



FAN

Family Access Network Spring Newsletter 2021 - Volume 115

CEO UPDATE

Welcome to the FAN Spring newsletter. I am writing this on the second last day of Winter and in our sixth (extended) lockdown – I know for many the cumulative toll is being felt on so many levels. I encourage those who are feeling isolated to reach out for support, and for the clients of FAN please be assured we are available, even if for the moment that is online or phone – we are here. The team at FAN remain committed to working in a COVID-safe way and we have all learned a lot about creative ways of working; all of our services and groups have continued throughout, albeit at times digitally. Workers at FAN have fully embraced vaccination, and we now have 100% across the whole team – this helps us all to feel safer in addition to the other protections which are fully embedded. If you are a client supported by FAN and you are unsure of the vaccination process, please speak with your support worker who will assist you.

In 2020 the Board decided to postpone the development of the new Strategic Plan to 2021, this was a common approach due to the uncertainty and also the impact of the pandemic. We are now in the process of finalising the new Strategic Plan, and have to date held a half day session with the staff. The Board held a meeting in August to consider the annual outcomes linked to the current Strategic Plan, and build on those to identify the Strategic Plan for 2021 – 2024 – we also thank David Burlew for his facilitation of this meeting. The final version will be presented at the 2021 40th Annual General Meeting on 6 October and included within the Annual Report.

We had hoped to hold the AGM in person, but it is not possible, so it will be via zoom for members, board, staff, clients and volunteers. However, we have invited a number of former staff, board, clients and volunteers to contribute to the Annual Report on their experiences over the life of FAN – copies of which will be available after the AGM. We are also hopeful that later in the year we will be able to hold an in-person FAN 40th Anniversary event.

The newsletter contains lots of important updates on what has been happening at FAN, please do take the time to read. If you happen to be reading this newsletter as a hard copy, we would be very appreciative, as would our Environmental Sustainability Portfolio, if you would consider signing up to receive electronically – thank you.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following for their support to FAN in recent months:

- Melbourne Inclusive Church
- StreetSmart
- Collin Bellis

Thank you on behalf of FAN, your support goes directly to our clients and assists them to achieve their goals.

Regards
Sue



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Board update

Welcome to the spring edition of the FAN newsletter for 2021

The time of growth and new life is indeed upon us; I spent time reading and learning that in the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung seasonal calendar, it is now the season of tadpoles here on the lands of the Kulin Nation.

As new shoots burst out to cover trees with foliage and bright new blossoms emerge, the birds are busy navigating the September winds and their spring duties of nest building and new life rearing; frogs also are busy with their work to produce the next generation, within the watery worlds brought on by all our recent rains. And we all find ourselves still grappling with the challenges of keeping ourselves and others safe and managing the impact of ongoing restrictions. It has been wonderful throughout this time to continue to hear about the ways staff, clients and Board members of FAN have managed to work together, connecting in groups via zoom, and in so many other ways also, to advance the projects, processes, responsibilities and journeys each of us are involved with. We can't project our songs and communication to each other quite like the frogs, but technology has certainly opened up many doorways for us, as has our combined creativity as we work together to support and survive.

As I write this piece, preparations are underway for the AGM in this, FAN's 40th anniversary year.

I feel so aware of the importance of history and stories as we prepare together for the AGM. Such a year allows us to connect new with old and past with present, to share stories, learn from those who came before, listen, remember, look forward and celebrate the hard work done to get us to this place, in this time, as an organisation. As a trans and gender diverse person I am very aware of the pioneering and brave work done by my TGD elders to afford me some of the pathways and opportunities I find myself being able to access in this time; for me, this echoes the importance of the history and journey of FAN and those who have worked so hard to bring us as an organisation to where we are today, leading the way in the homelessness sector in supporting young people, particularly those from the LGBTIQ community.

The strong and continuing service delivery, valued client input, advocacy, development of best practice and sharing of knowledge at FAN, and throughout the homelessness sector by FAN to our peers and partners, appears both as a legacy and an alive and ongoing force which we can all continue to attend to, nourish and value.

I'm looking forward very much to hearing more of these stories in the months ahead. If you find yourself needing some inspiration or escape in this ongoing time of restrictions for Covid safety, and in celebration of spring, I recommend tuning in to watch a pair of peregrine falcons sitting on their eggs in a nest built high up a building in Collins Street in the heart of Naarm / Melbourne <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Un8f85yADAU>

Or simply taking some quiet time at night to listen...to silence, to the wind, to all the small noises that form a soundscape around you...can you hear any frogs where you are? If you can't, and wish to, the Australian Museum has a rich collection of frog songs to enjoy <https://www.frogid.net.au/frogs>

My reading and learning about the seasons in the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung calendar came from Associate Professor Duane Hamacher, BSc student and Yorta Yorta person, Jessie Ferrari and Catriona Nguyen-Robertson (2020) at <https://science.unimelb.edu.au/engage/alumni/alumni-newsroom-stories/cosmic-creatures>

Wishing all some new energy in this time of winds, blossoms, tadpoles and new life.

- Ange Morgan



Image taken on Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Country, Ange Morgan, 2021

Homeless Support Services

Spring Forward

Although our forecast has been filled with COVID lockdowns, Spring brings us hope for a season of sunshine and less restrictions. Hopefully we can take this opportunity to spring forward by practicing self-care and achieving personal goals before we're finally set free.

Join the Self-Care Club

Sometimes we forget to take care of ourselves, but remember that you're important and deserve to treat yourself. As a wise person once said, self-care has no prescription and can be anything that helps your wellbeing, including meditating, gardening or dancing like nobody's watching. Try your best to set aside time for yourself to enjoy activities you love. If you're in a creative mood, try painting or drawing what Spring looks like to you. We all have the ability to be creative and there is no such thing as good or bad art!

Lockdown a Weekly Goal

While you're stuck in your 5km radius or if you're feeling unmotivated, try setting one goal to achieve every week. For example, your goal might be to spend more time on self-care or maybe doing 30-minutes of exercise every day. Going on walks is a great way to get exercise while basking in the ambience of Spring.

Spring Cleaning

If you're stuck indoors during stormy weather or lockdowns, why not indulge in some spring cleaning? De-cluttering and organising that pile of stuff in the corner of your bedroom might provide a sense of relief and clarity. Cleaning can feel therapeutic and healing as de-cluttering your environment can translate to de-cluttering your mind, and at least you won't have to look at that mess anymore.

Social Re-connection

It can be difficult to meet your loved ones during lockdowns, but to make the most of your time together you can still video chat and make phone calls. Although we're all sick of Zoom, we have technology to help us connect while we can't see each other, even if it's a 5-minute check-in to see how our loved ones are doing.

A Mind Full of Wellbeing

Finally, be mindful of your thoughts and feelings and look after the wellbeing of people around you. COVID has been difficult for all of us and sometimes reaching out to someone is enough to help them feel better. Sometimes "are you okay?" goes a long way, but don't forget to ask yourself the same question too.



Creating Connections - Private Rental Brokerage Program

The Private Rental Brokerage Programs (PRPB) continues to support young people to attain and sustain their private rental. Access to the private rental market continues to be a challenge for young people have no private rental history. The pandemic has provided additional challenges as we weave in and out of lock down, this has been particularly challenging with arranging property inspections.

FAN staff continue to support young people to give them the best chance of acquiring safe and stable long-term accommodation. We have been assisting them put together their application packs which includes completing budgets, producing cover letters, providing rental search resources, and compiling references. The young people we support have shown tremendous resilience continuing to attend inspections where possible and persisting with their applications despite multiple rejections. Regardless of the difficulties we have had several young people in the last few months who have been able to utilise their skills and crack the private rental market for the first time.

FAN also offer private rental capacity building workshops to young people in other supported accommodation such as Youth Residential Recovery or Education First Foyer model. These workshops equip young people with the skills to obtain private rental as well as educating them on their rights when they do become a renter. If your organisation is interested FAN running some workshops for their clients contact us on 9890 2673.

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

Pathways to Resilience - LGBTIQ + Family Violence Therapeutic Support Group

Talking with Pride is a group for LGBTIQ+ young people (ages 15-25) who have experienced family violence. Experiences of family violence includes having their identity and/or appearance being dismissed, controlled or put down by parents, siblings, and/or partners.

The group meets weekly on Tuesday afternoons at 4pm during school terms. Topics include self-care, character strengths, mindfulness, healthy relationships, helpful people, and positive emotions.

The group is currently conducting intake so if you or someone you know would be interested in participating, please contact, Miles, on 9890 2673 or mmilton@fan.org.au.



Life Skills

Eastern Diversity Group

Eastern Diversity Group is a social support group for young people aged 15-25 who are of diverse gender identities, expressions, sexualities, and/or sex characteristics that are, or at risk of becoming homeless.

EDG has been a safe place to have some fun with activities and excursions. Recently, due to lockdown as a result of COVID-19, the group has transitioned to play online games such as *Team Fortress*, *Minecraft* and *JackBox Games*. The group has run throughout COVID-19 adapting to health regulations and has been a constant support during times of uncertainty.

We will still be meeting every Thursday from 3:30pm to 5pm. Call us on 9890 2673 or send an email to miltonm@fan.org.au if you're interested in joining the group. EDG is a great place to meet some new people and have fun some fun!

Young Mum's Group

Since June 21st our Young mum's group has been taken over by another staff member Vanita, this is due to Maddie leaving Family Access Network. Due to the recent lockdowns, we have had to run our sessions online. We have improvised and sent food out to our mums so they can enjoy playing online games while having lunch. I have had the pleasure of working with FAN's placement student Steph, she is studying her Master's in Art Therapy. Steph has created online games such as MUM/COVID bingo, online Pictionary/charades, an ICE BREAKER board game and creating YMG posters online.

We usually meet the Family Burges Centre in Box hill but have been unable to due to COVID-19 restrictions. We are planning on having outings to either a park, playcentre or Café as soon as restrictions ease, which I think all the mums are excited for!

The YMG is usually run-on Wednesdays from 12-2pm, but at this time is being held via Zoom on Wednesdays from 12-1pm during school terms. If you are interested in joining or would like more information you can contact Vanita on 9890 2673 or vharris@fan.org.au.



Volunteers

Please see below current volunteer vacancies at Family Access Network, If you have questions or queries regarding these vacancies please contact Michelle on 9890 2673 or mthompson@fan.org.au

FAN is currently seeking a Child Play Supervisor

Child Play Supervisors engage in a range of child friendly, age appropriate with children while their parents are attending appointments, meeting with their support workers or participate in workshops and groups in FAN's various programs



FAN 40th AGM

Our AGM is will be held online
via Zoom on Wednesday 6th of
October from 3:30pm onwards

Client Feedback - Have your voice heard!

At Family Access Network, we strive to provide the best support and services to our clients. A big part of ensuring that FAN is delivering the best possible support is receiving and implementing the feedback received by our clients.

Listening and acknowledging the clients voice allows us to keep our services up to date as well as change aspects of our services if necessary. Feedback loops are critically important. As part of quality governance, continuous improvement and good practice, it is essential that the client voice is not only sought and heard, but that it is genuinely used to influence change and the feedback loop is closed. Below is some feedback from some of the clients from our HSS and PRPB Program

“The staff at FAN have been really supportive to help me settle into my new property.”

“I really appreciated all the help Miles provided :)”

“Empathetic staff who listened to my unique concerns and tailored support to best meet my needs”

If you would like to leave any feedback or provide suggestions on how FAN can improve it's services, please contact fan@fan.org.au or call 9890 2673.

Thank you for your support!

Alfred Felton Bequest
Austbrokers Countrysde (Staff)
Canterbury Council of Churches
City of Whitehorse
DACHS Group Printers
Deakin Uni
Department of Families, Fairness and
Housing - Youth Week Grant
Department of Premier & Cabinet (Home
Affairs
Eastern Emergency Relief
Goods 360
KevCom
Kogo
Linc
Lion's Club Box Hill
Melbourne Inclusive Church
Orcadia Foundation - Caroline & Derek
Young
Pride Foundation
Ringwood Magistrates Court
Salvation Army Housing
Share the Dignity
St Dominic's Parish, East Camberwell
St Kilda Mum's
Street Smart
Youth Affairs - HEY Grant
Youth Connexions - Whitehorse City
Council

Allan Rogerson
Ange Morgan
Brett Philipp and Band (5 Shades of Grey)
Dr. Cal Andrews
Cara Pitruzzello
Colin Bellis
David Burlew and Band (Max Zero)
Diane Godfrey
Irene Kay
Kelly Rafferty
Justin Bonney
Malcolm Romano of Designsense Web
Margaret Ogilvie
Paul Linossier

Useful Contacts

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
The Orange Door - Inner Eastern Melbourne 1800 354 322
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