



MEDIA RELEASE

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Renovation projects – a constructive look at men and relationships

Maintenance and toolboxes don't feature much in the language of self-help books, but in most men's lives they are real currency. And in the relationship setting, they can provide useful images and ideas about what's involved in building and sustaining a solid relationship.

Relationships are in a state of flux as never before, with choices, changes and high expectations being par for the course. So there's a lot of scope for planning, renovation, salvage around wear and tear, repair and rebuilding to stop cracks in a relationship getting too big and bringing the whole edifice tumbling down.

Using these notions about solid foundations, Relationships Australia and MensLine Australia have produced a new booklet titled **Renovate your relationship: a manual for men**, with the aim of getting men to think about the practical side of relationship maintenance and how to do it.

One of the authors, Dr Andrew Bickerdike, who is Relationships Australia Victoria's General Manager Operations, said men were often baffled by some of the commonly used counselling language and self-help terminology.

"Something a bit more offbeat as well as down to earth and practical may ring more true to men who want to do something about their relationship but are unsure about how," he said.

"Unfortunately, many men do not see problems in their relationships until it is too late. **Renovate your relationship** takes a positive and constructive view of what is required to identify problems and work to resolve them."

Dr Bickerdike said the booklet was set up as a DIY manual for a renovation project – in this case a relationship renovation. "Men are generally good at projects and we believe the positive and practical approach outlined in the booklet has a lot going for it."

There are 13 project tools in the DIY toolbox:

- Working together?
- Avoiding misunderstandings
- Sharpen up your listening
- Resolving conflict
- When the roof blows off! Anger and frustration
- Who has the power? Abuse and violence
- Self-maintenance
- Renovate your sex life
- Love
- Valuing differences
- Appreciation
- When trust breaks down
- Children – planning for the extension.

Each tool comes with key points and checklists of things to consider and do, expressed in plain and practical language.

The booklet also includes reactions and thoughts from men about their relationships, and other sources of helpful information.

Dr Bickerdike said a call to action in the form of a renovation manual had a lot to offer men who were aware of the strains and gaps in their intimate relationships, but were unable to find good ways to help repair them.

“This booklet, with its emphasis on ‘teamwork’, ‘anti corrosion treatment’ and ‘regular maintenance’, can go some of the way towards that.”

To obtain a copy of **Renovate your relationship: a manual for men**, contact Relationships Australia Victoria on 8573 2222 or download it from the website: www.relationshipsvictoria.com.au

Media enquiries: Bronwyn Thwaites, Communications and Marketing Manager, 8573 2222.

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Relationships Australia (Victoria) Inc. ABN: 51 263 215 677
Patrons: Professor David de Kretser, AC, Governor of Victoria, and Mrs. Jan de Kretser

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION OFFICE: PO Box 8656 Armadale Victoria 3143
Ph (03) 8573 2222 Fax (03) 9822 4584 Email reception@rav.org.au www.relationshipsvictoria.com.au

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