

In 2009 the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services are producing a quarterly newsletter for members providing updates about sector developments and project work. This will be a good opportunity for all Refuges and/or members to also showcase programs, initiatives or upcoming events in their own services. Please send any contributions you would like included in the next newsletter to policy@womenscouncil.com.au by Monday November 16th to be included in the December newsletter.

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Executive Officer report: Women's Refuge Remuneration Survey

EXECUTIVE OFFICER: ANGELA HARTWIG

Results of Women's Council Survey 2009

Levels of Pay for Refuge and Domestic and Family Violence Staff

The Women's Council conducted a statewide survey on the current levels of pay for Refuge and DFV staff. Twenty three (62.2%) of member services responded to a questionnaire which was disseminated in May 2009. 23 surveys were sent in and were completed by a range of Women's Refuge Services throughout Western Australia.

Geographical breakdown

Metropolitan region	13 services
Rural and Remote	10 services

Services from rural and remote areas were made up of Women's Refuges and Safe Houses from the throughout WA inclusive of the Kimberley, Pilbara, Gascoyne, Mid West, Wheatbelt and South West regions.

Snapshot of Results

The data collated has allowed the WCDFVS to gain a statewide picture of the current pay levels of workers in our sector are being paid in relation to their duties and

level of responsibility. Pay levels are based on the Crisis Accommodation Assistance Housing (CASH) or Social and Community Services (SACS) Awards or equivalent, which may include contractual agreements such as common law and/or Australian Workplace Agreements.

Feedback indicates that current levels of pay range are as follows:

Position	Lowest range	Maximum range
Admin Support	3.1	6.3
Refuge Support/ Advocate	3.1	6.1
Child Support	3.1	6.1
Outreach Support	3.1	5.3
Manager	5.2	8
CEO	9	9

Funding constraints limit a Refuge's ability to pay workers at a higher level for the performing the same role within the service. As funding levels vary between \$320,000 and \$580,000 for a similar types of Refuges and number of beds; disparity in pay levels can often occur.

The WCDFVS are committed to ensuring that Refuge and DFV staff are being paid at appropriate levels

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A CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR 2010

Skills Recognition Project

Certificate III and IV in Community Service Work

A partnership between the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (WA) and West Coast TAFE in Joondalup.

The Skills Recognition Project offers Refuge and Domestic & Family Violence staff the opportunity to gain skills recognition in Community Services, Certificate III and IV. This pilot has been an overwhelming success with twenty eight Refuge staff from six Women's Refuge Services in metropolitan, rural and regional locations are currently enrolled to complete this innovative work placed based assessment in 2009.

Existing skills and knowledge are matched to competencies that make up a qualification. Instead of going through each unit one at a time, evidence is collected by using 'holistic' assessment methods bringing together the common parts of different units and assessing them together. If there are some gaps in your skills and knowledge you won't 'fail'. What happens is, we work with you on how and where you can get that knowledge and/or skills and ways you can demonstrate this later.

This project has been developed taking into account the difficulties often faced by Refuge and DFV with be able to attend regular classes at TAFE, particularly if they work shift and validate the existing levels of skills and knowledge that workers gain within.

If you are interested in registering for 2010 (Semester One), please email TAFE Community Services Lecturer, Therese Smith on therese.smith@westcoasttafe.wa.edu.au or Executive Officer, Angela Hartwig on ahartwig@womenscouncil.com.au by 31 October 2009.

Executive Officer report

Continued from page 1

and support the following **minimum benchmarks:**

Admin Support	4
Refuge Support/Advocate	4
Child Support	5
Outreach Support	5
Manager	6
CEO	9

Funding levels are based on a formula of 80% and 20% and it is imperative that services have the capacity to attract and retain experienced staff with appropriate levels of pay and conditions. Good practice models of Refuge Service delivery require a minimum infrastructure of staff inclusive of all of the above FTE positions. A number of Refuges do not have a Child Support and/Outreach Worker position due to funding constraints.

Management Committees play a vital role in relation to good governance. It is timely that funding levels are brought up to a minimum benchmark of no less than \$400,000 and that further investigation and research are conducted into the costing of a range of good practice models; that deliver agreed service outcomes for clients, within a framework of continuous improvement and good practice. Refuges must have the capacity to build in longer term support for women and children escaping domestic and family violence.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2009

Absurd pay gap

Once again we are astonished to read that women in WA are paid 26 per cent less than men and that we have the widest gender pay gap of any State (WA women's pay worse, 1/9).

The national average gender pay gap is 17 per cent and WA has had a bigger GPG than the national average since the late 1980s (WA Council of Social Service research paper, March 2009).

When are we going to address this unacceptable situation? The WA non-government, not-for-profit community and welfare services sector has a workforce of more than 36,000 people. The fact that the industry is big (the second-biggest employer of women in WA), female-dominated (80.8 per cent female) and lowly paid means that more equitable wages for the sector would have a significant effect on the gender pay gap in WA.

This sector is underpaid by up to 30 per cent compared to similar roles in other sectors. Surely this is a good place to start addressing this unacceptable inequality, while ensuring we continue to provide vital services to those most disadvantaged in our community.

**Tony Pietropiccolo, Chris Hall,
Community Employers WA.**

15 YEARS OF TOY BANK IN WA

On 30 June 2009 more than 200 guests paid tribute to Holly Wood, Toy Bank Founder and Variety advocate. Holly founded Toy Bank back in 1991 after receiving a request to provide toys for children escaping domestic and family violence and residing in Women's Refuges. Since 1991 Toy Bank has provided new toys to Women's Refuges around the state, to the value of \$20,000 each year.

The Women's Council would like to sincerely thank the vision and efforts of Holly Wood and Toy Bank chairperson Lesley Hart for 15 years of generous support to Women's Refuges in WA.

New WCDFVS staff

Terri Aldridge

Social Work Student,
Curtin University
Ph: 9420 7264
womenscouncil@
live.com.au

A message from Terri ...

My name is Terri Aldridge and I am a

social work student from Curtin University. My particular areas of interest are grief and loss, the healing process and the implementation of this process into everyday life.

I will be on placement with the Women's Council until the end of November. During my stay here I will be working collaboratively on the 16 days of activism calendar and assisting to develop some new initiatives for this campaign – so watch this space!

I will also be assisting to coordinate the Annual General Meeting (AGM) so my name will be displayed as the returning officer on nomination forms. On that note I would like to invite you to the AGM which will be a breakfast event held on October 27.

Louise Carey

Behavioural Science
Student, Notre Dame
University, Child
Consultation, KKS
Project
Ph: 9420 7264
wcdvsv@live.com.au

A message from Louise ...

Hi, I am Louise Carey. I am a final year Behavioural Science Student from the University of Notre Dame. I am on an Internship placement with the Women's Council until the end of October. I am working with Nicole Leggett on the Keeping Kids Safe project, undertaking a consultation with children living in Refuges. The purpose of this consult is to gain insight into children and young peoples experience of Refuges, not to compare services, but to listen to the experience of children. The information gained from this project will be used to inform future project planning and the development of practice standards for supporting children and young people.



Evaluation of Fitzroy Crossing's alcohol bans, Notre Dame University

Angela Hartwig, June Oscar and Anne Moore at the screening of Yajilarra

In 2007, following 13 suicides in 12 months, Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women's Resource Centre and Legal Service lobbied the Director of Liquor Liscensing to introduce take away alcohol bans within Fitzroy Valley.

On 27 October 2007 The Director of Liquor Liscensing responded, announcing that as of October 2 2007 for a period of 6 months *the sale of packaged liquor, exceeding a concentration of ethanol in liquor of 2.7% at 20 degrees celsius, is prohibited to any person, other than a lodger (as defined in Section 3 of the Act)*. On the 19th of May 2008 the restriction was imposed indefinitely with an annual review to test its ongoing effectiveness.

Notre Dame University were contracted to conduct the alcohol restriction evaluation and they released their report on 29th of July 2009. The main findings of the evaluation were that the restrictions created continuing health and social benefits for Fitzroy Crossing and the Fitzroy Valley communities. In particular:

- Reduced severity of domestic violence (the report found that the number of reports to the Police about domestic violence actually increased as a result of the alcohol bans due to victims and other family members being in a better state of mind to report the crime. The number of domestic violence related hospital admissions decreased)
- Reduced severity of wounding from general public violence
- Reduced street drinking
- A quieter town
- Less litter

- Families purchasing more food and clothing
- Families being more aware of their health and being proactive in regard to their children's health
- Reduced humbug and antisocial behaviour
- Reduced stress for service providers
- Increased effectiveness of services already in the valley
- Generally better care of children and increased recreational activities, and
- A reduction in the amount of alcohol being consumed by Fitzroy and Fitzroy Valley Residents.

There were some members of the community who opposed the alcohol restrictions, such as dependent drinkers and also concern from community members that the restrictions had not been followed by targeted support and service provision for community members within Fitzroy valley.

Copies of the evaluation report can be accessed from the Drug and Alcohol Office website:
www.dao.health.wa.gov.au

Fitzroy Women's Resource Centre has made a documentary that describes their and the communities journey following the introduction of alcohol bans in the Fitzroy Valley. The DVD was launched at the United Nations earlier in the year and was presented at the Women's Councils *Supporting Women with Complex Needs* training by June Oscar Head of Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women's Resource Centre. To order a copy of Yajilarra– contact Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women's Resource Centre & Legal Service, 9191 5284.

Family Law Reforms

On Friday July 24 Attorney General Robert McClelland announced a series of reforms to the family court system, including a review of the shared parenting legislation. The Attorney General cited the case of Darcey Freeman, murdered by her father during a custody dispute, as an example of one case in which family court systems failed to protect or to prevent harm.

To lead the review, Professor Richard Chisholm has been appointed. Professor Chisholm is a former family court judge who has been vocal in highlighting the problems associated with the shared parenting legislation, stating in a recent article that in most cases presenting before the family court (cases in which their have been allegations of violence or abuse or the separation has been acrimonious) shared parenting is not in the best interests of the child and in some cases places the child at increased risk of harm (*McIntosh & Chisholm, 2008*).

Professor Chisholm will consult with family violence 'experts' in order to determine the degree to which the family court process facilitates disclosure about family violence and provides appropriate support for families who have experienced, or are at risk of violence. His report will be provided to the Attorney General at the end of the year at the same time as the Australian Institute of Family Studies evaluation of the 2006 reforms. The Attorney General will use the findings from the review and evaluation as the basis for legislative changes.

Other family court changes proposed by the Attorney General were:

- Introduction of a pilot project to increase the equity and safety for victims of domestic and family violence participating in mediation by providing them with legal representation/assistance throughout the process;
- An inquiry by the Australian Law Reform Commission to investigate gaps in the law that inhibit the protection from or prosecution of family violence;
- Development of a multi-disciplinary training package to improve consistency in the handling of cases involving family violence, and ensure professionals are properly equipped to work with families at risk; and
- Development of national guidelines for family law system professionals. These guidelines will support a minimum level of screening and assessment for family violence.

Child Support in Western Australia: Survey Outcomes

CHILDREN'S POLICY OFFICER: NICOLE LEGGETT

At the beginning of the year, the Women's Council conducted a survey of Child Support Workers/ Child Advocates in Western Australia to obtain insight to the funding arrangements, working conditions, and role of these workers in WA Refuges.

A copy of this report will be sent to all WA Refuges and will be available on the Women's Council website for viewing. It is important to note, that the results of this survey provide a reflection of the Child Support/Advocacy role as it was in February/March of 2009. As with most community services there is a degree of flux or change that naturally occurs within organisations with changes to staff and funding. Therefore the outcomes of this survey should not be generalised or extrapolated beyond what they represent - the nature of Child Support/Child Advocacy in early 2009.

The survey found that:

Of the 35 Refuges that provide support for children 23 had a Child Support Worker or Child Advocate on staff at the time of the consultation and one was using a Refuge Support worker to fill the Child Support role on an as need basis. This worker did not participate in the consultation process as was not available at the time of the survey,

- Fourteen of the 23 employed this person in a part-time capacity, and
- Five Refuges had one full-time worker and an additional four Refuges had more than one full-time children's worker.

The Child Support Worker and Child Advocacy Role mainly involves:

- Child minding
- Providing advice to mums about parenting



The Safe House (Girl – 5yrs)

- Protective behaviours and safety planning and
- Addressing pragmatic needs of the child (e.g., school enrolment, transport)
 - Eight Child Support and Child Advocates conduct case management of children
 - Six Child Support and Child Advocates undertake therapeutic intervention

And, the five key issues/challenges raised by staff during the consultation were:

- Lack of clarity/definition around the Child Support Worker and Child Advocate role
- Lack of adequate space and resources in Refuges to work with children
- Working with the Department for Child Protection
- Attraction and retention of staff, and
- Knowing what is 'best practice' when women and children only stay in the Refuge for a few nights

*Please see the full report for breakdown of these results by location (metro vs. remote) and job role (advocate vs. support).

Project Updates

Keeping Kids Safe Project

**CHILDREN'S POLICY OFFICER:
NICOLE LEGGETT**



keeping **KIDS** safe

The training calendar rolled out as a part of the Keeping Kids Safe project is coming to a close.

Two training events remain:

'The Impact of Sexual Abuse on Children' – Karratha

Friday September 4th, 9.30am-4pm
Conference Room, Welcome Lotteries House

'The Impact of Sexual Abuse on Children' – Perth

Wednesday September 16th,
9.30am-4pm
Conference Room, City West Lotteries House

To enrol in either of these workshops contact Nicole on 9420 7264 or policy@womenscouncil.com.au

To conclude the Keeping Kids Safe project a forum and training opportunity are being held in October (Monday 26th-Wednesday 28th) (see article on page 5 *Supporting Children who have Experienced Domestic and Family Violence*). The purpose of this forum is to discuss good practice in supporting children who have experienced domestic and family violence. Two key outcomes of this forum will be the development of good practice standards for working with children in Refuge in metro and remote locations and second, to develop a clear outline of the Child Support and Child Advocacy role.

To attend the forum contact Nicole, 9420 7264 or refer to the Women's Council website: <http://www.womenscouncil.com.au/default.aspx?MenuID=26>

Peer Education Project

**PROJECT OFFICER: JACKIE
NEWBIGIN**

The Domestic and Dating Violence Peer Education Project has now been delivered to six schools across Western Australia, with three of these schools participating in the peer education stage of the project.

Peer educators from Mount Barker Community College, Kent Street Senior High School and North Albany Senior High School have now been trained and are in the process of running awareness raising activities in their schools. The Women's Council would like to thank everyone who came out and spoke to the students throughout the peer educator training with a special thanks to Sonya Bell from the Albany Women's Centre for all her help delivering Peer Education in the Great Southern Region.



Peer Educator Training, Kent St SHS

We will be moving towards a train the trainer model to deliver this program in 2010. If you would like some information about accessing this program in 2010, or if you have any questions, please contact Jackie Newbigin at the Women's Council on 9420 7264 or email project@womenscouncil.com.au.

Supporting Women with Complex Needs: Training

**PROJECT OFFICER: JACKIE
NEWBIGIN**

On the 30th and 31st of July 2009 the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services, in partnership with the WA Council for Alcohol and other Drug Agencies, gathered together 60 people from more than 40 different agencies to receive training about supporting women with complex needs. The training had a particular focus on women who are experiencing domestic and family violence who use alcohol and

other drugs and how we can improve the way we work with this client group.

In attendance were representatives from domestic and family violence, alcohol and other drugs (AOD), corrective services, homelessness, mental health and women's health sectors.



Paul Dessauer from WA Substance Users Association

A survey was undertaken prior to the training asking participants about their service, the way they work and their client group. One quarter of respondents estimated that 60 to 75% of their clients present with both domestic and family violence and alcohol and other drug issues with 42% of participants estimating that this group made up more than 75% of their client base.

With such a large proportion of clients presenting with these issues it is critical that work is ongoing to facilitate service access for these women and effective holistic support.

This training was informed by a roundtable discussion held in March which gathered together 30 stakeholders to discuss access barriers for women with complex needs and how we can work together to best support this client group. One of the key themes to come out of the roundtable was the need to provide non-judgemental holistic support including effective partnerships and referral pathways between the AOD and domestic and family violence sectors. This theme was also discussed at the training with workers saying that this is something they would like to do however they often feel they don't have the resources, time and support to work in this way.

Presentations from this training are now available on the Women's Council website, www.womenscouncil.com.au. For further information on the project please contact Jackie Newbigin at the Women's Council on 9420 7264 or email project@womenscouncil.com.au.

EVENTS

Forum: Supporting Children who have Experienced Domestic and Family Violence



October 26-28th 2009 the Women's Council are hosting a forum and training opportunity. The purpose of the forum which will be held on Monday October 26th is to discuss good practice in working with/supporting

children who have experienced domestic and family violence. Specifically the forum will focus on the difference between metro and remote practice. The Hon. Robyn McSweeney, Minister for Child Protection, Community Services, Seniors and Volunteering and Women's Interests will open the forum and Donna Zander, Domestic Violence Advocate and Trainer, will provide the keynote address.

Following the forum on Tuesday and Wednesday, 27th and 28th of October, the Australian Childhood Foundation will provide subsidised training for sector

staff. The focus of the training will be 'Understanding the Impact of Trauma on Children's Brain Development' and 'Working with Traumatised Children'.

This forum and training event will be a great opportunity for sector staff from around the state to network and share information about supporting women and children escaping violence.

Travel subsidies are available for Refuge staff from regional and remote representatives.

To register for this event go to: <http://www.womenscouncil.com.au/default.aspx?MenuID=26>

Women's Council Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 27 October 2009

8.30-9.30am

Swan Room, Burswood on the Swan, 1 Camfield Drive Burswood
RSVP: Tuesday 20 October 2009, Terri Aldridge, 9420 7264 or womenscouncil@live.com.au

A light breakfast will be served.

The Women's Council AGM will be followed by training on the Impact

of Trauma on Children's Brain Development. If you are interested in attending this training see information above or on the Women's Council website <http://www.womenscouncil.com.au/default.aspx?MenuID=26>

"Cut it Out" An information evening for hairdressers and beauty therapists about responding to family and domestic violence

Patricia Giles Centre is hosting two forums for salon staff about understanding and responding to family and domestic violence.

Tuesday October 20 2009

5.30pm-7.30pm

Apollo Conference Centre, Cambridge Conference Centre, 350 Cambridge St Wembley

Tuesday October 27 2009

5.30pm-7.30pm

Flinders Park Community Hall, Broadbeach Boulevard, Hillarys

Light refreshments will be provided.

For more information and to RSVP contact Ashleigh Haw at northerndv@iinet.net.au or 9300 0340.

Community Education Booklet

PURCHASE FORM

'What is Domestic and Family Violence?' is a new resource from the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services. It provides clients, service providers and the public with some general information on about domestic and family violence including prevalence, forms of abuse, impacts on children and young people and the barriers to leaving a violent relationship. The booklet aims to increase awareness of about domestic and family violence, dispel some of the common myths and misunderstandings, surrounding it and provide some information on where people can go for help.

This colourful and easy to read resource is a great place to start when talking about domestic and family violence.

WC Members: \$3.00 each or 5 for \$10; **Non-Members:** \$5.00 each or 3 for \$10
Plus \$5.00 for postage and handling



To order a copy of the 12 page booklet fill out the order form below and fax or post back to the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (WA). **Fax:** (08) 9486 8744; **Post:** PO Box 8437 Perth Business Centre 6849

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Number of copies you wish to purchase: _____

