

*"For a community to be whole and healthy, it must be based on people's love and concern for each other."*

*Millard Fuller*

## WRISC News

Edition 8, July 2016

### FAMILY VIOLENCE OUTREACH PROGRAM

WRISC provides support to women and children in the Central Highlands region who are experiencing family violence through 3 programs:

1. Family Violence Outreach Program
2. Aboriginal Program
3. Children's counselling

The Family Violence Outreach Program provides:

- Short term case management (0—6 weeks)
- Longer term case management (0—12 weeks)
- Intensive case management (0—6 months)
- Family violence court support for clients
- Shared care planning support in collaboration with many other services (0—12 months).

#### MOORABOOL OUTREACH WORKER, KELLY

WRISC provides case management outreach to five local government areas: Ballarat, Pyrenees, Hepburn, Moorabool and Golden Plains. WRISC worker, Kelly, provides outreach to Moorabool by working in the following areas:

- ◇ **Court Support:** Bacchus Marsh Magistrate's Court. Kelly works closely with Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre (BMCLC) and the Family Violence Liaison Officer. At the court, Kelly completes a risk assessment, advocates for the client, does safety planning, provides referral information and gives emotional support.
- ◇ **Intake:** Moorabool. Intake assessments are completed at the Child and Family Services (CAFS) office usually on a Friday afternoon and some Thursdays. Other assessments are completed at the WRISC premises in Ballarat or over the phone.
- ◇ **Case Management:** Kelly provides case management and support to clients, referrals and case coordination with other services.

The strength of the outreach program is that it takes WRISC's services to the client. As WRISC covers such a large geographical area, it can be difficult for some clients to travel to the premises in Ballarat. Such clients are more likely to engage with our service if this barrier is removed. Being in the local area can also facilitate liaison with other services that the client may need.

*Photo: Bacchus Marsh Magistrate's Court*



#### Facts about Family Violence

- Violence in family and intimate relationships is mostly committed by men against women
- Violence and abuse is about power and control. The person using the violence is seeking to control their partner or family member's behaviour or choices. Using violence is always a choice made by the person using violence.
- Violence and abuse of any form is unacceptable and a breach of human rights.

# What happens at Court Support?

Family violence matters in Ballarat and surrounding areas are held in the Family Violence Division, sitting at the Magistrate's Court, in the Ballarat Courts, Grenville St. Court support is an important part of WRISC's work—a role we share with Berry St on an alternating 2 week roster. Workers are available to offer emotional support to women, as well as support for any relevant legal matters, for example, providing assistance to complete an intervention order application form. WRISC also provides support at court to Aboriginal women through the Aboriginal program. It is important to note that WRISC's role is one of support, and we do not offer specific legal advice.

WRISC workers can refer women to the court Applicant Support Worker for additional information and access to resources at the Family Violence Court. The Applicant Support Worker can provide women with information about intervention orders and help them to understand what is happening at court for any family violence matters they are attending. The Applicant Support Worker can also refer women to WRISC.

Attending court can be a frightening and stressful experience for women. The formalised processes of the court can seem foreign and complex, and the woman has to face the alleged perpetrator in the court room. To increase safety and reduce contact, there are separate waiting areas for the applicants and respondents at the Ballarat Courts. Women can give evidence via video but this must be pre-arranged. There is also a Respondent Support Worker who can refer men to services such as the Men's Behavioural Change Program.

Improvements to the court process that take into account the safety and well being of victims of family violence are very welcome. However, the Royal Commission into Family Violence has identified the need to upgrade facilities at some of the older, regional courts such as Bacchus Marsh where WRISC also provides court support. Provision of separate waiting areas and private areas for discussions between support workers, lawyers and their clients are a priority, as well as technological upgrades to allow women to give evidence via video link.

*For more information on the Family Court Division sitting at the Magistrate's Court of Victoria at Ballarat, please click [here](#).*



## WRISC holds first Agency Information Session on June 16

WRISC held our first Agency information Session on June 16. The aim of the information session was for workers of agencies in the Central Highlands region to come and learn more about WRISC. Participants were able to:

- Find out about what WRISC does
- Hear about our programs
- Learn how to refer
- Learn how to use the WRISC website as a resource
- Ask questions of our staff.

The session was of particular value to new workers and existing workers keen on finding out about support available in the Central Highlands region for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence.

***WRISC plans to hold an Information Session every 6 months. If you would like to be placed on a wait list for our next session, please email Alison, [alisonc@wrisc.org.au](mailto:alisonc@wrisc.org.au)***

The next session is likely to be held later in the year.

## Rosie Batty, Tim Cartright guest speakers at Ballarat launch

On Tuesday June 14, Libby, Alison, Tracy and Bernadette attended the launch of the Berry Street, “No Place for Violence in Our Community” campaign at the Mercure Ballarat Hotel and Convention Centre. It was heartening to see the event so well supported by a wide range of community organisations.

Rosie Batty, former Australian of the Year, and tireless campaigner for family violence awareness and action, spoke about children, the often silent and forgotten victims of family violence. She stated that she can now see that she was wrong to include Luke’s father in his life, and that a parent is not entitled to share a child’s life if they are not a good model—if they are violent and/or controlling.

Rosie also spoke about the ongoing trauma experienced by children, even when not experiencing violence themselves. Often the mother is punished if she is not able to keep children safe from the perpetrator. Instead of shaming the victim, focus should be on the perpetrator and his actions. The question should be, “Why doesn’t he stop being violent?” rather than, “Why doesn’t she leave?”

In his speech, former acting Chief of Victoria Police, Tim Cartright talked about the role of police in family violence, reminding the audience of the challenges police face when attending incidents—especially those involving children. He provided some sobering statistics:

- **In Ballarat, there has been an 8% increase in police attendance at domestic violence incidents over the past year.**
- **There are 3,000 domestic violence incidents in Ballarat per year; 75,000 in Victoria.**
- **Children are present in one third of incidents.**

These statistics indicate that there is much work to be done in the prevention of family violence in our community, and to better support the women and children who are the victims.



# Are you a WRISC member?

- ♦ Would you like to become more involved in the work of WRISC?
- ♦ Would you like to contribute to WRISC in a more meaningful way?
- ♦ Do you have skills and expertise which you would like to share with WRISC and support women and children in your community?

WRISC is inviting Ordinary Members to express interest in joining Board facilitated working groups. From time to time these working groups are seeking short term and/or ongoing membership. Examples of working groups include:

- BIG (Big Ideas Group)
- Finance and Risk Working Group
- Marketing and Communications Working Group
- Disability Action Plan Working Group
- Multicultural Working Group
- Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group

If you would like to express interest, please contact Sandra on 5333 3666 or email [sandrag@wrisc.org.au](mailto:sandrag@wrisc.org.au)

*(For enquiries about becoming a WRISC member, please contact Sandra as above.)*

## Thank you to all our donors/ sponsors

Kind and generous donations from organisations, private philanthropists and various grants enable us to continue to service the increasing number of requests for help. We sincerely thank our loyal and generous supporters.



## Can you help?

If you would like to make a contribution, our bank details are:

BSB: 063-507 Acct: 10042491

Name: WRISC Family Violence Support

**OR**

Donate online via PayPal [here](#).

***Donations of \$2 or more to WRISC Family Violence Support are tax deductible.***

### *What do you think?*

WRISC appreciates communication and feedback regarding the content of this newsletter. If you would like to make contact, please email the Communications Officer:

[alisonc@wrisc.org.au](mailto:alisonc@wrisc.org.au)



WRISC exists to change the lives of women and children affected by family violence. We promote safe homes, strong families and respectful relationships.

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