



THE FAMILY VIOLENCE
PREVENTION FOUNDATION
OF AUSTRALIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2015



violence free families

THE FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION FOUNDATION OF AUSTRALIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2015

The Year in Review	2
Our Vision, Rationale and Objectives	3
Current Activities	4
Research Study	6
The Directors	8
Public Relations & Fund Raising	10
Community Support	12

The Family Violence Prevention Foundation of Australia, trading as Violence Free Families.

Our fundamental belief is that children and adults all have the right to live in homes free of violence and trauma, in "Violence Free Families".

The potential for community benefit is enormous and it is our ambition that Violence Free Families will become a reality for all families in Australia.

www.violencefreefamilies.org.au



violence free families



THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Our focus on family violence prevention through research, innovation and the development of the online men’s behaviour change program continued and significant further progress was made.

THE ONLINE BEHAVIOR CHANGE PROGRAM

The third and final field trial of this innovative concept was completed in May, and the University of Melbourne Centre for Program Evaluation confirmed the excellent results obtained from the first two trials. One partner said: “The program has given me the man I believed he could be when we married nine years ago.”

On the Line, specialists in telephone counselling and the provider of MensLine Australia, was selected as our service provider for the broader rollout of the online program and preparations for induction and training of their staff by VFF were finalised.

RESEARCH

Our research study with Monash University into the long term results of face-to-face men’s behaviour change programs will continue for another nine months as we follow up men who have completed a program. The results will be published by mid 2016 and the findings presented at 2 seminars.

FUNDING AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

We welcome the continuing official recognition of our programs by Rotary. Generous donations were received from Women in Rotary and several other clubs, as well as philanthropic trusts and individual donors. Sixteen family violence prevention presentations were made to a total of over 1,000 people, spreading awareness of family violence and our contribution to prevention.

In March, our new Ambassador, Colleen Hewett, entertained delegates at a Rotary conference in Hobart with a powerful new song about the

experience of family violence, along with other signature songs. For many delegates, it was the highlight of the conference. An anti-violence video clip, featuring Colleen and numerous public identities, including the prime minister, premiered at the conference.

GOVERNANCE

We accepted with regret the resignation of Norm Thomas from our Board with effect from 31 December. Norm’s wise advice and many contributions over his five years of service will be very much missed.

In May, we welcomed Helen Bird to the Board. She brings to our work her great enthusiasm and a wealth of experience in business development and public relations.

We made a submission to the Senate Inquiry into domestic violence in July, 2014, testified at a hearing later in the year and followed up with supplementary material requested on notice. We also made a submission to the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence.

OUR TEAM

Once again, the dedicated work of our directors and wider community supporters shows the depth of concern about family violence and its prevention. All of our work is done by volunteers in a most committed and professional way, leading to the solid progress detailed in this report and allowing us to minimise overheads and maximise direct spending on research, innovation and the raising of public awareness.

Dr David Smyth
Chairperson

VISION, RATIONALE & OBJECTIVES

Our vision is summed up in our name, Violence Free Families. We aim to reduce all types of family violence: physical, psychological, financial and sexual. We provide a nation-wide community focus for action against violence. Fundamental to our existence is the belief that all children, and all adults, have the right to live in homes free of violence and trauma. The potential for community benefit is enormous.

In a year when Rosie Batty, whose son was killed by his father, is Australian of the Year, awareness of family violence has increased enormously.

Regrettably, family violence prevention has not kept pace and the high incidence of family violence remains unacceptably high.

As a community-based organisation, Violence Free Families recognises that the most serious element of this complex problem is violence perpetrated by men against women and that one in four Australian children witnesses or experiences this violence or abuse.

Our current programs are directed towards this element as a priority and developing new programs in this field.

HISTORY

The Family Violence Prevention Foundation of Australia, trading as Violence Free Families, was established in 2009 to build on the previous 14 years of experience in family violence prevention by the Rotary Club of Brighton, Victoria.

From 1995 to 2002 the Club provided men’s behaviour change programs in the Bayside area through “Bayside Family Support”, a non-profit company established for that purpose. In 2002 it transferred this service to prominent Melbourne counselling agency LifeWorks Relationships Counselling and Education Services. In 2003, the program received a national Crime Prevention Award for its work in this area.

From 2002 to 2006 the Club continued funding support for the Bayside program and others run by LifeWorks.

Thousands more families benefitted and an ongoing survey showed an encouragingly high success rate, at least in the short term.

In 2006, the Club sponsored a two-year evaluation by Monash University into men’s behaviour change programs and their outcomes, with the aid of Australian Rotary Health and LifeWorks. This was completed in August, 2009 but it identified a further need for longitudinal research into the outcomes of men’s behaviour change programs for men, their partners (or former partners) and children. This vital research project commenced in 2011.

In the past few years, our efforts have greatly expanded with the support of Rotary and the broader community, and we have focused on the two major projects described later in this report.



CURRENT ACTIVITIES

THE ONLINE MEN’S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE PROGRAM AN EXCITING INITIATIVE

Many men in need of help, such as those who live outside the main cities, shift workers, and those who are too ashamed to attend, cannot access a face-to-face behaviour change program. Programs are either not readily available or have long waiting times. This means a very large percentage of families are left without access to these services and the benefit these programs have to offer.

In an age where technology is used for long-range medicine, research, and education, when most households have access to the Internet, and with the National Broadband Network rolling out, we have embraced the opportunity to make use of technology for men’s behaviour change programs.

The facilitated Online Men’s Behaviour Change Program is a psycho-educational interactive group program designed to improve the safety and welfare of women and children who are suffering from male violence in their homes, by changing the attitudes and behaviour of men.

It uses a similar ‘curriculum’ to the face-to-face programs that have been provided for many years, and goes beyond it in significant respects. It brings men together online in a ‘virtual classroom’, in groups of up to about 12, for two hours each week over 14 weeks, guided by two trained facilitators. Interaction between the participants is an essential part of the

therapeutic value of the OMBCP. A ‘moderator’ is also present, dealing with any technical problems that might arise and supporting facilitators with software manipulation.

The concept was developed by a consortium of expert organisations under contract to Violence Free Families and three field trials were conducted during 2014 and 2015. Following the success of the first two trials, the last trial was designed to test the limits of the program in group size and case difficulty. The results were most encouraging.

Special attention was paid to partner and family safety when designing the program and during the trials. No issues were identified by any stakeholder and no reason identified that safety levels will differ from those of a face-to-face program; indeed they may also prove to be better due to the increased partner contact and the 24/7 accessibility of our service provider.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE’S CENTRE FOR PROGRAM EVALUATION WAS ENGAGED TO MONITOR AND EVALUATE THE TRIALS. KEY FEATURES OF THE EVALUATION WERE:

Partner and Family Safety	Evaluation reports from all stakeholders: partners, men and facilitators, indicated no concerns or incidents during the trials, and the consensus of facilitators and the evaluator is that there is no higher risk to partner and family safety from the online program than from a face-to-face program. There are some indications that it might prove to be safer.
Partner Satisfaction	Contact with partners indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the outcomes of the program.
Client Satisfaction	Clients also indicated a high degree of satisfaction with the outcomes of the program through questionnaires, focus group comments and emails.
Client Attitudes	It is considered by researchers in the social sciences generally that attitudes are good predictors of actions. The evaluators scored attitudes on several dimensions, showing small positive shifts and a greater level of understanding of the severity of the impact of their behaviour on partners and children.
Facilitator Satisfaction	Facilitators were highly satisfied with the process and outcomes. They reported that the men opened up more readily because of their relative anonymity and that it was generally easier to commence addressing their issues as a result. Only one of the 21 clients completing was regarded as a partial success; fewer than would be expected from an average for face-to-face programs.
Technology	Clients reported no difficulty in using the software and no problems were encountered that are not common to all internet users.

VFF has established a contract with On the Line Australia (OTL) for the provision of the first regular program, with the intention of extending the contract when funding is secured. OTL is the provider of a extensive range of remote counselling services, including MensLine Australia, crisis help lines for Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Defence, Australia Post, the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, SuicideLine (Vic) and witness counselling for the current Victorian Royal Commission into Institutional Child Abuse.

A knowledge and systems transfer process to OTL staff is well advanced and arrangements are in place to commence the delivery of the first regular program in January 2016. Referrals will be accepted from all States and Territories.

The new program opens up new opportunities to assist people experiencing family violence and abuse. In the future, VFF will consult with a range of communities to explore the adaptability of the online program concept for indigenous communities, other specific ethnic and religious communities and the further development of other respectful relationship programs.

The online program will not supersede face-to-face programs and may not suit all men. VFF believes that both methods of delivery should co-exist to improve the accessibility of programs.

The advantages of the facilitated online program are:

- Accessibility. It can be made available throughout Australia, wherever an Internet service is available.
- Greater anonymity for men wishing to avoid public identification and shame as perpetrators.
- Greater openness by clients, as demonstrated in trials, improving the level of engagement.
- Up to 30% more time spent by clients on the program, because self-paced materials are available between the online sessions and this ‘homework’ is required.
- No need to travel, saving costs and time.
- Improved quality control when delivered from a national hub from documented course material—our research indicates that the quality of face-to-face programs is variable.
- Economies of scale as program demand increases.



RESEARCH STUDY INTO THE LONG TERM EFFECTIVENESS OF MALE FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS IN AUSTRALIA

This study is examining the results of behaviour change programs for violent and abusive men over the long term. These programs are believed to be one of the most effective ways of helping men to stop their violence but no large scale systematic study of them has ever been conducted in Australia.

Violence Free Families has raised the funds for this study and it is supported by a talented and diverse academic reference committee.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?

The lead researchers are:

- Professor Emeritus Thea Brown PHD, Professor of Research in the Department of Social Work at Monash University, and
- Dr Catherine Flynn, Senior Lecturer in Social Work at Monash University, with special responsibilities for honours studies.

The academic reference committee brings together a cross-section of members with a wide range of relevant skills and knowledge to provide significant input and advice.

The committee includes:

- three program managers from agencies located in participating states
- a legal expert with human research ethics committee experience
- a medical practitioner with special interest in family medicine
- an agency chief executive
- a professional manager with a research background.

WHAT IS THE STUDY ABOUT?

The study is assessing the short and long term results of men's behaviour change programs. Data is collected through a series of questionnaires to participants and their partners (or former partners). Additional data is being gathered from interviews and web data collection. Partner assessments are an important aspect of the study plan.

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS STUDY?

The following key results are expected from the study:

- Better quality programs through comparing the results of the different types of programs in current use.
- Improved funding for programs (from both Government and community sources) because decision makers can have greater confidence that the money will be well spent.

However, if the results are negative, fundamental re-thinking will be required. The value of men's behaviour change programs seems to be poorly understood and they are chronically under-funded. Long waiting lists are normal and this is, effectively, denial of service because men lose interest. At present, families typically experience seven to ten years of violence before seeking help. In this time, irreparable damage is done, especially to children.

The ultimate beneficiaries of this study will be the children and women in the community who suffer family violence.

The need for more research into intervention programs has been recognised in the Federal Government's National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children, April 2009, and was further supported by a survey of agencies providing programs in 2012 by URBIS Research.

WEB SURVEY

As part of the study, we are inviting the opinions of partners and men with first hand experience of behaviour change programs, sometimes known as anger management programs.

WHEN WILL WE KNOW THE RESULTS?

Data collection for the study will conclude late in 2015. The results will be collated for publication in academic journals and disseminated through professional seminars in mid 2016.



THE DIRECTORS



DR DAVID SMYTH (Chairperson)

BE (Elec), BA, PhD, FIE Aust., FIET, David is a former Director of the Rotary Club of Brighton and Chairman of its Family Violence Prevention Committee.

David was a consultant to the Board of Bayside Family Support (a provider of men's behaviour change programs) from 1995 to 2002, Chairman of John Knox Close (Victorian Housing Commission accommodation) for eight years and is a former Director of Girrawheen Aged Care. After a career as a telecommunications engineer and senior postal executive, he served for 17 years as a UN and World Bank expert on postal legislation and business planning.

His doctoral studies were in management theory and industrial sociology.



MS KAYE SWANTON (Deputy Chairperson)

Grad Cert Bus Mgmt, M App Sc, FAIM, MAICD, Kaye Swanton is the former CEO of LifeWorks Relationship Counselling and Education Services, a position which she held for 14 years. Kaye is now the Principal Consultant of KPI Management Services, providing business consulting, coaching, counselling and conflict resolution services.

As the CEO of LifeWorks, she played a key role in their family violence prevention strategies and the expansion of their Men's Behaviour Change Programs.

Kaye has a 25-year history in governance, strategic management and business development, and has previously served on the management committee of No To Violence.

Kaye is a passionate advocate for social justice, equality and family violence prevention. She played a leading part in the design and development of the innovative Online Men's Behavior Change Program and the longitudinal research study into the outcomes of MBCP, in partnership with Monash University.



PROFESSOR EMERITUS THEA BROWN

PhD, is Professor (Research) in the Department of Social Work at Monash University and former Head of Department. She is also the director of the Well Being of Children Following Separation and Divorce, an inter-university research consortium.

Thea's research in the last decade has covered family violence, family breakdown and family law. She co-authored a recent book on "Child Abuse and Family Law". Another book on "Community Based Mediation Following Parental Separation" was published in 2011. She was the lead researcher in the two-year evaluation completed in 2009 for the Rotary Club of Brighton, LifeWorks and Australian Rotary Health.



MR BARRY HICKMAN

Company Director and former Chief Executive of CI Studios, a promotional photography company.

He is a former Director, Community Services and President Elect of the Rotary Club of Brighton. Through Rotary, he has led fund raising activities, acted as a mentor for the White Lion Foundation for youth in trouble with the law and shared leadership of an international award-winning water and sanitation project in Cambodia.



MR NORMAN THOMAS (resigned 31 December 2014)

Member Family Violence Prevention Committee, Rotary Club of Brighton, and former Director and Secretary of the club. He has held senior executive and board positions, including Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director with several companies. He commenced his own consulting practice 25 years ago and has since led a wide variety of Australian and foreign companies through organisational change and strategic development. He is a past partner of Laney Pickett Thomas Consulting and is now Managing Director of Norman Thomas Associates Pty Ltd.

He also leads a sailing program for disadvantaged youth.



MS KATHERINE STRAIN

Kate was the co-founder and foundation Director of Brainwave Australia 1994 - 2008, a charity established to support treatment and care of children suffering from brain illnesses. From 2002-2012 she was a Synod Board member of St. Leonard's College, Brighton. She is the President of the Rotary Club of Brighton North (2014/15).



MS KERRY KORNHAUSER

Kerry started her career in the advertising industry with the Clemenger's & George Patterson agencies. She continued in the private health sector, creating the biggest private hospital chain.

She joined the Rotary Club of Albert Park in 2008 and was awarded the Rotary Royce Abbey Award in 2009. After serving in various Board positions, she was President of the Club in 2011/12. Kerry is also leader of the Women in Rotary Network, with a mission to increase the percentage of women members from 17% to 30%.

Kerry is also the instigator of another Rotary project, Footy Nuts, designed to address the lack of nutrition in indigenous diets and help reduce truancy.



MR TOM CRAMPTON

BA, MBA, is the Managing Director of Trusted Impact Pty Ltd, a specialised consulting firm focused on information security. He has more than 25 years of management consulting, technology and business leadership experience working throughout Asia, North America, Europe and Australia. Tom is a member of the Rotary Club of Melbourne and was awarded the Rotary Royce Abbey Award in 2014.



MS HELEN BIRD (appointed 15 May 2015)

B.Hum.Svc, Helen is a leading expert in charity fundraising, business development, public relations and communications, with 17 years in the community sector, serving as a Board Director, CEO, senior executive and volunteer. She is acknowledged as an industry expert in new income streams and developing corporate and community partnerships in both Australian and overseas markets.

Directorships have included Bayside Community Health Service and Drummond Street Relationship Centre. She successfully founded a health charity and served as a Director and CEO, of NIDKIDS, which supports families with children who are suffering the life-threatening condition, Neuronal Intestinal Dysplasia (NID).

Helen is a past member of the Rotary Club of Melbourne, the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Fundraising Institute of Australia. She is a member of The Lyceum Club.



PUBLIC RELATIONS & FUNDRAISING



Our Ambassador, Colleen Hewett

We are extremely grateful to blues singer extraordinaire, Colleen Hewett, for agreeing to become our Ambassador last year. Her performances at the Rotary District 9800 Convention in Hobart, her dedication of some of the proceeds of her latest album, Black and White, to Violence Free Families and numerous other appearances and activities, were all highly appreciated.

Her new song ‘Let me Breathe’, written especially by Tracey Bunn, and a video clip featuring her singing this ‘anthem’ for Violence Free Families, supported by numerous national identities, including then Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, were outstanding contributions and also the product of much hard work by her manager, Danny Finley.

PUBLICITY TO ROTARY AND OTHER COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Active engagement with Rotary continued, with VFF having a presence at numerous meetings, conferences and training activities.

Rotary District 9800, which includes 70 clubs serving a large part of Victoria, continued its official endorsement and support for our work. We have appointed Gabe Hau, Assistant Governor of District 9800 as our Rotary liaison officer with results that will be included in our next annual report.

FUND RAISING

Fund raising continued to be difficult. The cash total of \$190,000 was ahead of the previous year, but included an abnormal item, a GST refund for expenditure from 2011 to 2014. The adjusted cash income of \$166,000 was an increase on \$155,000 last year and again a tribute to our many hard-working supporters.

The following chart shows the breakdown of sources of income. Significant contributions from philanthropic institutions were most gratefully received. They allowed us to complete the development and trials of the online men’s behaviour change program and to extend the contract for our long-term research study.



Rotary Clubs continued to provide most valuable support. A total of \$32,000 was received, and a further welcome \$18,000 from Women in Rotary (sponsored by the Rotary Club of Albert Park) from the proceeds of its 2015 International Women’s Day Breakfast.

VIOLENCE FREE FAMILIES REVENUE BREAKDOWN (CASH BASIS) 2014/15

	TOTAL	%
Trusts & Foundations	102,500	54%
Rotary Clubs	32,108	17%
Women in Rotary	18,000	9%
Private Donations	7,827	4%
Interest	5,343	3%
Tax refunds, prior years GST (Note 1)	24,243	13%
TOTAL	190,021	100%

VIOLENCE FREE FAMILIES EXPENDITURE (CASH BASIS) 2014/15

	TOTAL	%
Online Program	68,085	42%
Research (Monash University)	52,579	33%
Promotional (Note 2)	34,205	21%
Office	4,144	3%
Audit Fees and Insurance	1,540	1%
TOTAL	160,553	100%

Note 1. Abnormal item.
Note 2. These costs were offset by specific donations for this purpose.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

VFF continues to rely heavily on Rotary volunteers and their support is vital to realising our vision. An active working group of 14 individuals from many professional and business backgrounds, drawn from nine Rotary clubs, assists with various aspects of our work.

A number of non Rotarians who share our vision also help. We appointed a part time Administrative Assistant during the year to function as Board Minute Secretary and generally assist with office work.

We have been pleased to welcome strong recognition by the Australian Women in Rotary network for the third year. Its outstanding International Women's Day Breakfasts at Crown Casino in Melbourne reached the capacity of this venue in 2015, attracting over 1300 attendees.

The activities of VFF have also attracted widespread support from the professional community and the following organisations and individuals are involved in various capacities:

- Monash University Department of Social Work.
- LifeWorks Relationship Counselling and Education Services, which played a leading and co-ordinating role in the online men's behaviour change project.
- Social Welfare Agencies including LifeWorks, Child and Family Services Ballarat, Relationships Australia (NSW), Catholic Care (NSW), Relationships Australia (WA), MonashLink and others who are participating in the long term research study.
- Advice on the online behaviour change project from Federation Training (incorporating Gippsland TAFE) and Trusted Impact Pty Ltd, South Melbourne.
- The University of Melbourne Centre for Program Evaluation, Graduate School of Management for advice and evaluation of the online behaviour change program trials.
- The Baker Foundation.
- The Collier Foundation.
- The 5Point Foundation
- Streamscape Pty. Ltd, for website management.
- Ms Rebecca Heitbaum for management of Facebook content.

We record our sincere thanks to all of those who have contributed to our work in the reporting period.



violence **free** families

The Family Violence Prevention Foundation of Australia
Trading as Violence Free Families.
ABN 97 140 937 382
www.violencefreefamilies.org.au