

# Midland FRC *in focus*

## In this issue

- ◆ Welcome
- ◆ The official Opening of the Midland FRC
- ◆ FDR Practice
- ◆ Outreach Services
- ◆ Professional Development
- ◆ Working with Other agencies
- ◆ Useful Contacts

## Contact us

### MIDLAND FAMILY RELATIONSHIP CENTRE

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Welcome to the first edition of Midland FRC in Focus. This newsletter will provide you with information on what has been happening at Midland Family Relationship Centre since we opened on 2 July 2007. As this is the first newsletter, we would like to introduce you to the centre and the staff.

The Midland FRC is located at Unit 17/53 The Crescent, Midland 6056, and we can be contacted by phone on (08) 9436 0600 or email on [mfrc@centrecare.com.au](mailto:mfrc@centrecare.com.au)

Our staff group includes five Family Advisors, who are registered FDR Practitioners. The team, led by Centre Manager, Stephen Clarke, consists of Norma Williams, Peta Lewis, Karen Kickett (our Indigenous FDR Practitioner), Michael Tkacz and Bree Jennings. Karen will be exploring ways of adapting the FDR model to incorporate culturally sensitive ways of working with Indigenous families in her outreach capacity. Our business support team consists of receptionist, Mary MacBeth and Client Liaison Officers Julie Cawston and Gaina Brown. We have recently appointed Farida Lang as our Child Consultant. Farida Lang joins us with a wealth of experience developed in her role as a Judicial Officer in Zimbabwe. Farida completes our team at the Midland Family Relationship Centre.

The "Midland FRC in Focus" newsletter will be distributed quarterly. If you would like to contribute information, a story or photos to be included in the newsletter, please email Stephen Clarke at the above email address.

### Future Development

In January 2008, The Midland FRC will be opening its doors to clients on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings every week. The longer opening hours will help working parents to access the Midland FRC as well as enable the centre to offer our Children in Focus seminar to those parents who find it difficult to make appointments during working hours.



Introducing the Midland Family Relationship Centre Team: Karen Kickett, Norma Williams, Stephen Clarke (Manager), Peta Lewis, Bree Jennings and Michael Tkacz. Missing from the photograph are Mary MacBeth (receptionist), Julie Cawston and Gaina Brown (Client Liaison Officers) and Farida Lang (Child Consultant).



# MIDLAND FRC OFFICIAL OPENING

## 21 SEPTEMBER 2007

The Midland Family Relationship Centre was officially opened by the Hon Philip Ruddock, Australian Attorney-General, on Friday 21 September 2007. The opening was attended by well over 100 invited guests from many parts of the sector including our consortium partners, MIDLAS, Centrecare Board members, the Hon Chief Justice, Stephen Thackray, Principal Registrar David Monaghan, Magistrate Lisa Stewart, (Family Court of WA) Kay Benham Director, Paul Kerin, Manager and colleagues from the Family Court Counselling & Consultancy Service, Stuart Henry MP, Jaye Radisich MLA, member for Swan Hills, Michelle Roberts represented by Mr Gangell, Mayor Charlie Gregorini, FaCSIA, CSA Family Relationships Advice Line and Legal Aid, Men's Advisory Network, DVAN, Anglicare, Relationships Australia, Women's Refuge, local police and our partnership University, Notre Dame.

The opening was hosted by Centrecare's Director, Tony Pietropiccolo, who praised the work of Centrecare staff responsible for setting up the Centre. The opening then heard from Phillip Narkle, Indigenous Elder, for his thought provoking and warm, "Welcome to Country".

The Attorney-General went on to speak about the continuing rollout of the FRC's and the significant changes to the Family Law Act, highlighting the importance of families using mediation as the best means of resolving disputes, whilst maintaining a child focus.

The invited guests were then treated to a fantastic display of didgeridoo playing by Jeremy, Midland's Indigenous Police Officer. His performance, involving ancient stories of outback life and contemporary themes of family relationships, had everyone cheering with excitement.

Overall, the day was a huge success and provided Midland FRC staff with an opportunity to showcase the work of the Centre.

A special thanks to the Centre Manager, Stephen Clarke and the staff for their involvement and assistance in making the day such a success, it was certainly impressive and demonstrates what we can achieve through cooperation and mutual support.



FRC Midland Manager, Stephen Clarke; Executive Manager Centrecare, Melissa Perry; Attorney General Phillip Ruddock; Centrecare Director, Tony Pietropiccolo



Police Officer Jeremy playing the didgeridoo

### A word from Tony Pietropiccolo, Director Centrecare Inc

Families in Midland now have a new service to help them improve their family relationships with the opening of the Midland Family Relationship Centre.

"This new Centre will provide families with information, support and referral to a range of services that can prevent family breakdown or ease the difficulties associated with separation or divorce", said Tony Pietropiccolo, Director, Centrecare Incorporated.

"We hope our Centre will become an important and valued community resource for people seeking advice on any issue, whether it is for pre-marital education, preparing for the birth of a new child, all the way through the important life changes that many families face. In those situations where families are experiencing separation, the Centre will provide up to three hours of free Family Dispute Resolution as an alternative to Family Court action.

From July 2007, the Family Law Act requires families, with some exceptions, to attend registered Family Dispute Resolution sessions before issues relating to children can be taken to court."

The Centre is staffed with experienced and qualified professionals. They will provide high quality, impartial and confidential services," said Mr Pietropiccolo.



An Australian Government Initiative

# We are here to help you!

## FDR Practice

All of our practitioners are fully qualified and registered with the Attorney-General's Department to provide Family Dispute Resolution. All of our team have been trained to deliver child inclusive practice and over the coming months, we will be introducing this practice into our work with parents and carers. The research, conducted by Dr Jennifer McIntosh, highlights the benefits of hearing the voice of the child using this approach.

In December, we hosted the inaugural Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners Forum. This event attracted a broad range of service providers from the non government and private sector. The Forum focused on the different operational models and looked at the impact of the changes in Family Law since July 2007. The next Forum is scheduled to take place at Midland on Friday 14 March 2008.

Please let Stephen Clarke now if you would like to be included on the email circulation list.

## Outreach Services

The Midland FRC is responsible for covering a widespread area including the Wheatbelt, Goldfields (Kalgoorlie) and Esperance. The Midland Family Relationship Centre, in partnership with Centrecare Mediation Services, has developed a training facility for newly qualified FDR practitioners using our state of the art consultation rooms. The FDR rooms are equipped with audio visual facilities and one way mirrors for observation and supervised practice.

As part of our commitment to working with intact families and strengthening family relationships, Peta Lewis (FDR practitioner) provided an information stall at both the 2007 Peace Festival in Mundaring and Trek the Trail. The emphasis was to raise awareness of the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse families. Both events proved to be very successful. We also provided information stalls at the Ellenbrook Family Day and delivered PowerPoint presentations to a number of community groups.

Plans are underway to provide an outreach service to families in Northam. We hope to be talking with parents and stakeholders in the area to see what type of provision would best meet the needs of those families living in the Wheatbelt region.

## Professional Development — Children in Focus

The Midland Family Relationship Centre is committed to maintaining a child focus. In September 2007, all staff attended Dr Jennifer McIntosh's Child Inclusive Practice training in Perth. The objective of this week long training was to inform FDR Practitioners of the latest research and best practise processes for conducting family dispute resolution from a child inclusive perspective. Child Inclusive Practice involves the children being interviewed by a specialist Child Consultant. Once this has been done the Consultant is then able to feed information gathered back into the FDR process. This provides the opportunity for children to "have their voice heard" during the process which leads to far better and more durable outcomes for all involved.

## Working with other agencies

Midland Family Relationship Centre is committed to working collaboratively with service providers in meeting the needs of the local community. The Midland FRC, in partnership with Relationships Australia, continues to provide the venue for RA's eight week anger management group for men. Plans are nearing completion for the introduction of a joint venture between Midland FRC and Relationships Australia to deliver the Children in Focus / Legal Information seminar group for parents. The aim of this seminar is to assist parents in developing a child focus to ensure that the needs of their children remain the first priority in the dispute resolution process. These seminars will be held at the Midland FRC in the near future. Information on these seminars can be obtained by contacting the Midland FRC on 9436 0600.

## Donation of Artwork



*This beautiful artwork was provided by Karen Kickett. Completed by herself and her daughter Amy Greenwood while on holiday around Western Australia. The artwork represents family and how Amy felt on her holiday.*



*Pictured at the Trek the Trail event in the Glen Forest, is one of our Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners, Peta Lewis.*

## Useful contacts

Family Relationships Advice Line  
1800 050 321

Legal Aid  
(08) 9261 6222  
[www.legalaid.wa.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.wa.gov.au)

Child Support Agency  
(08) 9338 2584  
[www.csa.gov.au](http://www.csa.gov.au)

Centrecare Counselling Services  
(08) 9325 6644  
[www.centrecare.com.au](http://www.centrecare.com.au)

MIDLAS  
(08) 9250 2123  
[www.midlas.org.au](http://www.midlas.org.au)

Family Relationships Online  
[www.familyrelationships.gov.au](http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au)

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If you would like to add your contact details to this list please email Stephen at [mfrfc@centrecare.com.au](mailto:mfrfc@centrecare.com.au)

