



Relationships Australia

One of Australia's Leading Provider of Relationship Enhancement

Helping Australian Families for Over 50 Years

- Courses and Seminars
- Counselling
- Family Mediation
- Professional Training

How we're getting along...

President & CEO Report



Michael Hunt



Ken Heywood

A YEAR OF RAPID CHANGE

Helping people build stronger relationships is what we do. This year, we have worked hard to improve our own relationships with others in the field – and the benefits have been enormous.

We teamed up with new partners (Mallee Family Care, Centacare, MacKillop, Community West, E.A.C.H., R.E.F.S. and Berry Street) to successfully bid for the Commonwealth's first Family Relationship Centres in Sunshine and Ringwood. We have been very well supported by the Federal Government for this much needed new service.

Important partnerships with La Trobe University and the Australian Research Council are keeping us up to date with the latest evidence-based practice, and our work with health professionals and the legal fraternity is not only providing a steady stream of client referrals but the chance to discuss mutual concerns like the growing number of clients presenting with mental health problems.

Rapid change isn't easy, but our 175 staff across eight locations responded superbly to the changes in our family law system. An array of new services are bringing benefits to our clients.

In the past 12 months we have developed a specialist counselling service for indigenous Victorians in the Ballarat region, after developing a trusting relationship with the Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative. Our successful 'Good Connecting' relationship course is being further developed to cater for Muslim couples.

As we reach out to learn more about others in the field, our peers are learning more about us, and they are increasingly referring clients to our services.

Rapidly building our organisational capacity has been a challenge, and we have responded wonderfully. Thank you to all our staff and volunteers for embracing the change. We are better for it.

Michael W Hunt,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Ken Heywood,
PRESIDENT



I want to be a better parent

HELPING COUPLES GET IT TOGETHER

The greatest gift you can give your children is to have the best couple relationship possible. It's the cradle for the emotional and physical growth of your child. Relationships Australia is helping couples make the most of their relationships through a range of programs including pre-marriage, counselling and relationship education.



*During 2005-06
Relationships Australia
assisted over 12,500
clients, including children.*

GOOD CONNECTING WEEKEND

The Good Connecting Weekend is a program for couples to take time out for their relationship. It is helping couples strengthen their relationships and learn the skills, based on the latest research, to safeguard them against unhealthy relating patterns that often creep into relationships. A version of Good Connecting is now being developed for Islamic couples.

RELATIONSHIP RESCUE

A new program proving very popular with couples is Relationship Rescue. This one-day seminar helps people get their relationships back on track when they are stuck with the same old arguments or worried their relationship may end. Gender differences and different expectations can lead to misunderstandings. Relationships Australia gives couples strategies designed to help them work through their differences and rescue their relationship.



FAMILY RELATIONSHIP CENTRES

Family Relationship Centres are providing a much needed boost for families seeking support and access to relationship services. If separation is inevitable, parents are helped to develop plans in the best interests of their children.

Relationships Australia is excited to be the lead agency in the new Family Relationship Centre (FRC) in Sunshine that opened in July. Manager Jule Harris said the centre was a vital gateway for parents wanting parenting advice, dispute resolution or referrals to specialist services. Relationships Australia is also a partner in the new Ringwood FRC and is looking forward to the next round of FRC tenders. For more information, call 1800 050 321.

KEEPING FAMILIES SAFE

An abusive incident led Harry – a husband and father – to leave the family home. In desperate need of help and emotional support, Harry began attending Men's Behaviour Change Group sessions, conducted by Relationships Australia at Sunshine. Counsellors helped Harry to deal with his abusive behaviour. At the same time, Relationships Australia made contact with Harry's wife to ensure she and the children were safe and supported. Harry found his increasing commitment to non-violence was about being the best dad he could, despite his failed marriage. Now he is down the track, his children stay with him two nights a week.

Funded by the Department of Justice, the Heidelberg Court Counselling Program offers a 20-week Men's Behaviour Change Program to men who have been placed on intervention orders through the Family Violence Court. It is the first program of its kind to be piloted in Victoria. An innovative feature of the program is the emphasis it places on supporting women and children via group work and counselling. It also focuses on proactive prevention, by working with men from the time they receive their first intervention order – rather than waiting until after they have breached it. This early intervention can help increase the long-term safety of affected families. For men who would typically not seek access to counselling services, this program provides an invaluable experience that can assist families to live free of violence.

LET'S
TALK





CELEBRATING OUR KIDS

Children thrive when their home is happy. Relationships Australia provides programs to celebrate and strengthen parents' relationships with their children. Our FUN (Fathers Using Networks) for Kids program – conducted in schools around the state – has proved very popular. One of the most popular program activities involved dads and their kids coming together in the evening to create fun projects at Bunnings. Research tells us that high conflict is the single worst factor in children's wellbeing and adjustment, particularly after separation. Relationships Australia helps children through these difficult times with art projects, family therapy and child-inclusive mediation.

DAD'S DAY OUT

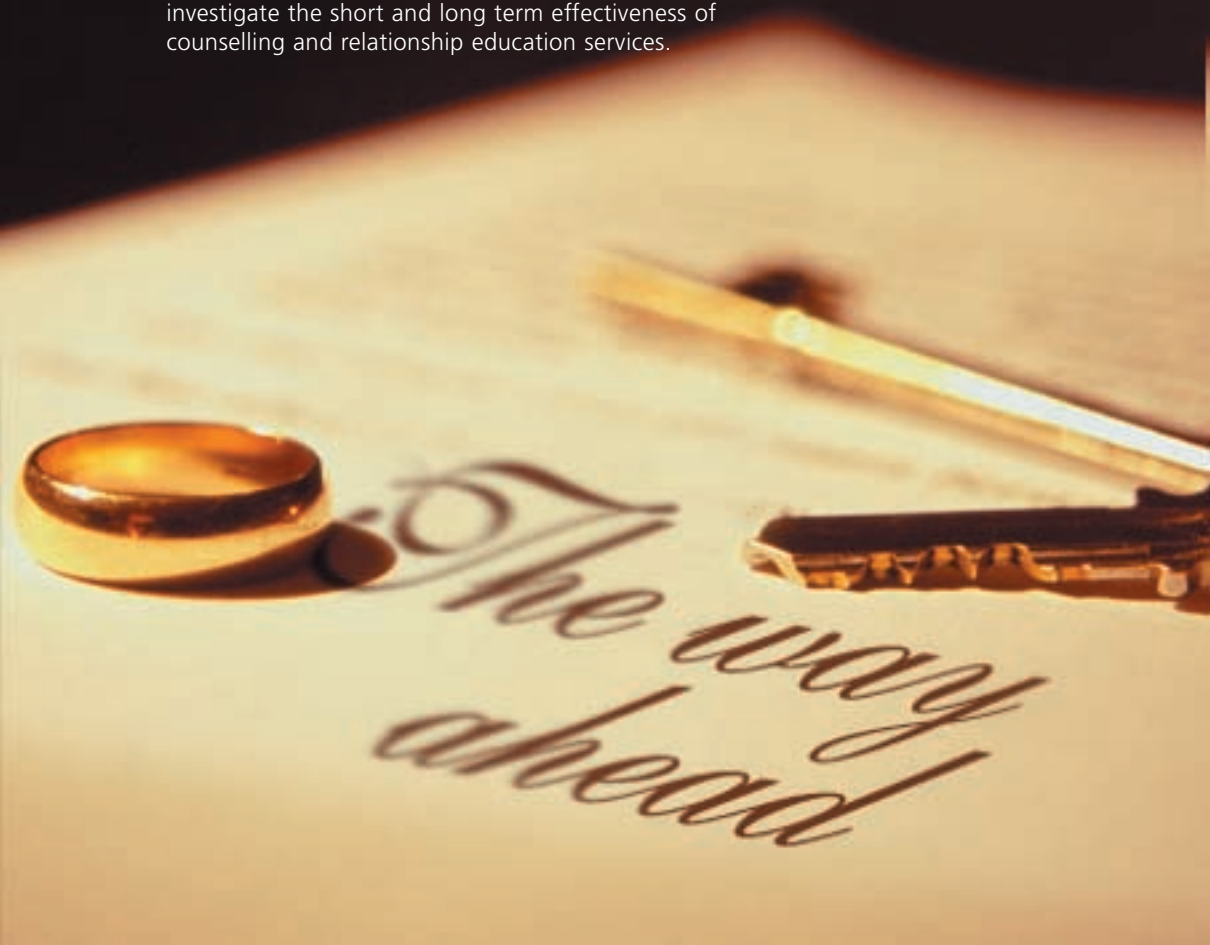
It's easy for a man to become isolated, vulnerable and depressed after separation, when he is grieving for the loss of his marriage and missing the day-to-day contact with his children. Relationships Australia is supporting fathers through counselling, separated men's groups and parenting groups to help them stay connected and take positive steps for themselves. At Dad's Day Out, separated dads enjoy each other's company while their kids enjoy playing in the park.

LET'S WORK IT OUT

Family Law reform is encouraging more separating families to use mediation to resolve their parenting and property disputes, rather than going through the expense and distress of the adversarial court process. As the largest and longest serving provider of mediation in Victoria, Relationships Australia has responded by expanding its specialist services to assist more families. Internationally acclaimed research by Jen Mackintosh has found our highly specialised child-inclusive practices to be very effective in alleviating some of the pain and distress experienced by children whose parents are separating.

YOU TOLD US...

Relationships Australia continually uses client feedback and research to improve our services. Feedback from over 1,000 clients found 94% benefited from our services and 78% were very satisfied. This year we followed up 150 counselling and 60 mediation clients 18 months after they received services. They told us overall that the benefits were enduring, and for some, the benefits increased over time as they applied the skills they had learnt. Relationships Australia will continue to research best practices. Recently we secured – in partnership with the La Trobe University – a \$150,000 Australian Research Centre Grant to investigate the short and long term effectiveness of counselling and relationship education services.





TEARS BRING DROUGHT RELIEF

There wasn't a dry eye in the hall when Benalla West Primary students showed their grandparents and extended families their 'Everyday Heroes' in the form of puppets, paintings and cane stick figures. "My pop is my hero because he helps me make things with wood, he spends time with me and he loves me," said one student. Relationships Australia staff Barb, Glenys and Angie said the drought program in schools was helping reinforce family relationships in a time of stress. The family celebration evenings have been a great success.

SUPPORTING GRANDPARENTS

For 22 grandparents in the Latrobe Valley, the usual retirement plans of trips and leisure activities have been put on hold in order to raise their grandchildren. Coping with the generation gap, exhausting toddlers and troubled teenagers are just some of the demands. Conflict with their own children – many of whom are battling drug and alcohol problems or serious illness – is another. Relationships Australia, in partnership with Anglicare, runs a monthly support group and annual camp for the grandparents who say they feel a lot stronger and better able to deal with their situation by sharing their experiences with others.

93%

*of Relationships Australia
Victoria clients said they
benefited from our help.*


SOMEONE TO TURN TO

Counselling is helping thousands of people like George, who had always toughed out his problems alone – until he found himself suicidal after another relationship breakdown. Through counselling, George has learnt to 'let his guard down' and let others into his life. Since 1948, Relationships Australia has been helping individuals, couples and families who are moving into, enhancing, maintaining or leaving their relationships. One of the great changes we've seen in this time is the acceptance of seeking professional help. It is no longer taboo to 'air your dirty laundry in public', nor are you expected to 'sort it out yourself if you really love each other'.

At Relationships Australia, our mission is to build stronger relationships, which enhance the lives of individuals, families and communities.

GAMBLERS HELP

The Ballarat Centre provides counselling and group work for people seeking help with a gambling problem. Recently, a woman who now manages her gambling addiction, agreed for her story to be told in a DVD produced by the Council of Gambler's Help Services. She spoke of the importance of her first contact with Relationships Australia, which was with the administration staff. The warm welcome she received from these staff gave her the confidence and sense of support she needed to follow through with seeking the help she needed to turn her life around.



It just helped to talk to someone

Balancing our household budget

BALANCE SHEET
as at 30 June 2006

	2006 \$	2005 \$
CURRENT ASSETS		
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	2,733,021	1,647,658
TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES	126,977	145,049
OTHER CURRENT ASSETS	33,999	57,948
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>2,893,997</u>	<u>1,850,655</u>
NON CURRENT ASSETS		
PROPERTY, PLANT & EQUIPMENT	2,350,025	2,020,361
TOTAL NON CURRENT ASSETS	<u>2,350,025</u>	<u>2,020,361</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>5,244,022</u>	<u>3,871,016</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES	649,088	438,822
PROVISIONS	442,498	355,922
OTHER CURRENT LIABILITIES	747,387	200,076
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>1,838,973</u>	<u>994,820</u>
NON CURRENT LIABILITIES		
PROVISIONS	427,268	430,422
TOTAL NON CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>427,268</u>	<u>430,422</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>2,266,241</u>	<u>1,425,242</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>2,977,781</u>	<u>2,445,774</u>
EQUITY		
RESERVES	1,791,144	1,469,202
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS	1,186,637	976,572
TOTAL EQUITY	<u>2,977,781</u>	<u>2,445,774</u>



Relationships Australia

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OUR KEY
PEOPLE

BOARD MEMBERS

Mr Ken Heyward (PRESIDENT),
Mr Mike Shaw (VICE PRESIDENT),
Mr Mark Madden, Mr Andrew
Maughan, Mr Michael Wooten,
Ms Ronda Jacobs, Ms Judi Anderson,
Dr Lyn Littlefield, Mr Paul Staindl.

CURRENT RAV MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Michael Hunt CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Andrew Bickerdike
FAMILY DISPUTE RESOLUTION PRACTICE LEADER
Rosalie Pattenden CLINICAL PRACTICE LEADER
Marisol Gormaz FINANCE MANAGER
Jane Kelson BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
Karen Weiss (REPLACING JANE VANDERSTOEL)
CENTRAL REGIONAL MANAGER
Nick Bliss
(ON LSL, BEING REPLACED BY LILIA SZARSKI)
EASTERN REGIONAL MANAGER
Jane Vanderstoel (REPLACING HEATHER
ROCHE) WESTERN REGIONAL MANAGER
David Lee
INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER
Jule Harris SUNSHINE FRC MANAGER

RAV STAFF

We have 175 staff based at eight client service centres and one Family Relationship Centre. These centres are located across metropolitan, rural and regional areas.

QUALIFIED TO HELP

At Relationships Australia, the qualifications and backgrounds of our people are the foundation of our quality services. All counsellors are required to have additional postgraduate qualifications in family and couple counselling, and our mediators exceed the requirements of the Family Law Act. All staff members are required to attend regular training. Our clinical staff members come from a diversity of backgrounds, with many counsellors experienced in areas such as family therapy, child psychology, family violence prevention, gamblers help, couple therapy and telephone counselling. Similarly, the members of our mediation team have a variety of backgrounds, many working previously as family lawyers. Other staff members have business, finance or education backgrounds.