



FAN

Family Access Network Winter Newsletter 2023 - Volume 122

CEO UPDATE

Welcome to the FAN Winter Newsletter. Most of you might already know me as I have worked at FAN for almost 10 years in the roles of Team Leader Client Services then in more recent years as Manager Client Services. In April, I commenced in the role of Acting CEO due to Sue Carlile departing FAN and entering into retirement. We had Sue's farewell party in May where we celebrated her 38 years at FAN. This was a great way to reflect on Sue's work at FAN after all those years. We wish Sue well in her retirement and hope she has a well deserved break.

It's a big year at FAN with changes in leadership and also being an accreditation year for us. I would firstly like to welcome Jessica Stott who is the new Manager Client Services and commenced with FAN in May. I will let Jessica introduce herself further in the Newsletter. We will also be undertaking accreditation in November including undertaking the Rainbow Tick which FAN will be doing for the 4th time! FAN was the first homelessness service to successfully complete the Rainbow Tick in 2014 and this is something we are extremely proud of.

I am writing this update following National Reconciliation Week <https://nrw.reconciliation.org.au/> on 27 May-3 June. FAN acknowledges the importance and significance of this week. We are also finalising on our own Reconciliation Action Plan which we hope to have completed by the end of this year.

FAN was also involved in the running of the Rainbow Ball on 26 May. The Q-EAST Alliance hosted the Rainbow Ball at the Box Hill Town Hall. Members of the Alliance with the support of funding from the DFFH Equality Unit worked together to organise the Ball to create a space for LGBTIQ young people to have their identities, valued, validated, and respected. During the night of the Ball, young people were able to participate in an array of exciting activities such as walking the Rainbow Ball runway, playing giant jenga, connect four, dancing, and painting. The facilitators saw many young people have an amazing time throughout the night, and this was evidenced through smiles, laughter and the gratitude that was given at the end of the Ball. The event was a great success and was highly appreciated by the young people who attended. FAN staff also participated in doing the Nutbush and just as much fun as the young people.

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:

- Underwear for Humanity
- The Generosity Collective
- Allan Rogerson
- Valda Twaddle Trust
- David Stohr
- Donald Kay
- City of Whitehorse

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

Regards

Michelle



Board update - hear from our Deputy Chair, Bronwen Henry

First and foremost, I'd like to welcome Michelle Thompson to the role of (acting) CEO at FAN! Having been with the organisation almost ten years, there is no one better placed than Michelle to lead FAN through this transitional period and into a new era.

Michelle takes on the role at a particularly formidable time however as we enter Winter, with all its inherent challenges, and face a housing system at tipping point! Australians everywhere are facing the impact of high inflation and low wage growth and the rental market is the most competitive it has been in modern time. This creates a frightening time for young people navigating independent housing; particularly for those who are without the traditional support mechanisms that many of us take for granted.

As per the AHURi brief *"What are the real costs of the housing crisis for Australia's young people?"*, for teenagers and young adults (aged 12 to 24) high housing costs have extra impacts, including issues of not being able to escape family violence or being able to stabilise life paths, as well as simply having the space to establish an identity independent from their family of origin. The 2021 Census shows that young adults aged 19 to 24 years have the highest rate of homelessness of any age group, with 91 people of every 10,000 Australians aged 19–24 (and 53 of every 10,000 Australians aged 12-18) being homeless. **Nearly one in four of all people experiencing homelessness (23%) is aged 12 to 24 years.**

While I don't purport to have the answers as to how to solve youth homelessness, I do know that FAN is on the front line, seeing the young people behind the data and bearing witness to them. On behalf of the Board, I'd like to take the time not only to thank Michelle, but also her entire team, for the work that they do, noting that they are making very real differences in the lives of their clients.



Client Services update - introducing our Client Services Manager, Jessica Stott

My name is Jessica Stott, my pronouns are she/her and I am the new Manager Client Services at FAN.

In this role I lead the Client Services Team to provide high quality services and holistic support to young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness with specific programs for young families, single people and LGBTIQ youth.

Before joining FAN I worked in family violence and primary prevention, in practitioner, project lead and management roles, with a long term commitment to working with LGBTIQ communities.

It is a real pleasure to work with the inspiring and committed staff team at FAN and a privilege to support young people in their journey towards safety, stability and fulfillment.

In my spare time I love camping, water skiing and road tripping with my partner and our four teenage children.



Homeless Support Services

Winter season can have adverse impacts on the health and well-being of clients, particularly around being sick with either the flu or covid. Some encouraged steps that can be implemented to keep one self-safe during this winter period include:

Getting your flu shot: Whilst there is a fee to getting the influenza vaccine, by getting one you can help protect yourself and those around you. Under the National Immunisation Program some Victorians can get the vaccine at no costs, it is advised to check with your local GP or pharmacy if you meet the criteria.

Getting covid booster: The Victorian Government has now noted that all adults over 18 who have had their last COVID vaccination more than 6 months ago are now eligible for the 2023 COVID-19 booster. The boosters are free, and you can get your next dose at your local pharmacy or GP. It is advised to speak to your local GP or pharmacy if you have any questions or concerns.

Healthy Habits: Ensure as well to maintain healthy hygiene habits, such as washing hands, covering your mouth when coughing or sneezing and cleaning surfaces where possible.

Private Rental Brokerage Program

The Private Rental Brokerage Programs (PRPB) continues to support young people to attain and sustain their private rental housing. Access to the private rental market continues to be a challenge for young people especially in today's competitive rental market. 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 to put together their application packs which includes completing budgets, cover letters, providing rental search resources, and compiling references.

Youth Central also have a fantastic website with advice for young people in looking for a rental properties or a share house

<https://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au/advice-for-life/housing/renting-and-sharehousing/how-to-look-for-a-place-to-rent>.

If you are interested in the PRBP, please call a Youth Support Worker 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 is now in full swing for Term 2 and is being supported by a grant from Whitehorse City Council for the venue hire costs. We have been pleased to welcome our new members and look forward to seeing the art created over the next 8 weeks with support from our art therapy student Amy.

Under the Pathways to Resilience umbrella, FAN also sees clients for one-on-one art therapy appointments, and you are welcome to contact Jess if you would like more information about this service.

If you or someone you know would like to join the TWP group, we are still accepting referrals for the program. The group meets weekly on Tuesday afternoons during school terms, is free to attend and all materials and snacks are provided.

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

Life Skills

Young Mum's Group

Young Mums Group (YMG) is back for Term 2 with an amazing event packed calendar. YMG is a social support group for mums under the age of 25 years. We facilitate different activities where mums can socialise with their little ones and take part in some great activities. *If you are interested in attending YMG, please contact Oriana on ophutully@fan.org.au or 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 continues to have a positive impact on the lives of LGBTIQ+ young people, serving as a safe, supportive, and welcoming space. During this winter period EDG participants will be immersed in activities such as board games, cooking class, sexual health workshop and sewing projects. It is anticipated that involvement in these activities will continue to foster positive well-being and enhance the life skills of young people attending EDG, as many may not have a healthy environment that provided them with such opportunities.

Rainbow Ball

FAN was involved in the running of the Rainbow Ball with a number of local agencies and Council areas including:

- City of Whitehorse
- Knox City Council
- Monash City Council
- Headspace Knox
- Burringa Arts Centre
- Women's Health East

The event was also supported by a number of volunteers, placement students, young people who formed part of the Rainbow Ball Working Group and two Victoria Police Protective Services Officers.

The event was a big success with over 50 young people attending and dressed in their best queer rainbow formal attire. Highlights from the night included the chill out room, the bubble machine, the red-carpet runway showcase, drag performances and the Nutbush.



VOLUNTEER *opportunities*



Youth Mentor (live in position) - Chadstone and Balwyn

FAN is currently seeking to engage two Live in Youth Mentors aged 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.

If you are interested in any opportunities, please call Oriana 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 Help

Eastern Community Legal Centre 1300 32 52 00
South East Monash Legal Services 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