



FAN

# Family Access Network Autumn Newsletter 2023 - Volume 121

## CEO UPDATE

Welcome to the Family Access Network (FAN) Autumn Newsletter - which is my last, as advised in the December Newsletter I am retiring effective 31 March, after 38 years at FAN, 41 if you include the prior volunteer roles. I will continue in a limited consultancy role to support the transition at FAN. I will prepare a more reflective piece to be included to the Annual Report, later this year, which will expand more on my role with clients and building a culture of learning and innovation with the team. However, in the meantime I would like to share a summary of advice about my retirement which I shared with sector colleagues, funding bodies, partner agencies, current and former staff, board, volunteers and clients:

*“Well, we all knew this day would come, but after joining FAN in January 1982 as a volunteer and 38 years as an employee (since February 1985 - the first employee under Supported Accommodation Assistance Program SAAP) it probably seemed like I would always be here, and hopefully in one way or another my legacy will in fact live on.*

*On a personal and professional level, I am no less committed to and passionate about FAN than I have ever been, however I feel the time has come to prioritise other things in my life, which working as a CEO is not easy to achieve. It was important to me to support FAN through the last two plus years in the navigation of a worldwide pandemic, potentially a once in a lifetime experience for us all. FAN is a special place, and it has been time very well spent over these last four decades. I am proud of our work in a variety of domains, particularly in our responses to young families and children, and our LGBTIQ responses, the only LGBTIQ Homelessness response since 2006, and in recent years through Pathways to Resilience a therapeutic response for LGBTIQ young people impacted by Family Violence. What might be less well known is FAN has been providing a continuous Young Mum’s Group since 1997 and Eastern Diversity Group (EDG) a social support group for LGBTIQ young people for more than 15 years. Many of you will have engaged with FAN over the years around our LGBTIQ Capacity Building that we have provided both when we were funded to do so and when not. It is therefore deeply important to me that we are implementing Pride in Place, LGBTIQ Homelessness and Housing response, in partnership with VincentCare, Uniting and Drummond Street - the official launch was 23 November, we are delighted to welcome Daniel Ip to the team at FAN in the LGBTIQA + Homeless & Housing Service Navigator role.*

*Similarly, I have been passionate about and committed to the many regional, state and at times national initiatives, working parties, research projects, reforms (I wish I had a dollar for all of those ☺), boards, governance groups etc, I have been involved in and will continue to be involved in and passionate right up to retirement, and beyond. It is a privilege to work in a sector where colleagues share values of social justice, inclusion, and that what underpins our work is the importance of the rights and dignity of the people we support.*

*I will leave at the end of March, knowing that FAN will be in good hands as Michelle Thompson will be appointed to Acting CEO for 12 months from 3 April 2023.”*

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:

- Canterbury Council of Churches - donated money towards material aid
- Austbrokers Countrywide - paid for Children’s Christmas presents and contributed towards Client Christmas party
- Whitehorse City Council - 50% discount on venue hire

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

Best of luck and take care one and all.

Regards

Sue



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### **Board update - introducing our Secretary, Hannah Hodges**

With Sue's recent announcement to retire as CEO, I wanted to take this opportunity to reflect on her contribution and legacy to FAN and to introduce our new interim CEO.

Sue's time at FAN has spanned an amazing four decades, her strong commitment to supporting homelessness saw her first join as a volunteer before becoming the first paid employee of FAN.

It's safe to say that over her time at FAN there has not been a job that Sue hasn't done before she eventually took the helm of FAN as its Manager in 1996 and title change to CEO in 2010.

This experience across a range of roles has driven Sue's approach to FAN as an organisation which recognises the importance of staff and seeks to develop, nurture and mentor them. Unsurprisingly Sue is still in contact with staff who worked for FAN years ago.

Not content to simply keep the status quo, Sue has pioneered several initiatives within FAN and externally. She has been a strong advocate for maintaining a culture of growth and innovation across programs and services ensuring FAN continues to offer a learning and reflective workplace.

It was also this innovative mindset that developed the Alsorts program with the ALSO foundation creating the first LGBTIQ homelessness THM program for young people in Victoria. This partnership led to Sue assisting in the development of the Rainbow Tick accreditation before establishing FAN as the first homelessness service to successfully complete the Rainbow Tick accreditation. FAN's LGBTIQ services was established from 2006 and led to several other Statewide programs and also to the EDG social support group. FAN also became involved in the LGBTIQ Family Violence response through Pathways to Resilience and PIP which ensured a broader response. FAN is no longer the only organisation providing a LGBTIQ homelessness response in Victoria, which I know Sue considers a fantastic outcome as it means more programs and support have been made available to LGBTIQ clients experiencing homelessness.

Sue also assisted in creating support to young families and children, working to establish new service options to enhance the support to clients. This led to the Young Mum's Group being established in 1997 and which continues to this day. It has brought Sue immense joy to see the bonds made between those young mums which have lasted years and even decades.

Her efforts in the sector were recognised in 2017 when she received the CHP Victorian Homelessness Award.

Sue has also greatly enjoyed her involvement in the research and sector involvement as it provides an important vehicle for FAN clients and staff to share their experiences and also contributes to a broader knowledge external to FAN. Sue has also been on several boards including two State peak bodies, sector consultations and national inquiries. She has also actively participated in networks, working parties, partnership and steering committees. This has ensured FAN has been seen as a reliable and committed participant at all levels.

Sue has given so much to FAN and we thank her for the profoundly positive impact she has had on the lives of many young people and the sector as a whole.

It's a testimony to Sue's dedication that she has also been mentoring our new interim CEO, Michelle Thompson over the last 9 years which has given Michelle great insight and understanding into the role of CEO. Sue has positioned FAN to enjoy a seamless transition with Michelle as CEO.

Michelle has extensive experience at FAN but also brings over 25 years' worth of experience working with young people and their families as well as holding management positions for over 20 years.

Michelle has worked in a variety of settings including Alcohol and Other Drugs, Mental Health, Family Services, Community Health and Youth Homelessness and can bring this experience to support FAN's mission.

Michelle is currently teaching at RMIT in the Diploma of Youth Work, Advanced Diploma Community Sector Management and Recognising and Responding to Sexual Violence.

We wish to thank Sue for her enormous contribution and wish Michelle much success as she embarks on her new role.

Regards

Hannah Hodges



## Homeless Support Services

On 5 February, FAN alongside clients supported by FAN, attended the Pride March in St Kilda. Pride March is an annual event hosted by Midsumma to provide a safe space where LGBTIQ+ members of all ages, abilities, religious beliefs, and ethnic backgrounds can unite and be in community with each other. During the Pride March many individuals wore their best rainbow attire and walked or danced down the streets of St Kilda in celebration of who they are. FAN takes pride in being part of such an event that supports and affirms the LGBTIQ+ community. A note of appreciation is given to FAN CEO, Sue Carlile, for the extensive work that she has done to foster a culture of inclusion and acceptance for a community that has and continues to be subjected to discrimination.

As the Pride March is a televised public event, it can be difficult for those who are not out to their friends and family to attend. If you happen to be in this space and are not out there are different subtle ways that you can choose to celebrate you. Celebration of your identity can occur through listening to your favourite queer artist, watching an LGBTIQ+ film or tv series or wearing something that holds special meaning to you.



Images from the Pride March

# Private Rental Brokerage Program

## Tips for finding Shared housing

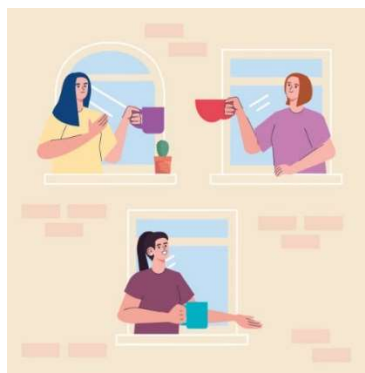
Living on your own may sound like an appealing idea but it can be quite expensive, particularly if you are studying and are working a casual job. Ideally when budgeting for rent, it should cost no more than 40% of your income. To rent a standard 1-bedroom apartment in the inner eastern suburbs would cost you around \$400 per week. You would need to be earning around \$1300 per week after tax! If this is out of your price range, then it worth considering moving into share housing while you get on your feet.

If you have friends who are also looking for affordable rent, then consider house hunting as a group, having renters with multiple income streams will increase your chances of getting accepted by a Real Estate agent. If searching by yourself, consider websites like [flatmates.com.au](http://flatmates.com.au) or [flatmatefinder.com.au](http://flatmatefinder.com.au) and look to team up with someone, you can browse all their profiles and read their blurbs to get an idea if they are suitable for share house living.

Alternatively, you can look for already established share houses and apply for a room, like all aspects of the private rental market there is a lot of competition you will need to really think about how you will sell yourself to your potential housemates. One must really write a thoughtful personal bio to cut through the noise, gone are the days where one-line generic descriptions such as *"I have a steady cash flow, I'm neat and tidy and respectful of other people's space"*. Households are looking for more than a housemate, they are looking to live with someone based around their identity, social values, and a sense of how they would gel with the current household. They are interested to know if their potential housemate are LGBTIQ+ friendly or understanding of those with a disability or neurodiverse condition.

Share house rent seekers really need to accentuate their individual lifestyle to really stand out from the crowd. The more colourful profiles on rent seeking sites speak about their love for indoor plants, fanaticism for sci-films, passion for collecting deep cut vinyls or by highlighting their wish to make some flavoursome cocktails for their new housemates on a sunny afternoon.

Creating your own profile can be daunting and difficult to write. If you're about to embark on your own journey into the share house private rental market, the Private Rental Brokerage Program can support you with writing your personal blurb or cover letter. Contact a Youth Support Worker on 9890 2673 or [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. Talking with Pride is offered under the Pathway to Resilience partnership between FAN, Uniting, Australian Childhood Foundation, Safe Futures and EACH.

Talking with Pride kicked off 2023 in early Feb 2023 and is again being hosted by Box Hill Community Arts Centre. We are pleased to report that a number of our participants from 2022 are continuing on with us again this year and we recently welcomed our new art therapy student for 2023 - Amy! Amy is on placement with FAN until November 2023 and we are looking forward to her joining our group and contributing her creative ideas throughout the year.

Feedback from the end of last year has suggested that group participants would like more opportunities to work on group or individual projects and more opportunities to learn new skills this year. In response to this, we have spent the first few weeks reviewing this and working together to brainstorm ideas for how we might put this into action in Term 1 and 2. We look forward to providing an update on this in our Winter edition of the newsletter!

If you or someone you know would like to join the group, we are currently accepting referrals for the program including for 2023. The group meets weekly on Tuesday afternoons during school terms.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about the program please contact Jess on 9890 2673 or [jinnes-irons@fan.org.au](mailto:jinnes-irons@fan.org.au)

# Life Skills

## Young Mum's Group

Mums group is back for the year with an event packed calendar and some new and old faces joining us again. This year we are going to miss one very special mum, Jeanne and her daughter who have graduated from attending YMG at the end of 2022. Jeanne and her daughter have been coming to mum's group for 5 years. Congratulations on all your achievements Jeanne and we wish you all the best on your new journey! Jeanne has kindly written a piece for this edition of the FAN newsletter about what attending young mums group means to her.

*"I attended Young Mums Group for years. I would always look forward to that one day of the week as it was nice to meet and social with other young mums.*

*Being at YMG made me feel comfortable, included and supported. I really enjoyed the activities and speaking to other mums. Before my daughter attended school, it was also a good way for her to socialise with other children. It warmed my heart to see other children play and engage with her as she has a disability.*

*Young Mums Group has been a big part of my life, as being a young mum is difficult. But joining the group made me feel like I wasn't alone."*

- Jeanne

If you are interested in attending group, please email Oriana on [ophutully@fan.org.au](mailto:ophutully@fan.org.au) or call 9890 2673.

## 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 will be commencing again for the year of 2023 with a range of activities facilitated at Youth Connexions in Box Hill. The first term will run from 9 February until 6 April. During the Autumn season the facilitated activities will include cooking classes, healthy relationship workshops and outdoor adventures. This season also marks the celebration of Harmony Day on 21 March and Transgender Day of visibility on 31 March. If you happen to reside within the Whitehorse municipality and would like to partake in the celebration of these events, please join us at youth connexions on 23 March for Harmony Day or 30 March for Transgender Day of Visibility. Alternatively, if outside of this catchment, a search through the events page of your local council can provide information on the activities conducted to honour the transgender community and individuals from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.



# Volunteers

**National Volunteering Week 15- 21 May 2023**



This event recognises the vital support that the millions of volunteers in Australia give to their communities and encourages people to consider volunteering. The theme for National Volunteering Week 2023 is ***The Change Makers*** - it is celebration our power to drive change and ensure volunteering is inclusive of all members of the Australian community. FAN is organisation in which its volunteers play an integral role in supporting young people and children experiencing homelessness. Volunteers at FAN have varying roles throughout the organisation including mentoring, lead tenants and group volunteers. Through their dedication and support to FAN and the young people we work with our volunteers help FAN in achieving our aspirations of making a difference in young people's lives. National Volunteer Week is an opportunity to thank all our past and current volunteers for their dedication, commitment, and support. In particular we would like to extend our deep gratitude to Sue Carlile who started at FAN as a volunteer from 1982 to 1985. Sue encompasses the volunteer ethos of community belonging and empowerment. This has been demonstrated throughout the extensive work she has done in establishing the outstanding volunteer program that FAN currently facilitates.

# VOLUNTEER *opportunities*



## ***Volunteer Mentors***

The aim of the Volunteer Mentor is to act as a neutral and consistent role model and provide friendship and support (on a one-to-one basis) to a young person between the ages of 15-25 years. Mentors and young people meet on a weekly basis - at a time and place that is mutually agreed -and engage in a range of low-cost activities that build positive adult relationships and community connection.

## ***Lead Tenants***

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 in Chadstone and Balwyn. This is a voluntary live-in position that involves a 12-month commitment in exchange for rent free accommodation. The purpose of the position is to act as a role model for young people to help them live in independent shared accommodation and is not a professional support role. This position offers ongoing training and support.

## ***Young Mums Group Volunteer***

We currently have a Group Volunteer Position available at our young Mums Group (YMG). YMG runs on Wednesdays 12.00-2.00pm in Box Hill. The YMG Volunteer role involves engaging with the participants, assisting the group facilitator with weekly activities for the young mums and children who attend group.

*If you are interested in any opportunities, please call Oriana or Michelle at FAN on 9890 2673.*

## 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!

Uniting  
Canterbury Council of Churches  
City of Whitehorse  
Department of Premier & Cabinet (Home Affairs)  
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing  
Eastern Emergency Relief Network  
Centrelink (Box Hill)  
KevCom  
Melbourne Inclusive Church  
Orcadia Foundation - Caroline & Derek Young  
Street Smart  
Malcolm Romano of Designsense Web  
Lions Club - Box Hill  
All donations from GiveOUT Day  
Austbrokers Countrywide