

Relationships Australia[®]

VICTORIA

Annual Report 2021-22

Resilient





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Australian Government



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

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

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

Relationships Australia Victoria acknowledges the funding it receives from the Australian and Victorian Governments.

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

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

Acronyms and initialisms

FDR	family dispute resolution
FRC	Family Relationship Centre
LGBTIQ+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual and other sexually or gender diverse
MBCP	Men's Behaviour Change Program
RAV	Relationships Australia Victoria
YAG	Youth Advisory Group

ABN 51 263 215 677 | ACN 628 873 941

Who we are

Our vision

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

Our focus

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



Our values



Inclusivity

Treating all people equally.

Respect

Treating everyone with respect.

Integrity

Behaving with integrity in all our dealings.

Transparency

Being open and honest in our communications.

Accountability

Using our resources responsibly.

Effectiveness

Providing high-quality, effective services and maintaining the highest professional standards.

Adaptability

Proactively responding to change to meet the needs of the community.

President's foreword



When COVID-19 first emerged in early 2020, few would have predicted that it would still be impacting us 2 and a half years later. While we initially needed to quickly adapt to ensure continuity of services, we have now embedded and enhanced hybrid service delivery models as we've adjusted to what is the new 'COVID-normal'.

What has been achieved by our organisation is outstanding. This year, we experienced periods of lockdowns, gradual transitions back to the workplace and new waves of infections. Despite the resulting instability and uncertainty, we provided our services to more than 20,000 clients while prioritising safety. Additionally, we achieved exceptionally strong financial results for the 2021-22 year despite the impacts of the pandemic.

Our ability to 'keep our doors open', whether physically or virtually as the circumstances required, and our financial success are a credit to our committed staff, hard-working management team, and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Dr Andrew Bickerdike. I thank all for their hard work and dedicated contributions.

Our Board also drives RAV's strategy and success, and I would like to thank our skilled Board members for their contributions and commitment. Their collective skills span the areas of mental health, mediation, family law, management, finance, information technology, digital learning, leadership, governance and strategy across the not-for-profit, corporate, education, health and legal sectors.

This year we welcomed a new member, Professor Helen Rhoades OAM, to our Board. Helen is a barrister and solicitor, and an Honorary Professorial Fellow at the University of Melbourne Law School. She

has extensive knowledge of the family law system, and is a past Chair of the Family Law Council (2010 - 2016) and past Commissioner of the Australian Law Reform Commission (2017 - 2018). We are honoured to have Helen join our already illustrious Board, and I welcome her to RAV.

Our Board and Senior Leadership Team met in April to consider our Strategic Plan and priorities for the coming year. It was a valuable opportunity for some of our thought leaders to consider our services and opportunities, changes within the sector and to clients' and funders' expectations, and how RAV can meet current and emerging needs.

Key to our discussions was our knowledge of the relationship between mental health and healthy, safe and respectful relationships. RAV has the skills and experience to deliver both general services to clients who are experiencing mental health issues, and specialised mental health services. These include 3 headspace services in Gippsland, our i-Connect Family Mental Health Support Service, and our new Connect Me counselling and case management program for children with minor to moderate mental health issues.

In 2021-22, one-third of the clients accessing our services had mental health-related needs. This prevalence is not unique this year nor to RAV. We are

fortunate, however, to have a skilled and experienced workforce who are well-placed to provide the support our clients need.

Recognising the critical importance of providing evidence-based services, our leaders endorsed a project to expand our dedicated research and evaluation team, to increase our capacity to undertake and translate our research and evaluation into practice improvement.

We concluded our day with a clear commitment to the areas of mental health, digital transformation, our organisation's response to changes in the family law sector, and the research, evaluation and social impact of our services.

Our digital transformation working group is focused on consolidating programs and platforms to enhance efficiencies and utilise a single source of truth. Planning is underway for the coming financial year.

RAV's long history of working in collaboration with the legal sector, including with the family courts, means that we are particularly well-positioned to respond to family law reforms that foster closer cooperation between family lawyers, the family courts and FDR services.

I invite you to read more about our year in this annual report. You will notice that the theme is resilience. While we are acutely

aware of the resilience of our clients and staff every year, it is particularly apt as we consider the year just passed.

We know that resilience is not always, in itself, sufficient to navigate adversity, overcome barriers and withstand hardship. Combined with strong governance, and other supports and attributes, however, it is a quality that has provided us with remarkable strength that has been needed to manage extraordinarily challenging times. As circumstances have changed, we – as individuals, as an organisation, and as a community – have had to adapt time and time again, and we have done so admirably.

The impacts of COVID-19 are significant and far-reaching, and have not yet abated. We will continue to adapt and respond to ensure that we can meet the needs of our clients, our staff and the community this year, and into the future.



Professor Lyn Littlefield OAM
Board President

CEO's report



We have managed to navigate another challenging year, and our organisation has stepped up to the challenges brilliantly. Effective services continued, staff and client safety was prioritised, and we weathered financial challenges, which unfortunately proved to be insurmountable for others.

We maintained our commitment to supporting clients even when COVID-19 impacted their ability to contribute to service costs, which significantly reduced our fee income. At the same time, we needed to ensure that RAV remained accessible to meet the ongoing strong demand, and we continued to invest in technology and communication to facilitate effective remote service delivery.

Our funders provided very positive feedback to us, acknowledging how well we had done to keep services operational and remain client-focused during our extended lockdowns.

We entered a complicated phase of the pandemic during the year, in which we needed to make decisions about when to return to the office and resume face-to-face services. While we have been able to provide high-quality and effective services remotely throughout COVID-19, we know that some clients prefer face-to-face services and, in some instances, face-to-face services are more appropriate. As such, we began a gradual transition back to our workplaces, while balancing safety, our obligations and responsibilities, and the needs of our clients and staff.

It is easy to continue to be swept up in COVID-19 and its impacts, however, this year was a successful one for many more reasons than our ability to navigate the pandemic. It's impossible to detail all this year's achievements, but I would like to highlight just a few.

- We successfully tendered to provide mental health support to Family Advocacy and Support Services clients at all Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia circuit locations, to promote survivor/victim safety and increase perpetrator accountability.
- We received funding from the Australian Government to work with those accessing the National Redress Scheme in a trauma-informed way.
- For the 10th year, we provided our AccessResolve property mediation and conciliation service to court-ordered clients on behalf of the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia, and were re-contracted for a further 3 years.
- We finalised a new Staff Enterprise Agreement, which enhances RAV's position as an employer of choice by providing staff with additional work-related conditions and benefits.
- We proudly launched 2 new, contemporary and accessible websites, for RAV clients generally and for our Open Place support service for Forgotten Australians, respectively.

We also implemented a range of new programs, including

- You Are Not Alone, a family violence support group for women
- Connect Me, a children's mental health counselling and case management service in Gippsland
- Diffuse, a pilot of a 6-week healthy and respectful relationships program for men in correctional facilities.

The diversity of these programs is indicative of the breadth of services RAV provides, in order to meet the complex needs of our clients and the community.

With our current Strategic Plan ending next year, it is now time for us to review, re-assess and plan for the years ahead. We have begun this process already, with a planning day this year resulting in a list of priority focus areas, which our Board President, Professor Lyn Littlefield OAM, has already highlighted.

RAV has a long history of electing to undertake meaningful and impactful research and evaluation activities. As part of our increased focus on evidence-based services, we have now established a separate evaluation and social impact division for our organisation, and have recruited a dedicated Manager of Evaluation and Social Impact.

This position will be responsible for driving the collaborative design, development and implementation of RAV's fit-for-purpose outcome measurements and evaluations, which incorporate the client voice. The team will seek to further build the evidence base for our services and undertake relevant research to guide practice improvements and developments both at RAV and within our sector more broadly.

During the year, we also appointed Amanda Goldstein as our General Manager Clinical Services. Amanda has extensive experience as a clinician and

practice leader, and expertise in clinical leadership, policy development, and the governance and development of clinical models of practice.

After over 2 years of living with COVID-19, many of us have felt weary this year, and experienced what has been called 'pandemic fatigue'. It is sheer determination and commitment that have enabled us to achieve what we have. I thank our staff, one and all, for their dedication. I have said it to them directly, but I think it is worth repeating - in times like these, you learn who is standing next to you and I am immensely proud of what I have learnt about those who are working with RAV. Despite many obstacles and disruptions, your focus on supporting your clients has been unwavering.

So too, our Board members have demonstrated determination in driving RAV's success and strategy, and I am grateful for their support, direction and advice. Professor Littlefield OAM also continues to provide me with valued counsel, and I'd like to thank her for sharing her extensive knowledge and experience to benefit RAV and our clients.

I'd also like to acknowledge our clients' understanding and resilience, as we have collectively navigated changes in services while prioritising their health and safety, and that of our staff and the broader community.

The future of the pandemic and its impact on our personal and professional lives is

unclear. COVID-19 continues to impact us in Victoria and as I write this, we are experiencing increased infections. I am confident, however, that we have the right people - staff, management and Board - to manage any challenges that may arise so that RAV can continue to thrive and grow, and do what it does best - provide support to those who need it.



Dr Andrew Bickerdike
Chief Executive Officer

Strategic directions 2019 to 2023

GOAL 1

Advocacy



To be a trusted thought leader on how to address the impact of complex relationship issues.

Objectives

Authoritative and influential voice

- Publish and comment regularly on select key areas relating to the organisation's specialist expertise.
- Demonstrate capacity to participate in and influence policy debate.

Influential research

- Undertake targeted research that demands attention from and influences the sector and government.

Digital transformation

- Integrate digital technology across business and service areas to deliver efficiencies and effectiveness to clients and customers.

GOAL 2

Response services



To effectively deliver leading practice, client-centred and financially sustainable response services.

Objectives

Sector analysis

- Undertake a client, funding body and sector analysis, and ensure services evolve to meet these needs.

Leading practice

- Develop program logic articulating the relationship between client needs, service design and outcomes.

Evidence base and practice improvement

- Measure client outcomes, evaluate service effectiveness and demonstrate informed service improvements.



GOAL 3

Prevention services



To increase knowledge and build the evidence base for reducing the impact of complex relationship issues, and to build capacity, and design and deliver effective prevention services.

Objectives

Prevention strategies

- Design, develop and implement evidence-informed prevention programs or services in response to identified societal problems that are aligned to our vision.

Build evidence base

- Evaluate and demonstrate effectiveness of prevention services, including evidence of change and credible presumption of positive population impact.

Secure funding and revenue base

- Acquire secure core, recurrent funding for key prevention service/s.

GOAL 4

Effective governance



To govern and operate an effective, sustainable organisation.

Objectives

Skilled workforce

- Foster a skilled and motivated workforce aligned to client, funding body and organisational needs.

Board performance

- Build a motivated, skilled and balanced Board that drives organisational success through data-informed decision-making.

Financial performance

- Ensure the organisation is financially secure and robust with sustainable revenue growth annually.
- Foster and implement strategies for future growth.

Our 2021–22 year

Our clients



20,191

Total clients



5,552

FRC clients



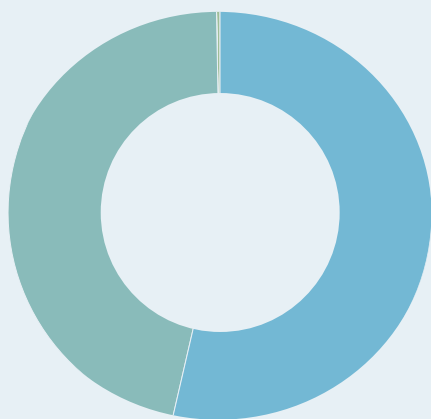
1,168

headspace clients



2,459

Open Place service users



Client gender

Female	53.77%
Male	46.12%
Intersex/indeterminate	0.08%
Not stated	0.03%



45.5%

with an income less than \$50,000



38.0%

had family violence-related needs



159

different countries of birth



87

different languages



1,161

suburbs nationally



33.0%

had mental health-related needs

Our organisation



- 354** employees
- 72%** of our managers are women
- 130** of our staff have worked with RAV for 5 years or more

Our impact

- 12,732**
Counselling sessions
- 2,448**
FDR sessions
- 9,233**
FRC sessions
- 3,974**
headspace sessions



\$39,607,580

Income



1,955

18 years and under



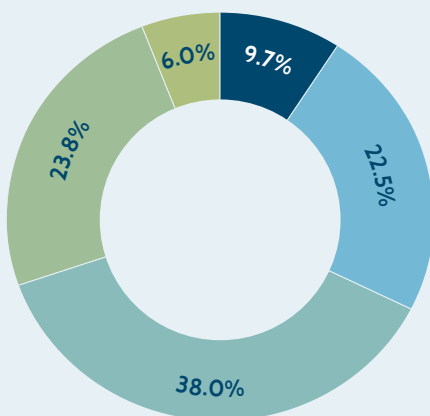
292

of our headspace clients identified as LGBTIQIA+



42,510

Contact hours



Client age in years



369

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples



[My practitioner] was amazing. So supportive and professional... she was sympathetic and understanding to what the issues were... and she was able to help me and my ex get to a great place.

FDR (mediation) client

Service satisfaction

97.5%

of counselling clients felt listened to and understood

97.6%

of FDR clients were better able to deal with the issues they sought help for

98.1%

of FRC clients were satisfied with the service they received

Our locations



4

Family Relationship Centres (FRCs)

1

Open Place drop-in centre

12

RAV locations

3

headspace sites

18

outreach locations

Key



RAV



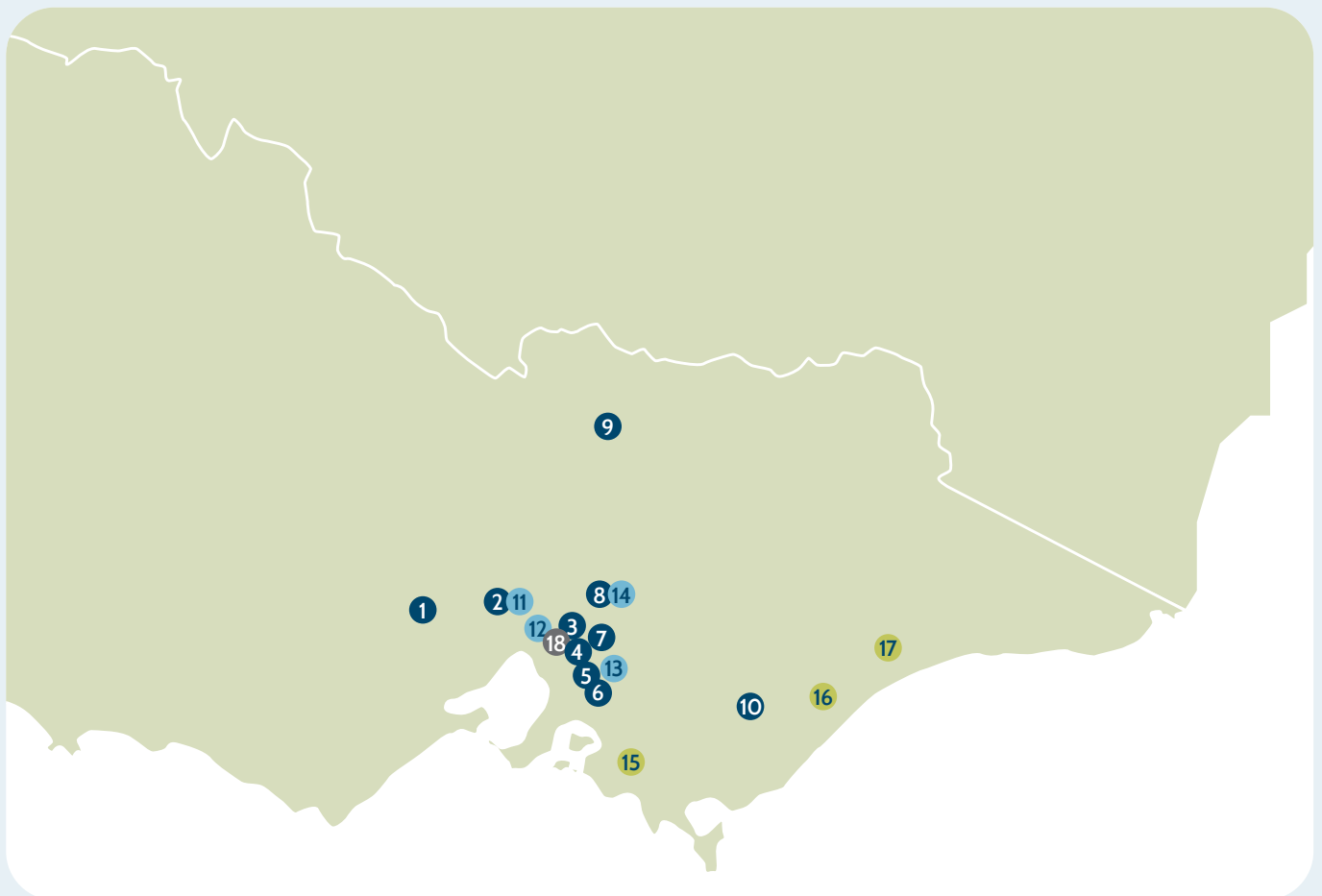
Family Relationship Centre (FRC)



headspace



Open Place



- 1 Ballarat
- 2 Sunshine
- 3 Kew
- 4 Camberwell
- 5 Cranbourne North

- 6 Cranbourne
- 7 Boronia
- 8 Greensborough
- 9 Shepparton
- 10 Traralgon

- 11 Sunshine FRC
- 12 Melbourne FRC
- 13 Berwick FRC
- 14 Greensborough FRC

- 15 headspace Wonthaggi
- 16 headspace Sale
- 17 headspace Bairnsdale
- 18 Open Place Richmond

Our services

Services and programs

Connect Me

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

Counselling

For individuals, couples and families.

Disability Counselling and Support

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

early matters

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

- ATTUNE – an antenatal program for expectant and/or new parents
- ATTUNE Plus – a postnatal program for expectant and/or new parents
- Circle of Security Parenting™ – an emotional needs and relationship-building program to support parents of children aged under 6
- Parenting Support Service – providing short-term interventions.

Family dispute resolution (FDR)

Mediation for parenting and property matters, including:

- AccessResolve property mediation and conciliation
- at the Royal Children's Hospital
- child-inclusive FDR
- co-mediation
- court-ordered dispute resolution
- enhanced child-focused FDR
- Focus on Kids webinars for parents
- lawyer-assisted mediation
- lawyer-inclusive mediation
- shuttle mediation.

Family Relationship Centres

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

Family Safety Advocates

Support, safety planning, and risk and needs assessments for partners and children of men participating in men's behaviour change and men's case management programs.

Family Safety Model

Wholistic support for the partners and family members of men attending our men's behaviour change and men's case management 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

Support for families experiencing difficulties or changes in their relationships.

Forced Adoption Support Service

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

Frontline Emergency Distress and Trauma Counselling

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

- Play Therapy
- Teleplay Virtual Wellbeing Rooms.

Gippsland drought and bushfire counselling

Free counselling support for individuals, couples and families in East Gippsland and Wellington.

headspace services

headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation, providing early intervention mental health services to young people aged 12 to 25. Free (or low-cost) services are available for help with mental health, physical health (including sexual health), alcohol and other drugs or work and study support, including:

- **Axious social group (Sale)** – a support group for LGBTIQ+ young people
- **Games group (Bairnsdale/Sale)** – for young people with autism spectrum disorder
- **HEY Project Group (Wonthaggi)** – a support group for LGBTIQ+ young people
- **Unique but United (U.B.U) (Bairnsdale)** – a social group for LGBTIQ+ young people
- **Youth Advisory Groups (YAGs)** – groups of young people who provide vital input into the operation of headspace sites.

i-Connect

A Family Mental Health Support Service providing free early intervention support for young people aged up to 18 in East Gippsland, including:

- **Caring-go-Round** – a therapeutic schools program supporting bushfire-affected children.

I like, like you

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

Intercountry Adoptee and Family Support Service

Free and confidential support for intercountry adoptees and their families.

Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCPs)

For male perpetrators of family violence.

Men Being Well

A men's health and wellbeing promotion program.

Men's Case Management program

For male perpetrators of family violence.

Open Place

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

Parenting After Separation Seminars

Online programs for parents providing key information and strategies for supporting children to successfully adjust to separation.

PREPARE/ENRICH

A pre-marriage and pre-commitment program.

Redress Support Services

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

Repair-enting

A program for fathers who have used violence in their relationships and completed an MBCP.

Right Now

A group for women who have experienced interpersonal trauma.

Support for Fathers

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

- **DadStuff** – free workshops for dads and father-figures
- **Dads in the Workplace** – a nation-wide program for employers and workplaces to support dads in their organisations
- **Working with Dads** – workshops for professionals and service providers.

Tuning in to Kids™

An emotionally intelligent parenting program provided to:

- Afghan women
- dads, with a dedicated Afghan program
- early matters clients
- parents/caregivers, with a dedicated Vietnamese program.

Tuning in to Teens™

An emotionally intelligent parenting program provided to:

- culturally and linguistically diverse parents/caregivers
- early matters clients
- parents/caregivers.

Women Making Choices

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

Workplace support services

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

You Are Not Alone

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

Professional training and development

Accredited training (Registered Training Organisation RTO 21977)

- CHC81115 Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution
- CHC81015 Graduate Diploma of Relationship Counselling (Responding to Family Violence)

Accredited programs: other

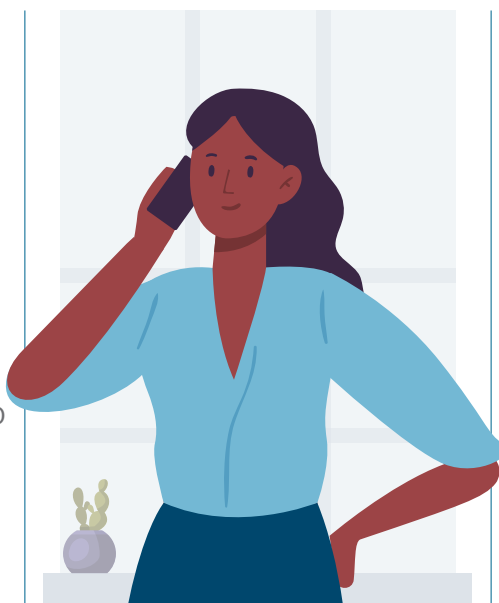
- Mediation Training Course (CHCSS00110 Mediation Skill Set and National Mediator Accreditation System (NMAS))
- Specialist Course in Integrative Couple Therapy

Customised training workshops

- Healthy and Respectful Relationships
- Leading Difficult Conversations
- Managing Challenging Behaviours
- Managing Stress and Building Resilience
- Negotiation and Conflict Management
- Responding to Family Violence in the Workplace
- Supporting Separated Families
- The Casual Counsellor
- Working with Dads
- Vicarious Trauma

Professional development webinars

- A Strengths-Based Approach to Reintegration – Working with a Corrections Cohort
- Family Dispute Resolution – Advanced Property and Financial Matters
- In Conversation with Rosie Batty AO – Raising Awareness and Action Concerning Family Violence
- Managing Challenges When Transitioning Back to the Workplace



- Mental Health Impacts of Loneliness and Isolation
- Reintegrating Children Back to School
- Responding to Sudden Disclosures – When Your Clients Say They Are Not Okay
- Supporting Co-Parenting Relationships
- Unresolved Grief in the Couple Following a Miscarriage, Stillbirth or Other Perinatal Loss
- What Do the New and Emerging Family Law Reforms Mean for FDR Practice? (Panel Discussion)
- Working with Family Violence Behaviours and Developmental Disorders
- Working with the Impacts of Trauma and Loss

Professional development workshops

- Attending Court and Writing Reports
- Family Dispute Resolution Micro-Skills in an Online Environment

- Leading, Managing and Developing People
- Managing Challenging Behaviours
- Managing Challenging Conversations
- Negotiation and Conflict Management
- Professional Boundaries in Therapeutic Work
- Single Session Contacts in Online Therapeutic Practice
- Supporting Separated Families
- The Accidental Mediator
- Transitioning into Leadership
- Working with a Correctional Cohort – Applying a Strengths-Based Approach
- Working with Dads
- Vicarious Trauma

Self-paced courses

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

Specialist programs

- ATLAS Train the Trainer – for facilitators delivering workshops in correctional facilities
- Diffuse pilot program – a 6-week healthy and respectful relationships program for men in correctional facilities
- LINCS – psychoeducational workshops for people who are subject to community correction orders
- LINCS in Families – psychoeducational workshops for people who are subject to family violence orders



Goal 1

Advocacy

Our community and sector engagement activities, and the research projects we conduct and collaborate on, assist us to further understand, advocate for and respond to our clients, their needs and our service impacts; contribute to policy discussions; and help shape sector trends.

Sector and community engagement

When COVID-19 lockdowns ended, face-to-face events gradually returned, enabling us to reconnect in person and to present to our peers and sector colleagues at national events, including those focused on research and evidence-based practice.

At the Australian Institute of Family Studies 2022 Conference, our CEO, Dr Andrew Bickerdike, and Senior Researcher, Dr Genevieve Heard, presented on property FDR and the client need for guidance, considering evaluation results from 2 RAV post-separation property services.

Dr Heard also presented at the Family and Relationship Services Australia National Conference on a 2-year collaborative critical evaluation of post-separation parenting smartphone apps, undertaken with the Australian National University.

Our trainer and clinical supervisor, Lilia Szarski, presented at Unpacking Trauma, the Australian Psychological Society Members' Choice Virtual Symposium. Lilia also spoke at a webinar on parenting coordination in Australia as part of the Our Family Wizard Ask the Experts series in New Zealand.

We were again involved in a Victorian Family Law Pathways Network project, featuring in videos designed to enhance knowledge of the family law system.

We participated in a No to Violence national webinar panel to discuss the impact of pornography in relation to intimate partner violence and control. The webinar aimed to support professionals to feel comfortable asking clients questions about pornography, enabling conversations about this (often) taboo topic, to facilitate change.

Staff represented RAV through involvement in a wide range of networks, such as the:

- Ballarat/Western Victoria Perinatal and Infant Mental Health Network
- Southern Melbourne Integrated Family Violence Partnership
- Northern Local Aboriginal Network
- Shepparton and Bendigo Family Law Pathways Network Steering Committee.

Other networks we were involved with included the Anglicare/Orange Door Network, Outer Eastern Youth Services Network and Ballarat 4 Kids – an extensive network of local organisations improving outcomes for children living in the area. We also continued our RAV Lawyers' Panel – a dedicated group of qualified lawyers who specialise in family law and understand and support FDR. The panel has operated for more than 20 years, and is a forum for lawyers and RAV's FDR practitioners to exchange information and ideas, and consider developments in family law and FDR.



RAV staff participating in the Safe Steps Walk Against Family Violence

RAV supported or promoted initiatives such as the global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign and 2021 Walk Against Family Violence. We celebrated Victoria's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual and other sexually or gender diverse (LGBTIQ+) communities by supporting the 2022 Midsumma Festival.

We joined in national Relationships Australia celebrations to mark the 20-year anniversary of Neighbour Day, a national campaign supporting respectful relationships across communities and helping to address loneliness.

RAV was represented through statewide and local media engagements, including with Vision Australia Radio and ABC Radio.

Our blog shared information and resources on navigating complex family relationships during holiday periods and around significant dates, healthy habits, returning to school post-COVID, being single, and community connection during COVID-19.

“
We all have an inherent desire to be close to other people, regardless of age or stage in life.

Jayne Ferguson, Centre Manager Ballarat, on ABC Radio Melbourne

Conferences and presentations



- Bickerdike A and Heard G (15 June 2022) 'Property family dispute resolution and the client need for guidance' [unpublished conference presentation], *AIFS Conference*, Victoria.
- Heard G (18 May 2022) 'Post-separation parenting smartphone apps: a critical evaluation' [unpublished symposium], *FRSA National Conference*, South Australia.
- Heard G, Bickerdike A and Hebblewhite M (9 September 2021) 'Court-ordered, lawyer-assisted property dispute resolution: mediation or conciliation? Practitioner impartiality & client self-determination' [online conference session], *National Mediation Conference*, Australia.
- Booth S and Yorston M (19 July 2021). 'Pornography, how does its use show up in the work with men and what are their partners saying?' [webinar panel], *No to Violence*, Victoria.
- Blake J [Panellist] (24 November 2021) 'Emergence and evolution: learning from the pandemic' [unpublished conference presentation], Victoria.
- Smyth B, Payne J, Irving M, Heard G and Althor G (16 June 2022) 'Post-separation parenting smartphone apps: a critical evaluation' [unpublished conference presentation], *AIFS Conference*, Victoria.
- Szarski L (3–4 September 2021) 'Vicarious trauma and vicarious resilience: what do we know?' [online workshop presentation], *Unpacking Trauma: Australian Psychological Society Members' Choice Symposium*, Australia.
- Szarski L (14 October 2021) 'Parenting coordination in Australia: a development in family law' [webinar], *Our Family Wizard - Ask the Experts*, New Zealand.



 The latest posts on our new blog are available at www.rav.org.au/news

Goal 1 - Advocacy

Research to inform service delivery

As well as being committed to research activities, translating and communicating our research and evaluation is a priority for RAV, to enable practice improvement within and outside our organisation.

Remote FDR delivery

This year we had several articles published related to recent research projects. Our article in a special COVID-19-themed issue of the *US Family Court Review* journal highlighted the resilience of our FDR clients and practitioners in adapting to remote delivery via video-conferencing and telephone during lockdowns. Interviews with FDR clients and practitioners illustrated the advantages and challenges of remote delivery, including the impact of remote service delivery on safety concerns.

Outcomes of FDR: A national investigation

The national Relationships Australia FDR Outcomes Study (2017 to 2019), of which RAV led the property component, also generated several journal articles. In our article published in the *Australasian Dispute Resolution Journal*, we highlighted the benefits for clients of having dedicated time in FDR for property matters. The article supports the policy shift that has enabled FRCs to provide FDR for property matters, regardless of concurrent parenting matters.

A second article published in the *Family Court Review* used interview data from the same study to identify the features of a dispute resolution process that are most important to clients: affordability, conflict mitigation, authority and guidance on outcomes. While the affordability and non-combative nature of FDR are highly

valued, some clients expressed frustration that the facilitative model does not allow for practitioners to offer guidance on property settlement outcomes.

In our article published in the *Australian Journal of Family Law*, we reflected on how the process could provide more direction when needed. We considered a tiered model where elements of alternative dispute resolution models, such as lawyer assistance and independent advice on settlement proposals, could be introduced to the process at the request of clients.

Apps for separated parents

We reached the halfway point of a 2-year linkage project funded by the Australian Research Council, on Smartphone Apps for Separated Co-Parenting. Led by the Australian National University, the project investigates the benefits and risks of these apps for separating parents, including those who access our FDR services.

Publications



- Heard G, Bickerdike A and Opoku S (2022) 'Remote family dispute resolution services for COVID and post-COVID times: client and practitioner perspectives', *Family Court Review*, 60(2):220–240, <https://doi.org/10.1111/fcre.12639>
- Heard G and Bickerdike A (2021) 'Dispute resolution choices for property settlement in Australia: client views on the advantages and disadvantages of family dispute resolution and legal pathways', *Family Court Review*, 59(4):790–809, <https://doi.org/10.1111/fcre.12565>
- Heard G and Bickerdike A (2021) 'Am I on track? Family dispute resolution and the client need for guidance in post-separation property matters', *Australian Journal of Family Law*, 34(3):211–230.
- Heard G, Bickerdike A and Lee J (2021) 'Family dispute resolution for property matters: the case for making space', *Australasian Dispute Resolution Journal*, 31(2): 158–172.
- Creek M (2022) *Sustain: a 10-session post-men's behaviour change program group* [program manual], Relationships Australia Victoria.

Videos



- No to Violence (host) (6 July 2021) 'NAIDOC 2021 Yarn' [video], Vimeo, <https://vimeo.com/571917371>
- Relationships Australia Victoria (22 August 2021) '7 types of dads' [video], YouTube, <https://youtu.be/CM6ttORCOAc>
- Relationships Australia Victoria (3 December 2021) 'Working with dads' [video], YouTube, <https://youtu.be/sXo33iL4Uxk>
- Relationships Australia Victoria (3 December 2021) 'DadStuff' [video], YouTube, <https://youtu.be/TppOGwjpnfw>



This year, 14 RAV FDR practitioners participated in app testing, providing valuable expert assessments of the utility of the apps for high-conflict separated co-parents.

Working collaboratively

RAV continued other collaborations, including with:

- La Trobe University academics on the use and misuse of communication technologies in separated co-parenting
- Relationships Australia National Research Network on a counselling outcomes measurement for Family and Relationship Services
- multiple university partners on an application for a linkage grant examining services that address loneliness in Australia.

Forgotten Australians

We undertook a research and evaluation project for our Open Place support service for Forgotten Australians, involving 30 interviews with service users and 6 interviews with practitioners about their needs and responses to the service.

Evaluating our services

We recruited a new Manager of Evaluation and Social Impact, who will drive RAV's evaluation to incorporate the client's voice and measure outcomes. These activities contribute to evidence-informed decision-making, practice improvements, incorporating the client voice and measuring outcomes.

Building upon the work of recent years, we continued to embed an outcomes framework into our practice, by routinely and formally collecting client feedback which informs service delivery.

Counselling framework

A new counselling framework was implemented across our organisation. This evidence-informed framework incorporates practice wisdom, research evidence and the client context.

Key measures and indicators informed by a comprehensive program logic are used to monitor program and individual client progress on a continuum of client engagement, achievement of collaborative goals and impact on RAV's key outcome domains.

This framework is compatible with our funding requirements and will improve data collection and contribute to the overall purpose and effectiveness of our work.



Our stand at the Australian Institute of Family Studies 2022 Conference

Goal 1 - Advocacy

Hearing our clients' voices

We are embedding systematic frameworks into each program and increasingly incorporating the client voice into evaluation processes and areas to inform practice improvements and program design. Currently our headspace sites in Bairnsdale, Sale and Wonthaggi have committed YAGs that play an active role in establishing and operating the centres and their services.

Many of our evaluations collect data related to the changes that have occurred for clients. These qualitative responses are systematically reviewed with program staff to connect them with the impact and



purpose of the work. We recently conducted a most significant change workshop with facilitators of our Parenting After Separation Seminar program (see page 21), which highlighted a strong connection between program logic, content and outcomes.

We also held a focus group with participants of our newly developed You Are Not Alone family violence support group (see page 23), to inform the ongoing design and evaluation of the program.

Adapting Men's Behaviour Change Programs for online delivery

We conducted a development evaluation, with resulting recommendations contributing to the design and implementation of online MBCPs. Positive feedback from all online MBCP groups engaged in the evaluation, as well as facilitators and external observers, indicate that the program's objectives are achievable using online delivery and that online groups can have positive group dynamics.

AccessResolve evaluation

We completed an evaluation of the AccessResolve property mediation and conciliation service (see page 21) for court-ordered clients. Our client survey

78%



of participants reported that our Parenting After Separation Seminar had a significant or very significant positive impact on them and their families

and interviews demonstrated strong satisfaction rates, even when the service was delivered remotely during COVID-19 lockdowns. In particular, we found that clients remained satisfied with their practitioner's impartiality and still felt able to express themselves under the conciliation model offered by this service.


Technology and digital transformation


In October 2021, we proudly launched a new RAV website. Its contemporary design and enhanced accessibility provide a user-friendly platform for our new blog; comprehensive resource library; and information on our services, programs and upcoming training opportunities.

We also developed a new website for Open Place, our specialist service for Forgotten Australians. Like the RAV site, the Open Place website incorporates a fresh new design, increased accessibility and easy-to-read information.

We continued to respond to the changing communication and technology needs of our workforce, and service delivery needs of our clients, by providing infrastructure and software upgrades to support staff working remotely where required.

As detailed on pages 40 and 46, respectively, we invested in a new risk management platform, and enhanced our training and development offerings through our upgraded learning management system.

 Visit our new RAV website: www.rav.org.au

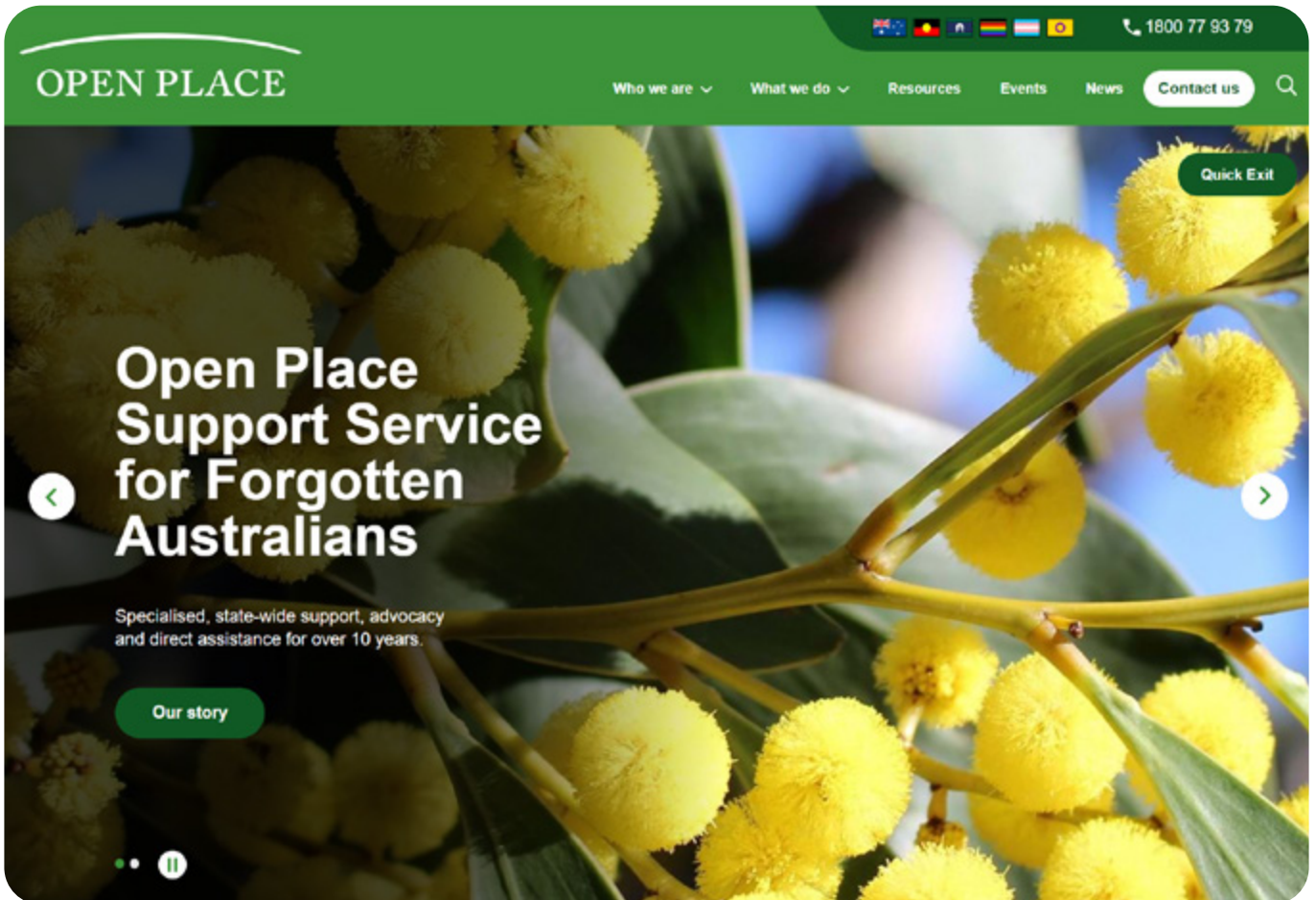
 Visit our new Open Place website: www.openplace.org.au



Podcasts



- Manyoul A and Tesema L (hosts) (27 May 2022) 'Introductory conversations about family violence' [podcast series], *Brimbank Live*, <https://soundcloud.com/making-media/sets/brimbank-live-rav-introductory-conversations-about-family-violence>, Making Media, accessed 27 May 2022.



Our new Open Place website for Forgotten Australians



Goal 2

Response services

We are committed to delivering effective, evidence-based, child-centred and trauma-informed services that prioritise safety and respond to the needs of our clients and communities.



Counselling

Our counselling services focus on strengthening family relationships through individual and relationship counselling and family therapy, preventing the breakdown of relationships or assisting people to navigate relationship breakdowns safely, and increasing safety and wellbeing for children and adults to strengthen our communities.

Through our Ballarat and Kew centres, we provided a single-session counselling approach that enabled clients to make the most of every session they attend by creating clear and consistent goals. During sessions, we reviewed outcomes and clients reflected on what they will do differently in their daily lives, so that clients could leave with some strategies to try out.

We developed and implemented a new counselling framework during the year, which, in conjunction with our practice principles and outcome measurement framework, guide our counselling practice to flexibly adapt to meet client needs.

We also commenced providing support through the Intercountry Adoptee and Family Support Service, on behalf of Relationships Australia South Australia. The nationwide service, which is provided through the Relationships Australia federation, offers free counselling, information and support to young adoptees, adult adoptees and adoptive parents.

Working with bushfire-affected communities in East Gippsland

We welcomed an extension of our contract with Gippsland Primary Health Network to provide Frontline Emergency Distress and Trauma Counselling in partnership with the Royal Flying Doctor Service Victoria. The service offers free, confidential therapeutic services to people who currently live in the East Gippsland area, and those who were holidaying or living in East Gippsland during the 2019 to 2020 Black Summer bushfires. This year, the service was expanded to include a specialist child and youth counsellor/play therapist who delivered play therapy sessions to children in schools and kindergartens, and facilitated and supported paediatric referrals when required.

With ongoing challenges from COVID-19, lockdowns and geographic limitations, the service developed an innovative online program. Our Teleplay Virtual Wellbeing Rooms allow counsellors to provide high-quality play therapy to children via a video link. In a positive, fun and engaging environment, children aged up to 11 years take part in therapeutic activities such as drawing tasks designed to help them explore their feelings, worries and thoughts; breathing exercises; and storytelling activities to support resilience, mindfulness and decreased anxiety-based behaviours.

We also developed partnerships across Gippsland to deliver workshops in 2022-23 to support men's mental health.

Supporting Australian Defence Force personnel

We continued to work in partnership with Open Arms, a service for veterans and their families. By providing relationship counselling across Victoria, we supported current and past serving Australian Defence Force personnel and their families to build resilience, and enhance their mental health and wellbeing.

Family dispute resolution

Many of us experienced significant pandemic-related pressures, first as a result of lockdowns and restrictions, and later due to COVID-19 illness or being a close contact. Our FDR clients faced issues related to changes to schooling arrangements, pressures at home, increased mental health challenges and a rise in family violence.

These pressures increased the need for our FDR services. To ensure continued service delivery, we offered face-to-face, telephone and video appointments as appropriate. We also continued to deliver shuttle mediation, co-mediation, lawyer-inclusive FDR and lawyer-assisted FDR to meet the needs of clients and their circumstances.

During uncertain times, it's important to focus on what we can control, and to practise sustainable, healthy habits to allow us to move forward with our lives.

Parenting programs

Our FRCs delivered Focus on Kids webinars to help to prepare parents for co-parenting and the FDR process. The free, live sessions are interactive and provide psychoeducation on children's needs during separation.

Our Parenting After Separation Seminars give parents key information and strategies to support their children to successfully adjust to their parents' separation. The online programs incorporate video content on self-care, co-parenting and supporting children after separation, a participant workbook and a facilitated group discussion. This year, we updated our program to incorporate clients' lived experiences, with the revised program to be launched in late 2022.

AccessResolve: Court-ordered services

For the 10th year, we provided our AccessResolve property mediation and conciliation service to court-ordered clients on behalf of the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia. We were pleased to be selected to deliver the service for an additional 3 years, enabling us to continue to support regional clients.

The use of video and telephone mediations and conciliations increased significantly this year. Approximately 80% of all sessions were conducted remotely to enable mediators, conciliators and clients to attend sessions. Despite this change in modality, the proportion of matters settled has remained consistently high.

What is family dispute resolution?

Family dispute resolution (FDR), also known as mediation, helps couples who are separating to resolve their family law disputes. Disputes may include conflicts over parenting and the care of children, child support, financial arrangements and how to divide their property.

We focus on safety, the best interests of children, and ensuring that both people can participate.

Our FDR services include:

- AccessResolve property mediation and conciliation
- child-inclusive FDR
- court-ordered dispute resolution
- enhanced child-focused FDR
- FDR for parenting and property matters
- shuttle mediation
- co-mediation
- lawyer-assisted mediation
- lawyer-inclusive mediation.

More than

72%



of matters were settled through our AccessResolve property mediation and conciliation service



Focus[ing] on the children is the most important thing above all else.

Focus on Kids participant



I'm not alone - others are going through this - and you can come out the other side.

Parenting After Separation Seminar participant

Goal 2 – Response services

Our impact

Counselling clients

97.5% felt listened to and understood

96.9% were better able to deal with issues that they sought help for

96.2% were satisfied with the service received

FDR clients

99.5% worked on and talked about what they wanted to

97.5% were better able to deal with issues that they sought help for

FRC clients

94.4% were better able to deal with issues that they sought help for

98.1% were satisfied with the service received

98.6% worked on and talked about what they wanted to

Family violence services

Men's Behaviour Change Programs

Our structured, 20-week MBCPs engage men to take responsibility for their behaviour, improve family safety and elicit positive outcomes for partners and children impacted by family violence.

Earlier in the year, groups were delivered via online sessions, before we transitioned to online and face-to-face sessions as COVID-19 restrictions and circumstances allowed. We maintained some online groups to cater to men who were unable to access face-to-face services due to geography, health or other issues.



The program was good. It helped me to look at myself and why things have happened.

MBCP participant

With funding from the Victorian and Australian Governments, we implemented a suite of new programs to meet the individual needs of men who have recently completed an MBCP.

Designed for men who are motivated to undertake further work to sustain the changes they have made, the programs build on achievements made and support men to move towards repairing their relationships, where safe to do so.

We are now offering men up to 10 individual counselling sessions on safety and accountability, and extend the reach of our 9-week Repair-enting program for dads. The program focuses on parenting, attachment, and how to repair relationships with children after trauma and support them to heal from the effects of violence and abuse.

With the Southern Melbourne Integrated Family Violence Partnership, we developed Sustain, a 10-week program that uses a whole-of-family approach to

enable men to continue learning and using non-violent behaviour. The program's model is evidence-informed and incorporates contemporary trauma-based research. It will be piloted and evaluated in the second half of 2022.

Men's case management

We continued to experience strong demand for case management, which gives men who want to stop their use of violent and abusive behaviours free, individualised support that is trauma-informed and child-focused.

In a safe and supportive environment, clients receive assistance for complex issues such as homelessness; mental health; English language, literacy and cultural barriers; drug and alcohol issues; and support required to navigate and understand the legal system. Men are invited to establish individual goal plans to increase safety for themselves, survivors/victims and children.



The service is open to men before, during and after completing an MBCP, or as a standalone service, and throughout the pandemic has been delivered using telephone, video and face-to-face methods.

Our ability to support non-English-speaking men using interpreters has extended the reach of the program and supported the safety of families and communities from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Brokerage funding is also available to facilitate practical supports for issues such as health, housing, employment, travel, counselling, parenting programs, education and other supports, which in turn can help to support sustainable behaviour change and increase safety.

Our case management approach keeps men visible and accountable for the violence they have used, by working with other services and sharing relevant information to increase safety.

Family Safety Advocates

This is a coordinated, online service for family members of MBCP participants who are affected by family violence. The program includes specialised family violence risk assessments, risk management, safety and legal support interventions, and service delivery. We support women and family members to develop goal plans, and facilitate brokerage and referrals to local services as needed. Safety planning is led by the survivor/victim in line with the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework comprehensive assessments.

With increasing demand for and more limited availability of family violence

services during the pandemic, our advocate role has been critical in supporting women, children and family members affected by family violence before, during and after men participate in MBCPs and case management programs.

This year, we also applied for flexible support packages and for brokerage to fund items such as security systems, housing, health care and educational supports that increase safety, self-sufficiency, and the ability for women and children to live safely and independently.

You Are Not Alone

In October 2021, we proudly launched a new, free support group for family violence-affected women in south-east Melbourne to connect with each other and access peer support. The program, which is delivered with funding from a Reimagining Health: A VicHealth Partnership grant and by Knox City Council, has been well received by participants, our sector colleagues and the community.



For me it is validation of my story... the name is spot on... I thought I was the only one.

You Are Not Alone participant

Feedback from participants has indicated the program makes them feel validated, comforted, less alone and more confident that they have the support and resources they need. RAV will evaluate the program with a view to expanding it to other areas of Melbourne where possible.

Mental health services

Our headspace services support young people aged 12 to 25 with mental health, physical health (including sexual health), alcohol and other drug services, as well as work and study support. headspace Bairnsdale, headspace Sale and headspace Wonthaggi are operated by RAV.



Goal 2 – Response services

The operation of these services is possible through the collaboration and contribution of local services that form the headspace Bairnsdale/Sale Consortium and headspace Wonthaggi Consortium, respectively. All headspace services are funded by the Australian Government Department of Health. Administration of funding is carried out by the headspace centre's local Primary Health Network, in this case, Gippsland Primary Health Network.

headspace Wonthaggi

headspace Wonthaggi delivers services through our main hub in Wonthaggi and outreach locations across the Bass Coast and South Gippsland region, and through regular outreach to the area's 5 secondary schools. The service is supported by a consortium of 12 local organisations that

contribute services onsite at the centre and support referral pathways with external services.

We focus on early intervention and keeping young people at the centre of all we do, and have an active YAG who met regularly this year. They give feedback, input and advice on the look and feel of the service and program designs, and ideas and representation at the governance level. The YAG farewelled some long-standing members who have gone on to pursue education and employment opportunities and have welcomed new members ready to start their headspace Wonthaggi YAG journey.

Despite the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, the service provided continuity of care and continued to deliver services via telehealth, phone and in-person.



[The] power to help people and build new connections

headspace Wonthaggi YAG member on the most enjoyable aspect of the group

Young people and our team continued to draw upon and build resilience to navigate these challenging times and receive support when they needed it. Young people most commonly sought support for feelings of sadness, depression, anxiety, stress, or problems with family or friends.

Some highlights of the year included:

- commencing the new Enhanced Mental Health Support in Schools program with 5 schools across 7 campuses; the program enables students with mild to moderate mental health concerns to access face-to-face counselling at their secondary school
- successfully obtaining 100% compliance with the headspace Model Integrity Framework, indicating that the service is fully aligned with and complying with the headspace model



headspace Wonthaggi photography competition first place winner Hannah



- commencing the Surge Project, which places a Child and Youth Mental Health Service worker at the centre to work alongside the team.

To mark headspace Day, we hosted a 'pop-up' mental health awareness stall to encourage early help seeking and drive health literacy at Wonthaggi Plaza. We also ran a photography competition, with entrants sharing photos of their 'happy place', such as when they connect to nature or practise self-care.

Our facilitated LGBTIQ+ group continued during the year and the group was successful in obtaining a Healthy Equal Youth (HEY) Grant through the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria. The grant will fund a youth-led project to plan and deliver social events for LGBTIQ+ young people that will showcase the resilience and strength of the community.

headspace in Bairnsdale and Sale

Following years of pandemic restrictions, cancelled events and delayed plans, as well as recent fires and floods, our headspace centre in Bairnsdale and headspace satellite site at Sale were enthusiastic to get back out into the community to engage and reconnect with young people, their family and friends and improve mental health outcomes for young people aged 12 to 25.

A key priority was to build, enhance and maintain meaningful relationships with East Gippsland and Wellington Shire communities on the lands of the Gunai Kurnai people. Both headspaces are strongly represented on networks and in working groups, and involved in community initiatives across the regions, to ensure that the work undertaken is informed by community need.

Both services also have active YAGs involving young people from the respective shires, who provide vital input into the establishment and operation of the services. They showed resilience and commitment throughout 2021-22, using a hybrid online/face-to-face model and digital platforms to engage during and between meetings. Online meetings enabled the 2 groups to work collaboratively, and it was wonderful for them to come together for an end-of-year celebration.

The YAGs spent time during the year planning the future structure of the groups and recruitment strategies to engage new members, and developing goals for the new year. Each has commenced major projects, with an atrium gardening project at Sale and mural walls being painted in Bairnsdale.

A key objective of headspace is to remove barriers to accessing mental healthcare. This year, as part of the Enhanced Mental Health in Schools program, a team of youth access

Supporting LGBTIQ+ youth is a priority. In 2021-22:

36% of headspace Bairnsdale clients

38% of headspace Sale clients

35% of headspace Wonthaggi clients

identified as LGBTIQ+.



Hayley, Stephanie, Jayme, Jake and Melanie from headspace Bairnsdale marking IDAHOBIT in 2021

Goal 2 – Response services

workers delivered counselling in secondary schools in Yarram, Maffra, Sale, Bairnsdale and Lakes Entrance. Young people also regularly accessed services via telehealth, removing geographic access barriers that often exist in regional areas.

For the third consecutive year, headspace Bairnsdale hosted a fortnightly games group for neurodiverse young people focused on social connection, with a committed group of attendees pivoting between online and face-to-face meetings as required by COVID-19 circumstances.

This year we aimed to increase support for First Nations young people through health promotion, psychoeducation and engagement activities. In consultation with Aboriginal school staff, the Bairnsdale centre developed and delivered presentations to Aboriginal young men in years 7 to 9. The presentations were on self-worth, healthy

habits to support mental health, and alcohol and drug use.

headspace Bairnsdale and Sale also supported an online art event featuring local First Nations artists promoting inclusion and healing.

The Anxious and Unique but United (UBU) social groups in Sale and Bairnsdale, respectively, are supported by local Victorian Pride Centres Healthy Equal Youth (HEY) partners, and offer local young people a place to connect, engage and feel supported. As part of Transgender Awareness Week, our Bairnsdale centre also supported their local HEY partner to screen a film promoting positive LGBTIQ+ representation.

The headspace digital work and study program was promoted at events hosted by the Gippsland East Local Learning

Employment Network, including health forums and careers expos hosted by local secondary schools. With a focus on early intervention, our 2 sites worked together to deliver presentations to young people at 10 primary schools preparing to transition to high school, and 3 healthy relationship information sessions to secondary students.

Other activities for the year included presentations as part of the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence, a 'pop-up' health promotion activity and mental health psychoeducation for year 12 students in Sale. To further increase knowledge of the service, the Sale site also hosted a chill out zone at the Sale Skate Park competition, and a health promotion stall and youth space at the Upswing Festival in Sale. The Bairnsdale centre also provided games, prizes and health promotion resources at the Mallacoota Family Fun Day.



Staff from headspace Bairnsdale and headspace Sale marking International Women's Day



i-Connect

Our i-Connect Family Mental Health Support Service in East Gippsland provides quality services for children aged under 18 at risk of developing mental health issues. We address social issues, mental health risks, social connection and self-esteem issues by providing programs tailored for individuals and their unique circumstances, and through group programs.

This year, i-Connect was mainly delivered through 14 primary and secondary schools across East Gippsland, from Bairnsdale to the far eastern Victorian border of Mallacoota. We provided telehealth services and several group programs, including in primary schools for children with additional social and learning needs.

Our new Caring-Go-Round program supports primary school-aged children

impacted by the East Gippsland bushfires to understand and manage their feelings, and care for one another. The 6-week, whole-of-school program is therapeutically- and strengths-based and incorporates relaxation, mindfulness, movement and a quality recognition exercise to encourage self-esteem and peer connection. It recognises that while not every family lost property during the fires, everyone in the area was impacted in some way.

The i-Connect team have strong working relationships with organisations, services, parents and caregivers in the area. We are strengthening our relationships with Aboriginal agencies and referral services; almost 8% of clients this year were Aboriginal.

The positive feedback from parents, teachers and principals is testimony to the

quality and impact of the service for communities in remote and regional areas.

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

Specialist services

Our services provide much-needed trauma-informed support for many of our clients. We developed strategies to maintain and enhance connection with clients during lockdowns, particularly as many clients were more isolated, unable to access usual supports and services, and experienced increased stress as a result of the pandemic.

We were pleased to implement new assessment and case planning processes that reflect our trauma-informed and strengths-based focus, and allow for increased transparency and collaboration with clients.



Goal 2 – Response services



Our staff undertook Deaf Awareness Training, and gained knowledge and strategies for creating inclusive, effective services. Additional professional development will enhance our work with clients who are neurodiverse, non-verbal or who have chronic health conditions or pain. We began working with Scope Australia to gain the Communication Access Symbol, which will demonstrate that our services are communication accessible.

Within our Disability Counselling and Support service and Redress Support Services, we established community engagement roles to engage with clients and stakeholders, promote the services and identify opportunities for future program development. Our new community engagement plan has enabled us to reach a broader range of services and increase the awareness of our services.

Forced Adoption Support Service

We continued to support mothers, fathers, adopted persons and other family members affected by forced adoption. We provided counselling and emotional support, information and referral, advice, and assistance with how to search for records and family members.

In March 2022, the Inquiry into Responses to Historical Forced Adoption in Victoria tabled a report in Parliament with recommendations including the implementation of a redress process and the introduction of integrated birth certificates for adoptees. The impact of this, as expected, was very emotive for those impacted by past policies. We implemented strategies to support our clinical intake model so that all clients were responded to in a timely, appropriate and trauma-informed manner.

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

Redress Support Services

Following a re-tendering process, we received an extension of funding that will enable us to continue providing free practical and emotional supports for anyone making, or considering making, an application through the National Redress Scheme.

The scheme is the Australian Government's response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. It offers support and acknowledgement to Australian citizens or permanent residents who had child sexual abuse perpetrated against them in an institution before 1 July 2018, and who were born before 30 June 2010.



We also participated in workshops led by the University of Melbourne's Phoenix Australia Centre on the implementation of changes to the forms used by the scheme. The knowledge of our clients' needs and challenges, and our practitioners' expertise, enabled us to meaningfully contribute to discussions on improving the Redress application process.

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

Disability Counselling and Support

The pandemic significantly affected our free service for people who have had violence, abuse, neglect and/or exploitation perpetrated against them, and those impacted by the Disability Royal Commission. People with disability may be disproportionately affected by the

pandemic due to factors including underlying health conditions, but also because they may not be adequately considered in government and community responses to the virus.

Recognising this, we provided counselling, information and strategies to manage trauma, and information and support to those deciding whether to make a submission to the Royal Commission. Services were accessible by telephone, video-conferencing, or face-to-face at one of our centres across Victoria (where it was COVIDSafe to do so), with home visits possible under exceptional circumstances.

Our stakeholder engagement and outreach activities continued, and consultations with Vision Australia resulted in a public service announcement and interview about our program on the Vision



Goal 2 – Response services

Australia Radio Network, which attracts an audience of over 170,000 people each week. In partnership with Your Story Disability Legal Support, Leadership Plus and Drummond Street's Your Way Through service, we hosted an information stand at the Melbourne Disability Expo.

With our Relationships Australia colleagues, we prepared a submission to the Royal Commission. Our Disability Responsive Practice Guidelines were finalised, which will enable us to better support inclusive practice and people with communication support needs.

RAV is one of the 2 organisations in Victoria providing a Counselling and Support Service for People Affected by the Royal Commission. Drummond Street Services is the other organisation.

Open Place

Open Place is our Victorian specialist support service for Forgotten Australians. The term 'Forgotten Australian' was used in an Australian Senate report on the 2003 to 2004 Inquiry into Children in Institutional Care, which referred to an estimated 500,000 children and child migrants who experienced care in institutions/orphanages or out-of-home care in Australia during the 20th century.

Open Place is funded by the Victorian Government to support people who spent more than 6 months in institutional 'care' in Victoria before 1990, with the Australian Government funding Find and Connect, to further support Forgotten Australians living in Victoria.

The service provides counselling, support with applications for the National Redress Scheme, assistance with obtaining records and family reunions, funding for health services, advocacy, community education and general support with day-to-day challenges. We also operate a drop-in centre in Richmond, and social support groups that were attended by over 210 service users.

COVID-19 restrictions continued to disrupt our face-to-face service delivery this year, in particular our drop-in centre and social support groups. We were pleased that our 14 social groups across Victoria could meet again in late 2021 for Christmas celebrations, and that our drop-in centre could host an end-of-year lunch.

Client feedback – Disability Counselling and Support service

“ [My Disability Counselling and Support worker] has been [an] amazing support to me through ongoing difficulties and trauma I have faced through family violence, family court proceedings and the negative effects these circumstances were having on my psychological and emotionally wellbeing.

[She] made me feel heard and understood in times when I felt isolated with limited supports. She has always made me feel comfortable to speak my truth and story without judgement. She has been incredible at identifying and explaining human processes and effects that trauma experiences can have on people's nervous system. She has done this [in] a comprehensive yet mindful

way, suggesting self-care methods and sending helpful resources for me to follow in my daily life. These have helped me regain confidence, mindfulness and self-empowerment outside of our sessions.

[She] has gone above and beyond to show her support with advocating for me as a domestic violence survivor, woman and mother. [She] has always been professional at the same time as showing compassion. I have gained knowledge for effective coping strategies from [her] and her support has provided me with strength and hope, and through her counsel and belief in me, I have gained belief in myself for me and strength to continue my journey.

I appreciate that there is a service like [this], that [is] committed to assisting people who need extra support ... especially those who may be vulnerable or marginalised.





Open Place has given me support, an ear to talk to, and are still assisting me today.

Open Place service user

Open Place service users showed resilience and courage in navigating the challenges of the pandemic and the associated isolation. Many transitioned successfully to telehealth, and some preferred it for personal reasons, including agoraphobia, physical mobility difficulties, transport challenges and costs, and feelings of safety and comfort when in their own home. Between 1,200 and 1,500 Forgotten Australians continued to use our services during lockdown, with over 2,000 service users accessing Open Place since restrictions lifted.

As detailed on page 18, we were pleased to launch an updated Open Place website this year, which incorporates design, accessibility and content enhancements.

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.

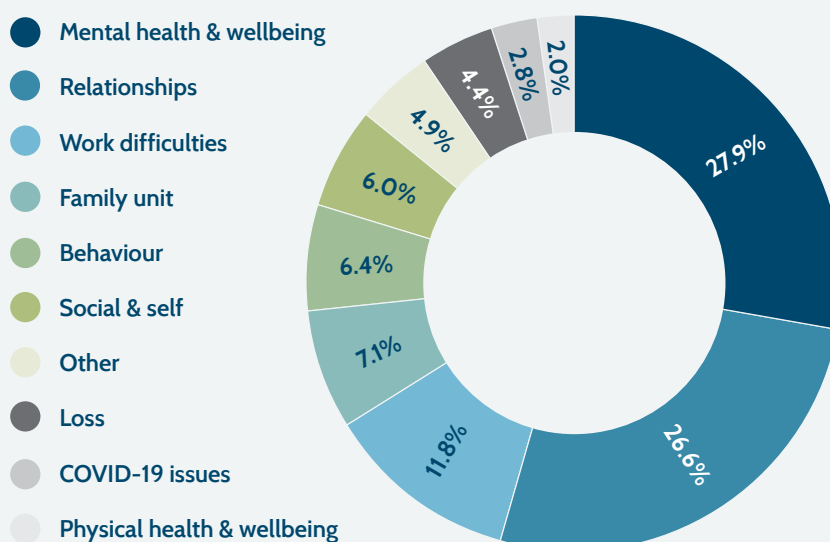


Visit our new website for Forgotten Australians at www.openplace.org.au

Workplace services

A record number of workplaces and clients accessed our Employee Assistance Program this year. The number of sessions delivered by our service increased by 84%, with staff from more than 50 individual workplaces accessing the program. This

Needs of our Employee Assistance Program counselling service clients



increase reflects the significant and ongoing impact of the pandemic, and the benefits of the service in supporting employees to navigate challenges affecting their wellbeing and the healthy functioning of their workplaces.

While many of us welcomed the easing of restrictions in late 2021, the changes elicited new challenges including when workplaces transitioned employees back into the office or adopted hybrid working approaches. Our counselling service provided support for the resulting changes in work environments, work-life balance and in-person interactions, along with COVID-19 health and safety concerns.

Our dedicated and adaptive systems ensured that clients could continue to access our services, via telephone, telehealth, and when restrictions

permitted, face-to-face. Feedback from employers indicates that RAV's services are responsive and supportive, and have been immensely helpful in enhancing feelings of safety at work, increasing productivity and improving the wellbeing of employees.





Goal 3

Prevention services

We know the importance of preventing and reducing the impact of complex relationship issues, and work to provide effective, evidence-informed prevention and early intervention services.



Connect Me

Our new Connect Me program provides free counselling and case management to support children aged 4 to 11 who are at risk of minor to moderate mental health issues in the Bass Coast, South Gippsland and Wellington areas of Victoria.

We support children, including with challenges related to the 2019 to 2020 bushfires and COVID-19, and feelings of anxiety, stress, loss or anger, sleeping difficulties, negative memories that impact daily activities, or withdrawal from usual activities.

The mainly outreach service provides counselling via video, telephone and face-to-face in kindergartens across Gippsland, and case management to connect children with education, personal, physical or community services. We work collaboratively with schools, maternal and child health centres, kindergartens and GP clinics. While only established in January 2022, demand for and referrals to the service have grown quickly.

We were pleased to receive an extension of our funding that will enable us to expand our reach into the Latrobe Valley and East Gippsland until June 2023.

Connect Me is funded by the Gippsland Primary Health Network, which is leading the primary mental health and suicide prevention stepped-care response of Gippsland.

Support for Fathers

We welcomed an extension of funding to deliver our Support for Fathers project until June 2023. The project, which commenced in 2018, gives dads and father-figures information about fatherhood, the different types of dad they can be, the relationship with their partner and connecting with their kids. We also support service providers to work more effectively with dads and families through our training workshops and a free, professionals' toolkit, and programs to support dads in the workplace.

In 2021–22, we delivered the following programs.

- DadStuff – workshops for dads and father-figure on ways to be a dad and how to form healthy relationships with their family
- Working with Dads – training for practitioners and support services on engaging dads using our professionals' toolkit
- Dads in the Workplace – a new program that supports dads and their families with workshops and catchups in workplaces, to assist dads to learn and talk about fatherhood.

We launched a new video on the 7 different types of dads. The engaging, informative resource is informed by 4 years of conversations we've had with dads/father-figures, families and support services around Australia, and extensive research on dads and fathering.



Dads in the Workplace enables employers to support their dads and father-figures at work and at home. These dads can feel supported to be the kind of dad they want to be and know that their workplace is helping them get there.

Dom Alford, Program Leader – Primary Prevention

In early 2022, we launched our new Dads in the Workplace program for employers and workplaces across Australia, with the inaugural program delivered at the Commonwealth Bank.

Support for Fathers in 2021–22:

190 professionals trained

373 dads and father-figures supported

24 workshops provided for dads & professionals

In partnership with Deakin University, we continued to evaluate our Support for Fathers project, with a final report expected later in 2022. We also commenced planning for the next phase of the project, which will involve developing a new program for separated dads and father-figures, and a train-the-trainer program for facilitators.

Support for Fathers is being delivered with funding from the Australian Government Department of Social Services as part of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022.

Men Being Well

We continued to implement our Men Being Well men's health and wellbeing promotion program, which was introduced in early 2021. It allows men to discuss life issues and challenges, learn from other men about wellbeing and mental health, focus on healthy relationships in their family and communities, and share stories

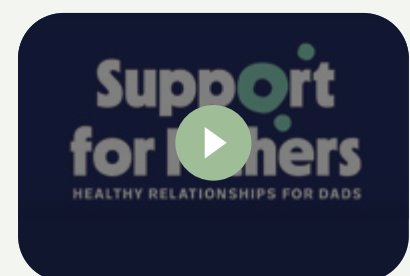
with other men. The program is provided with funding from the Australian Government Department of Social Services, and in partnership with Life Is ... Foundation. It has been delivered through monthly online or face-to-face drop-in sessions in Melbourne and quarterly workshops in a regional town east of Melbourne, with plans to expand the program across metropolitan Melbourne, and develop new resources to further support men in the coming year.

Healthy relationships workshops

In line with our focus on primary prevention, we delivered Healthy Relationships workshops based on the model of Respectful Relationships education delivered in Victoria schools. We ran successful programs for the AFL (Australian Football League), Melbourne City Football Club, Lifeline and Gymnastics Victoria, and secured a Victorian Government grant to deliver additional workshops in Victorian AFL and soccer sports clubs.



What type of dad are you? Watch our new 7 Types of Dad video to decide. Visit bit.ly/7-Types-Dads-Video



Goal 3 – Prevention services

I like, like you: Respectful relationships in schools

Our 'I like, like you' healthy and respectful relationships program for school students in years 7 to 10 was reviewed during the year, with individual presentations for teachers and parents, program materials and a facilitator manual revised, and new resources developed.

After COVID-19 restrictions eased, we recommenced the program with 135 year 8 students in eastern Melbourne, and are scheduled to deliver 'I like, like you' to another 500 students at 3 schools in the second half of 2022.

early matters

Our early matters primary prevention and early intervention services are for families and children aged up to 12 years in Delahey, Kings Park, Albanvale, Wendouree, Miners Rest and Ballarat South in Victoria. While early matters was not able to deliver its usual face-to-face services in primary schools and kindergartens due to COVID-19, our other programs ensured that the service was well-used online.

The increased flexibility and accessibility in accessing our Tuning into Kids™ and Circle of Security Parenting™ programs online was warmly welcomed and appreciated by clients. Our early matters team also continued to offer individual support in addition to the group support, which enabled parents to feel 'held' by the service as they explored their parenting journeys.

Evening groups allowed working parents to undertake our programs. Both parents could attend the same program at times that suited them, and they could reflect

with the other parent during the week between sessions. Parents reported that, as a result, they felt more aligned in their parenting.

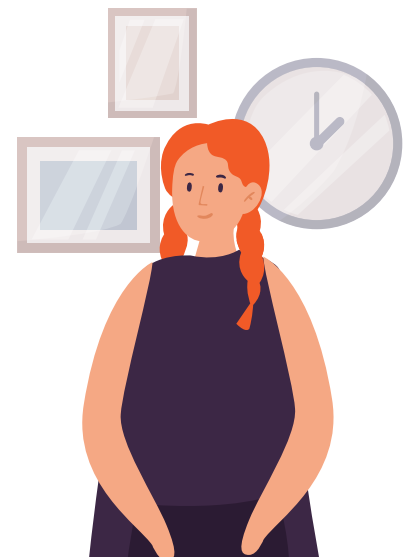
We continued our ATTUNE pre-birth education session for parents expecting their first baby and ATTUNE Plus post-birth session to mothers' groups in the maternal and child health centres, with face-to-face groups pivoting to online sessions as required to ensure that mothers and new parents could still access much-needed support despite COVID-19 restrictions.



Doing the group online is a godsend.

early matters online group participant

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





Communities that Care partnership

Since 2017, our Melbourne FRC has been a partner agency in Yarra Communities That Care, a strong collaborative partnership that supports the healthy development of children, young people and their families in the City of Yarra. The initiative was developed in response to a high incidence of family management and conflict issues identified in 2015 and 2019.

We coordinate a network of 26 practitioners from 8 local agencies who work together to build the emotional intelligence of and connection between parents and their children. We collaboratively deliver the 6-week, evidence-based parenting program, Tuning in to Teens™ and related webinars. This small group program helps parents better understand and help their children navigate adolescence, strengthen relationships with their children, and build their emotional intelligence and resilience skills.

This year, we delivered 11 programs with local primary and secondary schools. Three were tailored to meet the needs of parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Most were delivered online to ensure program availability throughout COVID-19.



A great program that has benefits for both parent and child. And run in a caring, compassionate and inclusive way.

Tuning in to Teens™ participant



We also facilitated 2 well-attended webinars: 440 parents registered to strengthen their connection with their teenage children and build their children's emotional intelligence.

Communities That Care supports families with a community of practice to enhance practitioners' understanding of practice and referral pathways, consistent emotional wellbeing approaches for families, and strong working relationships with wellbeing and cultural liaison staff in schools. Recognising this, we delivered professional development sessions to practitioners on topics such as supporting young people with anxiety, supporting LGBTIQ+ young people and their families, and working with co-facilitators.



A terrific course that opens the door to successful relationships between parents and teens. I have learned a lot in how to help my teen, defuse situations and navigate the ups and downs of my emotional teen and myself.

Tuning in to Teens™ participant



Goal 4

Effective governance

The qualifications, skills, experience and commitment of our staff are integral to our organisation's success in being able ensure that clients receive the support that they need.

Our workforce

Our employees demonstrated their resilience and adaptability in responding to change and the need for hybrid working arrangements related to COVID-19. Our clinical staff continued to deliver high-quality services, supported by our administration staff and led by our centre, management and leadership teams.

In navigating the pandemic, we prioritised safety, wellbeing, communication and connection. We engaged with our staff through surveys, team and organisational communications, and face-to-face engagement where safe to do so. We applied relevant safety controls and a risk lens to our resourcing, requirements, and policies and procedures.

We successfully completed the negotiation of our new Staff Enterprise Agreement, which was ratified by Fair Work Australia in December 2021. The agreement further enhances RAV's position as an employer of choice, and gives staff additional work-related conditions and benefits. We increased our paid parental leave entitlements for both primary and secondary carers to 8 weeks.



The (management) team are very approachable, supportive and care for my wellbeing.

RAV employee

This recognises the importance of both parents' involvement in parenting, and that the increased participation of fathers is linked to gender equality.

RAV is committed to gender equality and ensuring our workplaces are inclusive and supportive of diversity. We again were compliant with a Workplace Gender Equality Agency review and reporting process this year. Our report included a detailed assessment and report on RAV's strategies, policies, procedures, employment conditions, remuneration and recruitment as they relate to gender and diversity.

We value our staff and are proud to be an Employer of Choice. We offer attractive benefits and conditions including:

- competitive remuneration and public benevolent institution salary packaging
- further personal, compassionate, study/exam, family violence and paid parental leave entitlements
- an Employee Assistance Program to support staff wellbeing
- best practice clinical supervision and case consultation
- high-quality professional development and training to enhance skills, learning and competencies.

Our employees

67

new employees



354

total valued employees



39

internal promotions



36%

of staff have worked with RAV for 5 years or more



4,065

hours of professional development provided



72%

of our managers are women



Gender ● Female ● Male

Employment type ● Full-time ● Part-time ● Casual



Goal 4 – Effective governance

Our organisation supported a number of awareness and action-focused initiatives, including International Women's Day, with centres hosting staff discussions, attending local events and participating in the #BreakTheBias social media campaign.

Across the organisation, staff participated in over 80 types of different professional development through a combination of face-to-face and online learning opportunities. Training included:

- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)
- Cultural Awareness workshops delivered by the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency
- Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework
- Managing Wellbeing when Working with Complex Trauma
- Responding to Family Violence in First Nations Families to Support Children's Social and Emotional Wellbeing
- Suicide Risk in Family Law Mediation
- Trauma Informed Care for Practice and Managers
- Understanding Coercive Control.

Governance

Leading practice

At the core of our work is our understanding of the importance of healthy relationships throughout the lifespan for children and adults. We are committed to evidence-based, child-centred and trauma-informed service delivery and continue to develop evidence-informed frameworks for our services.

We know that families and relationships have faced multiple and complex challenges and ensuing trauma in recent years, including as a result of COVID-19 and extreme climatic events such as droughts, floods and bushfires. During 2021–22, RAV provided online, telephone and face-to-face services, in response to COVID-19 lockdowns and requirements, and to ensure accessibility for all clients throughout COVID-19.

We implemented a new clinical intake system to enable a professional and client-centred response from the first point of contact for all clients calling our centres. The system aligns with our practice principles of focusing on the safety for clients and children, and providing responsive services that meet client needs. Our priority during intake is to ascertain mental health, child safety, and/or family violence risks, so that clients can engage with an intake worker where they need additional, immediate support, and to improve outcomes for clients.



I believe that RAV [is] extremely supportive of staff and gives opportunities to encourage the growth and professional development of staff.

RAV employee

At our core, we understand the importance of healthy relationships throughout the lifespan.

Our principles of practice guide our service delivery to be:

- evidence-informed
- client-focused
- child- and family-centred
- safe
- strengths-based
- trauma-informed
- culturally responsive.





Senior leadership team*



Dr Andrew Bickerdike
Chief Executive Officer



Shiranthi Sivarajah
Chief Financial Officer
and Company Secretary



Sharon Greenhill
General Manager
Human Resources



Amanda Goldstein
General Manager
Clinical Services



Suzanne Ichlov
General Manager
Operations



Carl Beeston
Senior Manager ICT



Anna Clarke
Senior Manager
Communications and
Marketing



Jo Huggins
Senior Manager
Operations South East



Chris Lye
Senior Manager
Operations North West



Donna Plavljanic
Senior Manager
Training and
Development

Management team*

Rose Byrnes

Senior Manager
Western Melbourne

Cate Chaiyot

Centre Manager
headspace Wonthaggi

John Corvan

Manager Melbourne FRC

Hayley Davidson

Centre Manager
headspace Bairnsdale and Sale

Stuart Deagan

Manager Northern Melbourne

Jayne Ferguson

Centre Manager Ballarat

Andreana Harrison

Programs Manager
Family Violence Services

Kylie Lancaster

Senior Manager Gippsland

Carolyn Last

Senior Manager Kew

Michelle McDonald

Senior Manager Open Place

Suresh Ramachandraiah

Senior Manager Southern and
Eastern Melbourne

Shelley Watson

Manager Shepparton

* As of 30 June 2022

Goal 4 – Effective governance

Quality and risk management

RAV underwent a successful annual maintenance audit against the internationally recognised ISO9001:2015 Quality Management Systems, and Human Services Standards in early 2022. Our certification against these standards gives clients and community members confidence in the quality of our organisation's services and the effective management systems in place.

Our robust risk management framework, which aligns with ISO31000:2018, has helped to drive the quality and effectiveness of service delivery throughout the changing COVID-19 conditions. It structures the organisation's risk navigation and mitigation activities, and is supported by RAV's Quality Management System, which incorporate policies and procedures that guide RAV's activities to achieve our strategic and operational goals.

To enhance the management, recording, analysis and reporting of corporate and strategic risks, incidents and feedback, this year we invested in Riskware. The risk

management software will be implemented in the second half of 2022, and will ensure efficient and effective management of risk across RAV.

In recognition of the knowledge and expertise of all our staff, we developed a new online portal that will enable staff to propose continuous improvement initiatives. The Bright Ideas Box submissions may relate to a specific service or program area, or have the potential for organisation-wide impact.

Our Board

Our Board members are committed, skilled and experienced individuals who drive our organisation's success and achievement of our vision through data-informed decision-making. Their collective experience spans the not-for-profit, commercial and private sectors including health, mental health, service delivery, finance, law, banking, government policy, strategy, business development and ICT.

Our robust Corporate Governance Framework and the work of our 3 Board committees underpins the work of the

Board across the areas of strategy, governance, financial and risk management, sustainability and high-level operations.

Board committees

The Governance Committee is responsible for ensuring the Board and its committees are composed of individuals who are appropriately skilled, accredited and trained, to enable them to discharge their responsibilities as directors with regard to the law, RAV's constitution and highest standards of governance.

The Audit and Finance Committee assists the Board in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities for RAV's ongoing financial performance, legal and regulatory requirement compliance, financial risk management practices, and the endorsement of RAV's annual operating and capital budgets.

The independent Clinical Governance Committee safeguards RAV's responsibilities and compliance against clinical governance standards. Members oversee the analysis of clinical services and practices, and give specialised advice to RAV's Board and leadership on new services and practice models, continuous clinical quality improvement and risk management, to enable safe and positive outcomes.



RAV is a client focused, quality-based organisation that cares for staff and has mature governance and operational management systems in place.

HDAA auditor





Our Board members



Professor Lyn Littlefield OAM

President
Governance Committee member
Clinical Governance Committee member
Member since October 1993



Kaye Frankcom

Vice President
Clinical Governance Committee Chair
Member since April 2016



Michael Hunt

Audit and Finance Committee member
Clinical Governance Committee member
Member since January 2018



Ronda Jacobs

Governance Committee Chair
Member since October 2018



John Lovell

Member since October 2008



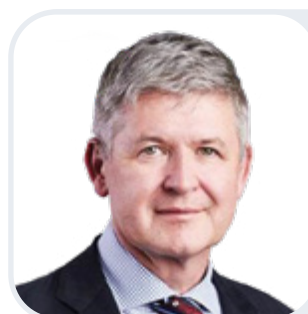
Michael Shaw

Audit and Finance Committee Chair
Member since October 2018



Professor Helen Rhoades OAM

Governance Committee member
Member since July 2021

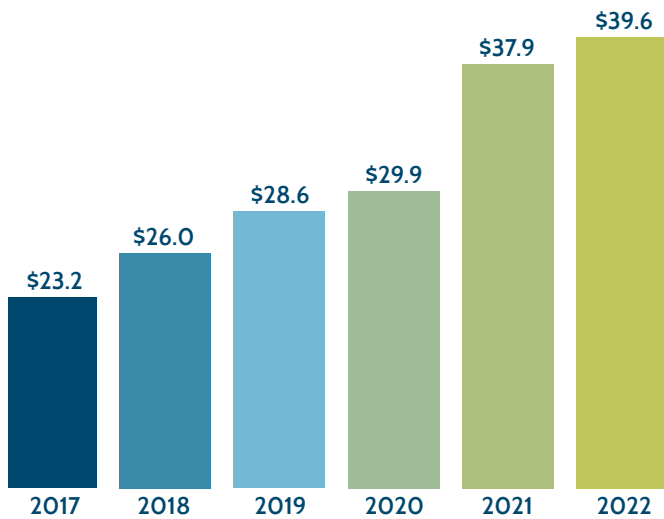


Professor Colin Royse

Governance Committee member
Member since October 2020

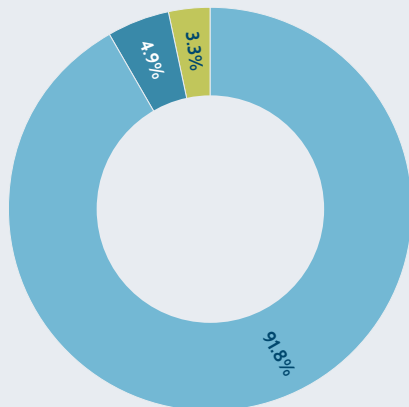
Financial performance

Revenue growth (M)



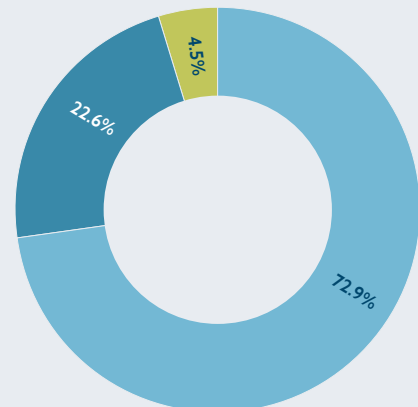
Revenue

● Grant funding ● Client fees ● Other income



Expenses

● Employee costs ● Operating costs ● Depreciation and amortisation



Summary statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 30 June 2022

	2022 (\$)	2021 (\$)
REVENUE		
Grant funding	36,357,239	34,374,919
Client fees	1,936,170	2,041,157
Other income	1,314,171	1,439,744
Total revenue	39,607,580	37,855,820
EXPENSES		
Employee costs	28,169,903	26,856,878
Operating costs	8,722,937	8,399,524
Depreciation and amortisation	1,725,397	1,664,165
Total expenses	38,618,237	36,920,567
SURPLUS	989,343	935,253
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		
Net gain on revaluation of non-current assets	-	677,000
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME	989,343	1,612,253

Summary statement of financial position as at 30 June 2022

	2022 (\$)	2021 (\$)
ASSETS		
Current assets	27,231,706	24,978,647
Non-current assets	10,562,064	10,405,255
Total assets	37,793,770	35,383,902
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities	15,602,202	14,045,451
Non-current liabilities	4,006,612	4,142,838
Total liabilities	19,608,814	18,188,289
NET ASSETS	18,184,956	17,195,613

Inclusion and diversity

We're committed to providing safe, inclusive and accessible services for all people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and LGBTIQ+ Australians.



Working with First Nations communities

Through our Community Liaison Officers, we maintained strong connections with Victorian Aboriginal networks, including engaging with Local Aboriginal Networks, which bring Aboriginal people together to set priorities, develop community plans and improve social connections.

The Relationships Australia Indigenous Network continued its work to strengthen cultural safety, support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and ensure that issues impacting First Nations communities remain core to our work. At our forum this year, we reviewed our action plan and heard from First Nations attendees about their experiences across our federation.

Our staff attended an Indigenous Healthcare Workforce Engagement and Career Development Masterclass, which discussed the importance of creating and sustaining a culturally respectful and safe environment for First Nations peoples.

We participated in face-to-face and virtual events to commemorate Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week. Ash Dargan – who is a Larrakia, saltwater man from the Top End, and RAV's then Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Specialist – also had an online yarn with No to Violence about the importance of integrating culturally informed therapeutic practices into any approach to recovery,

particularly when working with people affected by family violence. We also joined colleagues from Aboriginal Community Controlled organisations in attending the 2022 Overcoming Indigenous Family Violence Conference. It was a valuable opportunity to reconnect with these services who we support and partner with, and be guided by Aboriginal communities regarding culturally safe services.

In northern Melbourne, we commemorated National Sorry Day, attending a Welcome to Country, an Aboriginal Smoking Ceremony, and a Sorry Walk led by Gunai Kurnai Elder Uncle Herb Patten. We supported Whittlesea Reconciliation Group's involvement at the Whittlesea Community Festival, where the Yirram Birrin Wiin Space included a fire pit, yarning circle and arts activities.



Our headspace centres in Gippsland supported activities and partnerships with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and groups. These included a Take a Step health promotion and psychoeducation activity for young men, and a free interactive stall at the Gippsland and East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-Operative It's a Mob Thing music and health festival. We also delivered an online project to mark Survival Day. The All Mob program and GippsYouthKidsClub Inc supported young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to connect with Country through community art, learning about bush foods and yarning.

Since 2016, our work with First Nations communities has been guided by our organisational Statement of Commitment. In line with this, we established a Yarn Up group for staff to discuss ways to enhance cultural awareness and ensure inclusive and culturally safe service delivery. Growing cultural competency and encouraging allyship amongst our staff remains a key focus of our organisation. This year, a group of staff completed the 8 Ways of Knowing Cultural Knowledge Exchange Program with Terori Hareko AvaiVilla and Senior Wurundjeri Elder, Auntie Diane Kerr OAM. All RAV staff complete online Core Inclusion Training, which includes an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander course developed by Wayne Denning, a proud Birri Gubba man and founder of Carbon Creative.

Culturally and linguistically diverse initiatives

To ensure inclusive service delivery and meet the needs of people from diverse backgrounds, we tailored our online Parenting After Separation Seminars (see page 21). Clients were supported by translators, and the program used a combination of English, Vietnamese and Mandarin. We provided individual sessions for a client with hearing difficulties.

Our Community Liaison Officer, Quyen Ha, demonstrated expertise and connection to community in a well-received 3-part podcast series on family violence. The aim of the Brimbank Live podcasts, which were supported by Brimbank City Council, was to raise awareness of family violence and communicate with culturally and linguistically diverse young people about



Quyen Ha, Community Liaison Officer, being interviewed for a 3-part Brimbank Live podcast series on family violence

this complex and significant issue. Family violence is unfortunately prevalent across communities, however, there are often barriers around language, and cultural and traditional values and beliefs, and a lack of culturally appropriate services.

We piloted a customised version of the Tuning in to Kids™ emotional intelligent parenting program. The 6-week program was adapted to the unique cultural perspectives of Vietnamese participants. Groups were facilitated with early matters clients and women at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre. Feedback from participants indicated that a key takeaway of the program was the importance of listening to and understanding children's emotions. Specific Tuning in to Kids™ programs were also developed for Afghan fathers and mothers in south-east Melbourne, and provided by facilitators who were fluent in several Afghan dialects.

The Afghan fathers' Tuning in to Kids™ programs were delivered through the Windermere Communities for Children initiative, with funding from the Australian Government Department of Social Services.



It was important to adapt and deliver the program in a way that was culturally applicable to the participants in relation to their age, their emotion socialisation, and when they migrated to Australia.

Facilitator of the Tuning In To Kids™ program for Vietnamese participants

Supporting LGBTIQ+ communities

We renewed our commitment to our LGBTIQ+ Rainbow Working Group in late-2021, increasing our focus on staff education, developing inclusive resources and welcoming 7 new members from a cross-section of our diverse staff group.

Established in 2019, the group aims to enhance the quality, effectiveness and appropriateness of RAV's services for LGBTIQ+ community members, and to ensure a safe and positive experience for staff and clients.

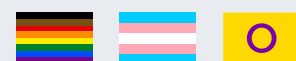
The group accepted an invitation to complete and provide feedback on Rainbow Health Victoria's new LGBTIQ+ workplace inclusion training course. We continued to identify and develop resources attuned to LGBTIQ+ needs and family circumstances, and updated our processes to increase inclusivity, transparency and relevance to gender diverse and sexually diverse people. Following a comprehensive research, consultation and review process, we adopted new flags for RAV's materials.

We participated in events designed to raise awareness and celebrate the strengths and achievements of LGBTIQ+ individuals, proudly supporting Midsumma Festival; International Pronouns Day; Melbourne Queer Film Festival; International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT); and LGBT Domestic Violence Awareness Day.

Members of our Rainbow Working Group participated in Rainbow Health Victoria's bi-monthly Communities of Practice Forum, and communicated with RAV's workforce to enhance awareness of inclusion and best practice, break down stigma and unconscious bias, and celebrate diversity within our staff group.

Our new selection of Pride flags includes the 8-stripe More Colour, More Pride Flag, Transgender Pride Flag and Intersex Pride Flag.

We hope that these new flags will better represent the rich diversity of LGBTIQ+ communities, including transgender and intersex people, and LGBTIQ+ people of colour, and make RAV more welcoming and accessible.



Professional training and development

As a leading training organisation, and a Registered Training Organisation, we deliver learning solutions to meet the learning and development needs of professionals, workplaces, educational facilities and other services.



COVID-19 had an ongoing, significant impact on our training offerings. We continued to implement learning solutions that met students' needs and were not solely reliant on face-to-face delivery.

As a result of the increased emphasis on online learning, our Training and Development team opened a new, dedicated training suite adjacent to RAV's Central Office. The space provides technology-supported rooms that facilitate quality, online programs, as well as a dedicated suite for onsite learning.

Additional functionality in our redesigned learning management system supported the delivery of our graduate diplomas, accredited training programs, and an online workshop and webinar series.

Accredited training

We were pleased to secure a 7-year extension in the registration of our Registered Training Organisation (RTO) (No. 21977) enabling us to deliver training programs until mid-2029. As an RTO, we deliver accredited graduate diplomas and training opportunities.

We launched an enhanced CHC81015 Graduate Diploma of Relationship Counselling (Responding to Family Violence) during the year, for counsellors or equivalent practitioners wanting to enhance their skills for working with people impacted by family violence. The updated course incorporates the latest research, and evidence-led content and practice theories, and offers a blended design including

face-to-face workshops, self-paced online learning and new experiential components. These include guest speaker sessions, forums and excursions to relevant organisations within the family violence sector. RAV is proud to also offer students a fully coordinated and supported placement experience, allowing students to apply their theory into practice. Multiple learning options are available, including part-time, intensive and a new rural intake model.

This graduate diploma will be undertaken by 10 eligible RAV staff in the new financial year, following our success in tendering for funding for sexual assault and family violence traineeships.

We welcomed 2 students to our CHC81115 Graduate Diploma of FDR in July 2021 and January 2022, with students from 2 previous intakes graduating. This nationally accredited qualification is based on current theory and practice, and enables students to develop the knowledge, skills and competence to practise FDR and an analytical reflective capacity in their role as FDR practitioners.

More than

80%



of Graduate Diploma of FDR graduates found a role in this profession within 12 months

For over 30 years, we have provided our Specialist Course in Integrative Couple Therapy to counsellors and psychologists wanting to develop rigorous knowledge and specialist skills in working with couples. This renowned course is offered to Swinburne University students undertaking their Master of Social Science (Couple Counselling), as well as being part of RAV's independent suite of accredited training offerings. The course uses an integrative therapeutic approach grounded in contemporary practice and evidence-based models. It equips participants to respond flexibly to couples' needs, world views and situations, and includes interactive presentations, case discussions, readings, recordings, podcasts, live demonstrations and practical couple therapy skills workshops.

Our nationally recognised Mediation Training Course was also revised, to incorporate self-paced learning, full-day workshops and assessment. Students learn the theory and knowledge required to progress to interactive practice workshops that support the development of mediation skills in a safe and supported environment. Our course uniquely combines a skills and qualification pathway that enables students to progress to enrol in our CHC81115 Graduate Diploma of FDR, or, with an additional assessment, become accredited mediators under the National Mediator Accreditation System.

Workshops and webinars

With our annual face-to-face professional development workshop program impacted by the pandemic, we introduced online workshops on developing skills in mediation, FDR, relationship counselling and primary prevention.

In addition, our first, well-attended annual webinar program supported professionals to build resilience and provided access to high-quality professional development throughout the pandemic. Webinars were live-streamed and recorded for post-event viewing. We were honoured to welcome renowned international and national presenters, including Clinical Social Worker and Psychotherapist, Babette Rothschild; UK Clinical Psychologist, Dr Bill Mitchell; Health Psychologist and Social Scientist, Dr Andy Ho; and Family Violence Campaigner and 2015 Australian of the Year, Rosie Batty OAM.

Self-paced courses

We launched new self-paced courses that provide convenient access to learn at a time, place and pace that suits participants. Popular courses included Working with Dads, Professional Boundaries in Therapeutic Work, and Conducting Family Dispute Resolution Online.

Customised training

We also introduced new online customised training solutions, and worked with clients from various industries to tailor programs and learning outcomes.

We delivered training on Responding to Family Violence in the Workplace, Negotiation and Conflict Management, Managing Stress and Building Resilience, and Vicarious Trauma.

Our training team developed new partnerships and working relationships with local, interstate and national organisations and services. We conducted an online content review and delivered professional development workshops for coaching staff at the AFL, and provided customised training workshops, and group and individual supervision services for Mackillop Family Services. We also secured funding to deliver a train-the-trainer healthy relationships program to support the community and upskill young leaders at the Melbourne City Football Club.

Additional partnerships include with the Australian Cemeteries and Crematoria Association, and with our Relationships Australia federation colleagues at Relationships Australia New South Wales, where we are contracted to be a third-party provider of training services and provider of training solutions for a new database implementation project.

Specialised training programs

A new 18-month contract with the Department of Education and Training Victoria will see us develop and deliver a pilot program of Early Childhood Mental Health Resilience Workshops, reflective circles and supervision support to 34 early childhood centres. The centres across the East Gippsland and Alpine Shires will support staff and leaders to develop resilience plans for local staff, families and communities impacted by recent bushfires.



Your facilitator was absolutely fantastic. It was a great training. We had a really great group that opened up on lot on their struggles and the facilitator was able to guide the conversation through some very deep topics.

Customised training participant

Other new contracts include:

- to deliver a 6-week family violence program within correctional facilities
- with the Victorian Government Department of Families, Fairness and Housing to provide accredited and non-accredited training services for Family Group Conferencing
- to provide supervision to the Victorian Government Department of Justice and Community Safety
- to work with the Victorian Football League and provide gender equity plans and promote women in sport through a Victorian Sports Funding Grant.

We continued to deliver our specialist rehabilitation and reintegration programs for the Victorian correctional cohort, including:

- LINCS – psychoeducational, strengths-based workshops for individuals on community correction orders
- LINCS in Families – workshops in Melbourne and regional Victoria for those on community corrections orders as a result of family violence
- ATLAS – a suite of non-clinical training modules on the wellbeing and personal development of unsentenced and pre-trial individuals on remand in correctional facilities across Victoria.

RAV's training services include:

- accredited training
- clinical supervision
- customised training
- leadership coaching
- on-demand webinars
- self-paced courses
- specialised training programs
- workshops.

Contact us

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enquiries@berwickfrc.org.au

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171 Main Street
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info@headspacebairnsdale.org.au

headspace Sale

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

headspace Wonthaggi

5b Murray Street
Ph: (03) 5671 5900
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5 additional outreach locations across
Bass Coast and South Gippsland.

Open Place

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info@openplace.org.au



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 regularly reviewed.