



**FAN**

# Family Access Network Winter Newsletter 2022 - Volume 118 CEO UPDATE

## Newsletter – CEO update – June

Welcome to the FAN Winter newsletter – at the time of writing this it is 8 degrees outside. Not having a secure place to call home seems grim at the best of times, but in Winter it takes on another perspective. All of us are also navigating this first Winter in two years without the layers of restrictions, mask wearing and other methods to contain the spread of Covid. We do so mindfully and already experiencing the impacts of Covid cases and emerging flu and related illnesses. I hope all readers are keeping warm and well.

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 transition is occurring in our broader sector roles, with a combination of in person, online and hybrid meetings. It is welcome experience to see sector colleagues in person, some of them for the first time in two years.

It was an absolute delight therefore to be able to attend the Communities in Control Conference in person for the first time since 2019, it was two days of inspirational speakers, thought provoking ideas and coming immediately after the election outcome had an atmosphere of hope and positivity – refer to the link for speakers presentations <https://communitiesincontrol.com.au/conferences/2022>

National Volunteers Week, 16 to 23 May, with the theme of “Better Together” – at FAN we are certainly the better for the contribution that Volunteers make across our programs, as mentors, lead tenants, group supporters, and of course the Board of Governance – thank you to each of you for the difference you make.

In the same week it was IDAHOBIT Day <https://www.idahobit.org.au/> - FAN was pleased and proud to be part of a collaborative event with City of Whitehorse, EACH, Headspace, Jobs Victoria. Activities on the day included a BBQ, live DJ, face painting, temporary tattoos and fingerprint tree but most importantly it was an opportunity for the community to come together to take a stand against the discrimination of LGBTIQ+ people.

FAN was also recently selected as a recipient of the 2022 LGBTIQ+ Organisational Development Grants. We have been awarded \$28,000 to support the expansion of LGBTIQ+ inclusive services in the Eastern Metropolitan region. In particular this grant will support FAN to develop a series of school holiday excursions for Trans and Gender Diverse Young people aged 11-14 who are currently unable to access social supports due to age barriers.

I am writing this update during National Reconciliation Week <https://nrw.reconciliation.org.au> FAN acknowledges the importance and significance of this week. We are also working on our own Reconciliation Action Plan which we hope to have completed by the end of this year.

In May we also successfully completed our Mid Cycle Accreditation Review for our Rainbow Tick, DHHS and Governance Standards – special acknowledgement to Michelle Thompson for the key role she has in supporting our continuous quality improvement work. I would like to acknowledge and thank the following for their support to FAN in recent months, your support goes directly to our clients and assists them to achieve their goals:

- Donald Kay
- Street Smart
- Department of Family, Fairness and Housing

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

It's May already and autumn is here, the trees are turning yellow, orange and red in preparation of losing their leaves for the cold winter months. Most plants will hunker down for the cold Melbourne winter and many of us feel like doing the same thing. May is a good time to select new deciduous trees and bare-rooted roses for the garden as well as plant spring bulbs for a spectacular spring show of daffodils, snow drops, and tulips. Both trees and roses benefit from planting at this time of the year as they are moving their energy away from the leaves, but with the soil still warm will concentrate on growing their roots to make the tree stronger.

The changing of the seasons, with the onset of colder weather is a particularly difficult time for our clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This is usually a time when services are stretched with clients seeking assistance and, given the reduction of time limited services following the successful initiatives implemented during the Covid 19 pandemic, options will be more limited. The reduction of restrictions imposed during the pandemic means that many community services, restaurants, and activities are back to almost normal. One positive outcome is that there are more jobs available and more people gaining employments during this time. This offers opportunities for many of our clients, some of whom have taken up opportunities for education and employment.

We must remember that Covid 19 has not gone away and as I write this I am still recovering after contracting Covid 19 two weeks ago. I can tell you it is not a nice illness to have, even though I am triple vaccinated, I felt drained, had difficulty breathing, headaches and dizziness that lasted through the two weeks. On the mend now but wanted to remind everyone to be aware of how easy it is to catch Covid 19, I have no idea where I picked it up. Remember to keep using your mask in areas where social distancing is not possible, still use hand sanitiser and good hygiene. If you feel unwell, have a cough or other symptoms undergo a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) on the day and a day or two later. If positive isolate for a minimum of 7 days, but longer if you are still feeling unwell.

Be assured that FAN has a comprehensive Covid 19 plan in place for staff and clients including availability of RAT tests if clients need them. Services can be provided via phone, skype or Zoom if required and assistance is always available.

So in closing I am looking forward to being able to get back to the usual activities and travel that I enjoy and look forward to seeing the fruits of my gardening efforts over the following months into spring.

Diane Godfrey - Chair



*Image taken by Diane Godfrey*

## **Meet our new LGBTIQ+ Specialist Youth Worker**

Michelle Kiriama joined FAN as an LGBTIQ Specialist Youth Worker in 2022. In her role she facilitates the Eastern Diversity Group and provides case management support to young people in Transitional Housing. Prior to joining FAN, Michelle worked as a settlement caseworker, and a youth health and well-being project officer. Michelle's educational background is a degree in Bachelor of Social Work (Honours) from Deakin University. Michelle is excited to be a part of the FAN team.



# Homeless Support Services

With the emergence of Covid into our world within the past couple of years, many have endured a season of extreme challenges. Activities that were once part of our day-to-day life such as going to work, visiting family and friends, travelling had restrictions imposed on them. This season has been very stressful and anxiety provoking. Right now, the world is in a place where it is trying to adapt to a covid-normal life. As we are trying to adapt to our new reality, one of the areas of our life that we should not neglect is our mental health.

## Financial Stress and Mental Health Well-being

Part of the new norm for some people may involve having to restart their career or their jobs again due to a loss of business or employment because of Covid. The Beyond Blue [website](#), which is an excellent [resource](#) to utilise provides some helpful tips on looking after your mental health during the period of job insecurity and financial uncertainty.

The journey of finding work or restarting a business can be very challenging, and with Covid this process is much more difficult due to factors that are outside of your control. During this stage it is important to remember to show yourself kindness and patience.

- **Do not allow yourself to carry the burden alone:** Seek support and confide in trusted friends, families, psychologists, counsellors. Whoever you feel comfortable with, just reach out.
- **Draw on your strengths:** Remind yourself of a tough time that you've managed to overcome in the past. Recognise that your identity and value does not solely come from your job. There are many incredible aspects of you that make up who you are.
- **Look after other areas of your well-being:** It is important through this journey not to neglect other aspects of your life that influence your mental health, such as your physical well-being, your social well-being, and even your spiritual well-being. Do the best that you can to implement healthy habits such as exercising, good nutrition, spending time with friends and family. Make sure to get a goodnight's rest, as that is when you will be at your best. **Beyond Blue** also has access to [relaxation and meditation exercises](#) that can help you relax your mind and body.
- **Accessing financial support services:** There are also a variety of financial support networks that you can access. For advice and resources, you can visit: [moneysmart.gov.au](https://moneysmart.gov.au) or **Financial Counselling Australia**. If you, or someone close to you, are experiencing financial hardship, the **National Debt Helpline (1800 007 007)** offers free financial counselling. Please note the service does not lend money or advise people how to invest.

## Creating Connections - Private Rental Brokerage Program

The Private Rental Brokerage Program (PRBP) aims to support young people between 16 and 25 years of age in their goal to attain and sustain private rental accommodation. The program is designed to enable young people through the different processes of finding a rental property in a step-by-step manner.

Some of these tips include:

**Budgeting** – ensuring you are not spending more than half your income towards your rent and bills and not applying for properties that are out of your individual price range.

**Application Pack** – Have everything photocopied and ready to go before you attend rental inspections so you can apply for a property straight away! These include your identification, proof of income (payslips or income statement) and have the application for the property already filled out. Also create a [1Form](#) so you are able to apply for multiple properties online with maximum efficiency!

**Cover/ Introduction Letter** - Another great tool is writing an introduction letter to add to your rental application, this is a great way of introducing yourself to a landlord/real estate and provides the opportunity of why you are the right person to rent the house too!

**Rental References** - Before you apply for any properties make sure you have a think about any rental references – it is a great idea to get any rental references you have in writing to add to your application pack.

If you have you would like any more information, contact a Private Rental Brokerage worker at FAN on 9890 2673 or by email [fan@fan.org.au](mailto:fan@fan.org.au)

## 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.

The group meets weekly on Tuesday afternoons at 3:30pm during school terms. The program centers around healing and recovery and 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, Jess, on 9890 2673 or [jinnes-irons@fan.org.au](mailto:jinnes-irons@fan.org.au)



*Image taken from IDAHOBIT Day*

## 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 at risk of becoming homeless. With the easing of Covid 19 regulations, EDG has resumed for a second term and is currently running face to face. Young people at EDG have had the opportunity to connect with each other and build social bonds. As EDG is in its third week for the term, the activities so far have included board games and jack box games. Future activities for the term will include laser tag, trip to the National Gallery of Victoria for IDAHOBIT week, celebration of Pride Month, and much more. EDG is really centred on creating a fun, safe and inclusive environment for all young LGBTIQ youth. If you are interested in being a part of the program, please call us on 9890 2673 or send an email to [fan@fan.org.au](mailto:fan@fan.org.au) if you're interested in joining the group. All participants attending EDG are required to be fully vaccinated. EDG is a great place to meet some new people and have fun some fun!

## 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 Term 2 has officially started. We usually run our group at Burgess Family Centre, but due to Covid-19, they are still not open for external organisations to reserve their rooms. We are being creative in where we run groups (going to play centres, parks, and having at the FAN office)

This Term has hit off with clay pottery, and painting. We will be going to the botanical garden, going to the pools and ending the season with a trip to SEA LIFE.

If you are interested in joining the group, please contact Vanita on 9890 2673 or [vharris@fan.org.au](mailto:vharris@fan.org.au)



## 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 a Lead Tenant aged 22 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.

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](mailto: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.

*"The PRBP definitely help me get back on my feet- without it I'm not sure how I would have managed"*

*"Having the support in finding a rental and a lot of knowledge from people more experienced in finding and the rules around renting"*

*"The most useful thing I got from todays workshop was learning how to go about applying for private rental and the different kind of housing options available and their pros and cons"*

*"My worker has helped me alot with setting up my new place."*



# 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  
Donald Kay  
Paul Wendt  
All donations for GiveOUT day

## 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

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

### 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

Gay and Lesbian Switchboard 9663 2939

Transgender Victoria 9517 6613