



FAN

# **FAMILY ACCESS NETWORK UPDATE**

**AUTUMN 2020: VOLUME 110**

## FAN and COVID-19 update

Welcome to the Autumn newsletter! We are off to a very interesting start to the year with the Coronavirus Pandemic. Here at FAN we are taking all of the necessary precautions to keep our staff, clients and the wider community safe. Home visits and office appointments are no longer being held, however, we are running online appointments to maintain contact with our clients. Sadly, our groups are also unable to run. Our Youth Support Workers are taking the groups online to ensure we are able to maintain the social connections the groups crucially provide for our clients.



# Board update

Welcome to 2020!

As the new secretary of the FAN Board, I look forward to supporting the great work that FAN does in helping clients to overcome significant challenges. FAN provides many great services to help young people, families and children experiencing homelessness.

After years of working as a lawyer at a law firm I now work for a not-for-profit called the Australian Financial Complaints Authority (AFCA). AFCA is an ombudsman scheme, which means we help individuals and small businesses to resolve complaints about financial products and services – and it's completely free to the public.

*What complaints can AFCA help with?*

AFCA can help with a broad range of financial problems, including:

- errors in banking transactions and credit listings
- difficulty repaying loans, credit cards and short-term finance
- denial of an insurance claim
- inappropriate investment advice; and
- a trustee's decision about the distribution of a superannuation benefit.

*How does AFCA resolve complaints?*

When AFCA receives a complaint, we give the financial firm one last opportunity to sort it out directly with their customer – a lot of complaints are resolved this way.

For complaints that aren't resolved early, we work to help everyone come to a fair agreement, using information negotiation, and more formal conciliation methods. If people can't agree on what is fair, an ombudsman, or a panel, will make a decision. Like a court ruling, financial firms must abide by our decisions.

An AFCA decision can include a financial remedy if the financial firm made a mistake, however we don't impose fines or award compensation as punishment.

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My team helps people who have suffered a financial loss through no fault of their own. For example, if the financial firm has made a mistake – such as a bank charging the wrong account fee – and that mistake means a large group of customers should receive a refund, the financial firm is required to identify all the customers who are eligible for the refund and help make amends for the mistake. My team receives complaints where a customer feels the financial firm has not fixed the mistake properly. We also work with the financial firm to make sure its process to fix the mistake is working properly and to make sure the same mistake doesn't happen again.

### *AFCA supports vulnerable people*

AFCA is used to dealing with people who are experiencing difficult circumstances, including homelessness, domestic violence, mental health issues, incarceration and financial hardship as a result of natural disasters, like bush fires and floods.

We have special processes in place to make sure that we're helping, not making the problem worse. We also regularly link people up with community support services, like free legal and financial counselling services. I am particularly proud of applying some of the knowledge I have gained at FAN and prior legal volunteer positions to support people experiencing domestic violence and homelessness.

### *The AFCA Ally Network*

Aside from ensuring we support people accessing our service, we also want AFCA to be a great place to work for LGBTQIA employees. The AFCA Ally network was established to celebrate, support and offer services and programs for LGBTQIA+ employees and their allies. We want to make sure that all AFCA employees feel safe, welcome and included.

Hannah Hodges - FAN Secretary

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# Homelessness Support Service

How to keep yourself healthy during flu season

The Flu season is almost upon us and you would know about the Coronavirus that is affecting the world. Here are some tips to keep you healthy during Autumn and Winter:

Wash your hands often with soap and running water for 20 seconds. Dry your hands with paper towel.

Are you sick of counting to 20? Sing the words to these songs which are roughly 20 seconds:

Dolly Parton – Jolene

“Jolene, Jolene, Jolene, Jolene. Oh I'm begging of you please don't take my man. Jolene, Jolene, Jolene, Jolene. Please don't take him just because you can”

Fleetwood Mac – Landslide

“Well, I've been 'fraid of changin'. 'Cause I've built my life around you. But time makes you bolder Even children get older. And I'm gettin' older, too”

Beyonce – Love on Top

“Baby it's you. You're the one I love. You're the one I need. You're the only one I see. Come on baby it's you. You're the one that gives your all. You're the one I can always call. When I need to make everything stop. Finally you put my love on top”

- Try to avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth

- If you cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or into your upper sleeve or elbow

- Drink plenty of water, exercise and get enough sleep

- If you feel yourself getting sick, call your GP to ask for advice and stay at home if you can

- DHHS suggest getting the flu shot (available in April)

- If you have concerns, call the Coronavirus hotline on 1800 675 398



✘ Wrong



✘ Wrong



✔ Right

# **Creating Connections Private Rental Brokerage Program**

The Private Rental Brokerage Program (PRBP) at Family Access Network is continuing its significant work with young people. The PRBP assists young people in gaining the skills and knowledge they need in order to successfully access and sustain private rental housing. This is a great achievement especially in the current rental climate where there is a lack of affordable rental properties and an increase in demand. For young people having a stable and affordable home enables them to fully participate in community and empowers them to participate in school, employment and enhance their overall wellbeing. This is recognised through the integral core values of Family Access Network and the Private Rental Brokerage Program. If you have any enquiries about the program please call FAN on 9890 2673 and speak to one of our Youth Support Workers.

## **Children's Program**

The Children's Program - Early Years provides timely support to young pregnant / parenting families and their accompanying children, providing them with appropriate services and therapeutic interventions. The Children's Program -Early Years provides the framework to ensure FAN's physical space, resources, work practice and policies are consistent with and operating at best practice to support a child safe environment. The Children and Young Families Support Worker is committed to providing a range of early interventions for children and to act as a resource for parent's staff and volunteers by conducting educational workshops and information sessions on current underlying issues regarding children.

For information on the current or future programs please contact FAN on 9890 2673

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# Life Skills Programs

## Young Mum's Group

Young Mum's Group gotten off to a great start for 2020. We have had 4 new referrals and consistent attendance throughout the first half of term 1. We have done a lot of arts and crafts so far this term with some canvas painting and jewellery making.

Due to the current circumstances with COVID-19, the group will now run on an online platform. We will continue to do activities and socialise through Zoom.

The YMG will now be held Tuesday's 12-1pm and Thursday's 10-11am during the school term. If you are interested in joining or would like more information you can contact Maddie on 9890 2673 or [msill@fan.org.au](mailto:msill@fan.org.au).

## Eastern Diversity Group

EDG is a social support group for young people aged 15-25 years who identify as part of the LGBTIQ+ community. The final term of 2019 for EDG was an excellent way to finish the year with a huge variety of fun filled activities.

The group finished the year with activities such as an Escape Room, a Time Zone excursion, sport with Proud2Play, a free Responsible Serving of Alcohol qualification and Christmas craft and card making activities.

Due to the current COVID-19 situation, EDG will be going to an online format. We will be using different platforms to play games such as Minecraft, Jack Box Games and online board games.

Give us a call on 9890 2673 or send an email to [miltonm@fan.org.au](mailto:miltonm@fan.org.au) if you're interested in joining the group, we always love to see new faces!



# Peer Leadership Program

In 2020 FAN has re-established the Peer Leadership Program. This is a skill and personal development program for FAN clients who have successfully transitioned from the Homeless Support Services program. Participants will have the opportunity to develop skills in leadership, communication, group work, and advocacy.

The program is run weekly, with terms run over a period of 8 weeks. We're about to kick off the program online which will be run every Wednesday between 1pm – 3pm. After completing the program participants will be provided with individual support to link them with opportunities if they wish to practice or further develop their newfound skills.

If you would like to be a part of this program, you can call the office on 9890 2673. We would love to have you join us!

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# Thank you for your support!

Alfred Felton Bequest

Allan Rogerson

Austbrokers Countrywide (Staff)

Ange Morgan

Canterbury Council of Churches

Brett Philipp and Band (5 Shades of Grey)

City of Whitehorse

Dr. Cal Andrews

DAÇHS Group Printers

Colin Bellis

Deakin Uni

David Burlew and Band (Max Zero)

Department of Health and Human Services

Diane Godfrey

Department of Premier & Cabinet (Home Affairs)

Irene Kay

Eastern Emergency Relief  
Goods 360

Justin Bonney

Kelly Rafferty

KevCom

Margaret Ogilvie

Kogo

Malcom Romano of DesignsenseWeb

Linc

Paul Linossier

Lion's Club Box Hill

Melbourne Inclusive Church

Orcadia Foundation - Caroline and Derek Young

Pride Foundation

Ringwood Magistrates Court

Rotary Club of Box Hill

Salvocare Eastern

Share the Dignity

St Dominic's Parish, East Camberwell

St Kilda Mums

St Peter's Mothers Union, Box Hill

Street Smart

YACVIC - HEY Grant

Youth Connexions - Whitehorse City Council



# Contact us

**1, 2-10 Harrow Street, Box Hill**

**Mail: PO Box 141 Box Hill, Vic 3128**

**P: (03) 9890 2673**

**F: (03) 9890 9919**

**E: fan@fan.org.au**

## Useful Contact Numbers

### Housing Assistance

Eastern Region Opening Doors 1800 825 955

Melbourne City Mission Youth Support 9614 3688

### Crisis Counselling

Lifeline – 24hrs 13 11 14

Suicide Helpline- 24hrs 1300 651 251

Kids Help Line – 24hrs 1800 551 800

Mens Line 1300 789 978

Parentline 13 22 89

### Sexual Assault

Eastern CASA 9895 3281

Sexual Assault Crisis Line 1800 806 292

### Health

Family Planning Victoria 9257 0100

Maternal & Child Health line 13 22 29

Nurse On Call – 24hrs 1300 60 60 24

### Domestic Violence

Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre 1800 015 188

Eastern Domestic Violence Service (EDVOS) 9259 4200

### Child Abuse

Child Protection Crisis Line 13 12 78

Child Abuse Prevention Services 1800 688 009

### Legal Aid

Eastern Community Legal Centre      Box Hill 9285 4822

Boronia 9762 6235

### Alcohol & Drugs

Direct Line 24hrs 1800 888 236

Youth Substance Abuse Services – 24hrs 1800 458 685

Eastern Drug & Alcohol Services 1300 650 705

### Sexuality & Gender Identity

Gay and Lesbian Switchboard 9663 2939

Transgender Victoria 9517 6613