	8	Social impact	54
What we do	12	Services spotlight	55
Children and communities	16	Inclusion and equity	58
Resolving disputes	20	Rainbow	59
Counselling	26	Learning and innovation	60
Healthy clubs	28	Digital footprint	64
Mental health	30	Workforce	65
Our open place	33	Governance	69
First Nations peoples	36	Financials	70



We acknowledge First Nations peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waterways of Australia. We support their right to self-determination and culturally safe services. We are committed to encouraging a culturally safe and supportive environment for all First Nations 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 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 (LGBTIQA+) communities to our organisation.



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

A note about photos in this report

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.

First Nations peoples should be aware that this report may contain images of people who have since passed away.

Acronyms and initialisms

FDR	Family dispute resolution
FRC	Family Relationship Centre
LGBTIQA+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and other sexually or gender diverse
MBCP	Men's behaviour change program
RAV	Relationships Australia Victoria
YES	Youth Enhanced Service

ABN 51 263 215 677 | ACN 628 873 941

The importance of relationships

**Positive, respectful,
safe and fulfilling
relationships are the key
to health and wellbeing.**



Leading at a strong time

I am honoured to have been elected President of Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV) in October, and it is a privilege to be helping to lead the organisation at a time when it is evidently so strong and effective. I'm proud to be working alongside my capable Board colleagues, a committed senior leadership team and a staffing group truly dedicated to our clients.

My appointment follows the retirement of Professor Lyn Littlefield OAM as Board President, after more than 3 decades of service to RAV. Lyn's leadership, stability and long-term involvement helped shape the organisation we have today – we owe her deep thanks. We also mourn the passing of Ken Heyward, who served as an RAV Board member for 20 years, including 17 as President, and recognise his significant contributions to our organisation.

It was a successful year for RAV, as we navigated reforms affecting many of our services, and ongoing funding constraints. We continued to advocate for longer, indexed contracts that would allow us – and others in the sector – to plan and invest in staff, training and systems that achieve better outcomes for clients.

We welcomed the appointments of the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP as Minister for Social Services and the Hon Michelle Rowland MP as Attorney-General. We congratulate them and look forward to engaging with them on priorities that affect our work.

During the year, RAV continued to advocate for the needs of our clients, including through the Review of the Family Relationships Services Program, and for integrated, place-based mental health services delivered through trusted local organisations.

We also responded to several significant family law changes, affecting our family dispute resolution (FDR) and Family Relationship Centre (FRC) services. We will continue to monitor and respond as those reforms progress.



‘RAV is well positioned – financially stable, strategically focused and grounded in high-quality, effective service delivery.’

Addressing family violence remains a central priority for RAV. This year, we published a Family Violence Position Paper to help inform practice and policy across the sector. I fully support the direction that RAV is taking to push for systemic change, and encourage you to explore our findings and recommendations in more detail later in this report.

The Board continues to prioritise risk management, financial responsibility and strong governance to support our staff and clients, and monitors, reviews, evaluates and controls outcomes. There were a number of strategic and governance milestones this year that I want to highlight.

- We unveiled a new RAV logo that reflects our established history but also commitment to adaptation and continuous improvement.
- The Board endorsed a new First Nations Statement of Commitment, and cultural competency and training measures that will shape how RAV works with First Nations communities. This commitment is so important for both RAV and the community as a whole, and is wholeheartedly supported by our Board.
- Our ongoing commitment to evaluating and demonstrating the social impact of our services was recognised at the Social Impact Network Australia Awards (see page 54).

At RAV, we also value innovation and responsiveness to community challenges. This year, we developed a new mental health service for children affected by separation and divorce – an important project that responds to a clear need, and sits within our prevention and early intervention work.

We continued to support and invest in place-based services, early years and child-focused programs – including our early matters program and a new pilot program in Ballarat (see page 17) – and advocacy for integrated, community-based mental health services. These investments are about choosing where RAV can make the most significant, long-term difference.

None of this happens without good people. I want to recognise our CEO, Dr Andrew Bickerdike for his leadership – Andrew reached 30 years of continuous service with RAV this year, and that commitment is remarkable. Thank you to our leaders and all staff for their professionalism and care. I also want to recognise our funders for their support and trust. To my fellow Board members, thank you for your trust and governance expertise.

I am optimistic for the future. RAV is well positioned – financially stable, strategically focused and grounded in high-quality, effective service delivery. We face challenges in the sector, but we also have clear opportunities to shape better systems, support our skilled workforce and deliver services that improve people’s lives. I look forward to the Board continuing to work closely with Andrew, management and staff to seize those opportunities and make a lasting difference across Victoria.

Ronda Jacobs
Board President

Relationships at the core

We continued to respond to the pressing challenges facing our clients and communities this year, including the cost-of-living crisis, increasingly complex needs and the ongoing family violence epidemic.

As Ronda has mentioned, organisationally we navigated budget constraints, and uncertainty around indexation, supplementation funding, and contract end dates. Since the end of the financial year, we were notified of an extension to our contracts with the Attorney-General's Department for a further 2 years, to 2028. This extension, which covers much of our funding, provides time for consideration of the recommendations of a comprehensive review undertaken in 2024 of the department's funded programs, including FRCs, FDR services and family law counselling services.

RAV participated in this review, and has welcomed the recommendations, including child-inclusive practice, FRC hubs and legally-assisted FDR. If implemented, this increase would help meet growing demand and increasingly complex client needs, and would be the first funding increase since the program's inception in the mid-2000s. RAV fully supports these recommendations, and joined Relationships Australia federation colleagues in Canberra in November to meet with ministers and advocate for their timely implementation.

Mental health is another priority area for RAV, with a significant proportion of clients of our core services affected by mental health issues, and the delivery of 6 dedicated mental health services. Our work in delivering these services — including our new Youth Enhanced Service (YES) in Gippsland — demonstrates how RAV can respond to unmet need and support integrated, community-based service delivery in place-based and age-appropriate ways.

We believe that key to meeting the current unmet demand across the sector for mental health support is the delivery of integrated mental health services through community-based providers. By doing so, we can meet clients where they are at, prevent them from 'falling through the gaps', and help alleviate some of the evident workforce challenges.

Other key achievements this year include:

- A new cost-benefit analysis of our FDR services, which demonstrated a remarkable \$20 in benefits for every \$1 invested, for families, the legal system and communities (see page 21).
- Commencement of a new pilot program in Ballarat using a community-focused, preventive approach to strengthening relationships (see page 17).
- Our second annual Social Impact Report, highlighting the measurable difference we make in the lives of those we serve (see page 54).
- A new First Nations artwork commissioned by Emrhan Tjapanangka Sultan, RAV's First Nations Engagement Specialist and distinguished Aboriginal artist. This piece symbolises our commitment to working collaboratively with First Nations communities and reflects the relationships we build with our clients (see page 38).

‘Across our diverse range of services, and in working with clients with increasingly complex needs, our core agent of change is relationships.’



This year we needed to navigate the impact for our services of family law reforms, including the consideration of family violence in relation to parties' contributions and future needs, when delivering FDR. We see the impacts of gender-based violence with clients every day, and we welcomed this change, but we know that more needs to be done.

We also published our inaugural Family Violence Position Paper, designed to support workforces and services – including those working outside family violence-specific programs – in their understanding of family violence, its causes and consequences, and approaches to prevention. We intend for this to be the first annual paper on this pervasive issue.

While it might seem obvious from our name, it is worth noting that relationships are our core agent of change across services. Across our diverse range of services, and in working with clients with increasingly complex needs, this is our focus. It takes skill and expertise to work with such complexity and RAV would not have the positive impact it does in the lives of so many clients without its committed, compassionate workforce. It is no surprise, therefore, that a recent psychosocial health and wellbeing survey highlighted that our staff overwhelmingly reported they find their work meaningful and experience very high levels of collegial support. I commend and thank all RAV staff, and credit our managers for their ongoing leadership and adaptability in responding to sector challenges.

In late 2024, we bade farewell to Professor Lyn Littlefield OAM, who retired as Board Chair after over 30 years of service on the RAV Board. We welcomed the election of our new Chair, Ronda Jacobs, whose strategic and governance skills, sector knowledge and experience will support RAV's future growth and success.

Thank you to our funding bodies for enabling us to provide much-needed support to our clients. I also acknowledge the courage and resilience of those who use our services, as well as the trust they place in us every day. It does not go unnoticed, and is not something we take for granted.

We know that 2024 has not been an easy year for many, and we remain dedicated to delivering accessible services to those who need them. I'm proud that our organisation does not refuse support because a client cannot pay. This commitment, however, comes at a financial cost to the organisation, and with high demand for services, we are stretched to capacity to meet this demand in a timely way.

Despite the challenges we have faced, our organisation is financially strong. We use our resources prudently to ensure we remain able to do so, always focusing on the safety and needs of our clients.

We have achieved much to be proud of this year, and I look forward to the new year with confidence.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'A Bickerdike'.

Dr Andrew Bickerdike
Chief Executive Officer

A new look for a trusted name

We're proud to have adopted a new logo and branding. An evolution rather than a revolution of our existing brand, the change reflects our 75-year journey of growth, adaptation and continuous improvement, as well as our commitment to meet the evolving needs of our clients, the community and our funders.



Our new visual identity is designed to clearly illustrate who we are: a responsive, contemporary, accessible and compassionate organisation.



Clients we support

Who we support

4,305

children and young people



2,255

people aged 65 and older

23.6%

were born overseas



7.5%

spoke a language other than English at home,
most commonly Punjabi, Hindi, Mandarin,
Dari and Arabic

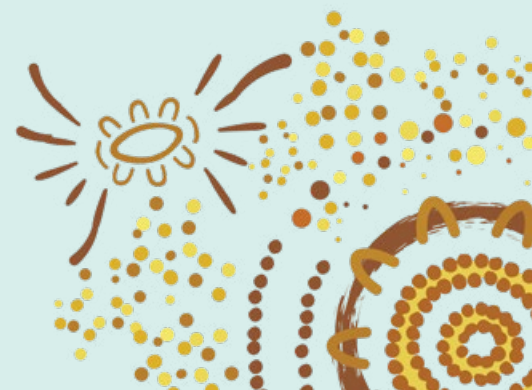
141

different countries of birth



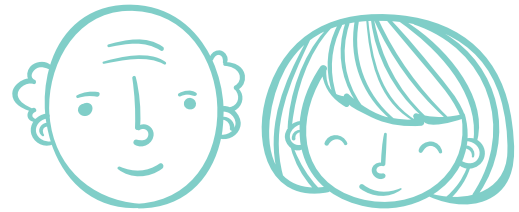
841

First Nations peoples



26,444

clients



32.0%

had mental health needs

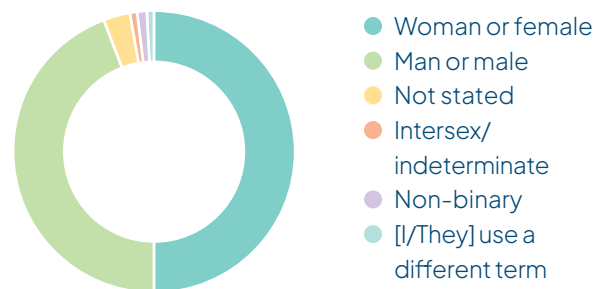
54.0%

were affected by family violence

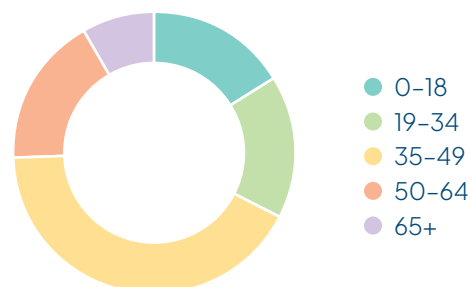
42.8%

of clients who reported family income
earned \$50,000 or less

Client gender



Client age



Our organisation at a glance

What we delivered

131

unique services, programs
and courses



55

client services
(see page 12)



76

professional training and development offerings
(see page 62)



86,776

hours of client services

The foundations of our work

393

staff members

21

centres and sites



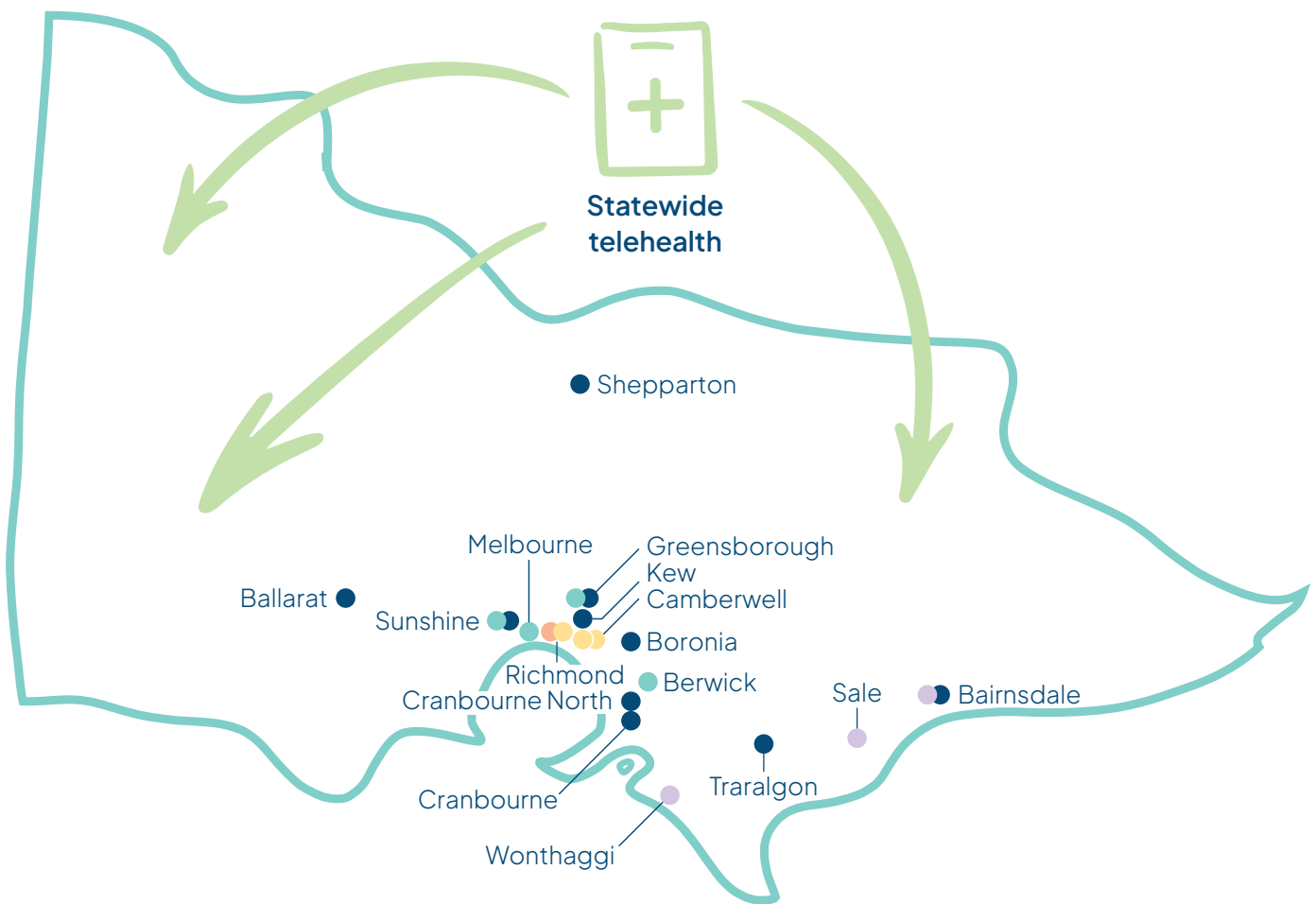
14

metropolitan sites

7

regional sites



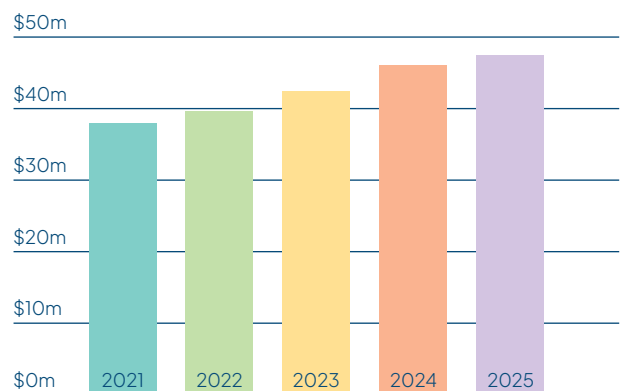


***‘My practitioner has been invaluable** in her reassuring and kind support. She has helped me to practise coping strategies, has helped me untangle my jumbled thoughts and is behind many of my **relationships becoming improved.**’*

– Client, Shepparton Centre

\$47.4m

Income



A service for every story

Our broad range of services supports clients with diverse and complex needs.

AccessResolve Property Mediation and Conciliation Service

A property dispute resolution service for court-ordered clients, delivered on behalf of the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia.

ATLAS

An interactive 10-module program targeting the wellbeing and personal development of un-sentenced and pre-trial individuals (persons on remand).

Baby massage program

Provided for First Nations mums and babies, in partnership with Barrbunin Beek Aboriginal Gathering Place.

Connect Me

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

Counselling

For individuals including children, couples and families.

Diffuse

A 7-week psychoeducational program for people engaged with the correctional system.

early matters

A free program in areas of Ballarat and Sunshine to enhance parenting skills, and promote child wellbeing and healthy, safe family relationships. Includes:

- **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
- **Tuning in to Kids® and Tuning in to Teens®** – emotional intelligence parenting programs.

Family dispute resolution (FDR)

Mediation for parenting and property matters, including:

- Lawyer-Inclusive Dispute Resolution
- Legally-Assisted FDR
- Court-Ordered Dispute Resolution.

Family Relationship Centres

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 men's behaviour change programs (MBCPs), men's case management and post-MBCP programs.

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

A free therapeutic service for people aged 16 and over who are affected by family violence.

- **bRAVe Steps** – A free therapeutic service in Cranbourne for children and young people aged 18 and under who are impacted by family violence.

Focus on Kids

A webinar to help parents to understand their children's experience of separation and associated conflict, and focus on their children during FDR.





*‘I personally really appreciate Relationships Australia Victoria, who have seriously helped me to deal with adoption issues, childhood trauma, and large amounts of deeply buried anger in a **non-judgmental way**. A life-changing experience. Thank you for your professional help ... **you are very good at what you do.**’*

– Client in regional Victoria

Forced Adoption Support Service

Free and confidential counselling, support and information for people affected by forced adoption.

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** – a project/social group that plans and delivers social activities for LGBTIQ+ young people
- **Games group** – for young people living 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.

Healthy Clubs

Healthy relationship workshops for sporting clubs to prevent family violence.

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 program delivered in schools.

Intercountry Adoptee and Family Support Service

Free support for intercountry adoptees and their families.

LINCS

Strengths-based, psychoeducational workshops for individuals who are subject to a community correction order, including specialist programs for First Nations men.

LINCS in Families

Psychoeducational workshops for people who are subject to a community correction order as a result of family violence.

Men’s behaviour change programs (MBCPs)

Free programs for men who have used violent, harmful or controlling behaviour towards family members, including partners and/or children, and who want to change their behaviour.

Men Being Well

A free men’s health and wellbeing promotion program.

Men’s case management program

Free, personalised support for men who want to stop using violent or harmful behaviours.

Open Place

A free specialist support service for people who grew up in institutional care in Victoria prior to 1990, known as Forgotten Australians / Pre-1990 Care Leavers.

Parenting After Separation Seminar

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



*‘The program reiterated to me **the importance of leaving children out of adult issues** and maintaining focus on moving forward and ensuring the kids are ok and reassured throughout a challenging time.’*

– Parenting After Separation Seminar client

Prepare/Enrich®

A pre-marriage, pre-commitment and relationship enrichment program.

Redress Support Services

Free and confidential 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.

Respect and Connect

A skills-based schools' program for students on healthy relationships, gender equality, mental wellbeing, communication and managing emotions.

Right Now

A body-based recovery program 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.

Sustain

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

Training services

A diverse range of accredited and non-accredited training and professional development programs (see page 60).



“**Approachable**” is the perfect word for (the service); from the front counter through to everyone.’

– Client

Tuning in to Kids®

An emotional intelligence parenting program, including specialised groups for:

- Afghan women
- dads
- multicultural families
- multicultural women.

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 mental health supports 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

Workplace programs including 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.

Youth Enhanced Service (YES)

Free mental health and wellbeing support for young people aged 12 to 25 years in Gippsland.

Stories that matter



Listening: Putting Avi first

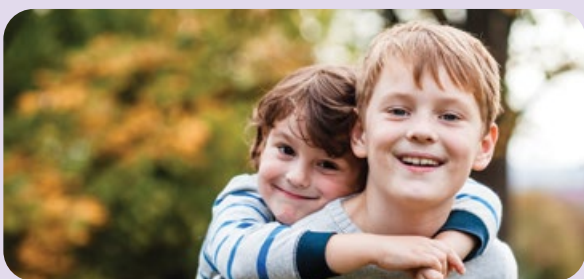
Priya* contacted our Ballarat Centre with concerns for her 10-year-old son, Avi*, who had been living 50/50 with her and his dad, Kris*. She was frustrated by the way Kris was communicating and his lack of follow-through – especially when it meant Avi missed out on things that mattered to him, like joining his chosen sporting team.

Kris was hesitant to take part in FDR, but agreed once we explained that the focus would be on what was best for Avi.

In the first session, we helped both parents shift their focus to Avi's needs. Kris began to see how uncooperative communication was affecting their son. They agreed to use a parenting communication app, informed by our research on communication apps, to help with timely and respectful communication.

Three months later, at their next session, things had changed. Priya felt less angry, and Kris acknowledged past mistakes and committed to doing better. Both parents said they were now co-parenting more cooperatively, and that there was less conflict.

The most powerful moment came when they shared that Avi had recently opened up to each of them about how tough he was finding it moving between 2 homes. It showed they'd created a safe space for him to speak honestly. They left our service with a commitment to maintaining this safe space, and to putting Avi's needs first.



Brett and Karen: Shuttle FDR in action

When Brett* came to our Greensborough Family Relationship Centre, he hadn't seen his 2 young children in 3 years. The separation from his ex-partner, Karen*, conflict between them, and the impact of COVID-19 had made things difficult. An intervention order had been in place but had recently expired, and Brett now wanted to reconnect with his children.

Karen had concerns for her children's safety, having experienced physical violence from Brett in the past. She feared he might take the children without consent.

Because of this, we used a shuttle mediation format, with Brett and Karen in separate rooms, to support structured and safe discussions. The practitioner helped both parents focus on realistic, child-centred options, and they eventually reached an agreement: Brett would have supervised visits with a trusted mutual friend present, while Karen checked in with the children before and after each visit to make sure they felt safe and supported.

Both parents attended a Focus on Kids session, which helped them better understand their children's needs, focus on safety and avoid their children getting stuck in the middle of conflict. By their final FDR session, communication had improved, and Karen reported feeling less stressed.

A follow-up showed their parenting plan was working well. The children were adjusting, Brett was enjoying time with them, and both parents were putting their children's needs first.

*Names changed for privacy

Relationships at the centre

We're working to strengthen relationships as a foundation for lifelong health and wellbeing, starting in early childhood and extending across families and communities.

The importance of relationships across the lifespan

We are committed to improving outcomes for children and families, and we share the Australian Government's vision in the Early Years Strategy 2024–2034 for all children to thrive. There is growing recognition that preventive, place-based approaches are essential for addressing Australia's complex social challenges. We believe that investing in prevention is key to strengthening families and communities, and reducing long-term health and social costs.

In November 2024, we released reports from our project with our partner, the Centre for Community Child Health at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, which explored how we can better influence systems to support children and families.

Through an evidence review and co-design process with parents and local stakeholders, we identified 3 key opportunities for improving outcomes:

1. Raising public awareness of the importance of relationships.
2. Introducing a new role that actively increases social connection for families.
3. Integrating supports and services into accessible community spaces.

The report also highlights the importance of relationships across the lifespan. Secure and responsive relationships provide the foundation for emotional regulation, social skills, resilience, and long-term mental and physical health. The quality of these relationships shapes expectations of social interactions, influences social and emotional development, and provides a buffer against stress and adversity. Supportive relationships – within families, peer networks or communities – are a core condition for wellbeing.



Read: *Supporting children and families to thrive in their relationships*
[Full report, options paper and report for workshop participants]

Visit rav.org.au/about/research-evaluation/stronger-relationships/ or scan the QR code.



Stronger relationships in Ballarat

Based on these findings, we launched a new community-focused prevention pilot in Ballarat, aimed at strengthening social connections, improving family and community outcomes, and reducing long-term social costs.

Our first initiative was a public screening of *SEEN: The film*, delivered in partnership with the City of Ballarat. More than 400 professionals, parents and community members attended this powerful documentary on how parents can build connections to positively impact child brain development – helping to foster stronger, healthier families. The screening sparked important community conversations about parent-child relationships and how to strengthen local connections and support networks.

Central to this pilot is a dedicated community-facing role to foster stronger local connections. Working alongside families, services and local partners, the role will ensure families are supported and connected, contributing to a strong 'village' of families and communities, and creating lasting, positive change.



Subscribe: Learn more about our Stronger Relationships project in Ballarat.

Visit rav.org.au/community/stronger-relationships/ or scan the QR code.

‘We know that **relationships and social connection are the key to mental health and wellbeing**, this is especially true for families in the early years. Because of this, we also understand the preventative power of relationships.’

– Sandra Opoku, Senior Manager Evaluation and Social Impact



Above: Ballarat Centre Manager, Jayne Ferguson, addressing over 400 attendees at the screening of *SEEN: The film*

‘[We] talked a lot about **emotion coaching**, which was useful, but it also confirmed what I was already doing. It’s nice as a parent to get that **validation that you’re on the right track.**’

– early matters client

Building on our foundations: early matters

Our Stronger Relationships initiative builds on a decade of delivering our free ‘early matters’ program in the cities of Ballarat and Brimbank. We know that early childhood is a critical window for prevention and early intervention, when the potential impact of investment is greatest.

early matters is grounded in strong evidence that secure parent–child and family relationships are among the most powerful protective factors in a child’s healthy development – especially in the early years. It provides evidence-based parenting programs, group education and tailored one-to-one assistance at key points of transition in life. This includes after the birth of a baby, starting kindergarten or school, or during major life changes such as separation, divorce or the death of a family member – when changes and developmental transitions can negatively impact children’s mental health and wellbeing.

We work collaboratively with local service providers to deliver early matters through universal services such as hospitals, maternal and child health services, kindergartens and schools.

Ongoing evaluations show the positive impact of the program, including:

- parents’ increased confidence
- families’ improved access to support
- enhanced social and emotional development in children
- reduced behavioural concerns.

Since 2019, we’ve deepened the program’s focus on antenatal and maternal child health education, ensuring it continues to reflect emerging evidence and meet evolving community needs.

1,193

early matters healthy & safe family relationships service clients



early matters is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

Strengthening family relationships in Yarra

We were pleased to release a new evaluation report and accompanying research summary this year on a collaborative, place-based approach in the City of Yarra. Over 7 years, we partnered with Yarra Communities that Care® to strengthen family relationships by coordinating a network of program facilitators, and delivering social and emotional learning programs to families.

The report highlights the network as a strong example of how local, collaborative prevention and early intervention efforts can improve family wellbeing.



Read: Yarra Communities that Care®: A collaborative approach to strengthening family relationships in the City of Yarra [Report]

Visit rav.org.au/about/research-evaluation/yarra-ctc or scan the QR code.



Above: Map of the Yarra Communities that Care® partner schools

Stories that matter

Brad and Amelia: Finding balance as a new stepfamily

Brad* was reconnecting with his children after a period of separation, while also introducing them to his new partner, Amelia*. At the same time, he was navigating turbulent family court proceedings.

Having previously completed a Circle of Security® parenting program through early matters, Brad and Amelia joined our 6-week Tuning in to Kids® group. They also accessed one-on-one parenting support sessions to better understand the children's emotional and developmental needs during this challenging time.

'We had to buffer the kids from our own uncertainty. During this time, it was so good to explore with [early matters] the little moments with the kids, and what to do and say to help them feel safe and secure.'

– Brad

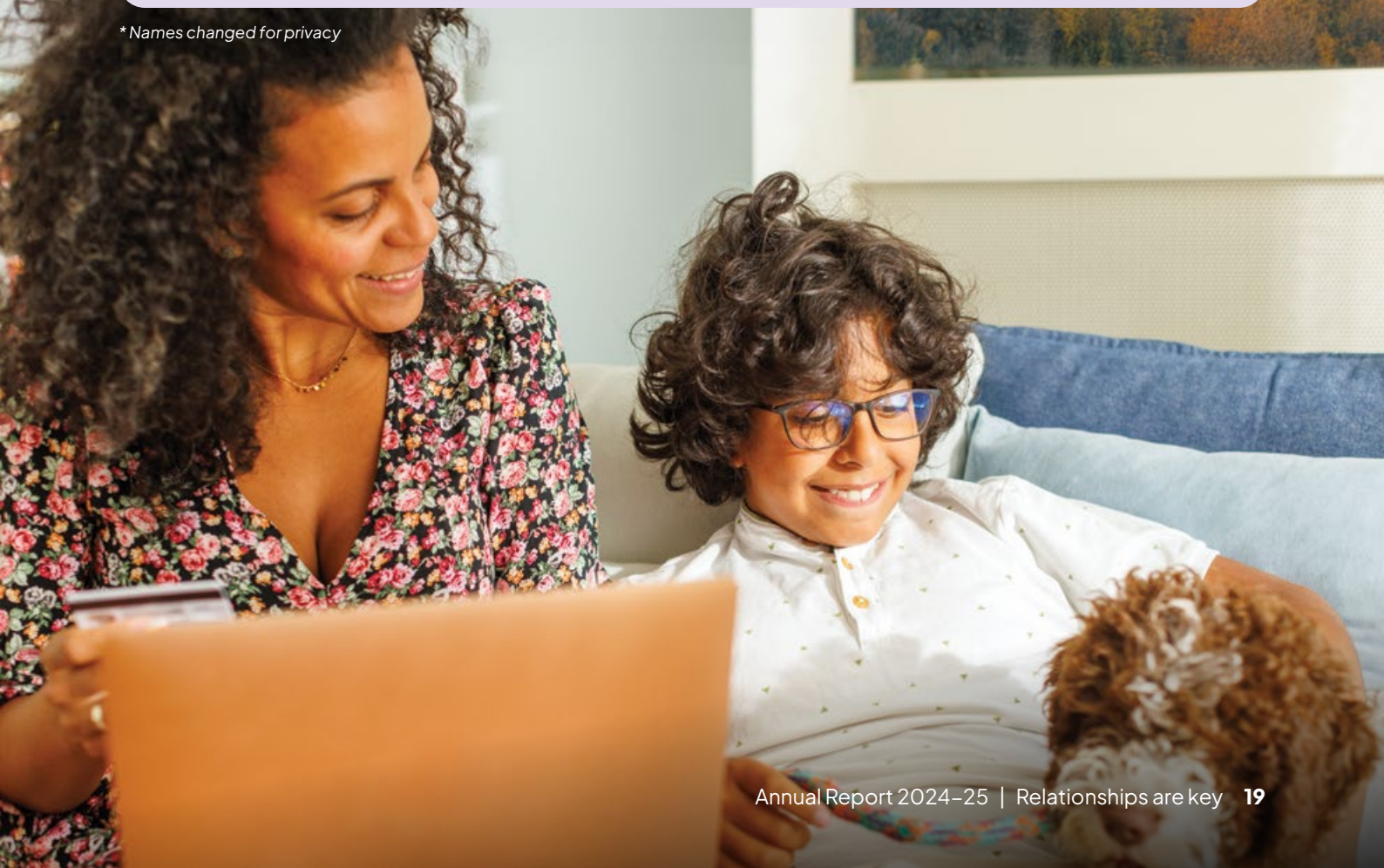
When the children later came to live with them full-time, Amelia – now a primary carer – continued to access support from us. As a mother to adult biological children, she was adjusting to her new role as a step-mum, and how to balance building relationships with her stepchildren while also being a parent.

Counselling sessions gave her space to reflect, gain confidence, and find balance in supporting and parenting the children in a new family dynamic.

'I find it extremely hard to sit with my emotions, but this time around I feel better about my ability to sit with uncomfortable emotions with the kids. I have a lot more confidence. I learnt my gig is to support and not change the kids. We had to find our balance as a new family.'

– Amelia

* Names changed for privacy



The benefits of dispute resolution are clear

Family dispute resolution (FDR) plays a vital role in reducing conflict between separated parents and supporting better outcomes for children.

Also known as mediation, it offers a safe, structured and supportive space, to help families resolve disputes around parenting, property and finances – without the stress, cost and delays of going to court. We deliver these services through our RAV centres and Family Relationship Centres, and our specialist AccessResolve Property Mediation service.

1,725

FDR clients



6,043

FRC clients



***The mediation team was incredibly helpful** during a very stressful time. It truly felt like they cared about our family and were fully committed to helping us **find the best outcome for our children**. Their support and genuine concern made a difficult process much **more manageable**.*

– FDR client





‘Mandatory **FDR delivers substantial financial and social benefits**, helping both the legal system and families achieve **better outcomes at a fraction of the cost** that would be incurred if disputes progressed through the courts.’

– Family dispute resolution services: Cost-benefit analysis summary, November 2024

20:1 Cost-benefit analysis of FDR

In 2024, RAV partnered with Inform Economics to gain a deeper understanding of the economic and social impacts of our FDR services for families, the family law system and the wider community. We used an evidence-based cost-benefit analysis to compare outcomes for families who used FDR for parenting matters in 2023 with likely outcomes for disputes resolved without FDR.

The analysis showed that there are substantial financial and social benefits of FDR, with a benefit-cost ratio of over 20:1. This means that for every dollar spent on FDR, \$20.80 of benefits are returned.

On average, families save \$41,800 per case by avoiding court-related expenses. When non-financial outcomes are also considered, such as improved mental health, child wellbeing, and family safety and functioning, the benefits increase to over \$63,000 per family.

FDR offers a faster, more affordable, less acrimonious and less stressful alternative to court, and allows families to move forward with their lives more quickly. It also diverts cases from court processes, allowing legal and judicial resources to focus on more complex disputes, and reducing demand on the family law system.

The findings demonstrate the value of FDR, and reinforce the need for increased investment in FDR, particularly in the face of growing demand.



Read: Our cost-benefit analysis reports

Visit rav.org.au/fdr-cba or scan the QR code.



20:1

benefit-cost ratio: \$20.80 in benefits returned for every \$1 invested

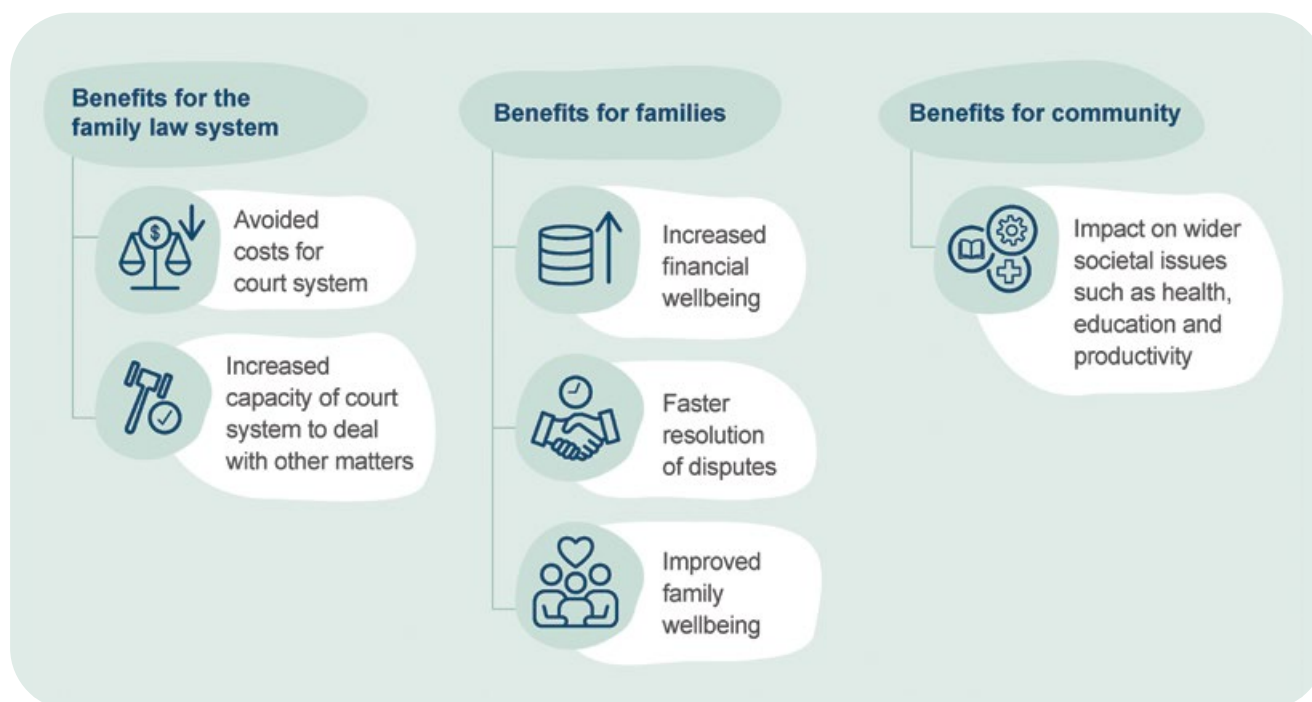


\$41,800

average savings per family

\$63,042

total average benefits per family



Above: Insights from our 2024 FDR Cost-Benefit Analysis

FDR for ambivalent clients

We continued analysing and sharing the results of our national Relationships Australia FDR Outcomes Study. In Australia, separating couples must try FDR before taking parenting matters to court. As a result, some clients attend the service solely to be able to go to court, with little expectation of reaching agreement.

Our research found that even with limited motivation to negotiate, but with the right support, families can achieve positive outcomes with FDR. Our research found that, among parents who attended FDR primarily to proceed to court:

- 58% reached agreement on their parenting matters
- 73% were satisfied with the FDR process
- hostility and ill-will between parents often decreased.

These results reinforce the value of FDR in helping to avoid the emotional and financial costs of court proceedings, and of improving outcomes for children.



Read: Family dispute resolution: What the research says and how we know it works [Information sheet]

Visit rav.org.au/about/research-evaluation/fdr/#info-sheet or scan the QR code.



Watch: Family dispute resolution: A valuable option for resolving family law disputes

Visit youtu.be/TZsu-4vKfXs or scan the QR code.



Online parenting programs

Our Parenting After Separation Seminar helps separated parents to understand how separation and conflict can affect children, and offers practical ways to support their wellbeing.

The program includes flexible online learning and a 2-hour group session led by an experienced facilitator, exploring topics like co-parenting, self-care and how to respond to their children's needs.

*'I found RAV's **course easy to follow and informative**. I strongly believe as a participant you must be willing to learn, willing to [accept] that you may not have been the fantastic person you thought you were, willing to reflect and own your actions, willing to change.'*

– Parenting After Separation Seminar participant

Focus on Kids is a practical, interactive session offered to parents taking part in FDR. It helps them to understand how to create a safe, supportive environment for their children by putting their needs first, and keeping them out of adult conflict and issues.

*'FDR offers a **neutral and dedicated time and space for negotiation that can bring positive outcomes** – even where communication has broken down altogether.'*

– Dr Genevieve Heard, Manager Research

*'The most important thing I can do for **my daughter** is take the time to **listen to her**, let her know that the separation is **not her fault** and **be the emotional and physical safe harbour that she deserves**.'*

– Focus on Kids participant

The value of lawyers in FDR

We completed a collaborative study of our Legally-Assisted FDR service, delivered in partnership with community legal centres. This model involves at least one party participating in FDR with the support of a lawyer, helping address vulnerabilities such as family violence, power imbalances or unrealistic court outcome expectations. It improves accessibility and capacity to participate in this non-adversarial process.

Of 54 Legally-Assisted FDR clients:

- 70% were satisfied with the process
- 80% reached a full or partial parenting agreement
- 91% said having a lawyer helped them understand their position.

Hearing children's voices for lasting parenting plans

Children have a right to be heard in decisions that affect them, yet they are rarely included in FDR. In 2024, we continued our review of child-inclusive models to strengthen children's participation in FDR – both within our organisation and across the sector. A workable process for the inclusion of children is key to their participation in FDR, which leads to more durable parenting agreements and helps children better manage changes in their families.

Our leadership is recognised in this area. We were invited to help organise the 2025 Child Inclusive Practice Forum in Canberra, where we also presented a paper on international models for hearing children's voices in FDR.

*'Including children in the mediation process can often **bring about better outcomes for the children ...** It usually **results in better parenting plans** that hold together for longer when the voice of the child has been included.'*

– Child-Inclusive FDR Practitioner

*'[The lawyers] were just fantastic about **keeping me focused** on the task at hand ... **but supporting me** at the same time.'*

– Legally-Assisted FDR client

*'**Children's opinions are some of the most important**, as we might not be experts, but **it is our futures at stake.**'*

– Benji, 14 years old



Above: Dr Genevieve Heard at the Child Inclusive Practice Forum, Canberra 2025

Stories that matter

Linh and Khai: Three siblings, 2 houses

Parents Linh and Khai* came to us for FDR a year after separating, seeking parenting arrangements for their 3 children: Ethan (14), Lucas (7) and Lily (6)*. Ethan was Linh's son from a previous relationship.

Both parents, particularly Khai, were facing mental health challenges, and the children were feeling the ongoing strain of high conflict, including verbal putdowns, poor communication, and a lack of clear, joint parenting decisions. We connected Khai with our Family Safety Practitioner, who provided practical strategies, information on the family law system, and mental health referrals, enabling him to continue with FDR.

As the process continued, Ethan began living with Khai following Child Protection involvement. Discussions about caring for Lucas and Lily stalled, with both parents feeling overwhelmed.

While some services might have discontinued FDR and referred Linh and Khai to legal services, after thorough assessments, we began child-inclusive FDR. This allowed the 2 younger children to independently meet with our child consultant and talk about their experiences of their family's situation, and what was important to them.

They said that they wanted the arguing to stop, that they missed their big brother, and were scared about the uncertainty of where they were going to live. They just wanted time together with their dad and siblings.

This feedback was shared with Linh and Khai, and it helped shape the focus of next session on the children's needs. Linh and Khai made a new plan focused on what was best for their children: Lucas and Lily would move in with Khai and Ethan, and spend school holidays with Linh. They agreed on ground rules for communication and protecting the children from conflict, and on reviewing the arrangements in 6 months.

The process empowered both parents and children. Linh and Khai are now focused on rebuilding their co-parenting relationship and have a clear plan for the future – with the option to return to us for more support if they need. The service provided a safe space for them to re-focus on the most important people in their lives – their kids.

**Names changed for privacy*



Resolving entrenched disputes

Our AccessResolve Property Mediation service uses a lawyer-assisted conciliation model to help court-ordered clients resolve disputes outside of often lengthy and costly court processes. Operating since 2012, this year we expanded to Melbourne and Dandenong circuit courts, improving access for clients.

In May, AccessResolve hosted a conference for service conciliators from across Australia and Federal Circuit and Family Court representatives. The conference panel shared insights on managing increasing case complexity and the value of providing extended mediation sessions.

Senior Judicial Registrar and Executive Director of the Court, Anne-Marie Rice, emphasised the Court's commitment to encouraging dispute resolution at all stages of parenting and property disputes, and the importance of early intervention in keeping families out of the Court system, and supporting them after orders have been made.

The conference also featured the results of a new analysis of AccessResolve cases, involving interview and survey data, which identified key factors influencing settlement outcomes. The strongest positive influences were the skills of conciliators and lawyers in encouraging settlement, alongside cooperative client attitudes. Barriers included lawyers' adversarial attitudes, high acrimony between parties, and late or poor-quality documentation, all of which reduced the likelihood of settlement.

AccessResolve in 2024–25

440

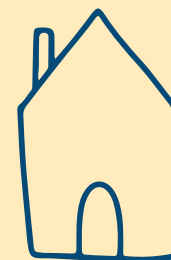
mediations

62%

settlement rate

37

Federal Circuit & Family Court locations supported



'This was a modest property pool, so I reminded parties several times about the costs of proceeding to trial outweighing any possible benefits.'

– AccessResolve Property Mediation Conciliator

The first 4: Key benefits of sessions

Informed by our 75 years of counselling experience, we updated our service model to better meet high demand, while delivering timely, effective support.

This year, we updated the model used in our counselling service, which supports clients with challenges including family, relationship and parenting issues, family transitions and family court involvement.

Research shows that most clients gain the most benefit from counselling within the first 4 sessions. They experience improvement with the issues they've sought help for, for up to 8 to 12 sessions. Recognising this, our new model provides clients with access to up to 20 sessions over a 12-month period, with an additional 5 sessions available in exceptional circumstances.

With ongoing high demand, this model is expected to reduce waiting times for new clients – while continuing to deliver effective, evidence-based support. Clients work with counsellors to set specific, achievable and measurable goals, which are regularly reviewed and updated. Specialist referrals are also provided where required at the end of counselling to ensure clients' ongoing needs are met.

*'I am **beyond grateful** for the **invaluable support** and guidance [my practitioner] has provided me with. Her expertise and compassionate approach have been instrumental in helping me navigate complex family matters. From offering insightful advice to creating a safe space for open communication, **she has truly made a difference in my life.**'*

– Counselling client

3,914

counselling clients



Stories that matter



Belle and Tim: Setting boundaries and finding clarity

Belle and Tim* came to our Ballarat counselling service looking for support with some tricky family dynamics. Since having their first child, they felt that Belle's family wasn't respecting their choices as new parents, instead expecting them to go along with what the wider family wanted.

Counselling helped Belle and Tim identify what mattered most to them and why it hurt so much when their boundaries were ignored. They learnt skills for setting boundaries that were firm but kind, and how to stick to them when things got tough.

They also reflected on how these patterns had shown up in their own childhoods. By recognising that old hurt was being triggered by present events, they were able to begin healing, and feel more confident in who they are now, as adults and new parents.

*Names changed for privacy

Stories that matter

Nikos: From anger to accountability

Nikos* chose to begin counselling to address long-term difficulties with anger management. He was in a long-term relationship and has a 17-year-old son and 9-year-old daughter.

Nikos felt that he had always had an issue with anger, but that lately it had become a significant issue in his relationships. His family found it difficult to be around him. At times, they found his behaviour intimidating. His relationship with his partner was breaking down. He felt increasingly disconnected from his children, and his teenage son was starting to copy some of his behaviours. Long work hours and ongoing stress left him constantly on edge. He said he felt ashamed and didn't know what to do to change.

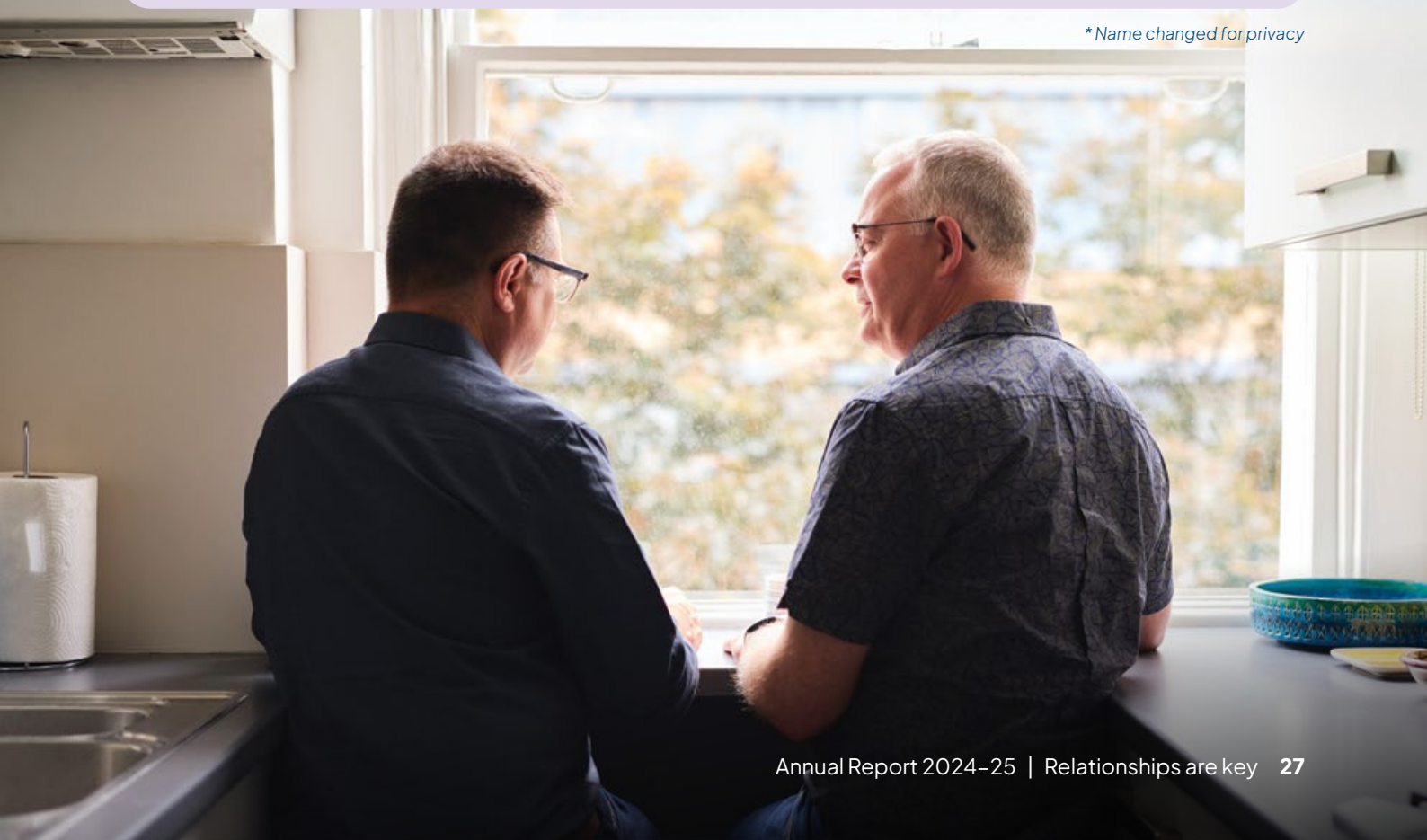
Using a non-judgemental, strengths-based approach, Nikos's counsellor helped him build insight, take responsibility, and recognise that his decision to seek help and be a better role model for his kids was a powerful first step towards change.

Over 6 sessions, Nikos explored his personal triggers, the cycle of anger, and how stress was affecting his relationships and self-esteem. He learned strategies to increase self-awareness, manage stress and improve self-care. He also reflected on the kind of partner and father he wanted to be.

Nikos' strong family values served as a key motivator for change, and with his counsellor's support, he developed positive communication skills and began rebuilding connections with his partner and children.

Nikos says that he now feels less stressed, and has improved moods and stronger relationships with his family. His family have noticed the changes too, and his relationship with his son is finally improving.

** Name changed for privacy*



Getting the ball rolling with gender equality

Healthy Clubs in 2024–25

15

clubs involved

15

gender equality plans developed

300+

workshop participants



‘For me, **gender equality means giving everyone a fair go** and giving everyone the same opportunities to succeed.’

– Jessica, Coach, Beaumaris Lawn Tennis Club

‘I think for me it’s **everyone having the same opportunities** to perform well or have fun. So, same grounds, facilities, training nights, physios.’

– Connor, Senior Player, Old Scotch Football Club

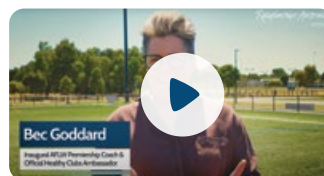
Sporting clubs do more than bring people together to play – they shape attitudes, behaviours and culture. That’s why we’re working with clubs to promote gender equality and prevent family violence.

With many people engaging in sport during their formative years, sporting clubs have a unique opportunity to champion gender equality, model and foster healthy relationships, drive cultural change, and help prevent family violence – on and off the field.

Recognising this, our Healthy Clubs project takes a whole-of-sport approach to promoting a culture of respect, equity and inclusion, in clubs and in the broader community. We also work closely with clubs to develop gender equality action plans. These plans can drive real and lasting change across all areas and roles in a club, from leadership to culture, recruitment, participation and facilities, and with players, volunteers and executives.

Healthy Clubs is delivered with support from the Victorian Government’s Preventing Violence Through Sport Grants Program, in partnership with the Victorian Amateur Football Association, Tennis Victoria and NRL Victoria, and with funding from the Victorian Government’s Preventing Violence Through Sport Grants Program.

This year, we introduced a single workshop session model to enhance workshop accessibility and engagement. We also welcomed 5 new Healthy Clubs Ambassadors – elite athletes and coaches who amplify the program’s key messages, and helping to raise awareness, including through a series of new videos.



Watch: Our Ambassadors on why healthy clubs matter
Visit youtu.be/YBmiUDA00Yk or scan the QR code.

Healthy Clubs Ambassadors



Luke Beveridge
Western Bulldogs
Senior Coach



Damien Fleming
Australian Cricketer
and Commentator



Bec Goddard OAM
Inaugural AFLW
Premiership Coach



Dean Ieremia
Melbourne Storm
NRL Player



Scott Jamieson
Melbourne City FC
Assistant Coach

Why Healthy Clubs matter



Watch the individual videos or scan the QR code to watch the playlist.

What is gender equality?

Visit youtu.be/tnrHul6LsIM

Why does gender inequality exist?

Visit youtu.be/Pt_2KBEmlhk

The importance of gender equality in sport

Visit youtu.be/1Rdg2M3PNyO

Tell us about gender equality in your club

Visit youtu.be/rw9P_BKOBcc

How do we promote gender equality?

Visit youtu.be/fgzWE9gO8dc

What's your hope for gender equality in the future?

Visit youtu.be/O6msTNjZv7g



Above: CEO, Dr Andrew Bickerdike, announcing our Healthy Clubs Official Ambassadors

*'This program is **tackling critical issues like gender equality** and respectful relationships, while supporting clubs to lead the way in preventing violence. It's exciting to see how **sport can bring people together to foster safer, more inclusive environments** for everyone, on and off the field.'*

– Damien Fleming, Healthy Clubs Ambassador

*'Gender equity in sport to me looks **big**. Let's have women playing on big stadiums. Let's have equal access to facilities at our local community sports. Have a look at the times that your training sessions are run. Have a look at who the coaches are, who the support staff are. That's what gender equality looks like to me – having a **really well balanced and professional club**.'*

– Bec Goddard, Healthy Clubs Ambassador

Improving access to timely, effective support

We support clients experiencing mental health challenges, through both our generalist services, and dedicated mental health programs for children, young people and adults across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Why relationships matter in child and youth mental health

Our child and youth mental health programs use a family-inclusive approach, grounded in our belief that respectful, safe and fulfilling relationships are key to positive mental health outcomes.

This approach recognises that:

- Respectful and safe family relationships reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors.
- Families are often the first to notice when a child or young person is struggling.
- Families provide an essential support system to young people and children accessing our programs.
- Respectful and safe family relationships lead to better long-term outcomes for children and young people engaged in mental health programs.
- Family involvement enhances the effectiveness of therapeutic interventions and supports sustained progress.

Supporting kids through separation

Research indicates that one in 4 children experience parental separation before age 18 and that children affected by separation are at an increased risk of mental health issues, particularly when high conflict or instability is present. Parents are often dealing with overwhelming stressors such as legal proceedings, financial insecurity, housing instability or their own mental health challenges. These factors can make it hard for them to identify or access the right support for their children at the right time.

Key mental health services

- Connect Me
- early matters (see page 16)
- Family Advocacy and Support Services – Mental Health Support
- headspace Bairnsdale
- headspace Sale
- headspace Wonthaggi
- i-Connect Family Mental Health Support Service
- Respect and Connect (see page 53)
- Youth Enhanced Service (YES)



Read: Our dedicated mental health services

Visit rav.org.au/mental-health/ or scan the QR code.

Launching in July 2025, our new 2-year pilot program will provide targeted mental health support for children aged 4 to 13 who have experienced or are currently experiencing family separation.

The program will be delivered by a senior child therapist and coordinator based at our Kew Centre. It will offer short-term individual and group support to address the mental health impacts of family conflict and separation. Using a brief therapy model, we will provide assessment and a combination of child, family and parent sessions to help build emotional insight, regulation skills and stronger family connections.

Once established, the service will accept external referrals, while also supporting children of existing clients, helping to meet people where they are, and reduce the risk of children ‘falling through the gaps’ of service systems. By intervening early with targeted, child-centred support, our service aims to reduce the long-term mental health impacts of separation for children, and strengthen families’ capacity to move on after separation.

88

Youth Enhanced Service clients



Young people in the 'missing middle'

In July 2024, we launched our Youth Enhanced Service (YES), a new mental health program for young people aged 12 to 25 in Gippsland. Designed to bridge the gap between generalist mental health services and hospital-based care, YES supports young people whose mental health needs are too complex for services like headspace or school counselling, but not acute enough for specialist services such as those in hospitals.

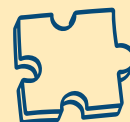
The service offers flexible, short- to medium-term support via phone, video or in-person sessions. It is delivered by a clinical team including a senior consultant psychiatrist, mental health navigators, and youth peer workers with lived experience. Navigators provide holistic mental health and psychosocial support, such as individual therapeutic sessions and group work. Navigators also work with young people to develop care plans, often the support of their friends and family. A First Nations navigator also supports young people across East Gippsland and Wellington.

Peer support workers with lived experience play a vital role in YES. Young people, carers and their friends also contribute to a reference group, helping to keep the service responsive and relevant. The program is also engaged with over 70 local services, ensuring young people can be referred quickly and supportively when needed.

In early 2025, we officially celebrated the service's launch with an event co-organised by young people involved in YES. The program has already had a significant impact in filling a significant service gap in the region.

811

i-Connect Family Mental Health Support Service clients



Connection is key

Strong social and family connections help young people feel supported, valued and less isolated – especially during times of change or stress. Staying engaged in education and activities like sport builds confidence, supports emotional regulation, provides a sense of routine and belonging, and creates opportunities for achievement and growth. These are important protective factors that help reduce the risk of mental health difficulties and support positive long-term outcomes.

That's why in East Gippsland, our i-Connect program supports children and young people aged 18 and under who are at risk of or affected by mental illness. i-Connect helps them stay connected to family, friends and their communities; stay engaged in education, sport and recreation; and develop skills to support their wellbeing now and throughout their lives.

*'YES will help **young people who have fallen through the gaps** of mental health services feel **supported, recognised and understood** about their mental health and wellbeing.'*

– YES Youth Lived Experience Peer Worker

*'Sometimes it can be hard to know how we are helping, but then a **parent will stop me and say thank you for everything we've done, and tell me what a difference it has made in their lives.**'*

– i-Connect Case Manager

i-Connect is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

The YES program in Gippsland is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care. Administration of funding is carried out by Gippsland Primary Health Network.

headspace

954

clients



7.94%

First Nations peoples

30.11%

clients identified as LGBTIQ+

90%

client satisfaction



Getting in the right headspace

As the lead agency for headspace sites in Bairnsdale, Sale and Wonthaggi, we provide early intervention services for young people aged 12 to 25. This includes support for mental health, physical and sexual health, alcohol and other drugs, and work and study. Our services are delivered in safe, inclusive and youth-friendly ways, shaped by our Youth Advisory Groups.

We continue to build and strengthen relationships with local First Nations young people and communities, which is reflected in the number of First Nations clients accessing our services – up 33% in Bairnsdale and 40% in Wonthaggi this year.

‘At headspace, **we see real transformation** – from uncertainty and distress to resilience, confidence and hope. Our service gives young people the support and tools they need to **take control of their mental health and move forward.**’

– headspace Youth Access Worker

headspace Bairnsdale, Sale and Wonthaggi are operated by RAV. All headspace services are funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care. Administration of funding is carried out by the headspace centre's local Primary Health Network, in this case, Gippsland Primary Health Network.

Forgotten Australians need to be seen

Did you grow up in a Victorian orphanage or home prior to 1990? Open Place is here for you and your family members.

Up to 500,000 Australians grew up in orphanages, homes or other out-of-home care during the last century. Many were physically and sexually abused, neglected and abandoned. As a result, many of these people, known as Forgotten Australians or Pre-1990 Care Leavers, continue to struggle with complex issues including physical and mental health, financial instability, housing, employment and family relationships. Open Place works to address these challenges by providing support services, access to healthcare, and pathways to education and employment.

Commemorative march offered recognition, connection and healing

Open Place organised a powerful community-led march, held on 15 November, to mark the 15th anniversary of the National Apology to Forgotten Australians and Former Child Migrants. The apology, delivered by then-Prime Minister Kevin Rudd on 16 November 2009, formally acknowledged the abuse, neglect and trauma experienced by Forgotten Australians.

Held in Richmond, the event aimed to highlight the lasting emotional, social and economic impacts of Forgotten Australians' institutional experiences, while honouring their resilience. Up to 200 Forgotten Australians, family members, supporters and Open Place staff members marched from our Drop-In Centre across Richmond, behind a banner recognising the more than 500,000 Forgotten Australians.

The march culminated with an event at Citizens Park, where the National Apology was read aloud, and Forgotten Australians shared their lived experiences through song, spoken word and storytelling. It was a deeply emotional day – marked by tears, but also reflection and a sense of connection.

The march was supported by Yarra City Council, Victoria Police and St John Ambulance, and funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services. It reflects Open Place's commitment not only to deliver services, but also to advocate for recognition and justice, and support healing for Forgotten Australians.

3,332

service users, with 5,000+
registered service users



Stories that matter

Laurie: Feeling safe and supported at home

When 78-year-old Laurie* contacted Open Place, he was scared and overwhelmed. Recently diagnosed with terminal oesophageal and liver cancer, he was told he may have just 8 months to live. In severe pain and struggling to advocate for himself and understand his treatment options, Laurie was navigating a hospital stay and facing \$1,000 in weekly taxi fares to hospital for treatment – an impossible cost on his pension.

As a Forgotten Australian, Laurie was naturally wary of institutions and feared being kept in hospital or respite care. He was determined to return home, but lived alone without any family or friends to support him.

Our Health Team stepped in to help Laurie in 3 key ways:

- 1. We reduced travel costs** by coordinating hospital appointments, securing taxi vouchers from Open Place and the hospital, and liaising with his GP to apply for a half-price taxi card.
- 2. We improved hospital support**, with a trauma-informed hospital social worker working with Laurie to support his needs and provide feedback back to medical teams.
- 3. We advocated for at-home care**, successfully fast-tracking the highest available aged care package, to allow Laurie to return home safely.

Within 2 months of contact Open Place, Laurie was back home, feeling safe and supported while undergoing and recovering from treatment. We also worked with a community care nurse to help Laurie access hearing aids and new dentures. Laurie also knows that, when he's ready, he can join in some of Open Place's free social activities, to connect with others and support his wellbeing.

**Name changed for privacy*



... to be seen

This year, as part of our focus on community education, raising awareness of the challenges faced by Forgotten Australians, and improving access to services, we developed 'to be seen', a Community Education and Priorities Report.

The report follows extensive individual and group consultations with 195 Forgotten Australians across metropolitan Melbourne, and regional and rural Victoria, in which the following 3 questions were asked.

1. What information should be in an education package about Forgotten Australians?
2. In Victoria, who needs to hear this information?
3. How would it benefit you and others if more people knew about Forgotten Australians?

The responses we received were insightful and compelling.

*'Different organisations need to **be aware of what Forgotten Australians are** about, and the impact upon them ... We need it so that we are not constantly explaining ourselves. When you say you are a Forgotten Australian, people don't know what that means.'*

*'They should be better informed and understand that **a lot of us suffered trauma** etc. and for many it has had lifelong effects, **but with ongoing support** from organisations ... **we can cope.**'*

The report details the valued feedback from Forgotten Australians, 6 resulting education priorities, and a community goal for Forgotten Australians to be understood, to be treated with dignity and respect, and to be seen. The report will be officially launched later in 2025, and will provide the foundations for Open Place's ongoing community education and advocacy work.

*'We want the community to **understand our journey and history**, and the impact of long-term trauma and family disconnection on children. We want **to be seen, understood and not forgotten.**'*

– Forgotten Australian

Open Place services

- Community education
- Coordinated support (information, referral, casework and advocacy)
- Counselling
- Drop-in centre
- Events and activities
- Health support
- National Redress Scheme support
- Records searches and family reunions
- Social support groups



Learn: Open Place support services for Forgotten Australians

Visit openplace.org.au/ or scan the QR code.

We acknowledge the pain and loss of childhood experienced by Forgotten Australians, and we recognise the lifelong impacts of childhood trauma.

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

Building relationships, listening and trust



We acknowledge the First Nations Peoples of Australia as the oldest continuing living culture in the world, and pay our respect to Elders past and present, and recognise the cultural connection, beliefs and relationships to the ancestral lands of the First Nations Peoples of Victoria.

Working within and beyond

Our First Nations team grew this year to include 4 First Nations staff members and 2 non-Indigenous allies. The team leads our First Nations initiatives – enhancing cultural fitness within the organisation, and strengthening relationships with community members and Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations. Our goal is to make our services more accessible and welcoming for First Nations communities.

In South Australia, we joined other Relationships Australia Indigenous Network members at the Living Kurna Cultural Centre at Warriparinga for 2 days of yarning. The national network includes First Nations and non-Indigenous staff members from across the 8 Relationships Australia state and territory organisations. It upholds truth telling and deep listening as core principles in our work with First Nations staff, clients and communities. This year's yarning focused on cultural fitness and cultural supervision/mentoring with a commitment from all to introduce online First Nations cultural fitness training to be completed by all Relationships Australia staff across Australia.



Above: Staff from our Sunshine centres on the Walk for Truth

Other key highlights of the year include:

- **Acknowledging Country Meaningfully** – Training for our staff was developed by Will Austin, a Peek Woorroong Keerraay Woorroong First man and founder of First Nations-led organisation, Yarn Bark.
- **Baby massage program** – This is an infant massage program for First Nations mums and babies, delivered in partnership with the Barrbunin Beek Aboriginal Gathering Place as part of their First 1,000 Days program.
- **Walk for Truth** – We participated in the final stages of this event to mark the conclusion of the 4-year Yoorrook Justice Commission, Victoria and Australia's first formal truth-telling inquiry, led by First Peoples.
- **Sisters Day Out®** – We connected with Aboriginal women at this community event hosted by Djirra, a culturally safe support organisations for First Nations people who have experienced family violence.
- **Engagement** – We participated in network meetings, community forums and local NAIDOC Week events.
- **Yarn Ups** – These are monthly reflective gatherings for First Nations staff members and allies to listen, share and reflect.
- **Cultural walk** – Staff attended a cultural walk and mediation in McCrae led by Living Culture, a not-for-profit Indigenous organisation.

'The effect on me was a deeper appreciation and reverence for our natural world, and First Nations people who have been custodians of the land for thousands of years ... I am grateful to the First Nations people who have kept this wisdom and knowledge alive and who are so gracious in sharing the richness with all.'

– MBCP Facilitator

Our statement of commitment

This year, our Board endorsed a new Statement of Commitment to First Nations Peoples of Australia. The statement was developed after a year of deep listening among our team, and reflection on how to capture RAV's commitment to First Nations peoples. It is a promise to First Nations clients, staff and communities that we will continue to show up with humility, courage and care — with relationships always at the centre of our journey.



Relationships
AUSTRALIA · VIC



Our Commitment to First Nations Peoples

At Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV), our commitment to walking alongside First Nations peoples is grounded in respect, responsibility, and a deep desire to learn and grow together. We hold self-determination at the heart of everything we do, whether it's in our conversations, our partnerships, or the services we deliver. Over time, this commitment has moved beyond words and taken shape through real relationships, cultural learning, and meaningful change across our organisation.

In listening to truth-telling and acknowledging the pain caused by colonisation, including disconnection from land, loss of life and freedom, and the forced removal of children, we recognise our shared responsibility in creating a future where reconciliation is real, and relationships are strong. We also acknowledge the ongoing harm caused by systemic racism and the policies that continue to disadvantage First Nations peoples. These truths are not easy, but they are essential, and we are committed to holding space for them with care and honesty.

We have learned so much from our First Nations staff, past and present, who have shown extraordinary commitment, generosity, and cultural leadership. Through their voices, stories, and guidance, we have taken meaningful steps toward becoming a more culturally safe and responsive organisation. Their impact can be seen in how we design and deliver services, how we support one another, and how we hold ourselves accountable. We are proud of the cultural fitness work we have undertaken so far, and we know there is more to do.

We stand in support of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria and the journey toward Treaty, and we embrace the call of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. Our commitment is not only to listen, but to act — to walk alongside, to be guided by community, and to build trust through continued learning and partnership.

This Statement of Commitment has been endorsed by our Board and Executive and reflects who we are becoming. It is a promise to First Nations clients, staff, and communities that we will continue to show up with humility, courage, and care, and that our relationships will always be at the centre of this journey.

'I am pleased and proud to endorse our new Statement of Commitment to First Nations Peoples of Australia. Developed by our First Nations Team, it captures exactly where we are and where we want to be, recognising a lot has been achieved but there is so much more to do. We are committing to listen and to act, to walk alongside First Nations peoples, and to learn and, as the document so eloquently puts it — to show up with humility, courage and care. I commend the Statement as our guide as we continue this important journey.'

Dr Andrew Bickerdike, Chief Executive Officer

'As Board Chair, I fully endorse our new Statement of Commitment to First Nations Peoples of Australia. Our Board of Directors voted unanimously to support this important Statement, which accurately reflects the Board's deep commitment to listening, learning and acting alongside First Nations peoples. Our wholehearted commitment is as individuals, as a Board, and as leaders and representatives of RAV as an organisation.'

Ronda Jacobs, Board President

Honouring culture through art

We were proud to commission a unique artwork from Emrhan Tjapanangka Sultan, RAV's First Nations Engagement Specialist and a distinguished Aboriginal artist. Emrhan is from the Western Arrarnta and Luritja people in Central Australia, and Kokatha people of South Australia. He is deeply connected to his cultural values, and from an early age was taught and given permission by his Elders to paint in the traditional style of the Western and Central Desert.

The artwork represents our organisation, values and ongoing commitment to respecting and working with First Nations communities. It symbolises the relationships we foster within and outside of our organisation with both First Nations and non-Indigenous clients.

Key elements in the artwork represent our staff, the places we gather and our shared organisational journey. Each part tells a distinct story that is connected to the whole, mirroring the role of individuals in supporting connection in relationships, families and communities.

This commission aligns with our Strategic Plan 2024–26, which commits us to deepening our understanding, trust and sustainable relationships with First Nations peoples. It also part of our broader efforts to learn from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, celebrate their achievements, and ensure their voices and experiences are central to our services.

By using this artwork in our materials, we honour First Nations cultures, and reinforce our values of inclusion, respect and cultural safety.

*'This design is a celebration of the **deep relationships RAV has nurtured with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities**, reflected in the 'U' shapes that represent people – **honouring the resilience, wisdom, and cultural strength of First Nations peoples**.*

'It acknowledges the importance of past relationships; the value of present connections that are reflected in the circles expanding like a ripple effect; and the commitment to future collaborations that support reconciliation, healing and shared growth, which are reflected by each dot. Through this design, we pay tribute to RAV's ongoing dedication to respect, understanding and cultural integrity, and recognise the vital role these relationships play in strengthening communities for generations to come.'

– Emrhan Tjapanangka Sultan

Insights and action

We continued to share our knowledge across the sector – contributing to consultations and submissions, publishing reports and resources (see pages 43–49), and sharing research and evaluation findings. Our aim is to ensure the needs of our clients and the community are understood and met, across our sector and beyond.

Family law is complex and broad, and the impact is significant on those experiencing separation, divorce and other family law disputes. We valued the opportunity to provide input into the Review of the Family Relationships Services Program, through written submissions and with Lead Reviewer, Mr Andrew Metcalfe AO, who met with us and visited our Kew and Sunshine centres.

We welcomed the report and its recommendations, in particular funding for child-inclusive practice in FRCs, the establishment of FRC Hubs providing an expanded suite of services, access to legal advice and legally-assisted FDR through the hubs, and case management that can deliver specialised for matters involving family violence.

In November, we joined Relationships Australia colleagues in Canberra to meet with ministers and senators. We advocated for the implementation of the review's recommendations, and launched our family dispute resolution services cost-benefit analysis reports (see pages 46–47).

We were appointed to Victoria's Minimum Mandatory Qualifications Policy Advisory Group, convened by the Centre for Workforce Excellence. As one of a handful of selected organisations, we're helping to shape the development, recruitment and retention of the family violence sector workforce.

We also joined the Policy Advisory Network convened by No to Violence, contributing to national policy development through our insights on sector priorities, systemic challenges and innovative practice.

With No to Violence and other organisations, we supported a joint letter urging political parties to prioritise ending family and sexual violence. It called for a national perpetration strategy, greater early intervention investment, long-term support for Aboriginal-led responses and sustainable funding. The letter was presented to the Minister for Social Services, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, and the Assistant Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, the Hon Ged Kearney MP, reflecting our ongoing commitment to prevention, early intervention and systems reform.



Above left: Senior Manager Strategic Communications, Brand and Advocacy, Anna Clarke, with Senator Larissa Waters, and representatives from Relationships Australia organisations in Tasmania and South Australia



Above right: Senior Manager Evaluation and Social Impact, Sandra Opoku, presenting the results of the cost-benefit analysis of our FDR services

We proudly participated in the Southern Melbourne Family Violence Regional Integration Committee and Persons Using Violence Working Group. This year, the group led a research project exploring the experiences of male perpetrators who have used family violence services. Launched in October 2024, the report highlights opportunities to enhance engagement, accountability and system responses.

Our staff presented at major conferences (see page 44), including:

- **Family and Relationships Services Australia Conference**
- **Child Inclusive Practice Forum**
- **Safe Schools Conference**
- **No to Violence Conference**
- **International Conference on Social Work in Health and Mental Health.**



We also delivered targeted presentations to:

- **Victoria Police** on information sharing and our MBCPs
- **Respect Victoria** on primary prevention, and the intersection between early intervention and response
- **Monash University** on working with people who use sexual violence.

We joined key campaigns and awareness initiatives including the Walk Against Family Violence, 16 Days of Activism, and Wear It Purple.



Family violence: Australia must do more

We released a position paper to support across-sector programs – family violence-specific and generalist – in understanding the drivers, impacts and effective responses to family violence.

Our paper was developed in response to an alarming number of high-profile family violence incidents in Victoria, and an internal background paper we developed for our workforce.

The paper and a follow-up public webinar explored how the sector and community can understand and respond more effectively to prevent family violence in future.

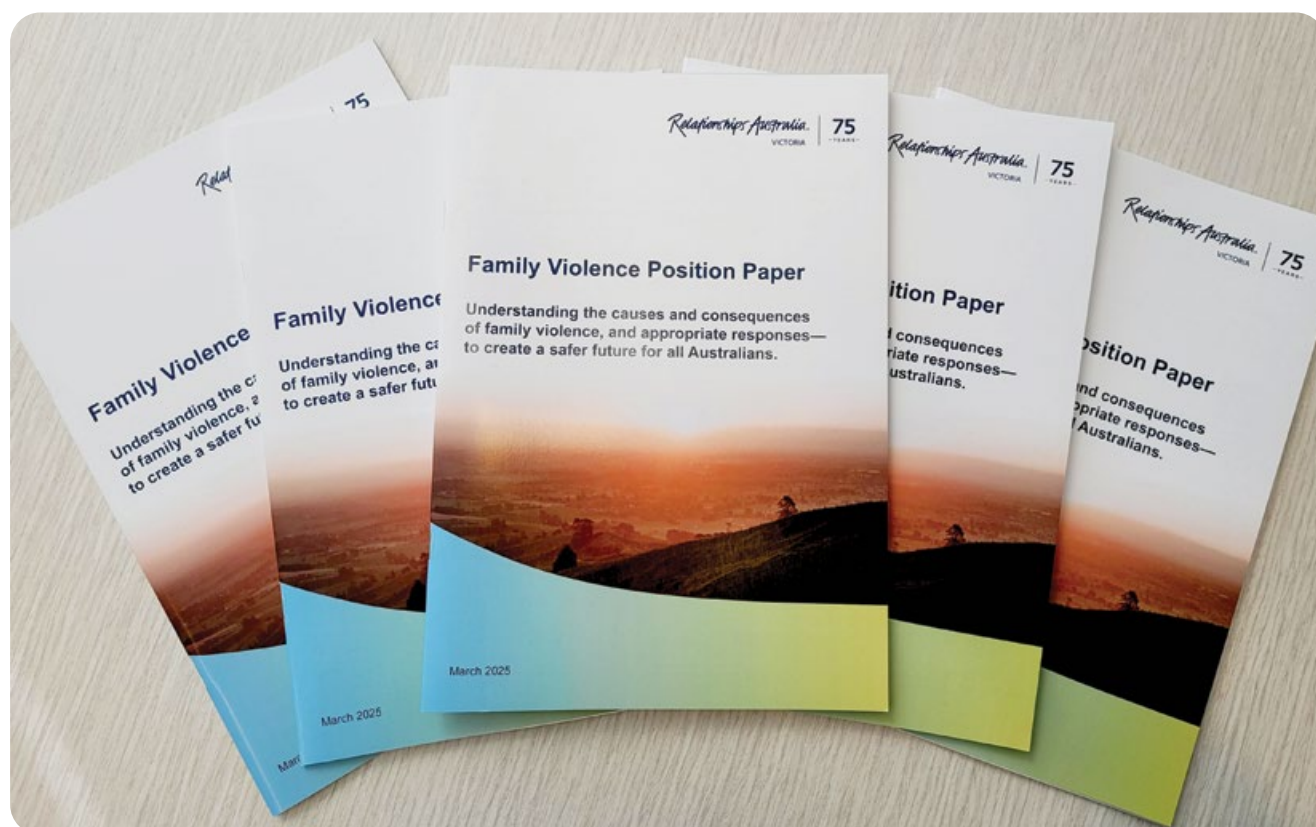
‘Our position paper makes the strong statement that **Australia can and must do better in its efforts to reduce family violence.**’

– Dr Genevieve Heard, Manager Research



Read: *Family violence position paper* [Report]

Visit rav.org.au/about/research-evaluation/FV-Paper/ or scan the QR code.



Going international

Our knowledge-sharing activities extended beyond Australia, especially in mediation and FDR – areas of growing international interest.

We hosted

Japanese Ministry of Justice and Osaka Family Court representatives, as part of a research project into Australia's family law jurisdiction, detailing our service range and impact.

We hosted

A professor from the University of Bialystok in Poland, via a Monash University study tour on Australia's approach to mediation and its effectiveness.

We hosted

A Philippine Judiciary delegation on a study tour exploring access to justice for disadvantaged groups, family mediation, social services, counselling and child-protective measures. The visit was the foundational activity of a new Memorandum of Understanding on Judicial Cooperation between the Philippine Court and the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia, and is part of the Philippine Court's goal to increase access to justice.

We presented

At the Taiwan-based 2024 Voice of Children: International Conference, delivering a keynote address and Q&A on child-inclusive services to legal professionals, judges and FDR practitioners from across Asia.

Journal articles

Heard, G., Zeleznikow J., Maxwell, C., Evered-Wilson, E., & Bickerdike, A. (2024). 'The use and misuse of 'everyday' communication technologies in a family law setting: an exploratory study of post-separation experiences'. *Journal of Social Welfare & Family Law*, 46(3).

Reports

Relationships Australia Victoria. (2024). *Evaluation report – Yarra Communities that Care®: A collaborative approach to strengthening family relationships in the City of Yarra*. <https://www.relationshipsvictoria.org.au/about/research-evaluation/yarra-ctc/#report>

Relationships Australia Victoria. (2024). *Social impact report 2024*. <https://socialimpact.relationshipsvictoria.org.au/>

Relationships Australia Victoria. (2024). *Family dispute resolution services: Cost-benefit analysis summary*. <https://www.relationshipsvictoria.org.au/fdr-cba/#summary>

Relationships Australia Victoria. (2025). *Family violence position paper*. <https://www.relationshipsvictoria.org.au/about/research-evaluation/fv-paper/>

Commissioned reports

Alexander, S., Prichard, P., Moore, T., & Heery, L. (2024). *Supporting children and families to thrive in their relationships: A review of context and evidence for Relationships Australia Victoria*. Centre for Community Child Health. Murdoch Children's Research Institute. <https://www.relationshipsvictoria.org.au/about/research-evaluation/stronger-relationships/#evidence-review>

Alexander, S., Prichard, P., Moore, T., & Heery, L. (2024). *Supporting children and families to thrive in their relationships: An options paper for Relationships Australia Victoria*. Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute. <https://www.relationshipsvictoria.org.au/about/research-evaluation/stronger-relationships/#options-paper>

Alexander, S., Prichard, P., Moore, T., & Heery, L. (2024). *Supporting children and families to thrive in their relationships: Report for Workshop Participants*. Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute. <https://www.relationshipsvictoria.org.au/about/research-evaluation/stronger-relationships/#workshop-report>

Inform Economics. (2024). *Cost-benefit analysis: Family dispute resolution services (parenting)*. Relationships Australia Victoria. <https://www.relationshipsvictoria.org.au/fdr-cba/#report-parenting>



‘The evidence is clear – **relationships and social connections are fundamental to health and wellbeing. This is especially true for families in the early years.**’

– Sandra Opoku, Senior Manager Evaluation and Social Impact

Conferences and presentations

International

Moran, C., Button, N., & Forcey, C. (2024, October). *Incorporating the voice of the child in family dispute resolution* [Online conference presentation]. 2024 Voice of Children International Conference, Taiwan.

Plavljanić, D. (2025, May 21). *Navigating vicarious trauma when supporting grieving clients* [Conference presentation]. New Zealand Cemeteries and Crematoria Conference 2025, Auckland, New Zealand.

National

Coward, L. (2025 May 1). *Supporting LGBTQIASB+ young people in schools* [Conference presentation]. Safe Schools Conference, Gippsland.

Forcey, C. (2025 February 18). *Disclosures of self-harm, gender identity and eating disorders in child-inclusive practice sessions* [Presentation]. Child Inclusive Practice Forum, Canberra.

Goldstein, A. (2025 May 22). *Brief therapy counselling models* [Conference presentation]. Family and Relationship Services Australia National Conference, Sydney.

Goldstein, A., & D'Adamo, K. (2024 September). *Engaging men to change using trauma-informed strategies* [Conference workshop]. No to Violence Conference, Melbourne.

Heard, G., & Lindstrom, J. (2025 May 20). *Safe, strong and legally-assisted: The value of lawyer support in family dispute resolution* [Conference presentation]. Family and Relationship Services Australia National Conference, Sydney.

Heard, G., & Velasquez-Tan, M. (2025 February 19). *The child's voice in family dispute resolution: mapping diverse international models* [Presentation]. Child Inclusive Practice Forum, Canberra.

Heard, G. (2025 May 8). *AccessResolve: Practitioner Survey* [Conference presentation]. AccessResolve Conference, Melbourne.

March, A. (2025 May 24). *Conflict management* [Conference presentation]. Australian Funeral Directors Association Conference, Brisbane.



March, A. (2024 October 2). *Working with diversity and culture* [Conference presentation]. Australasian Cemeteries and Crematoria Association Conference, Adelaide.

McCord, L., & Pepperell, L. (2024 November). *The diffuse program – working with men in a correctional setting*. International Conference on Social Work in Health and Mental Health, Melbourne.

Opoku, S. (2025 May 20). *Supporting children and families to thrive in their relationships: An evidence review* [Conference presentation]. Family and Relationship Services Australia National Conference, Sydney.

Opoku, S. (2024 November). *Cost-benefit analysis: Family dispute resolution services* [Presentation]. Relationships Australia Strategic Leadership Forum, Canberra.

Opoku, S., & Matthies-Brown, K. (2024 September). *Place-based evaluation: collaborating to navigate learning in complex and dynamic contexts* [Conference presentation]. Australian Evaluation Society International Evaluation Conference 2024, Melbourne.

Plavljanić, A. (2024 October). *Supporting your learning and development in 2025* [Conference presentation]. Australasian Cemeteries and Crematoria Association Conference, Adelaide.

Szarski, L. (2025 May 21). *Using parenting coordination as a transformative program for high conflict separated parents and children* [Conference presentation]. Family and Relationship Services Australia National Conference, Sydney.

Webinars

Alford, D., Narywonczyk, T., Martin, T., & Eddy, J. (2024 August 15). *Men's lived experience of suicide* [Webinar]. Relationships Australia Victoria.
<https://enrol.rav.org.au/courses/webinar-recording-mens-lived-experience-of-suicide>

Alford, D., Wynter, K., & King, A. (2024 November 7). *What works for men? Engaging men in prevention* [Webinar]. Relationships Australia Victoria.
<https://enrol.rav.org.au/courses/webinar-recording-what-works-for-men-engaging-men-in-prevention>

Gilbert, N., & Opoku, S. (2025 April). *Yarra Communities that Care®: Evaluating our collaborative approach to strengthening relationships in the City of Yarra* [Webinar]. Relationships Australia.
<https://vimeo.com/1073796586/6ce3a78177>

Goldstein, A. (2025 February 27). *Understanding coercive control* [Webinar]. Relationships Australia Victoria.
<https://enrol.rav.org.au/courses/webinar-recording-understanding-coercive-control>

Heard, G. & La'Brooy, A. (2025 June 17). *Understanding family violence: Key issues in context* [Webinar]. Relationships Australia.
<https://vimeo.com/1094253111/67f509ba92>

March, A. (2025 April 30). *Reflective practice – Considering diverse perspectives* [Webinar]. Relationships Australia Victoria.
<https://enrol.rav.org.au/courses/webinar-recording-reflective-practice-considering-diverse-perspectives>

Moran, C. (2024 July 17). *Family law reforms – In discussion* [Webinar]. Relationships Australia Victoria.
<https://enrol.rav.org.au/courses/rav-webinar-recording-family-law-reforms>

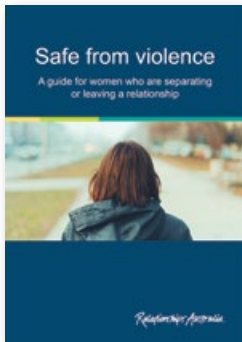
Roberts, J. (2025 March 5). *Psychological wellbeing in the workplace* [Webinar]. Relationships Australia Victoria.
<https://enrol.rav.org.au/courses/webinar-recording-psychological-wellbeing-in-the-workplace>



Resources for clients, practitioners and communities

This year, we developed new reports, information sheets and booklets to share key knowledge and research insights, and support safety, understanding and evidence-informed practice.

Booklet



Safe from violence – A guide for women who are separating or leaving a relationship

Current, practical guidance to help victim-survivors stay safe, and understand their options, including information on technology safety, financial assistance and available support services.



Download

Visit rav.org.au/resources/booklets/safe-from-violence/ or scan the QR code.

Research and evaluation summaries



Evaluating our collaborative approach to strengthening family relationships in the City of Yarra

The results of an evaluation of the impact of our role in a place-based project to deliver social and emotional literacy messaging to families in the City of Yarra. It highlights the transformative power of establishing a closely connected coalition of facilitators and stakeholders.



Download

Visit rav.org.au/about/research-evaluation/yarra-ctc/#summary or scan the QR code.



Family dispute resolution: Benefits for parents and the family law system

The findings of a 2024 cost-benefit analysis conducted by Inform Economics, on the significant economic and social benefits of our FDR services, for families, the courts and the community.



Read more

Visit rav.org.au/fdr-cba/#research-summary or scan the QR code.

Read: All resource booklets

Visit rav.org.au/resources/booklets/ or scan the QR code.



Information sheet



FDR: What the research says and how we know it works

The outcomes of an analysis into FDR for parenting matters, including settlement rates for parents who expected to proceed to court to resolve their disputes.



Download

Visit rav.org.au/about/research-evaluation/FDR/#info-sheet or scan the QR code.

Commissioned reports



Cost-benefit analysis: Family dispute resolution services (parenting)

The results of an analysis conducted by Inform Economics, which provides compelling evidence of the significant advantages FDR provides to families, the family law system and the broader community.



Download

Visit rav.org.au/fdr-cba/#report-parenting or scan the QR code.



Supporting children and families to thrive in their relationships

The results of a project with the Centre for Community Child Health, which aimed to identify how we could best influence positive systems change to support children and families. Outcomes include a review of context and evidence for RAV, an options paper for RAV and a report for workshop participants.



Download

Visit rav.org.au/about/research-evaluation/stronger-relationships/ or scan the QR code.

Read: All research and evaluation summaries

Visit rav.org.au/about/research-evaluation/research-summaries or scan the QR code.



Reports



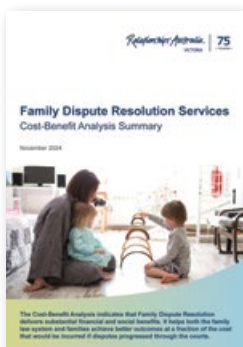
Evaluation report – Yarra Communities that Care®: A collaborative approach to strengthening family relationships in the City of Yarra

The results of an evaluation of this initiative, which we participated in from 2017 to 2024. It reports on the initiative, which aimed to provide evidence-based social and emotional literacy messaging to families, and our role coordinating a network of parenting program facilitators.



Download

Visit rav.org.au/about/research-evaluation/yarra-ctc/#report or scan the QR code.



Family dispute resolution services: Cost-benefit analysis summary

A summary report of a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis of our FDR services for parenting matters, demonstrating significant financial and wellbeing benefits for families, the court system and the wider community.



Download

Visit rav.org.au/fdr-cba/#summary or scan the QR code.



Family violence position paper

Information about family violence, its causes and consequences, and approaches to prevention, to inform the understanding of those working in family violence-specific and non-specific services and leadership roles.



Download

Visit rav.org.au/about/research-evaluation/fv-paper/ or scan the QR code.



Social impact report 2024

The impact of our services in 2023–24 across key domains – mental health and wellbeing, family functioning, child wellbeing, and personal and family safety. The report showcases how we create real-world change for individuals, families and communities.



Download

Visit socialimpact.relationshipsvictoria.org.au/ or scan the QR code.

The right to be safe

Key programs

302

men's case management clients

838

MBCP clients

915

family safety contact service clients

With more than one in 4 women experiencing family violence in their lifetime,¹ and concerns about violence among young people, the need for our support services continues to grow.

We work to prevent violence before it occurs and to support healing after harm has taken place, addressing both the drivers and impacts of family violence. We work alongside people who have used violence, as well as those who have been affected by it, including through MBCPs, men's case management, family safety contact, counselling and group programs.

We deliver trauma-informed, person-centred family violence programs that are responsive and deeply reflect each client's unique circumstances. This flexible approach recognises the diverse experiences of individuals, and prioritises the safety and wellbeing of whole families.

We support reflection, accountability, safety and change, so individuals and families can build the insight and skills needed for respectful, safe and fulfilling relationships.

‘When men have completed week 20, we get them to write a letter to themselves. It's really fulfilling to see that, what you can see in them, they're also seeing in themselves and the **massive change from when they first started.**’

– Family violence program staff member

Men making changes

Our MBCP is a 20-week group that supports men to reflect on and change their use of violence towards family members. Each group includes up to 14 participants with a rolling intake model through which new participants join as others complete the program. This model fosters a dynamic learning environment, where men further along in the program often informally support newer participants by sharing insights and personal reflections. These shared learnings complement the work of facilitators, and contribute to deeper engagement and sustained change.

‘When I first joined the men's behaviour change program, I had doubts about how it could positively impact my life. I wondered how a program like this could change behaviours I had developed over 45 years. However, after just a few weeks, I began to feel more at ease and found real value in learning from the personal stories shared by others. Both facilitators were highly experienced and supportive. I especially appreciated how they respectfully challenged our thinking and encouraged us to explore alternative paths – approaches that avoid aggression and are considerate of others' thoughts and feelings. Looking back, I believe joining this program was one of the best decisions I have ever made.’

– MBCP client

¹ <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/crime-and-justice/personal-safety-australia/latest-release>

Stories that matter

Ed's voice: A letter to my past self

'I'm writing this letter as the old me, as it was very hard to relate to it as the person I've already changed to become!

The difficulties I had coming to the MBCP were quite severe. I didn't see anything wrong in a lot of the things I was doing and I wasn't ready to change whatsoever. I didn't believe I needed to change. I thought everything I was doing was awesome. The program was court ordered so I had to attend, but I've also loved attending this program and learning more and meeting all the blokes in here.

I continued to come every week because regardless of what anyone thinks, you can learn more about yourself, even if you think you have learnt it all. There's nothing stopping anyone from continuing to develop as a man and striving to become the best version of themselves as possible.

I was held back from being honest with myself and others as I was in denial for a very long time. But when you can finally admit that you're the problem and you need to change, but that no one else can make you or help you change, you will take the next step to becoming a better person.

I never thought I was going to be able to change. I thought that I was going to be stuck in the rut of crime, smoking, drugs, and in and out of jail, for the rest of my life. I didn't see [any] other future for me — I thought that was it. I thought I belonged in that world of dealers, etc., and that's where I thought I was accepted. It took me many goes to change — I kept trying and getting knocked down but after a while I would always try again, because if you don't try then you will never know what's on the other side for you.

The reason I changed was for ME, but not only me. I also changed for my kids.

The only advice I can give is, regardless of the situation, even if you really don't want to be here, make sure you put 100% into the group and interact as much as possible. Because if you don't, you won't get anything out of the program and you're just here as a number. Change starts with you and only you, and you only have yourself to blame for the reason you're here, so always be open.

Stick at it guys, because trust me when I say this: change is possible.'

– Ed*, MBCP client

*Name changed for privacy

Addressing barriers to behaviour change

Many male perpetrators of family violence referred to our organisation present with complex needs that must be addressed alongside, or sometimes before, participating in group-based behaviour change work.

Our men's case management service works holistically with men to identify and address factors such as housing instability, substance use and mental health concerns, including by coordinating with or referring to specialist services. Supporting individuals to achieve greater stability is critical for reducing the risk of family violence, and promoting safer outcomes for victim-survivors and families.

With greater stability, clients are better placed to engage in the reflective work and sustain meaningful change.

Sustaining change

Maintaining behaviour change and accountability takes time, ongoing commitment and continued support.

Recognising this, we offer support during and also after men complete an MBCP with us. Our Sustain program helps men to maintain changes they've made during the MBCP, with a strong focus on parenting and the impact of violence on children.

We also offer a post-participation program tailored to individual needs, including safety planning, risk assessment and referrals to relevant services such as mental health or substance use supports.

By extending support beyond our 20-week MBCP, we promote sustained behaviour change and safer, healthier relationships for men and their families.

Safety is the focus

Safety for victim-survivors and families is at the heart of our family violence work. Through Family Safety Contact, we proactively engage with current or former partners and family members of men participating in an MBCP, men's case management and post-participation support programs.

We conduct risk assessments, develop safety plans and make referrals to specialist services to ensure that risk is continuously monitored, and that the voices, needs and safety of women and children are central to all decision-making. This work is critical in supporting safety, reducing harm and maintaining a whole-of-family focus.



*'The MBCP here in Shepparton has **really made a difference** to my day-to-day life in the best way, with family and friends noticing the clear difference in me. **Couldn't have changed my life without you ALL! Thank you.**'*

– MBCP client

*'**Healthy relationships start with respect** – for ourselves, others and our communities, and our program is a testament to the **power of education in shaping a safer, more respectful future.**'*

– Coordinator Respect and Connect

‘If many Victorian kids did Respect and Connect, the **society would be a better place.**’

– Jasmine, Braybrook College student, year 8

Respect and Connect in schools

Family violence is a pervasive issue that disproportionately affects women and girls, and primary prevention is key to ending it.

We deliver Respect and Connect, a family violence prevention and mental health promotion program for school students, focused on protective factors that underpin safe and respectful relationships.

Delivered on-site to individual school classes, the program provides a safe and supportive space for students to build self-awareness, empathy and conflict resolution skills. The impact extends beyond the classroom, with learnings that students can carry into other areas of life.

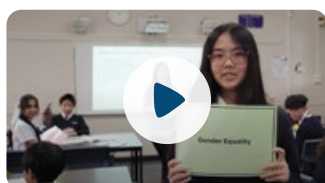
We also engage parents and teachers in the program's key messages, as research shows that involving the whole school community is critical to broader environmental and cultural change.

*‘To me, a **healthy relationship** looks like a relationship where both individuals are able to **talk about how they feel** without being uncomfortable, and to **always have each other's back.**’*

– Jacob, Braybrook College student, year 8

*‘**We will definitely keep running Respect and Connect**, it's become part of the fabric of the school ... It's all so impressive because it's targeting the message which is on building those relationships and making sure that everyone's accepted, stereotypes are challenged and poor behaviours are challenged.’*

– Sean McMahon, Braybrook College Assistant Principal



Watch: Respect and Connect in schools
Visit youtu.be/4yT37Clhgd0
or scan the QR code.



Safe from violence: A guide for women who are separating or leaving a relationship

We have released a new edition of our *Safe from violence* booklet to meet the evolving needs of our clients, victim-survivors and the wider community.

Our third edition includes current, practical guidance to help women who are separating or leaving a relationship to stay safe and understand their options. It includes information on technology safety, support services and financial assistance, and importantly, reflects the growing focus on children and young people affected by family violence.

The booklet acknowledges their unique needs – whether as victim-survivors, those who witness violence or those who perpetrate violence – and provides information on services specifically designed for them.



Read: Safe from violence [Booklet]
Visit rav.org.au/resources/booklets/safe-from-violence/
or scan the QR code.

*If you are experiencing any form of family violence, it is important to know that **you are not to blame** and that **help and support is available.***

Demonstrating positive outcomes

Collecting and analysing data, and sharing personal stories, helps to showcase the power of relationship-based services in creating positive outcomes for individuals, families and the wider community.

Our service impact and value

We released our second annual *Social impact report*, showing how efforts to strengthen relationships create outcomes for individuals, families and communities. The report offers clear insights in key program areas, with real stories illustrating the meaningful difference our work makes.



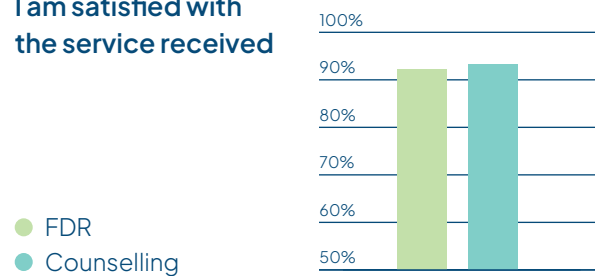
Read more

Visit socialimpact.relationshipsvictoria.org.au/ or scan the QR code.

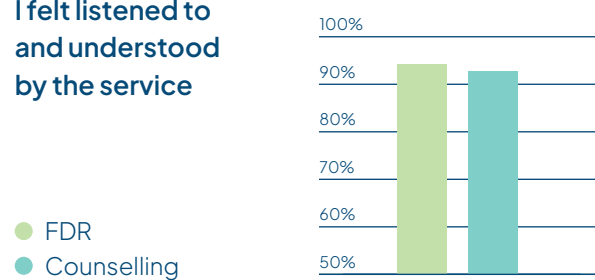
Award for impact

We're proud to have won the 2024 Excellence in Social Impact Measurement Award at the 10th Annual Social Impact Network Australia Awards, which celebrate outstanding efforts in evidencing social change across Australia. The excellence award recognises best practice initiatives that serve as a benchmark for others, and celebrates how robust social impact measurement not only improves our work, but also contributes to positive change across the sector.

I am satisfied with the service received



I felt listened to and understood by the service



Annual Social Impact Network Australia Award Judges' feedback

'Relationships Australia Victoria should be congratulated for their highly strategic, rigorous, and evidence-based approach to social impact measurement.'

'This investment and dedication demonstrate leading by example and will likely inspire social impact methodologies that peer organisations can adopt and adapt.'

Support to move forward

Listening, believing, supporting

Our Redress Support Service supports survivors of institutional child sexual abuse as they engage with the National Redress Scheme. Using a trauma-informed, survivor-centred approach, we offer individualised support throughout the process – from counselling, information and referrals, to help with applications and receiving outcomes. These outcomes can include financial redress, counselling and Direct Personal Responses from responsible institutions. Our holistic model ensures clients feel supported, safe and empowered at every stage of their journey.

In October, we joined a client of our Redress Support Service and others from across Australia who have engaged with the National Redress Scheme, at a Survivor Round Table in Adelaide hosted by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

The event gave them a direct opportunity to share their experiences and provide feedback to government representatives, including the then-Minister for Social Services, the Hon Amanda Rishworth MP, on their experiences of the National Redress Scheme, and opportunities for improving the service and reaching more people eligible to use it.

Our client bravely spoke directly to the Minister about her own experiences, including where she felt the scheme was falling short in supporting victim-survivors. We were present at the event in a support role, to ensure our client felt safe, heard and empowered to speak. Our client showed courage and strength in sharing their powerful and moving story to contribute to improving the system for others.

*'Other counselling was not successful, which made my experience with RAV even more valued. I want to stress how much I appreciate that **at last I have been listened to and more importantly, have been believed.** I am very grateful for the help you have provided.'*

– Redress Support Services client

202

Redress Support Service clients

63

Forced Adoption Support Service clients

Understanding the legacy of forced adoption

As a provider of Forced Adoption Support Services in Victoria, we offer free counselling, therapeutic support, education and information to those affected by historical forced adoption policies and practices. They include mothers, fathers, adopted individuals and extended families. Our services are available statewide via in-person, outreach, telehealth and online delivery.

At the heart of our work is the knowledge that healing from forced adoption trauma is central to building respectful, safe and fulfilling relationships. Many clients come to us still grieving deeply, and struggling with isolation, and this can impact their sense of belonging and ability to maintain meaningful connections. We provide a supportive, client-centred service to help rebuild trust, agency and connection – key foundations for therapeutic outcomes and wellbeing generally.

*'We often see clients come to us carrying decades of unresolved grief, shame, or a deep sense of disconnection. Through gentle, trauma-informed support, **many begin to make sense of their experiences – sometimes for the first time.** It's incredibly powerful to witness the shift when someone starts to reclaim their story, rebuild trust in themselves and others, and feel a renewed sense of identity and connection.'*

– Therapeutic Services Coordinator,
Forced Adoption Support Service

Stories that matter

Janet's voice: Unpacking forced adoption

'I feel like I want to tell everyone that is impacted by forced adoption that they should ring your service ... they won't regret it, because it can only be beneficial. No matter how big the can of worms is, for anyone that is adopted I think that you have to open it at some point. Everyone can benefit from counselling like this.'

The service has been fabulous. The biggest benefit I think was the number of sessions, because it meant I could talk to [my practitioner] once a week, and it felt like I had a life coach – a support person. It dawned on me how much better I felt with someone to unpack all my thoughts and feelings with, who is understanding.

I still think I have plenty of things to work on, but I do feel better equipped to understand myself, which is a big thing for me.

I wouldn't hesitate to say that your service, and seeing [my practitioner], has been above and beyond all those counselling experiences put together, in all seriousness ... it has been the best.'

– Janet*, Forced Adoption Support Service client

**Name changed for privacy*



Links are key

We have expertise in developing and delivering rehabilitation and reintegration programs for people in Victoria's correctional system.

LINCS is a strengths-based, one-day psychoeducational workshop for individuals who are subject to a Community Correction Order. It uses skills-based activities to support participants to build capabilities, identify personal strengths, and develop strategies and supports. We also deliver LINCS in Families workshops for people on a Community Correction Order due to family violence.

This year, we delivered these Corrections Victoria-funded programs both online and in-person across Victoria, including in Ballarat, Bendigo, Broadmeadows, Dandenong, Frankston, Geelong, Melbourne CBD, Ringwood, Sunshine and Wodonga.

Participants consistently report gaining insights into the drivers of their behaviour, their capacity to manage their lives and how to identify their priorities.

LINCS participants

Most important learnings

'Cementing the steps I've taken and intend to take are in the right direction.'

'To stop and think about the consequences of my actions.'

'Identifying values in relationships.'

'Insight to others' struggles, as I have been feeling indifferent and alone with mine.'

Feedback

'Best program I have done.'

'It will help me to live a healthier and sustainable life.'

'It has helped me understand my behaviours and see things more clearly.'

'The program has provided me with life tools that will allow me to grow as a partner and a father.'

LINCS and LINCS in Families

175

programs delivered

1,105

people completed the program

96%

would recommend the program

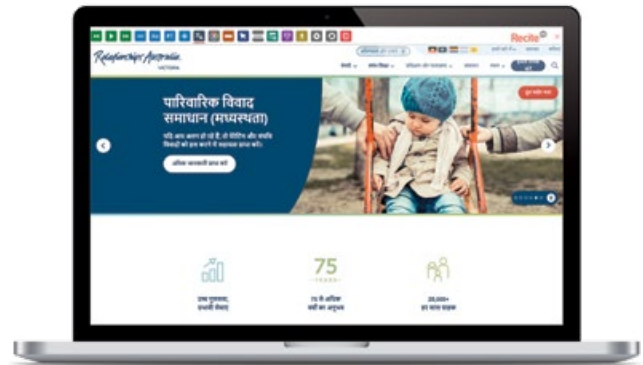


Championing diversity, accessibility and cultural safety

We're committed to supporting people from different backgrounds, and with different identities and experiences, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Our Diversity Working Group drives meaningful change for clients, staff and communities through ongoing learning, consultation and advocacy. The group focuses on promoting equity and accessibility across our services, particularly for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with disability and First Nations peoples.

This year, we took important steps to strengthen inclusion and accessibility across our organisation. We became a member of Diversity Council Australia, giving employees access to practical resources and learning opportunities to support inclusive practice. We also began developing Access Keys, which are customised, detailed guides of our service locations to improve physical and sensory accessibility for people with disability. They help to make our centres more welcoming and easier to navigate.



To enhance access to online information, we introduced a new accessibility and languages toolbar on our website. Visitors can now customise how the site looks and sounds to suit their needs, including options for text-to-speech, audio downloads, font and colour adjustments, and translations.

In our community engagement work, we facilitated a workshop organised by Multicultural Women Victoria on respectful relationships, the impacts of family violence and available support services. The workshop brought together community leaders from a range of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, with a focus on how they could take this knowledge back to their communities and lead meaningful conversations.



‘Respecting diversity and ensuring inclusion are not just best practices – they are central to delivering high-quality, responsive services. **When people feel safe and respected, they’re more likely to engage openly, participate fully, and achieve better outcomes.**’

– Diversity Working Group member

Providing safe, more welcoming places for everyone

Inclusiveness is one of our core values, and it's essential to delivering contemporary and supportive services that meet the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and other sexually or gender diverse (LGBTIQA+) clients, their families and our staff members.

Our Rainbow Working Group plays a key role in strengthening the inclusivity and accessibility of our services for LGBTIQA+ clients, communities and staff members. It also provides a safe and welcoming space for LGBTIQA+ staff and allies to connect, and undertakes initiatives focused on our shared goal of a safe and inclusive organisation.

In 2024–25, the group supported a range of initiatives, including:

- **Wear It Purple Day** – Staff across RAV wore purple and hosted morning teas to mark this annual celebration of LGBTIQA+ pride, and promote safe, empowering and inclusive environments for LGBTIQA+ clients, colleagues, families and allies, both in the community and at work.
- **Training by Transgender Victoria** – Staff participated in sessions to build their capacity to work respectfully and inclusively with LGBTIQA+ and transgender clients.
- **Community engagement** – We hosted information stalls at the Midsumma Carnival and ChillOut Festival, connecting with community members and other organisations. We also continued our support of the Melbourne Queer Film Festival.

When clients are free to be themselves and are supported by skilled staff, it leads to **better outcomes** for our clients, our workforce and the broader community.



Above: Staff members at the Midsumma Carnival



Above: Central Office staff members marking Wear it Purple Day

Supporting professional growth across sectors

Training delivered in 2024–25



2

Mediation Training Course intakes

49

webinars & workshops

4

Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution intakes

22

self-paced & micro courses

51

accredited training enrolments

1,471

self-paced & micro course participants

This year, we launched a new name for our training and development team, now known as the Centre for Learning and Innovation. The change reflects the extensive and growing suite of professional development services we offer, including our accredited graduate diplomas in family dispute resolution and relationship counselling, delivered through our Registered Training Organisation (No. 21977), and our Mediation Training Course and Specialist Course in Integrative Couple Therapy.

This year, our organisation also became an accredited AMDRAS body and training provider. We introduced a new online course – a 12-week Couples Counselling Course, which is accredited by the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia. We welcome accreditation for the VET Student Loans program for our Graduate Diploma of Relationship Counselling, which also gained accreditation with the Australian Counselling Association.

In response to the growing prevalence of mental health issues affecting individuals, families and in workplaces, we began delivering accredited Mental Health First Aid training.

‘The course has not only given me new skills and tools, but also the confidence to use them, that has **already enhanced my day-to-day practice** and in turn benefited not only the people we work with, but also their families, friends and the wider community as well.’

– Graduate Diploma of Relationship Counselling student

New government partnership to strengthen the sector

This year, we secured 2 new contracts with the Victorian Government's Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.

As part of its broader graduate program, the department engaged us to develop and deliver Peer Learning Networks for new and entry-level workers across the community and social services sectors. RAV will facilitate 10 sessions annually for up to 50 networks, to build capability, support professional learning and foster networking opportunities – ultimately, helping to grow and retain the workforce.

We are also leading the development and delivery of a leadership and mentoring program for Level 5 child protection practitioners. Of the 30 planned workshops, two-thirds were delivered this year, equipping practice leaders and managers with mentoring, stakeholder management and leadership skills to support their day-to-day work, including team leadership.

What Peer Learning Network participants say

1. What do you like most about the network?

'Building connections with others, and building resources and knowledge.'

2. What knowledge or skills gained so far will you be able to apply in your work?

'Learning about professional boundaries and strategies that others have put in place to manage their workload and practice self-care.'



Four intakes, 40 students — reaching across Australia

Through our Registered Training Organisation, we continued to deliver our CHC81115 Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution. This year, over 40 students attended one of 4 new intakes being delivered online, in-person or using a hybrid model. This nationally accredited course provides a combination of theory, practice and evidence-based content, preparing students to become accredited FDR practitioners, and practise FDR under the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth). As we are a government-approved VET Student Loan provider for this course, eligible students can receive assistance with the course fees.

*'Coming from a long career in family law, **the training that I received with RAV was refreshing and transformative.** Being guided by highly experienced FDR practitioners, **I gained a new perspective** with the focus shifting from legal principles to the people at the heart of the conflict. I have taken this approach to my new career as a mediator and family dispute practitioner, allowing me to support parties with greater empathy, clarity and effectiveness in resolving disputes.'*

– CHC81115 Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution student

Training delivered this year

Accredited training

Nationally accredited and delivered through our Registered Training Organisation RTO 21977, which is regulated by the Australian Skills Quality Authority.

- CHC81115 Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution
- CHC81015 Graduate Diploma of Relationship Counselling
- Mediation Training Course: CHCSS00142 Mediation Skill Set and Australian Mediator and Dispute Resolution Accreditation Standards

Accredited programs: Other

Evidence-informed, nationally recognised and nationally accredited.

- Specialist Course in Integrative Couple Therapy
- Couples Counselling Course: A contemporary and client-focused approach

Customised training

Developed and delivered to meet the unique needs of organisations, services and staff.

- Coercive Control
- Compassionate Customer Service
- Critical Incident Debriefing
- Critical Incident Debriefing and Interventions during Bereavement
- Family and Domestic Violence Refresher
- Group Mentoring
- Healthy Relationships
- How to Navigate an Arrangement When There Is Family Conflict
- Introduction to Grief
- Leadership Masterclass: Business Planning and Strategic Thinking

- Leadership Masterclass: Transitioning into Leadership
- Managing Challenging Behaviours
- Motivational Interviewing
- On Being a Dad
- Professional Boundaries in the Workplace
- Responding to Disclosure
- Responding to Family Violence in a Community Setting
- Responding to Family Violence in a Community Setting (Rainbow)
- Responding to Grief – Single Session Contact
- Stress Management
- Supporting Adolescents through Grief and Loss
- The Accidental Counsellor
- Vicarious Trauma
- Vicarious Trauma, Debriefing and Self-Care
- Working with Dads

Professional development webinars

On-demand webinars on a diverse range of topics, presented by leading national and international professionals.

- Child Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Family Law Reforms – In Discussion
- Gender Equality in Sport and the Prevention of Violence
- Life Transitions and Mental Health
- Making Space for Peacekeeping – What Can We Learn from Mediation in Remote Communities?
- Men's Lived Experience of Suicide
- Psychological Wellbeing in the Workplace
- Raising Children with Disability – Supporting Fathers
- Reflective Practice – Considering Diverse Perspectives
- Understanding Coercive Control
- Understanding Prolonged Grief
- What Works for Men? Engaging Men in Prevention

Professional development workshops

Online and in-person training for individuals, teams and workplaces.

- Advanced Property FDR
- Attending Court and Writing Reports
- Couples Who Separate 'Under One Roof'
- Critical Incident Debriefing
- Dads' Group
- Facilitating a Therapeutic Support Group
- Managing Challenging Behaviours
- Mental Health First Aid
- Motivational Interviewing
- Narrative Therapy
- Parenting Coordination Supervision
- Parenting Coordinator Masterclass
- Solution-Focused Brief Therapy
- Supervision Training
- The Casual Counsellor
- Vicarious Trauma
- Working with Dads

Self-paced courses and micro-courses

Online and on-demand courses.

- Casual Counsellor
- Conducting Family Dispute Resolution Online
- Leading Difficult Conversations
- Managing Challenging Behaviours
- Negotiation and Conflict Management in the Workplace
- Professional Boundaries in Therapeutic and Care Work
- Property and Financial Matters in Family Dispute Resolution
- Understanding and Preventing Vicarious Trauma
- Understanding Grief
- Working with Clients Experiencing Grief
- Working with Dads

*'I've had **nothing but positive feedback** about the session, so many thanks to you and your team for facilitating a wonderful session.'*

– Customised training client



Online where and when we're needed

We continue to share our knowledge, resources and services online, making it easier for people to access the information they need – when and where it suits them.

Online reach 2024–25

Website (rav.org.au)

- 318,598 unique visitors
- 858,916 page views
- 34,785 downloads
- Most visited: *What is coercive control?*
rav.org.au/news/what-is-coercive-control/
- Most downloaded:
Share the care parenting plan [Booklet]
rav.org.au/resources/booklets/share-the-care/

Social media

- 132,666 unique users reached

Videos and animations

- 21 new videos (48 total)
- 11,652 views

Most viewed videos:

- *Here for you: 75 Years of RAV*
Visit youtu.be/i7kzi40kLUA
- *7 types of dad*
Visit youtu.be/CM6ttORCOAc
- *Good communication*
Visit youtu.be/DrBfDEcwmvU

Key new videos in our library

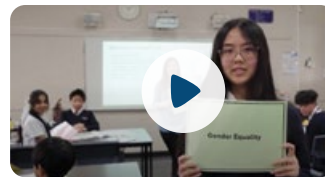


Healthy Clubs. Preventing family violence through sport



Watch

Visit youtu.be/90bcXJfEgLE
or scan the QR code.

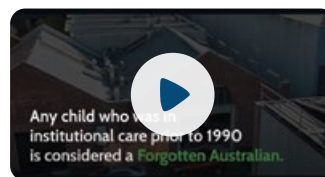


Respect and Connect. Working in schools to support healthy and safe futures



Watch

Visit youtu.be/4yT37ClhgdO
or scan the QR code.



Open Place. A vital support and advocacy service for Forgotten Australians



Watch

Visit youtu.be/DjhX2693wIE
or scan the QR code.



Watch: Access our full video library

Visit youtube.com/@RelationshipsAusVic
or scan the QR code

Workforce

Our people behind our impact

Our workforce

393

staff members

24

promotions



66

new employees



Staff commitment

4.6

years average
tenure for staff



32.57%

of staff members have worked
with us for 5 years or more

35

dedicated staff members have
worked with us for 15 years or more

Staff professional development in 2024–25

282

training programs accessed

3,684

hours of training delivered



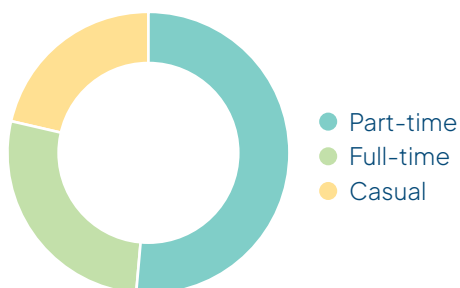
Employee gender



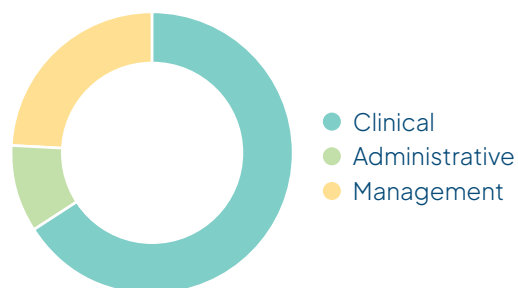
Management gender



Employment type



Role type



The RAV difference for our people

Why people choose to work with us — and stay

People choose to work with us because what they do here means something. It aligns with their values, makes a difference in communities, and supports their professional and personal growth.

Our culture is one where people feel respected, and where wellbeing and work-life balance are genuinely valued and supported. Our people are backed by best-practice supervision, ongoing training, and real opportunities to learn and progress their careers. This year, our staffing group accessed professional development on topics ranging from the Family Law Act changes, to leading difficult conversations, psychological wellbeing in the workplace, and working with fathers using family violence.

We're proud to offer competitive salaries, generous leave, flexible and hybrid working, and benefits like salary packaging and organisational-paid parental leave.

Our commitment to ensuring respectful, safe and inclusive workplaces is reflected in everything we do – from core inclusion training to dedicated working groups, staff-led yarning circles and involvement in community awareness campaigns.

When you work with us, you're not just doing a job – you're part of something bigger, making a meaningful difference for our clients and our communities, every day.



‘RAV’s workplace culture is one of respect, and it’s inclusive and it’s collaborative. Achievements are acknowledged within teams and also organisationally, and we celebrate our achievements.’

– Jo Huggins, Senior Manager Operations
Regional Victoria

‘I really appreciate how well RAV values equate with my own. It is a joy to work for an organisation that holds all people — employees and clients — in such high regard.’

– headspace staff member

‘Providing this support is both deeply important and immensely rewarding ... The team consistently demonstrates dedication, compassion and professionalism in every interaction. It is a privilege to lead such a committed group and to contribute to the care and support of this client cohort.’

– Redress Support Services Coordinator



Learn: Working with RAV
Visit rav.org.au/careers
or scan the QR code

1. Values and community impact

- Opportunities to engage in work that has real impact and aligns with your personal values and beliefs.
- Trusted, evidence-based and continuously evaluated services.
- A client-responsive approach with a strong focus on social responsibility and responding to community needs.
- Meaningful connections between staff and with our clients and the communities where we live and work.
- Experience the joy of contributing to a greater purpose and helping advance our organisational vision and focus.

4. Compensation and benefits

- Competitive salaries that reflect your qualifications, skills and experience. Access to Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) salary packaging.
- Generous leave benefits above the award, including personal, compassionate, special and flexible leave, and additional paid leave provided between Christmas and New Year.
- Flexible working arrangements and hybrid working options.
- Paid parental leave for primary and secondary carers.
- Supportive family violence leave policy.

2. Career development

- Career growth / progression opportunities.
- Ongoing training and professional development opportunities to enhance knowledge / skills.
- Registered Training Organisation (RTO) providing accredited and over 80 non-accredited training courses.
- Best-practice clinical supervision.
- Regular feedback opportunities with managers as part of an annual performance cycle.

5. Diversity and inclusion

- Staff resource working groups including Rainbow Working Group and Diversity Working Group.
- Diversity Council of Australia membership.
- Mandatory Core Inclusion Training for all staff.
- Commitment to gender equity at all levels.

3. Culture and work environment

- Strong, supportive and values-aligned team culture.
- Organisational commitment to supporting a positive work-life balance.
- Open, honest and future-focused communication.
- Recognition and acknowledgement of staff achievements and contributions.

6. First Nations

- Support for First Nations staff
- First Nations Identified roles.
- Cultural leave and cultural supervision.
- Cultural fitness initiatives.
- Mandatory cultural competency training.
- Regular staff yarning circles to talk about First Nations cultures and allyship.
- Staff can apply to work on 26 January and take an alternative day off.

Senior leadership*



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
Information and Digital
Services



Suzanne Ichlov
General Manager
Operations



Sharon Greenhill
General Manager People
and Culture



Anna Clarke
Senior Manager Strategic
Communications, Brand
and Advocacy



Donna Plavljanic
Senior Manager Learning
and Innovation



Jo Huggins
Senior Manager
Operations Regional
Victoria



Sandra Opoku
Senior Manager Evaluation
and Social Impact



Suresh Ramachandraiah
Senior Manager
Operations South East and
West Metro

* As of 30 June 2025

Our Board

The Board provides oversight and strategic direction that support our goals and objectives.

The Board's areas of focus this year included the advancement of strategic initiatives, robust risk management and an ongoing commitment to the delivery of high-quality client services.

The work of the Board is further strengthened by its 3 Committees: the Audit and Finance Committee, the Clinical Governance Committee and the Governance Committee. Each plays a vital role in enhancing governance practices within their respective areas, ensuring accountability, compliance and continuous improvement across RAV.

Board members*



Ronda Jacobs
Board President



Associate Professor Kaye Frankcom
Board Vice-President,
Clinical Governance
Committee Chair



Michael Hunt
Board Member, Audit
and Finance Committee
Member, Governance
Committee Member



John Lovell
Board Member



Professor Helen Rhoades OAM
Board Member, Clinical
Governance Committee
Member



Professor Colin Royse
Board Member,
Governance Committee
Chair



Michael Shaw
Board Member, Audit and
Finance Committee Chair



Michael Wootten
Board Member, Audit
and Finance Committee
Member

* As of 30 June 2025

Financial performance

Summary statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 30 June 2025

	2025 (\$)	2024 (\$)
Revenue		
Grant funding	40,864,146	40,028,470
Client fees	2,039,839	2,042,260
Other income	4,564,450	4,074,574
Total revenue	47,468,435	46,145,304
Expenses		
Employee costs	34,224,868	33,453,991
Operating costs	10,265,160	9,820,079
Depreciation and amortisation	1,832,825	1,965,137
Total expenses	46,322,853	45,239,207
Surplus	1,145,582	906,097
Other comprehensive income		
Net gain on revaluation of non-current assets	-	1,145,000
Total comprehensive income	1,145,582	2,051,097

Summary statement of financial position as at 30 June 2025

	2025 (\$)	2024 (\$)
Assets		
Current assets	35,002,549	32,371,131
Non-current assets	11,985,331	11,358,021
Total assets	46,987,880	43,729,152
Liabilities		
Current liabilities	19,646,152	18,037,445
Non-current liabilities	4,691,719	4,187,280
Total liabilities	24,337,871	22,224,725
Net assets	22,650,009	21,504,427

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 2025 and the Summary Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2025 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 16 September 2025.

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.

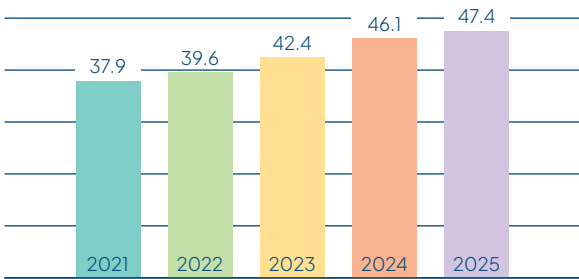
Grant Thornton

Grant Thornton Australia

Brock Mackenzie

Brock Mackenzie
Partner

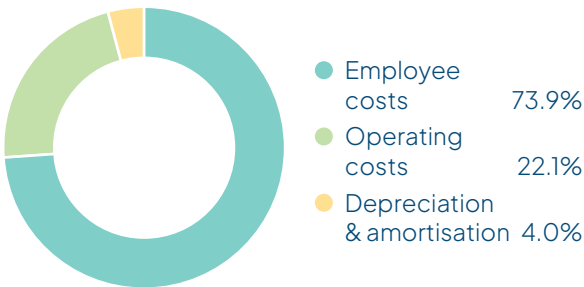
Revenue growth (\$M)



Revenue



Expenses



Central Office

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

Victoria-wide

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

Social media

Facebook: @RelAustVic
Instagram: @RelationshipsVic
LinkedIn: Relationships Australia Victoria
YouTube: @RelationshipsAusVic
X: @RelAustVic

Scan the QR code or visit
www.rav.org.au/socials



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.

