



# GIPPSLAND

July 2019- Issue 5

## Gippsland Family Law Pathways Network

The monthly FLPN bulletin for practitioners across Gippsland who intersect with the family law space.

If you know a service provider or organisation who wishes to be included in this network newsfeed, email us at [gippslandfamilylawpathways@betterplace.com.au](mailto:gippslandfamilylawpathways@betterplace.com.au)

## NETWORK EVENTS

### Latrobe Community Service Provider Information

The next Latrobe Community Service Providers meeting will take place on:

Tues 6<sup>th</sup> August, 9.30 am – 12.00

VRI Hall, 18/20 Queens Parade, Traralgon

Catering by Onyx Café, Traralgon

The Australian Children's Contact Services Association Inc are holding a National Training and Networking forum in Glenelg, SA on October 29 & 30<sup>th</sup> including workshops, presentations.

Sharing and networking opportunities. Go to <https://accsa.org.au/> to register.

## Updates from Around the Web / Blogs / Opinion Pieces / Studies and Reports

Judge J Harman considers the child's best interests in Family Law cases:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/anzf.1352> .

Lawrence Moloney writes about parenting disputes after separation and divorce:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/anzf.1351>

The enduring conundrum regarding morality and the Law:

<https://open.mitchellhamline.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2227&context=wmlr>

The ongoing discussion regarding Masson v's Parsons by Sarah Jones, Senior Lawyer, Family Law blog:

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/natural-ordinary-parenthood-age-artificial-conception-sarah-jones>

## News and Developments

Fees are increasing for Family Court and Federal Circuit Court services from July 1<sup>st</sup>  
<http://www.familycourt.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/fcoaweb/about/news/2019-fl-fee-increase>

Women's Legal Service Training for practitioners to best support clients through the intervention order process is coming up in August, tickets here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/intervention-orders-supporting-your-client-through-the-legal-process-tickets-55747484226?aff=ebapi>

### **The Mental Health Productivity Commission**

The Mental Health Productivity Commission Inquiry received over 500 submissions from individuals and organisations. Prior to the election the current Government made promises to implement the full raft of recommendations when they are made apparent on the 23 May 2020. This undertaking is currently underpinned by a commitment to spending 4.8 billion on mental health services, which can be compared to the 9.1 billion that the 2016-2017 expenditure on mental health cost Government and non-government combined, according to the Mental Health Australia organisation the funding is insufficient given the scale of need. Recent recognition by the World Health Authority of the need to reduce the burden of mental illness worldwide is a reminder that mental illness poses enduring problems on a global scale in terms of productivity and wellbeing.

Relationship organisations such as Better Place Australia and Relationships Australia as well as Legal Aid and the Law Council of Australia have identified a bi-directional relationship between poor family relationships and mental ill health and have highlighted the social and economic benefits to broader society regarding supporting mental health in the community.

Legal issues are a known contributing factor to mental health stressors in adults and families, this connection has been further identified in the youth population where legal

issues are a key predictor of mental health decline. In cases of Family Law, some Relationship Centres utilize the FL-DOORS model (Family Law Detection of Overall Risk Screen) which is a three-part framework that assists separating parents and family law professionals to detect risk at client point of entry and provide pathways towards a co-ordinated response to mitigate mental health stress and assist in determining safety decisions regarding risk of suicide, domestic violence and child safety. Family Relationship centres and Legal organisations suggest professionals working with clients in distress detect risk at client point of entry and provide pathways to an effective and co-ordinated response.

Legal and Relationship Centres clarified the relationship between financial insecurity and mental stress, many risk factors for developing mental illness are associated with social inequalities. Legal Aid has highlighted Australia's manifestly inadequate affordable housing availability on top of diminishing social security payments for those in need of disability support pensions who are currently relying on Newstart payments due to changes in the impairment tables setting out DSP qualification criteria. ACOSS points out that Newstart is well below the Henderson Poverty Line and cannot adequately support long term welfare recipients. The Centrelink debt recovery system which has raised 77,500 incorrect Centrelink debts against recipients has also been red flagged as a system which actively undermines community wellbeing within vulnerable demographics in Australia.

The Law Council of Australia has drawn attention to the prevalence of mental health issues within the legal sector including depression, anxiety, alcohol and drug misuse in rates higher than the general population. These problems co-occur with overcommitment as a contributing cause of psychological stress. Mitigating such workplace mental health issues could include introducing mental health first aid programs as compulsory workplace initiatives under relevant legislation, amongst a raft of many other progressive suggestions.

Better Place Australia has called for mental health services to be aligned with the Family Law System, perhaps similarly to the Assessment & Referral Court initiative, to ensure awareness of both the potential and availability of supports for those who are vulnerable or at risk of developing a mental health condition.

You can read the submissions here: <https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/mental-health#draft>

**For more information about services available in Gippsland, visit the Family Law Pathways Network Circuit Court information kiosk:**

The FLPN kiosk will be present from 9am -3.30 pm during the Mon and Tus of weeks beginning **16th September** and **11th November**, providing service information, Network expertise and referral advice. Located upstairs in the Latrobe Valley Magistrates Court, look for the FLPN brochure display



*Copyright © 2019 Gippsland Family Law Pathways Network, All rights reserved.*

**Our mailing address is:**  
Gippslandfamilylawpathways@betterplace.com.au



