



Family Access Network Spring Newsletter 2022 - Volume 119

CEO UPDATE

FAN

Newsletter – CEO update – September

Welcome to the FAN Spring newsletter – for many the winter was particularly bleak and wet and highlights the challenges of those experiencing homelessness, including those experiencing homelessness as a result of climate related crisis.

National Homelessness Week 1 – 7 August: In Australia, there are over 116,000 people experiencing homelessness on any given night. Homelessness Week aims to raise awareness of the causes and impacts of homelessness via national and local events and campaigns. Without a doubt the most effective way to address homelessness is with housing. We need a national plan to end homelessness to properly address the issues driving rising homelessness, and to respond effectively so that homelessness is prevented where possible and quickly resolved when people do lose their home.

Solving Homelessness takes more than swags and blankets... and this sticker!	Housing Ends Homelessness ehn.org.au	Feed your kids or pay your rent? Build more low income housing before this becomes the new normal	Housing Ends Homelessness ehn.org.au
Homelessness impacts children too Secure their future - fix the housing crisis	Housing Ends Homelessness ehn.org.au	Looks like a car Sounds like a car ...but acts like a house for many people homeless tonight	Housing Ends Homelessness ehn.org.au

FAN has been providing an LGBTIQ Homelessness response since 2006; we have advocated for a robust service system response for many years, including thorough research and our own LGBTIQ Capacity Building work with the sector. We are therefore very pleased to be a part of the Pride in Place consortium. The Victorian Labor Government, Minister for Equality Harriet Shing and Minister for Housing Danny Pearson announced the program on 19 August. "Pride in Place provides comprehensive, safe and inclusive recovery pathways for LGBTQIA+ people who are experiencing homelessness. Pride in Place identifies and intervenes early to direct LGBTQIA+ people who are at risk of homelessness towards a pathway and place of safety. Pride in Place consortium partners include Drummond Street Services Queerspace, VincentCare Victoria, Uniting, and Family Access Network (FAN). This is a pilot project, funded until June 2024 and services LGBTQIA+ people in the Hume Moreland, Inner Western Metro, Outer Eastern Metro and Central Highlands Regions."

The FAN team continue to maintain flexible responses across all of our programs, during this period of transitioning back to full in person contact. The same transitioning is occurring in our broader sector roles, with a combination of in person, online and hybrid meetings.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following for their support to FAN in recent months, thank you, your support goes directly to our clients and assists them to achieve their goals:

- Lions Club Box Hill
- East Doncaster Secondary College
- Melbourne Inclusive Church
- Milla Burgess & Keely Chew
- Donald Kay

Please note we are holding the first in person Annual General Meeting since 2019, on 3 October, to ensure as safe as possible conditions for all, this will be via invitation, however the Annual Report will be available on our website immediately after the AGM.

The newsletter contains lots of important updates on what has been happening at FAN, please do take the time to read.

Regards
Sue



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Board update - Introducing our newest board member

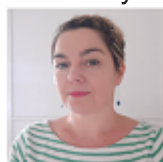
My name is Annerliegh and I joined the FAN board in June of this year. Decades ago, I was a young person, living in a FAN property in Box Hill, trying to balance a part-time job and high school and learning to maintain a property. It feels pretty lonely, when everybody else seems to be living a good life. You see your peers being picked up by parents driving nice cars, kids at school don't seem to have to try very hard to achieve academically, they have nice clothes and shoes and the latest must-have gadgets. One of my most embarrassing experiences was being called out day after day by a school teacher for wearing old sneakers instead of the required black leather shoes. Those black shoes just weren't a priority when you were living in a relative's spare room, without a job and already feeling like a burden. Not to mention it didn't seem sensible to purchase shoes that could only be worn to one place – people who grew up poor will know what I mean.

I'm in my forties now and what I realise is that whilst I felt alone, there are so many kids like me, kids who grew up in extreme poverty, who lived in households with drugs and alcohol, young people who experienced violence or sexual assault, and some who moved from place to place without a warm, stable place to call home. I wish that thirty years later, we could say that all young people were getting a great start in life with equal access to housing, the resources they need to pursue employment or schooling, and the emotional support they need to achieve futures they desire and to feel they belong. What I can say is that Family Access Network is one solution to the problem of youth homelessness.

Young people are not adults and the services that support young people need to know that we will make mistakes. Like FAN, homelessness services need to approach young people without judgement and with a willingness to try, try again. A safe stable home should be a human right. A home first and then the space and support to learn and grow.

The young people who live through the experiences I've outlined above, have perspectives and viewpoints that are forged through experience, and experience is a form of evidence. I'm excited to join FAN's board and I hope that other community services follow FAN's lead and draw on the knowledge and experience of young people. FAN demonstrates that it is listening to its young people and tailoring programs and supports that respond to their needs. They seek the user voice not only through welcoming a past service user to their Board, but at all levels of the service, pivoting over FAN's 40+ year history to be one of the homelessness system's most unique and innovative services.

Annerliegh Pappos



Homeless Support Services

Drawing from one's creative side can be very therapeutic and it can also help you to enhance skills that are beneficial for your day-to-day life. There are so many different ways to be creative, and with the weather warming up one does not have to be confined to their house. You can engage in activities such as:

- Going to the park and writing poems, songs or taking pictures of nature, or even drawing your surroundings.
- You can decide to make some home-baked goods and have a picnic with your family or friends.
- You can decide to pick up crocheting or knitting and create something fun and exciting. Many people are always under the assumption that they lack a sense of creativity because they may compare themselves to individuals such as Picasso or Mozart, but we all have a creative side to us. We just have to take the time to be in-tune with our creative spirit.



Creating Connections - Private Rental Brokerage Program

Rental stress

Many young people FAN support are facing challenges in accessing and sustaining private rental housing as Melbourne's rental market reaches record highs. Rent has surged due to the low number of rental properties available and has significantly increased competition in the rental market for tenants. On top of this young people continue to face barriers and challenges including age-based discrimination, lack of start-up funds and a lack of rental references. The situation in the rental market may seem bleak however the Private Rental Brokerage Program continues to bridge this gap and support young people in obtaining and sustaining private rental housing. This program has always been a significant part of the homelessness sector and even more so now. If you are experiencing a rent increase and would like further information, please refer to the following websites:

<https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/housing/renting/rent-bond-bills-and-condition-reports/rent/challenging-rent-increases-or-high-rent>

<https://tenantsvic.org.au/advice/during-your-tenancy/rent-increases/>

For more information about the Private Rental Program, you can contact the contact a Youth Support Worker at FAN 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 - Talking With Pride

Talking with Pride is an arts-based 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. Talking with Pride is offered under the Pathway to Resilience partnership between FAN, Uniting, Australian Childhood Foundation, Safe Futures and EACH.

Since our winter update, we have been busy refining the program for the remainder for 2022. Talking with Pride has been supported by the Pathways to Resilience Team to purchase a number of art kits for participants. These kits include sketchbooks, watercolour pencils, paint brushes, pastels, journals and more! We are extremely grateful for this support.



In addition to art supplies, the PTR Special Projects Brokerage Fund was offered to seven young people participating in the program to support engagement with therapeutic interventions tailored to their individual needs. The fund has enabled participants to access a wide range of supports including home wifi, an electronic drawing pad, drum lessons, laptops, a camera and a kick boxing bag. These supports will be used to enable young people to engage with their health and wellbeing goals while recovering from experiences of family violence.

If you or someone you know would like to join the group we are still accepting referrals for the program. The group meets weekly on Tuesday afternoons in Box Hill during school terms.

Please contact Jess on 9890 2673 or jinnes-irons@fan.org.au

Young Mum's Group

Young Mums group is a social support group for young mums aged 15-25. We facilitate activities through the school terms every year. We run YMG on a Wednesday from 12-2pm and we are near the end of Term 3. This Term is the first Term since lockdown, we currently run our program from the Burgess Family Centre. The activities for this Term are, Scrunchie making, Sip and Paint, Body Scrubs, Modge Podge Canvas', Belly Dancing, Vision Boards, and an outing.

If you are interested in joining the group, please contact Vanita on 9890 2673 or vharris@fan.org.au

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 is running for the third term and will be occurring between 14/07/2022-15/09/2022 at Youth Connexions in Box Hill.

Creativity has been the theme for EDG during the third term. Projects in place have included canvas painting, where participants were given the freedom to express their ideas, and emotions without being restricted to a certain criterion. The young people involved expressed gratitude in having the space where they could be free to paint whatever that came to mind for them. Participants involved in EDG also took a part in a cooking class, where they learnt how to make homemade pizza from scratch. In the the second half of if the term participants were involved in a sewing project and celebrated Wear It Purple Day on the 26/08/2022 at the Box Hill Mall.



Volunteers

We need your help! You never know who might be interested in giving back to their community so it's worth spreading the word.

FAN is currently seeking to engage two Lead Tenants aged 24 or over to assist us to support three young people in a shared living house. This is a voluntary live-in position that involves a 12-month commitment in exchange for rent free accommodation. The houses are located in Chadstone and Balwyn and you will have your own bedroom and bathroom. The Lead Tenant is required, in liaison with the agency, to ensure that house rules are maintained. The Lead Tenant is not a professional support role but rather a positive role model living in a shared property. The Lead Tenant would pay for their own food and cleaning products, utility bills and property service fees are \$30 per week. Ideally suited to someone who is interested in, or actively studying, in the Human Services Field.

This position offers ongoing training and support. The purpose of the position is to act as a role model for young people to help them to live and share in independent accommodation.

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a Volunteer at Family Access Network or would like further information on our volunteer programs, please contact Oriana on 9890 2673 or OPhutully@fan.org.au



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 to 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.

FAN clients in our HSS & PRBR programs have expressed how grateful they are for the support, not only financially but emotionally as well.

Below are some examples of the feedback FAN has received.

"I am thankful for the support I received when I had no place to stay"

"I really appreciate all of the support and help I have received so far. And have been completely blown away with the commitment, compassion and dedication all the staff have for their clients"

"My worker has helped me a lot with setting up my new place"

"I appreciate my case worker and the organisation beyond words. I wouldn't have been able to persevere through the many tough times this year without your support."

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
First Nations Support 13YARN - 13 92 76

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
Health Ability After Hours Mental Health Nursing Service 1300 003 509

Domestic Violence

1800RESPECT 1800 737 732 Sexual Assault, Domestic & Family Violence Counselling Service
Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre 1800 015 188
The Orange Door - Inner Eastern Melbourne 1800 354 322
The Orange Door - Outer Eastern Melbourne 1800 271 150
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
South Eastern Community Legal Centre 9545 7400 or 9038 8002

Alcohol & Drugs

Direct Line 24hrs 1800 888 236
Youth drug and alcohol advice (YoDDA) - 24hrs 1800 458 685
Eastern Consortium of Alcohol and Drug Services (ECADS) 1800 778 278

Sexuality & Gender Identity

Rainbow Door Switchboard call 1800 729 367 or text 0480 017 246
Q-Life 1800 184 527
Transgender Victoria 9517 6613

Thank you for your support!

City of Whitehorse
Department of Premier & Cabinet (Home Affairs)
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
Eastern Emergency Relief Network
KevCom
Melbourne Inclusive Church
Orcadia Foundation - Caroline & Derek Young
Share the Dignity
St Kilda Mum's
Street Smart
Youth Connexions - Whitehorse City Council
Malcolm Romano of Designsense Web
Lions Club - Box Hill
East Doncaster Secondary College
Milla Burgess & Keely Chew
Di Godfrey
Kelly Rafferty
Paul Linossier
All donations via Give Now
Anne Oberin
Collin Bellis
Donald Kay