



Relationships Australia[®]
VICTORIA

STAYING CONNECTED TOGETHER

Annual Report 2020-21



Australian Government

We are committed to providing safe, inclusive and accessible services for all people.

Relationships Australia Victoria acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waterways of Australia.

We support Aboriginal people's right to self-determination and culturally safe services.

We recognise the lifelong impacts of childhood trauma. We recognise those who had children taken away from them.

Relationships Australia Victoria acknowledges the support of the Victorian and Australian Governments.

ABN 51 263 215 677 | ACN 628 873 941

Acronyms and initialisms

EAP	Employee Assistance Program	LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual	MMIGP	Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place
FDR	Family Dispute Resolution	LMS	Learning management system	RAV	Relationships Australia Victoria
FRC	Family Relationship Centre	MBCP	Men's Behaviour Change Program	YAG	Youth Advisory Group
ICT	Information and communications technology	MCMP	Men's Case Management Program		

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Connect with us

Vision

Positive, respectful, safe and fulfilling relationships for all Australians.

Focus

Providing high-quality, effective and accessible services for people with complex relationship issues, and delivering prevention services that lead to system-wide change that reduces the incidence of relationship problems.

VALUES

Inclusivity

Treating all people equally.

Respect

Treating everyone with respect.

Integrity

Behaving with integrity in all our dealings.

Transparency

Being open and honest in our communications.

Accountability

Using our resources responsibly.

Effectiveness

Providing high-quality, effective services and maintaining the highest professional standards.

Adaptability

Proactively responding to change to meet the needs of the community.



2 I am extremely proud of how the whole RAV organisation, led so ably by Dr Andrew Bickerdike, was able to continue to meet client needs by changing their services to online. This was a remarkable achievement and certainly showed the extraordinary capabilities and commitment of our staff – and no doubt enhanced RAV’s already great reputation.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT



This past year has been like no other. COVID-19 clearly impacted on us all. I am extremely proud of how the whole Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV) organisation, led so ably by Dr Andrew Bickerdike, was able to continue to meet client needs by changing their services to online. This was a remarkable achievement and certainly showed the extraordinary capabilities and commitment of our staff – and no doubt enhanced RAV’s already great reputation. My sincere thanks go to all concerned.

The pandemic has also had a significant impact on RAV’s income from clients as they understandably were less able to contribute fees for services. Similarly, revenue-generating activities such as training and professional development were severely limited. However, RAV’s existing strong and conservative financial position coupled with judicious cost cutting allowed the organisation to maintain services throughout. I would also like to acknowledge the support of the Australian Government and state and territory governments, who provided key funding supplementation that helped RAV maintain services and supported our highly professional workforce.

During this time, the emphasis on online services, which by their nature

do not have geographical boundaries, has spurred the Presidents and CEOs of state and territory Relationships Australia organisations to come together and form a National Council of Relationships Australia. The purpose of the council is to foster collaboration and promote the joint interests of the federation of Relationships Australia organisations and its members, by setting strategic directions, supporting national projects, identifying opportunities and risks, and enhancing the Relationships Australia brand.

In addition, the reports of a number of external inquiries relevant to our sector were released – including royal commissions into Victoria’s mental health system, the national aged care system, the treatment of people with disability and the government’s response to the Australia Law Reform Commission’s review of the family law system. These inquiries have resulted in the need to review RAV’s services to ensure best practice in line with their recommendations.

In March we held a strategy day to plan for the future, with some uncertainty in the air, not knowing whether we would be heading into another lockdown. We formed special committees to address the fundamental challenges posed by digital transformation and the reviews

of mental health and family law, all areas that are integral to the operations of RAV. We left this day with confidence, knowing RAV has a strong workforce and an appropriate suite of programs and services behind its name.

During the year there were some changes to the Board, with Paul Staindl and Kimberly Hunter both resigning after many years of extremely valuable service bringing their expertise in family law. We welcomed Professor Colin Royse, a cardiothoracic anaesthetist with considerable experience in the digital learning space, and look forward to welcoming Professor Helen Rhoades, a barrister and former Chair of the Family Law Council.

RAV’s CEO, Dr Andrew Bickerdike, has led with great focus, strength and decisiveness in a period of intense uncertainty. He has set the tone for our staff, who have forged ahead despite unprecedented challenges. I want to personally thank Andrew, the staff and Board at RAV for an exceptional year of commitment and dedication to RAV and our clients.

Lyn Littlefield

**PROFESSOR LYN LITTLEFIELD OAM
BOARD PRESIDENT**



Our staff demonstrated immense dedication, strength and resilience navigating through these difficult times. It cannot be overstated how difficult it has been to maintain services during the pandemic, particularly as the ground has kept shifting as the crisis has unfolded.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



As we approach the end of our first full year under new 'COVID normal' conditions, I want to take a moment to reflect on another extraordinary year.

We can be proud of our adaptability in the face of adversity. As the reality of a return to a 'pre-COVID normal' way of life may be months or years away, we are grateful to have learnt much over the last few years, and have strengthened our processes and ensured our staff are well equipped to pivot within their roles when needed.

Throughout it all, we kept our focus front of mind: to provide high-quality, effective and accessible services for our clients. The inability to provide group programs meant we were not able to provide services to as many clients during the year. However, our critical core counselling, Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) and family violence services continued without interruption and actual session numbers were maintained throughout the lockdowns. Not surprisingly, the challenges of the year meant clients needed more intensive support and I am pleased to say they received it.

We were nimble and adaptable. When the pandemic forced us into lockdown, our information and communications technology (ICT) department ensured staff were able to work from home and stay connected.

This meant our programs and services could continue uninterrupted; the purchase of new technology allowed us to deliver online sessions.

Despite the multiple challenges of the year, we managed to grow our services, launching a new headspace site in Sale and implementing a Frontline Bushfire Counselling support program in East Gippsland to help people affected by the devastating natural disaster. We also welcomed Open Place to the RAV family. Open Place is a crucial service for Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers, and we are proud to be delivering this service.

The onset of COVID-19 was a period of great distress for many Victorians, in all walks of life, and while we here at RAV were challenged every day, the imperative to deliver for our clients was stronger than ever. It is a source of great pride that we were able to meet this challenge head on.

I am pleased to say that we had State and Commonwealth contracts extended by between 3 and 5 years, another endorsement of the work we do here every day.

Our staff demonstrated immense dedication, strength and resilience navigating through these difficult times. It cannot be overstated how difficult it has been to maintain

services during the pandemic, particularly as the ground has kept shifting as the crisis has unfolded. It needs to be recognised that, like everyone, RAV staff have been personally impacted by the pandemic and many of the challenges they assisted clients to deal with were also affecting their own lives.

I would also like to thank the RAV Board for their unflinching support of the organisation. RAV is fortunate to have a highly skilled and committed Board who have been flexible and responsive throughout this difficult year. I want to personally thank the Board President, Professor Lyn Littlefield OAM, for her leadership during this challenging period.

It's hard to say what the future will hold. However, no matter what is coming, I know RAV will continue to provide effective critical services to the Victorian community.

DR ANDREW BICKERDIKE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS



Goal 1

Advocacy

To be a trusted thought leader on how to address the impact of complex relationship issues.

Authoritative and influential voice

Publish and comment regularly on select key areas relating to the organisation's specialist expertise.

Demonstrate capacity to participate in and influence policy debate.

Influential research

Undertake targeted research that demands attention from, and influences the sector and government.

Digital transformation

Integrate digital technology across business and service areas to deliver efficiencies and effectiveness to clients and customers.



Goal 2

Response services

To effectively deliver leading practice, client-centred and financially sustainable response services.

Sector analysis

Undertake a client, funding body and sector analysis, and ensure services evolve to meet these needs.

Leading practice

Develop program logic articulating the relationship between client needs, service design and outcomes.

Evidence base and practice improvement

Measure client outcomes, evaluate service effectiveness and demonstrate informed service improvements.



Goal 3

Prevention services

To increase knowledge and build the evidence base for reducing the impact of complex relationship issues, and to build capacity, and design and deliver effective prevention services.

Prevention strategies

Design, develop and implement evidence-informed prevention programs or services in response to identified societal problems that are aligned to our vision.

Build evidence base

Evaluate and demonstrate effectiveness of prevention services, including evidence of change and credible presumption of positive population impact.

Secure funding and revenue base

Acquire secure core, recurrent funding for key prevention service/s.



Goal 4

Effective governance

To govern and operate an effective, sustainable organisation.

Skilled workforce

Foster a skilled and motivated workforce aligned to client, funding body and organisational needs.

Board performance

Build a motivated, skilled and balanced Board that drives organisational success through data-informed decision-making.

Financial performance

Ensure the organisation is financially secure and robust with sustainable revenue growth annually.

Foster and implement strategies for future growth.

OUR SERVICES AND PROGRAMS



Services

Counselling

For individuals, couples and families.

Counselling and Support for People Impacted by the East Gippsland Bushfires (in collaboration with the Royal Flying Doctor Service).

Disability Counselling and Support

For people who have had violence, abuse, neglect and/or exploitation perpetrated against them, and those impacted by the Disability Royal Commission.

early matters

A healthy family relationships program.

Family Dispute Resolution (FDR)

For parenting and property matters

- child-inclusive FDR
- enhanced child-focused FDR
- legally assisted FDR
- AccessResolve property mediation for court-ordered cases.

Family Relationship Centres

Family Safety Contact Services

Family Safety Model

Family Safety Navigation Program

Family Therapy

Forced Adoption Support Service

Gippsland Drought Counselling

headspace centres

i-Connect Family Mental Health Support Service

Men's Behaviour Change Program

- for male perpetrators of family violence
- for Vietnamese male perpetrators of family violence.

Men's Case Management Program

For male perpetrators of family violence.

Prepare/Enrich

Pre-marriage and commitment program.

Open Place

Support Service for Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers.

Redress Support Services

For people contemplating or going through the National Redress Scheme.

Support for Fathers project

Workplace Support Services and Employee Assistance Programs

Groups and programs

Art Space

Art therapy-based, facilitated social connections for young people.

ASD Games Group

For young people with autism spectrum disorder.

ATTUNE

An antenatal program for expectant and/or new parents.

ATTUNE Plus

A postnatal program for expectant and/or new parents.

Caring-Go-Round (i-Connect)

A therapeutic schools program supporting bushfire-affected children in East Gippsland to manage their feelings and care for one another.

Circle of Security™

Teaching parents with children aged 0–6 years to understand their children's emotional needs and build secure parent-child relationships.

DadStuff

Free webinars for dads and families.

Professional training and development

Accredited training (Registered Training Organisation RTO 21977)

- CHC81115 Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution
- CHC81015 Graduate Diploma of Relationship Counselling (with a focus on family violence)

Other accredited programs

- Specialist Course in Integrative Couple Therapy
- Mediation Skill Set Short Course (CHCSS00110) and Mediation Short Course

Professional development workshops

- Advanced Family Violence
- Advanced Training in Property and Financial Matters in Family Dispute Resolution Practice
- Attending Court and Writing Reports
- Introduction to Couple Therapy
- Introduction to Property and Financial Matters in FDR Practice
- Managing Challenging Behaviours
- Performance Energy within the Workplace
- Professional Boundaries in Therapeutic Work
- Reconnecting Teams during COVID-19
- Responding to Family Violence in the Workplace
- The Casual Counsellor
- The Tree of Life: An Approach to Working with Vulnerable Children, Young People and Adults

- Trauma-Informed Care
- Vicarious Trauma

Specialist programs

- ATLAS Train the Trainer: For facilitators delivering workshops in prisons
- LINC'S: Psycho-educational workshops for people who are subject to Community Correction Orders
- LINC'S for Families: Psycho-educational workshops for people who are subject to Family Violence Orders



Games Group

A facilitated social group for young people.

Healthy Habits

A group to help young people manage life's ups and downs.

'I like, like you'

A healthy intimate relationships program for secondary schools.

'I like, like you' Upper Primary

A psycho-educational, respectful relationships and mental health focused, school-based program, informed by principles of gender equality, an early intervention in the prevention of family violence.

LGBTIQA+ support group

For young people.

Men Being Well

A program for men to meet, discuss and learn about wellbeing through connection, reflection and peer support.

Parenting After Separation programs

Raising Respectful and Resilient Children in Multicultural Australia

A flexible short program, developed in collaboration with South East Community

Links and a culturally and linguistically diverse co-design, community-based group.

Ready Set Kids

A healthy relationships program for playgroup, kindergarten and lower primary school children.

Relationship Recharge

Relationship Rescue

Repair-enting

A program for fathers who have used violence in their relationships.

Right Now

A group for women who have experienced interpersonal trauma.

Right Now Zoom Yoga

A trauma support program for East Gippsland bushfire-affected communities.

Talking When Things Get Tough

A workshop to support the mental health of men in Gippsland.

Tuning in to Kids™

An emotionally intelligent parenting program for

- Afghan women

- dads
- parents/caregivers
- parents/caregivers together.

Tuning in to Teens™

An emotionally intelligent parenting program

- for parents of teenage children
- Parenting in a Pandemic webinar.

Unique but United (U.B.U.)

A support group for LQTIQA+ young people.

Women Making Choices

A program for women who have experienced controlling and abusive behaviours.

You Are Not Alone

A 6-week pilot program that aims to create a safe and supportive group environment for women affected by family violence.

The program will be complementary to the individual family safety contact women are offered when their previous or current partners are undertaking the Men's Behaviour Change Program. The program has been funded through VicHealth – Reimagining Health Grants for \$50,000 and will be piloted in the Southern Region of Melbourne over 2021–22.

RAV IN 2020-21 OUR IMPACT

OUR ORGANISATION

\$37,855,820

income

364

employees

20

centres/offices

27

outreach locations



3

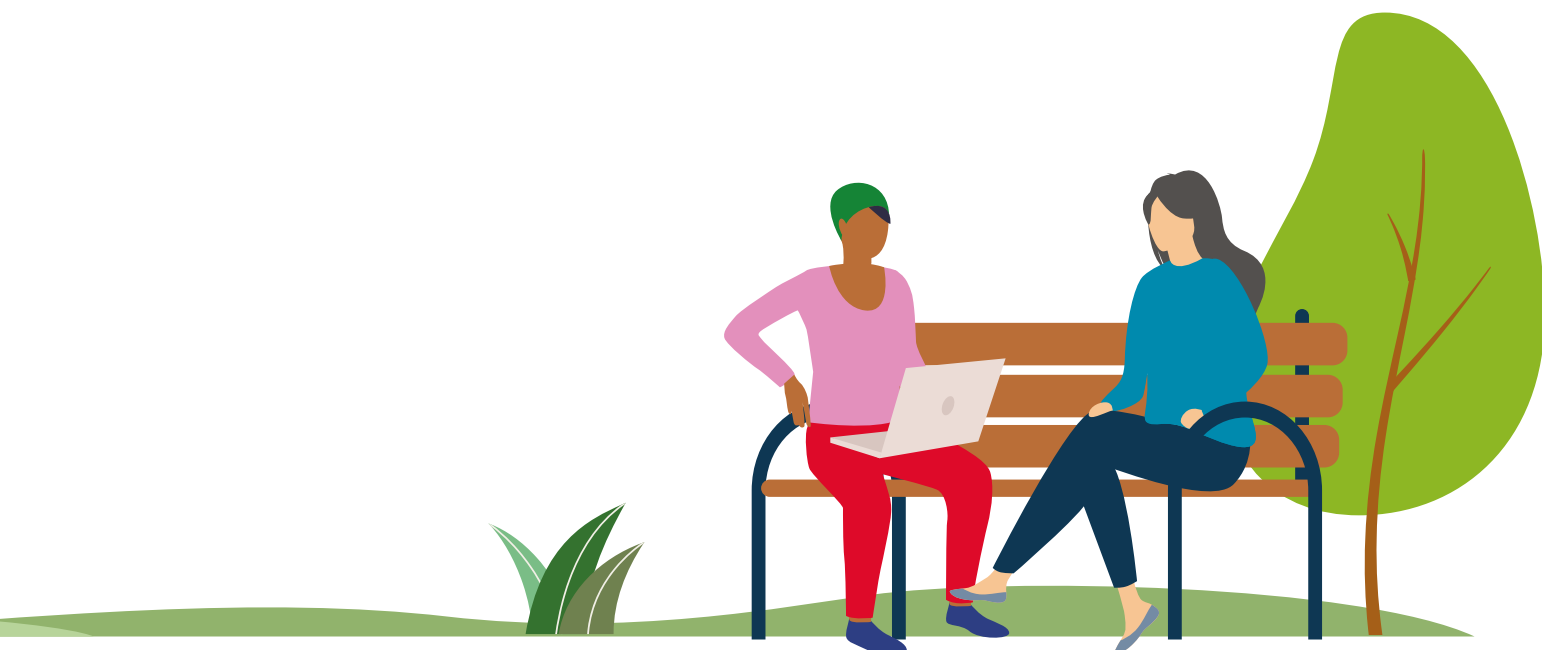
headspace locations

4

Family Relationship
Centres

1

Open Place drop-in
centre



OUR CLIENTS

19,561

clients

824

headspace clients

2039

Open Place service users



15.8%

from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

2%

identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

36.5%

reported an income of \$25,000 or less

0.1%

identified as intersex, transgender and/or non-binary

OUR CLIENTS (CONTINUED)



1855

young people (0-24 years)

54%

identified as female

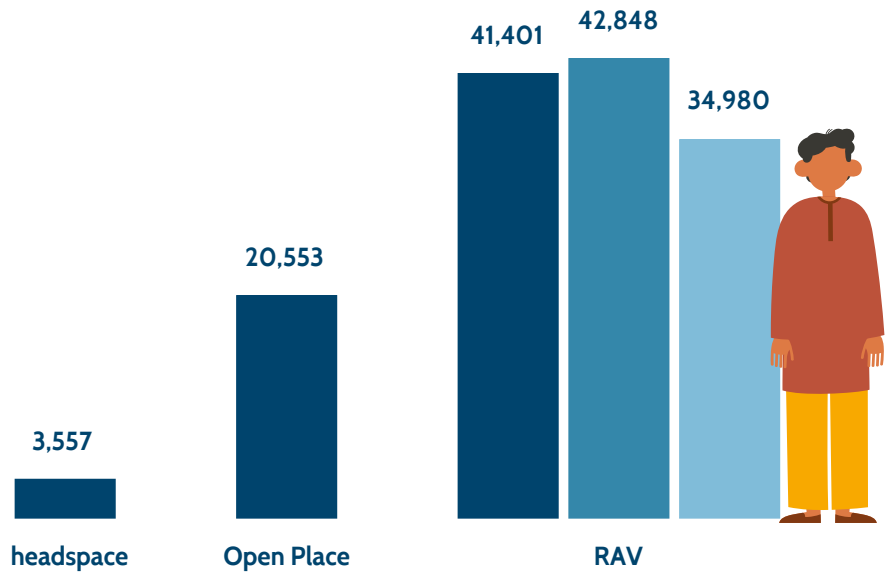
45.5%

identified as male



OUR PERFORMANCE

RAV session numbers yearly comparison



* RAV acquired headspace Sale and Open Place 2020-21

● 2020-21 ● 2019-20 ● 2018-19

	Clients felt listened to and understood with the service they received	Clients felt they were better able to deal with issues after attending this service	Clients were satisfied with the service they received
Counselling	96.1%	77.7%	91%
FDR	92.3%	79.1%	87.1%

3501

FDR sessions

9587

FRC sessions

14,754

counselling sessions



Key

- RAV
- headspace
- Family Relationship Centre (FRC)
- Open Place



- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① Ballarat ② Sunshine ③ Kew ④ Camberwell ⑤ Cranbourne North | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⑥ Cranbourne ⑦ Boronia ⑧ Greensborough ⑨ Shepparton ⑩ Traralgon | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⑪ Sunshine FRC ⑫ Melbourne FRC ⑬ Berwick FRC ⑭ Greensborough FRC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⑮ headspace Wonthaggi ⑯ headspace Bairnsdale ⑰ headspace Sale ⑱ Open Place Richmond |
|---|---|---|--|

GOAL 1

ADVOCACY

During 2020–21, RAV participated in numerous virtual and face-to-face events around Victoria, and was involved in exciting and timely research projects.

Staying connected with the community

In May we hosted a virtual stall as part of the Midsumma LGBTIQ+ Festival, and headspace Wonthaggi staff and young people participated in this event. At the sourcekids disability expo in May, we shared a stall with 2 other support services for the Disability Royal Commission: drummond street services and Your Story Disability Legal Support.

We were asked to comment for media at a local, state and national level on a range of topics, including the impacts of COVID-19 on relationships, family breakdowns, increased family violence and the challenges of meeting demand for Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCPs) during the pandemic.

RAV's General Manager Clinical Services, Anastasia Panayiotidis, spoke to *The Age* about the increase in couples seeking information about separation following Victoria's 2020

COVID-19 lockdowns: 'For some people, spending a lot of time together actually brought out the vulnerabilities in the relationship. It's a cascading effect, beginning with the impact on people's psychological state due to a high stress response, which directly affects the physiological state, which impacts on people's attitudes, behaviours and communication style, which naturally affects their intimate and family relationships as well.'

Our research

We surveyed nearly 500 clients who accessed remote FDR services via telephone or videoconferencing since March 2020, when face-to-face delivery ceased under COVID-19 restrictions. Forty-two more clients participated in an in-depth interview about their FDR experience, and 11 of our FDR practitioners were interviewed about their experience transitioning to remote delivery.





For most of us, this [COVID-19] is a new experience and it's raising a lot of anxiety about feeling that need to be connected, that security that we seek in relationships. Relationships do give us emotional, mental and physical security so it's quite normal to want to feel connected to others because as humans, innately, we're social creatures, but that level of social interaction varies from person to person.

Cate Noy, Senior Clinician, Traralgon, speaking to ABC Radio Gippsland



Approximately 28% of clients indicated that their need for the service increased during COVID-19, and a similar proportion indicated increased safety concerns. Clients and FDR practitioners alike felt that service continuity was a notable achievement under the difficult circumstances of the pandemic, with 73% of clients reporting they found the service (FDR) just as accessible or more accessible when delivered remotely. Participants offered valuable reflections on the different methods of service delivery and the advantages and challenges associated with each method. An invited paper has been submitted to the *Family Court Review* for a special issue on disruption and response in the family law sector (due 2022), and an internal report is being prepared to assist RAV in considering delivery options beyond the pandemic.

RAV commenced a 2-year collaboration with academics from the Australian National University and the University of Wollongong on an Australian Research Council-funded study aimed at testing the myriad post-separation parenting apps on the market and assessing the benefits and risks associated with their use. RAV will assist with a survey of FDR practitioners on their attitudes towards these apps. RAV FDR practitioners will also be invited to participate in the testing of specific apps.

We continued a pilot study with Victoria University, The Use and Abuse of Communication Technologies for Post-Separation Parenting, and conducted client interviews to supplement data gathered in an earlier survey of separated parents. In 2020-21, RAV also collaborated with university partners on an application for an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant to study how single Australians manage loneliness post-COVID-19.

A number of RAV research papers were accepted for publication in peer-reviewed journals, including the *Family Court Review* and the *Australian Journal of Family Law*. The papers were based on client interviews conducted as part of the Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) Outcomes Study previously conducted with the National Research Network.

An evaluation of the AccessResolve conciliation service for Federal Circuit Court cases, based on 68 survey responses and 14 interviews with clients, will form the basis of a presentation at the National Mediation Conference in September 2021. The data demonstrate strong satisfaction rates even within this relatively high-conflict client group. The conference presentation will examine perceptions of practitioner impartiality and feelings of self-determination under the conciliation model.

28%

OF CLIENTS INDICATED SERVICE NEEDS INCREASED DURING COVID-19



Kai, Daniel, Shayla, Eryk, Ollie, Flynn and headspace Wonthaggi Youth Access Worker, Sophie, at the Midsumma Pride March, May 2021.

GOAL 2 RESPONSE SERVICES



We are a leading provider of services empowering individuals, couples, families and children through counselling, relationship education groups, early intervention programs and psycho-educational school-based programs.

We aim to support Victorians to have safe, secure and respectful relationships, foster wellbeing and connect communities. We work with couples and families so that they can provide safe and loving homes, where children can be nurtured, thrive, and have a sense of belonging and cultural identity. Our services are guided by a focus on child safety, cultural safety and inclusion, trauma-informed and evidence-based practice and continuous professional development, reflection and evaluation.



I just felt like that whole experience [of FDR] was quite different for me ... being a bit more comfortable in my own environment, discussing these types of issues, which can be pretty emotionally draining and upsetting.

Remote FDR client



2178

NUMBER OF BUSHFIRE COUNSELLING SESSIONS PROVIDED TO 370 CLIENTS

Counselling and relationship support during COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, our staff worked tirelessly to adapt their practice to the changing environment, providing ongoing and high-quality services via phone, videoconferencing and face-to-face counselling.

We developed a range of tip sheets on topics related to the pandemic, including coping with stress and anxiety, working from home and managing relationships with your partner and family during self-isolation/extended lockdown, preventing and overcoming loneliness, managing conversations about money, supporting children to return to school, and co-parenting during the pandemic.

We also continued to provide relationship education groups via videoconferencing, including the 'I like, like you' healthy relationships program in schools, Tuning in to Kids™ and the Right Now women's trauma support program.

Frontline Bushfire Counselling

Since the inception of the program in February 2020 through to 31 May 2021, the RAV component of this program has provided 2178 sessions to 370 clients.

RAV and the Royal Flying Doctor Service continued to deliver free and confidential therapeutic services to people affected by the bushfires in East Gippsland, across multiple outreach sites in the region and via remote service delivery. The service expanded to include a play therapist, who delivers sessions to children in 11 school/kindergarten-based environments across East Gippsland, and facilitates and supports paediatrician referrals as required.

The service increased its strong partnerships and local service referral pathways and received the 2020 Gippsland Primary Health Network Award for Partnership and Integration.

We delivered 2 innovative, online programs to support the wellbeing of women impacted by the bushfires: the Right Now Zoom Yoga trauma support program; and Zoom Achieving Better Sleep, a new sleep hygiene pilot program.

To support the mental health of men in Gippsland, we delivered a Talking When Things Get Tough workshop to 32 participants in Omeo, in partnership with High Country Health, a Swifts Creek Community Project. Following strong community interest and positive feedback, an additional workshop is scheduled for July 2021.

Innovations in mediation in response to a challenging year

RAV is the largest provider of FDR and family law mediation in the state, with over 35 FDR practitioners delivering face-to-face and remote services from 10 centres across Victoria, including 4 specialised Family Relationship Centres (FRCs).

Quantitative and qualitative research (see 'Our research') into the use of remote FDR (videoconferencing) since the start of the pandemic demonstrates that the service has remained relevant and connected for clients during such tumultuous times.

Healthy co-parenting after separation

Parenting After Separation Seminar (PASS) went live in April, and by mid-June, 161 people had registered for the course online. Twenty-two people have completed the course, with another 14 scheduled for facilitated sessions and around 112 people completing the online learning component.

We adapted our PASS program to an accessible blended model of self-paced, online learning followed by a 2-hour group discussion.



The session encouraged self-compassion [which] has prompted and empowered me to change how I see my life going forward.

Right Now Zoom Yoga participant



112

NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO COMPLETED PASS ONLINE LEARNING COMPONENT

This program is appropriate for both voluntary and Court-mandated participants. Early results show that parents respond very favourably to the program, with most noting significant subsequent changes in their co-parenting.

Our FRC pre-recorded Frequently Asked Questions video and slideshow about attending FDR will be complemented, from July 2021 onward, by a new, live webinar focusing on the needs of the children.

Client feedback and continuous evaluation of our programs demonstrates the success of these innovations in keeping us connected to our clients during COVID-19, and we will continue to provide these elements as part of our FDR practice.

Keeping women and children safe through specialised men's family violence programs and family safety support

RAV is committed to keeping women and children safe. We were quick to adapt our family violence programs for remote delivery in response to heightened concerns about the escalation of family violence through the pandemic.

During COVID-19, our MBCP and Men's Case Management Program (MCMP) were provided through a newly designed and innovative model of blended telephone, online

600

NUMBER OF MEN OFFERED MBCP SERVICE VIA REMOTE DELIVERY

(videoconferencing) and face-to-face (where COVIDSafe) delivery.

The average rating of MBCP suitability to the virtual delivery method was 8.5 (10 being completely suitable and 1 being not suitable at all). Most participants responded that, compared to face-to-face groups, they were able to 'engage with the program content and activities' (26 out of 34 participants), 'engage with the other group participants' (23 out of 34 participants), and 'engage with the facilitator' (25 out of 34 participants) and that these aspects of the program 'stayed the same.'

Men's Behaviour Change Program

The MBCP is designed to assist men to stop their use of violence and make changes towards developing safe and respectful relationships. This has been traditionally delivered through a 20-week face-to-face group program.

Our online program followed Family Safety Victoria's COVID-19 guidelines and was developed in collaboration with No to Violence, which offered monitors to observe and evaluate the program, as well as ensure accountability and best practice. The evaluation examined the outcomes focused on risk and safety management, efficacy and ability to engage the participants in the program.

The new model of remote delivery positioned us strongly to maintain



It opened my eyes up around co-parenting and how the children also view the relationship between the parents.

PASS participant

Hearing about experiences in a safe environment over Zoom is helpful.

PASS participant

I thought the course was exceptional. Realised it was put together in COVID-19. We were able to share things that were helpful.

PASS participant





8.5/10

**AVERAGE PARTICIPANT
RATING OF VIRTUAL MBCP
DELIVERY COMPARED TO
FACE-TO-FACE DELIVERY**



We had to keep an eye on risk, and I would ask, 'What are you doing today, how are you keeping yourself and your family safe?'

RAV family violence practitioner

When I contacted the victim survivors, they would tell me that it was great that the men were receiving contact and support from us; it gave them a sense of reassurance.

RAV family violence practitioner



engagement with men who use violence, and we offered a service to over 600 men, including more than 130 men in 16 online programs.

During periods of lockdown, maintaining a strong focus on assessing and managing the risk of men's use of violence in the home, particularly men living with their partners and children, was critical. Our family violence practitioners engaged men regularly through telephone contact, focusing on assessing the men's wellbeing and supporting them to maintain strategies to manage their behaviour.

We became very familiar with the term 'pivoting' as periods of lockdown and physical distancing requirements called for new adaptations of the program. RAV met the challenge to deliver this essential service and the delivery of the online MBCP was highly successful. The aims and objectives of the MBCP were delivered with the fidelity and the integrity of the program intact, as well as safety for the women and children connected to the men.

The legacy of this adaptive process is our ability to transition quickly between face-to-face, socially distanced and online models. Through online services, we can keep men accountable and visible. We can provide service access to men in regional and remote areas, and those with other access challenges, enabling men to gain the support – and the challenge – they need to stop using violence in their families.

Men's Case Management Program

Through our MCMP, we offer a more intensive and tailored response to men who, in addition to their use of family violence, are experiencing

issues such as mental health problems, alcohol or drug abuse or homelessness. During the 2020 COVID-19 lockdowns, there were heightened concerns about men who use violence living in the home with their partners and children, or returning to the home even when police had removed the man through a safety notice or intervention order. We were able to respond to this through offering support and alternative short-term accommodation to keep men out of the home and keep women and children safe.

Family safety

RAV offers family safety support to the affected family members of the men engaged in our men's family violence programs. Due to the anxiety across the community about the safety of women and children living with men who use violence, we offered a more intensive level of support to victim survivors during COVID-19. For many women, our practitioners were the only contact that they had during periods of lockdown; we maintained a focus on supporting their wellbeing and had oversight of the risk of family violence. Women also fed back their appreciation of RAV maintaining engagement with their partners through this time.

RAV acknowledges the government departments that fund our family violence programs:

- State Government funding*
- Department of Fairness, Families and Housing – Family Safety Victoria*
- Department of Justice and Community Safety*
- Magistrates Court of Victoria*
- Australian Government funding*
- Department of Social Services*

1623

**NUMBER OF SERVICES
DELIVERED TO 359
PEOPLE BY HEADSPACE
WONTHAGGI CENTRE**

Mental health support for children and young people

headspace services in Gippsland

RAV's headspace services in Bairnsdale, Sale and Wonthaggi developed and supported a variety of initiatives throughout the COVID-19 restrictions to assist young people to stay connected with each other and to participate meaningfully in their communities.

Despite the challenges of not being onsite due to COVID-19 restrictions, the teams were able to provide continuity of care to young people during this challenging time. The services saw an increase in demand, and young people adapted well to the change in service modality.

The headspace teams experimented with engagement activities such as virtual lounge hangouts, mindfulness sessions and shared films, and staff continued to review, reflect and evaluate on how best to engage young people in virtual supports.

The virtual version of the headspace Bairnsdale ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) Games Group was awarded the 2020 Gippsland Primary Health Awards for Innovative Support of Diverse Communities. Other initiatives at headspace Bairnsdale involved the creation of short video clips showcasing staff promoting the service and sharing healthy headspace

tips for the purpose of supporting RUOK? health promotion days at local secondary colleges. We also supported the Save the Children Diversity and Inclusion Ambassadors program, co-facilitating group online training to support young people to develop and execute a community project.

To mark headspace Day, the headspace Wonthaggi Youth Advisory Group (YAG) co-designed a journal based on the headspace National '7 tips for a healthy headspace'. Each member contributed their own tip or activity, with the aim that every young person at the centre could be given a journal. The response was fantastic and they continue to be handed out at the centre.

Since face-to-face groups commenced in early 2021, headspace Wonthaggi has also been excited to introduce 4 new LGBTIQ+ Art Space 'healthy habits and gaming' groups.

In April 2021, we officially launched our headspace Sale service via a hybrid virtual onsite event – a Victorian first. The event showcased local YAG members and was well attended in both forums, drawing overwhelmingly positive feedback from those in attendance. headspace Sale commenced service delivery in July 2020 but delayed the official event due to COVID-19.

The headspace Bairnsdale YAG developed an exciting new podcast program and working group in partnership with Save the Children. The first season of the podcast, 'Unity in our community', addresses a range of issues young people face in East Gippsland and suggests resources and recommendations about how to be an ally to young people experiencing marginalisation. The podcast working group will undertake capacity-building training provided by SYN media and



After a very challenging year, it was heartening to be attending the official launch of the headspace Sale site in person, together with consortium partners. Since opening in June 2020, this service has been a very important support to young people in the Wellington Shire community, especially during the coronavirus pandemic, and I thank everyone for welcoming us so warmly into the community.

Dr Andrew Bickerdike, RAV CEO



Picture L-R: Julia Smith (headspace National Chief Operating Officer), Amanda Proposch (Gippsland PHN CEO), Rio Davis (Youth representative), Dr Andrew Bickerdike (RAV CEO), River Mayman (Wellington Shire Youth Councillor), Orlando Davidson (Wellington Youth Shire Mayor).

with support from the East Gippsland Local Learning and Employment.

All headspace services are funded by the Australian Government Department of Health; administration of RAV's headspace funding by Gippsland Primary Health Network.

i-Connect East Gippsland Family Mental Health Support Service

Funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services, i-Connect uses a strengths-based model for therapeutic case management to support people aged up to 18 years to achieve key education, physical, personal, community and safety goals.

Despite the continued challenging circumstances unique to this region, we adapted our service model to meet the increased demand for our services in timely and appropriate ways.

In 2020–21, case management supports continued with bushfire-impacted communities across the region. Strong partnerships formed to co-facilitate community engagement days, including family events, men's mental health workshops, and therapeutic programs in regional and remote primary schools.



We were involved in the High Country Community Health Project, a One Community Grants partnership, which aims to foster community connectedness and education, after the impact of drought, bushfires and now isolation due to the pandemic.

i-Connect also developed a new therapeutically based, mindfulness and movement-focused Caring-Go-Round group program for children experiencing emergencies such as the trauma and stress associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Specialist services

Open Place Support Service for Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers

On 1 July 2020, the Open Place support service for people who grew up in institutional care before 1990 became a service of RAV after 11 years of operation under Berry Street. RAV recorded a short YouTube announcement to mark the event.

The pandemic saw the suspension of face-to-face drop-in centre services, social support groups and outreach. Open Place moved to the telehealth model of counselling and national redress support. The records team

continued to process requests and searches, despite some limitations accessing information due to other agency lockdowns. Coordinated support and health support continued to operate by phone, and community education moved online.

The Open Place suite of services is funded by the Victorian Government Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

300

NUMBER OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM BAIRNSDALE TO MALLACOOTA WHO RECEIVED DIRECT CASE MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

85

NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHO PARTICIPATED IN CARING-GO-ROUND THERAPY GROUP PROGRAM

For many of our Forgotten Australians/ Pre-1990 Care Leavers, lockdown compounded their social isolation. One service user reflected that the COVID-19 restrictions had helped them identify and reconnect with the resilience they had developed during their childhood.

Social support groups were able to come together for an end-of-year, face-to-face celebration in late-2020. Regular groups and services resumed in a limited capacity in early 2021, following further easing of restrictions.

RAV hopes to celebrate the launch of Open Place and its one-year anniversary with a face-to-face celebration in the latter half of 2021.

Therapeutic services

RAV is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services to provide therapeutic support to vulnerable client groups through our Redress Support Services, Forced Adoption Support Service, and Disability Counselling and Support service for people who have had violence, abuse, neglect and/or exploitation perpetrated against them, and those impacted by the Disability Royal Commission.

During the pandemic, we saw a large increase in demand for these services and quickly developed processes for staying in touch with clients, both those currently engaged with services and those on waiting lists, to manage risk through check-in calls and holding sessions provided by our clinical intake worker. We also established a clinical intake model to ensure that clinically and trauma-informed support is available from the moment that people engage with our programs.

In recognition of the heavy impacts of lockdown on many of our clients, we increased our support to provide more frequent sessions and contact during this time. We also expanded

4.2

PERCENTAGE OF SURVIVORS WHO HAD A DISABILITY AT THE TIME OF THE ABUSE

10%

PERCENTAGE OF SURVIVORS GIVING EVIDENCE WHO WERE IN PRISON AT THE TIME OF THEIR PRIVATE SESSION

our team, recruiting 9 additional staff to support our clients through new videoconferencing and telephone counselling platforms. These modes of service delivery are now well established in our programs and will endure into the future to ensure diverse access options for a range of clients, including those who live remotely and those with disabilities.

Many of our clients are affected by complex trauma, poverty, family violence and mental and physical ill health, and so the pandemic and the related lockdowns carried additional and very real dangers for their everyday lives. We know that people with disabilities were specifically impacted during the pandemic and we supported the statement of concern published by the Disability Royal Commission that recognises the unique challenges for people with disability. We have also made multiple submissions and presentations to ongoing government inquiries and royal commissions impacting our client groups.

20%

MORE EAP SERVICES DELIVERED TO INDIVIDUALS AND COUPLES COMPARED TO LAST YEAR

14.9

PERCENTAGE OF SURVIVORS WHO ARE OF ABORIGINAL AND/OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER DESCENT

Our model development during this time has embraced a human rights framework and has brought a lens of intersectionality to better articulate and respond to the needs of our client group and their unique experiences. Additional frameworks – such as radical trauma theory, feminism and critical theory, and trauma-informed care – augment our approach and direct our practice.

As part of our commitment to raise broader awareness about our services and the experiences of the clients we support, and to support relationship building with organisations and direct service providers, we appointed 2 community engagement officers.

Direct emphasis is being applied to ensuring that our identified priority populations are reached first. This includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, older Australians, people who are engaged with alcohol and other drug services, people experiencing homelessness, people with disability, culturally



and linguistically diverse people and members of the LGBTIQ+ community.

*Our Disability Counselling and Support service, Forced Adoption Support Service and Redress Support Services are funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.
Go to www.dss.gov.au for more information.*

Supporting workplaces and employees

The extended COVID-19 lockdowns in late-2020 and ongoing impacts of the pandemic brought enormous challenges to workers and organisations across Victoria, including RAV. In particular, workplaces needed to adapt staff to working from home then returning to working on site as required, while ensuring all staff and clients were well supported with a safe working environment.



More organisations reached out to secure workplace support services for their staff, in relation to the impacts of social isolation, uncertainty and anxiety about the pandemic. Smaller businesses and not-for-profits had a particular increase in demand for services and made up the majority of newly aligned Employee Assistance Program (EAP) contracts in this past year. Real estate and community support services were the heaviest users of the service, accounting for more than 60% of the services delivered, followed closely by the retail sector. Demand for workplace conflict resolution services also increased almost threefold.

The use of videoconferencing to deliver EAP services enabled many clients to fit appointments more comfortably into their work day. This provided a quicker booking

turnaround and shorter wait times, and helped to minimise the stress employees might have otherwise felt about taking extended periods of time away from work for appointments.

We assist employees with a broad range of day-to-day, personal and work-related challenges. In 2020-21, our EAP service supported clients with anxiety, stress, communication issues, conflict (home and workplace), bullying, grief and loss, mental health (general), family violence, and identity and social connection.

Taking into consideration the year-on-year increase in EAP service demand, we are thinking differently about how we can continue to best support organisations and employees to be more productive, and feel safer, happier and more empowered.

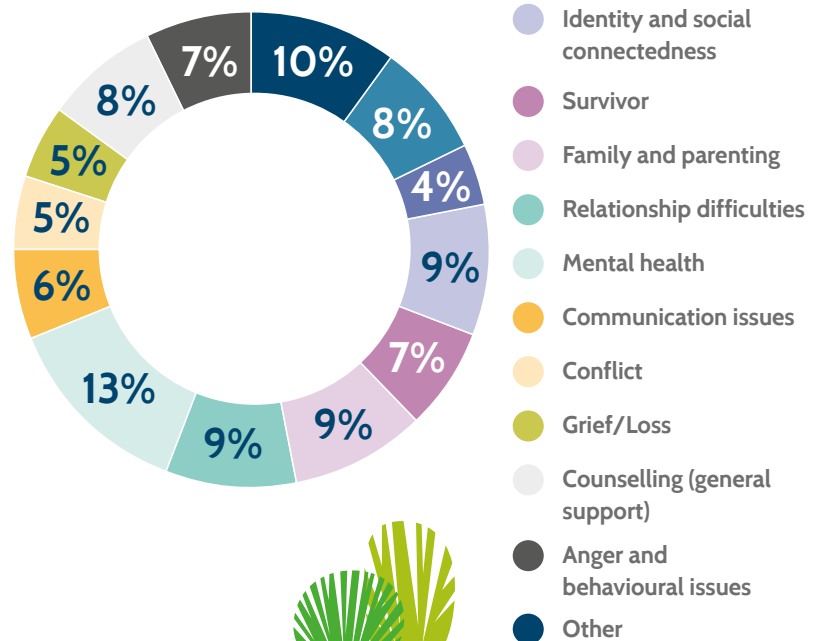


Thank you for your warmth and professionalism in creating such a safe place for us to share and explore the complexities and impact of working with this family.

EAP client



EAP client needs



GOAL 3 PREVENTION SERVICES



We provide a series of programs to help support parents, and promote and strengthen family relationships.

Connecting with fathers

The Support for Fathers project aims to support young men and fathers in their role as parents and partners. It provides options and information about fatherhood, relationship with partners and connecting with kids; the intended outcome is increased men's involvement in gender equality and reduced violence. It also assists support services to work with dads and families more thoughtfully by providing a toolkit to engage dads.

The project, which commenced in 2018, is being delivered by RAV collaboratively with input from the federation of Relationships Australia state and territory organisations, with funding from the Australian Government Department of Social Services as part of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022. We

were pleased to be notified this year of a further extension of funding for the project, which enables it to continue until June 2022.

In 2020, due to the impacts of COVID-19, we shifted all our face-to-face delivery online and found a new and wide-reaching audience. We developed new online workshops for dads, families and professionals to continue the delivery of Support for Fathers and these were widely well-received.

503

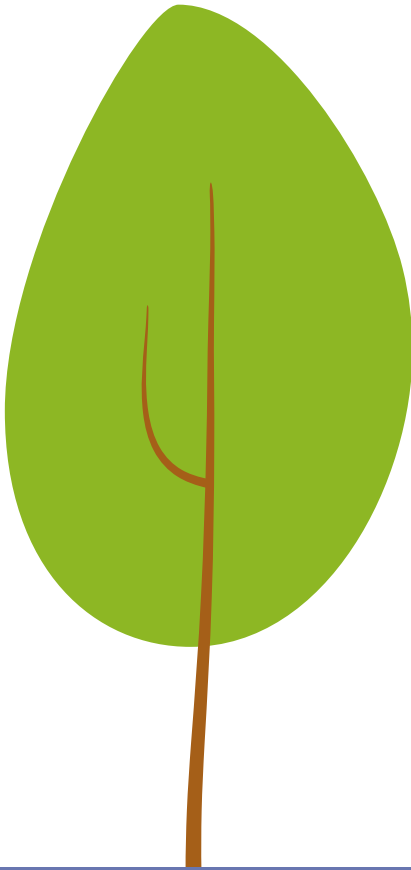
**NUMBER OF PROFESSIONALS
TRAINED TO ENGAGE DADS
IN BETTER WAYS**



We are proud to support dads and father-figures through the Support for Fathers project by providing information and choices to help them build healthy relationships and empowering them, at any stage of life, to be the best fathers they can be.

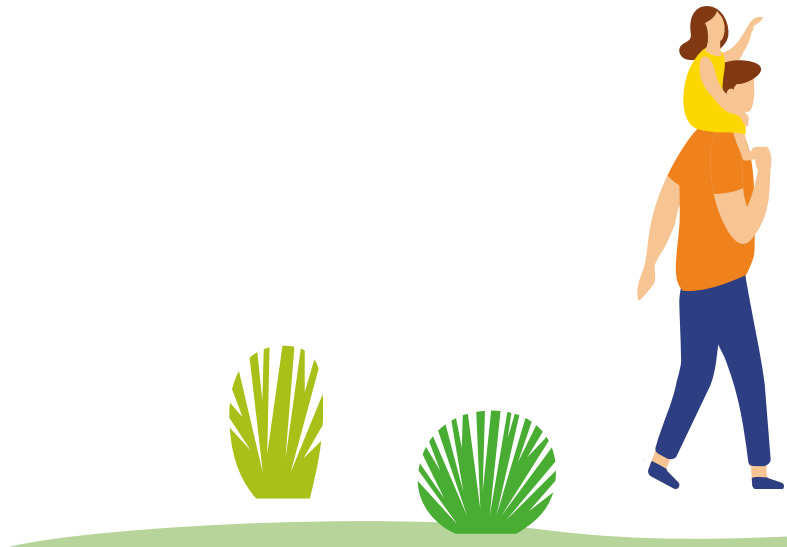
**Dr Andrew Bickerdike,
RAV CEO**





We've developed the DadStuff wall to share with dads all the great resources out there on social media. We're taking out the 'middle man' so that dads can look at all the content that's available and relevant to them, without having to sign up for or log in to different social media accounts. We've also sifted through all the ads and other stuff to keep it focused on dads.

Dom Alford, Support for Fathers Project Coordinator



164

NUMBER OF DADS SUPPORTED TO LEARN AND TALK ABOUT FATHERHOOD

In June 2021, we launched a newly updated suite of resources for dads and families, including a refreshed logo and design, and a brand-new DadStuff social media wall. Further resources are planned for release in 2021-22.

early matters: Strengthening healthy family relationships

early matters is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services to provide primary prevention and early intervention services to families with children aged 0-12 years, in Delahey, Kings Park, Ballarat South, Miners Rest and Wendouree.

COVID-19 meant that our usual work in kindergartens, schools, and maternal and child health centres was significantly disrupted; however, we were able to pivot quickly and successfully to phone and videoconferencing work to enable uninterrupted support to children and families.

This past year taught us many things. The first major success was in moving Tuning in to Kids™ to an online group format, supported by individual participant phone calls in between sessions to keep our clients connected. This method meant greater time for reflection and integration for clients and provided a place for clients to share other stressors in their life, which we were able to either support or refer on.

The online model has seen great success in engagement opportunities for those who otherwise would not have been able to attend. Without the need for transport time and childcare, many parents felt it was easier to



connect with a group. Joining the group were dads on lunch breaks in their cars and breastfeeding mothers who did not have suitable childcare.

In February 2021, early matters added the world-renowned Circle of Security™ parenting program to its suite of services. The 8-week, attachment-based group explores children's needs and assists parents and caregivers to reflect on what they are doing (and not yet doing) to meet all those needs. There was tremendous interest in the group, which complements Tuning in to Kids™ very well, with many parents completing and successfully integrating the information from both programs.

The ATTUNE program, for first-time expectant parents, was able to commence face-to-face groups in hospital and was well-received.

ATTUNE Plus, delivered once the baby is born, was delivered online during COVID-19 and then resumed face-to-face delivery in February 2021. Having successfully delivered the program online, we will be able

to flexibly and quickly pivot to this mode in any future lockdowns.

Training initiatives to prevent family violence and promote healthy relationships

Since January 2021, we have been pleased to offer Men Being Well. The program supports men to discuss life issues and challenges, learn from other men about wellbeing and mental health, focus on healthy relationships in their family and community, and share stories with other men. This program is delivered via face-to-face and online gatherings, events and retreats, in partnership with Life Is Foundation.

We broadened our work and education in primary prevention, providing education about creating healthy relationships. We were pleased to be working with the Melbourne City Football Club, Eastern Health and Gymnastics Victoria. We have grown our support across sporting organisations and will continue to forge new relationships and partnerships nationally.



Both programs allowed me to understand my parenting skills and to identify learnt behaviours and parenting patterns that were no longer serving a purpose. I am now able to recognise my child's needs and her hidden cues. I was able to break down the walls I had built to protect myself and allow my child in. I also learnt to pause and respond without reacting, which was creating a lot of tension in the house. She is a happier child and our relationship has grown so much.

Tuning in to Kids™ and Circle of Security™ participant



GOAL 4

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE



Great outcomes, positivity about the new skills staff are learning and potential for client service ongoing.

Staff response to COVID-19 staff survey



Our staff are key to the effective delivery of our services. To support our staff, we encourage flexibility in workplace arrangements as well as continuing professional development. This section also explains our processes of accreditation and details our adherence to risk management and critical incidents reporting.

Our workforce responds to the global pandemic

In response to the global pandemic during 2020–21, we moved quickly to develop and implement a temporary working from home policy and safety checks for all our staff.

Our clinical and administrative staff and management adapted efficiently to continue providing client services and programs through a hybrid working model including telephone, online and face-to-face delivery, where permitted under government restrictions.

During this challenging time, we focused as a team on maintaining communication, connection and safety and wellbeing. Our leadership team committed to communicating regularly at all levels, providing clear,

concise and informative updates across the organisation. Our centre and management teams sought new and engaging ways to connect with our staff and create pathways for colleagues to support each other, including coffee and morning catch-ups online.

The safety and wellbeing of our staff is a priority and we continued to provide clinical supervision, in addition to encouraging staff to make more frequent contact with their colleagues and check in regularly with their teams.

We also implemented staff engagement initiatives, including online yoga, mindfulness and meditation sessions, trivia competitions and regular informal meetings across our centres and teams.



On RUOK? Day, we shared a special 'Thank you' video to recognise the individual and collective contributions of all our staff during this challenging time, share special messages and pictures, and celebrate the importance of staying connected and together.

We provided a consistent process of staff recruitment, employment and onboarding, which included an effective online interview and selection process, and pre-employment checks.

We implemented a new human resource information system to streamline the recruitment process from vacancy and candidate application through to selection and talent pool creation. Since July 2020, we've posted 117 campaigns in the system and received over 4000 job applications.

Throughout COVID-19, we continued to meet and negotiate our Staff

Enterprise Agreement with staff and union representatives and were proud to present a finalised agreement to staff for voting in June 2021.

Survey of staff satisfaction

Our staff provided feedback through our staff surveys, which showed us:

- Many were looking forward to returning to the workplace.
- Most were happy with the level of communication from their managers.
- Most were confident in RAV's COVIDSafe plan and practices.

Overall, most were satisfied with their roles during COVID-19 restrictions and were able to work productively and stay engaged by their work.

Staff professional development

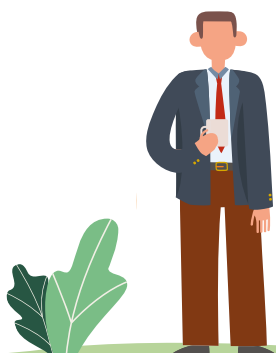
RAV's capable workforce provides our organisation and clients with a diverse range of experience, expertise and skills. We invest strongly in staff training and development, to ensure we promote a workforce that is equipped to deliver services that meet increasingly complex client needs.

All staff are offered professional training, in the form of workshops, courses, conferences and seminars. These opportunities bolster core competencies and allow staff to



Staff acknowledge the importance of, and promote and uphold, human rights. A strengths-based approach is the cornerstone of service delivery. Strong assessment and planning processes are in place for clients. Diversity and choice is promoted. Clinical governance and evaluation is another strength. The organisation seeks feedback and acts on that feedback. Client feedback was very positive. Clients indicated they felt safe, respected, supported, informed and felt their rights are maintained.

HDA Australia, RAV auditors





I have not been able to start my program yet because of COVID-19, but the service has been calling me. They are so nice, and they do treat me like a human being. Even though they know the details of my situation. They have been very helpful.

RAV client

Productive, proactive, respectful, provide a great service, break down barriers, responsive, have a 'can-do' attitude, innovative, good communicators and bring a personal relationship to the business.

RAV business stakeholder



3199.5

HOURS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROVIDED TO STAFF

learn the new skills required of them to respond to the changing needs of our clients, funders, the sector and the community.

Some of the professional development undertaken by our staff included:

- property and financial matters in FDR
- clinical approaches to working with trauma
- suicide bereavement support
- suicide risk assessment
- high-performance teams
- child-inclusive practices
- motivational interviewing
- comprehensive first aid
- cultural safety and FDR for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients
- understanding and responding to controlling and escalating behaviours
- working with traumatic memory
- cultural safety in family violence services
- busting burnout and chronic stress.

COVID-19 impacted both the accessibility and content of professional development opportunities sought by staff. Many employees participated in online training that enabled them to adapt their services for online and/or telephone delivery. This included specific training to equip our FDR practitioners with the capacity and confidence to deliver FDR services, which are often high conflict, online.

Accreditation

Since 2015, RAV has been accredited against the internationally recognised ISO9001:2015 Quality Management Systems, and Department of Health and Human Services HSS Standards.

We have undergone annual audits to ensure our continued compliance against these standards, demonstrating that RAV has a strong quality and governance framework and is 'a safe pair of hands' in delivering services for funders.

In 2021, RAV underwent the recertification process against the ISO standards (3-year cycle) in a new and entirely digital process. Over 3 days, key staff met with auditors via videoconferencing to discuss service provision, operational frameworks, the standards, governance and a range of other workplace components. Some clients also met with the auditors to share about their journey through the service (e.g. the state-funded family violence services and Open Place services for Forgotten Australians/ Pre-1990 Care Leavers).

Recertification is a full review of the services and standards, which creates considerable additional work for many within the organisation in the preparation for and during the audit process. This year, we worked with staff from our new service, Open Place, to prepare for audit. RAV staff worked hard to ensure that all the required documented evidence against the standards was available and uploaded to the audit portal.

The auditing body, HDAA Australia, used this portal (in addition to videoconference interviews and walkthroughs of sites) to complete their comprehensive audit of RAV. This included a review of client files, policies and procedures; organisation monitoring systems; incident reporting; key stakeholder documentation; and clinical tools. Through the interview process, clients



were given an opportunity to provide feedback to the auditor about their experience with RAV. This is a crucial part of the audit and often noted by the auditors as the most rewarding and interesting part of the process for them.

RAV achieved a positive audit outcome, which confirmed that RAV is continuing to deliver high-quality services that the community and funding bodies can be confident in.

As an outcome of the audit, RAV has been re-certified (accredited) against ISO9001:2015 for the next 3-year cycle, with annual maintenance audits to ensure continued quality services.

Risk management

RAV continues to operate with a strong and robust risk management framework that is underpinned by the ISO31000:2009 Standard for Risk Management. RAV's approach to risk management is to embed risk-based thinking into all elements of the organisation while highlighting the importance of opportunistic thinking and continuous improvement in its dealings.

COVID-19 brought significant challenges and risks to community organisations such as RAV. The need to keep staff COVIDSafe in line with government safety requirements, while providing much-needed support to our clients, was challenging

for and required innovation in our service provision. RAV's Quality Management and Risk Management Frameworks, which underpin our operations, supported services to adapt to enable our staff to continue to deliver high-quality services while keeping staff and clients COVIDSafe.

The rapid shift in risk priorities due to COVID-19 demonstrated an element of dynamism to our framework that we have continued to pursue. RAV will work to improve elements of our Risk Framework through the onboarding of new enterprise risk management software, which will further refine risk analysis and improve the dynamic approach to risk management that RAV strives for.

Critical incidents

Critical incident and complaints management is a key process at RAV that provides a lot of insight into our clients, their needs and the risks posed to them, and helps inform our practice.

COVID-19 saw a change in the types of incidents we deal with regularly and required adaptation in how we report that information in a work-from-home environment. We invested in a software solution that enables easier reporting, more efficient processing and greater insight into key elements that can better inform future practice for the

organisation and support our clients. It is a significant step towards a more paperless and green processing of our data, and a more efficient and accurate way of handling important and sensitive risk elements.

Continuous improvement

COVID-19 encouraged RAV to think differently about how we work, how we process our information, and how we stay connected and communicate. We are creative and proactive in how we approach service provision, planning, data collection and a range of other elements.

Our staff adapted to an almost entirely digital framework incredibly well and we are looking to build upon that. We invested in tools that have expanded the capacity of our services in a number of ways, being more responsive to clients and their needs, accurately processing data in real time, increasing access to key information as required, and making a work-from-home model work.

Continuous improvement has always underpinned our work, whether in a clinical sense or in relation to organisational productivity and processing. With an adaptable and creative workforce and some 'out of the box' thinking, RAV's processing power and clinical services will go from strength to strength.

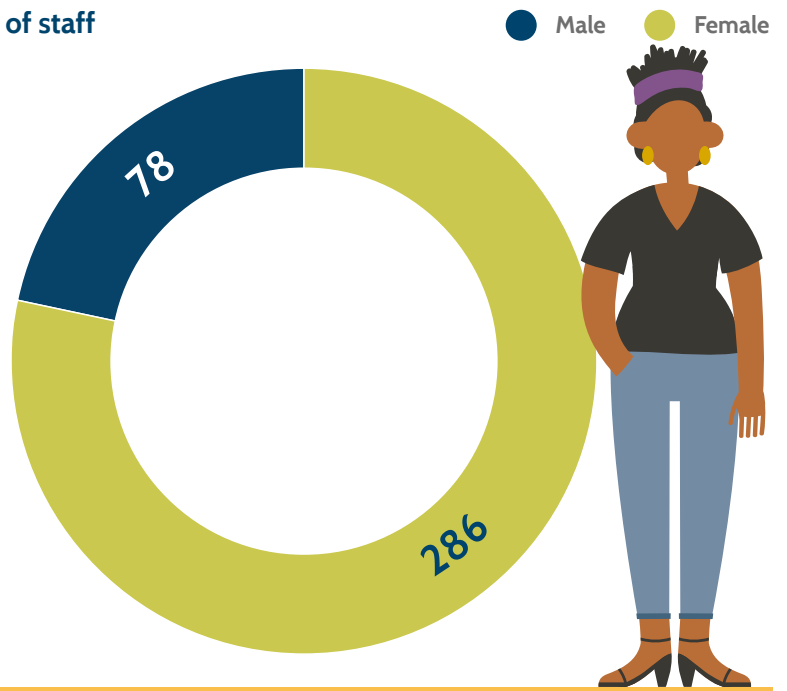
Employee average service type

Employee type	Avg. length of service
Administrator	5.3
Practitioner	4.0

Tenure as at 30 June 2021

Employment status	%
Less than 5 years	67.9
Equal to 5 years	5.2
Greater than 5 years	26.9

Number of staff



Employment status

Full time Part time Casual



75%

of our managers are women

22

staff promotions



INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

Focusing on community connectedness in partnership

RAV's community liaison officers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Specialist maintained a constant connection to Melbourne's diverse communities, despite the challenges COVID-19 presented to all aspects of community work. Our team was directly involved in forming many online networks and community hubs to maintain essential planning, development, and the implementation of community programs, cultural events and celebrations.

Aboriginal partnerships and programs

The Victorian Aboriginal community was particularly impacted by successive and long-lasting COVID-19 lockdown periods during 2020–21. When restrictions eased, Aboriginal community services shared a focus towards rebuilding a sense of connectedness. This period brought about new opportunities for partnerships and initiatives that responded directly to the needs of the Aboriginal community.

RAV's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Specialist, in partnership with Mullum Mullum Indigenous Gathering Place (MMIGP), initiated a mindfulness program based on the culturally informed

therapeutic practise of Dadirri, which translates to "deep listening". Dadirri was first taught by Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr Baumann AM, a celebrated Aboriginal Elder from the Daly river region in the Northern Territory, who was named Senior Australian of the Year 2021. The program runs monthly and creates a space for Aboriginal Elders to remain connected to each other and build upon the protective factors Dadirri promotes, such as connection to country, a sense of belonging, continuum of cultural practices, respect and healing. Aboriginal Elders are the backbone of their community and are constantly called upon for their time, knowledge and guidance in all matters. The Dadirri program was created to give back to them by providing a space where they can replenish themselves and maintain their wellbeing.

During Victoria's lockdown periods, RAV's family violence team partnered with the MMIGP Ochre program and Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service. Together, our services co-facilitated a series of online community workshops themed to RAV's new tip sheets developed specifically to help people navigate the challenges of COVID-19. These workshops were well attended by members of the Aboriginal community from Melbourne's inner east to the Yarra Ranges, where they were promoted.



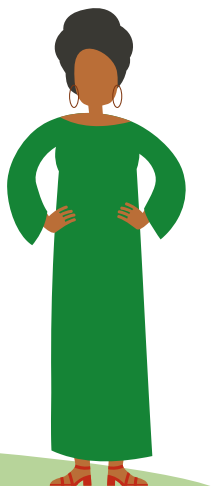
Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Specialist was invited to facilitate a cultural activity to promote mental health and wellbeing during MMIGP's annual community camp. This camp was attended by over 60 community members, families and elders over 4 days in April during the school holidays at the YMCA Mt Evelyn recreation camp. Activities on the camp provided a safe space for families to interact, enjoy time together and de-stress after such a prolonged lockdown period.

Culturally and linguistically diverse community programs

At our Sunshine centres, the skills of interpreting languages and the interpretation of cultural differences share equal value in helping culturally diverse communities navigate a pathway to positive outcomes. Our Sunshine Community Liaison Officer regularly engages with the Vietnamese community to both interpret and support them to gain a better understanding of RAV services through a cultural lens.

A good example was with a client who was ordered by the Court to complete the Tuning in to Kids™ program. The client did not understand what they had been 'ordered' to do, only that they were fearful of losing their son if they did not complete the program. After further assessments that included both language interpretation and culturally interpreting the Australian system, the client was reassured and ready to begin their journey, which ended in the successful completion of the program.

Our Melbourne FRC Community Liaison Officer is engaged in a working



As part of Reconciliation Week 2021, Ash Dargan, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Specialist (RAV), hosted an event with RAV staff in the South East.

partnership with the Brotherhood of St Laurence and the Yarra Communities that Care initiative in delivering parenting programs targeting inner Melbourne's local primary and secondary schools. As part of this initiative, RAV coordinates the network of facilitators, from local community organisations, to become trained in the Tuning in to Kids™ programs. Furthermore, RAV arranges professional development for the network of facilitators on topics relevant to parenting groups in communities, including Cross-Cultural Responsiveness Training, Adolescent Mental Health and Separated Families. The facilitators we train to deliver these programs regularly use the principles and materials to respond to community needs in their primary roles. This may be a family support or a youth worker with Victoria Police, who is working with a range of culturally and linguistically diverse communities in the City of Yarra.

RAV, in partnership with the Yarra Maternal Child Health Nurse team, created an online training and support space in response to COVID-19 lockdowns. This network allowed the continuation of First Time Parent groups during a vulnerable time when

parents from culturally diverse backgrounds did not have access to usual family and cultural supports. The online support space allowed First Time Parent groups to connect with each other and ease social isolation.

Providing resources and parenting support to multicultural families

We partnered with South East Community Links to develop and translate 2 tip sheets on healthy relationships and parenting practices. The resources were developed in consultation with the Tamil, Punjabi and Dari-speaking communities, who shared valuable insights and feedback based on their lived experience of migration and parenting in a new culture. We also co-delivered a parenting program in Hindi and English for the Indian community in Melbourne's South East.

Providing Family Dispute Resolution to culturally diverse and Aboriginal communities

RAV continued its committed approach in building culturally safe FDR services in its Melbourne,

Sunshine and Greensborough FRCs. Our approach recognises the value of continued opportunities for professional development in cultural competency through workshops. Melbourne and Greensborough centre FDR practitioners, client services officers and management attended a cultural awareness course run by Victoria's largest Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation, VACCA.

Building staff cultural competences

We provided some additional online learning programs to all employees

to broaden their skills and experience in working across diverse cultures and population groups. We also introduced an online Core Inclusion Program, as compulsory learning for all staff, aimed at building capability and cultural competence around diversity in the workplace.



Elder Uncle John Baxter sharing stories around the fire at the MMIGP community camp.

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT



272

NUMBER OF HOURS OF CUSTOMISED TRAINING DELIVERED, MAINLY ONLINE

144

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS ATTENDED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

Staying connected through online learning

In 2020, we introduced new models of training and professional development, to support the diverse needs of participants working remotely due to COVID-19. Most of our delivery was facilitated online through various platforms, including Zoom, Webex and Microsoft Teams.

Our face-to-face workshops paused, and professional development took the form of online workshops, offered in an interactive learning environment.

We introduced a new Webinar Program in 2021, providing a broad range of professional topics across FDR, mediation, relationship counselling, family violence and other professional development topics. Our webinars are hosted by experts nationally and internationally, taking a research and evidence-led approach.

During 2020, we worked to upgrade our learning management system (LMS), Moodle, to provide enhanced functionality and capability to create an enhanced online user experience. This included the introduction of a shopping cart, learning journal and embedded Zoom plugin features. Our upgraded LMS provides a seamless online experience, and online and self-paced training programs.

We have successfully been offering online programs to provide greater access and reach for our LINCS, LINCIS for Families, and ATLAS

offender services programs, as well as our Support for Fathers project. Our offender services programs take a strengths-based approach, providing skills and access to resources for those on family violence and correctional orders, and those in remand.

We continue to offer our accredited training courses, migrating our mediation and FDR courses to blended modes of delivery, and our Specialist Course in Integrative Couple Therapy to online delivery during COVID-19, to increase accessibility and maximise learning. Our new Learn More Webinars for our accredited mediation, FDR and relationship counselling courses were well received.

RAV's training offering expanded in 2020 to include tailored training for organisations and workplaces. This grew over the 12 months to become one of the largest training offerings provided by RAV. We delivered programs including Vicarious Trauma, Responding to Family Violence in the Workplace, Managing Challenging

Behaviours, Managing Stress and Building Resilience. Our customised training learning experience involves a co-design process and has continued to evolve. It is a valued offering provided by RAV to workplaces and organisations.

Throughout the year there was increased engagement with all our training offerings.

Family Dispute Resolution and mediation training

Our Registered Training Organisation has continued to provide quality professional training to our future workforces. Around 25 new FDR practitioners participated in the CHC81115 Graduate Diploma of FDR during 2020–21, with graduates reporting success in gaining employment within RAV, other community organisations, the private sector and the Courts' new FDR program. We're also proud to announce that we are now a VET Student Loan Provider for this course.

We trained 16 new mediators, providing training and assessment leading to accreditation under the National Mediator Accreditation System. This provided mediation graduates with a pathway to progress into the Graduate Diploma of FDR.

Throughout the year, we delivered our FDR and mediation courses using our flexible and accessible blended learning model, consisting of self-paced online learning modules, interactive webinars and intensive face-to-face/online workshops. This unique combination equips our participants with a range of skills that are now required and highly sought after in the workforce.

After some initial sector-wide disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all student work placements resumed and students were included in the direct service delivery via the various remote service provision formats. This was supplemented, whenever possible, with face-to-face learning opportunities.

The FDR training team also delivered external courses in Advanced Property FDR to experienced FDR practitioners, and online workshops to other professionals on Supporting Separated Families. The shift to online courses has also been useful for RAV, with online property FDR courses adapted and made available to our FDR practitioners.

The table below shows how we were able to remain professionally engaged with peers during periods when travel was restricted.

Date (2020)	Organisation	Conference name
16 October	Australian Psychological Society	Psych2020
17 October	Australian Psychological Society	Psych2020
18 October	Australian Psychological Society	Psych2020
12 November	2020 International Mental Health Conference	2020 International Mental Health Conference
13 November	2020 International Mental Health Conference	2020 International Mental Health Conference
17 June	National Mediation Conference	2021 National Mediation Mini-Conference

All conference attendance was online.



Thanks so much! I look forward to digesting everything and am so grateful for all of the amazing teaching from you and everyone on the team last week.

FDR student

You are fantastic coaches and you both have inspired me on so many different levels.

FDR student

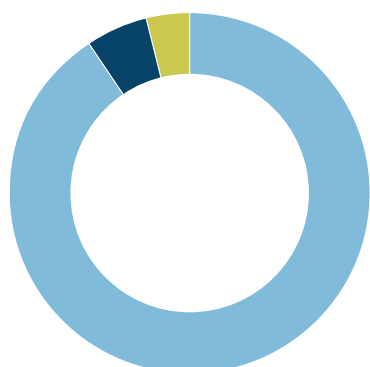
Thank you for running such an organised and structured workshop. Your enthusiasm was contagious. This was a great experience in more than one way for me. I look forward to our next workshop.

FDR student



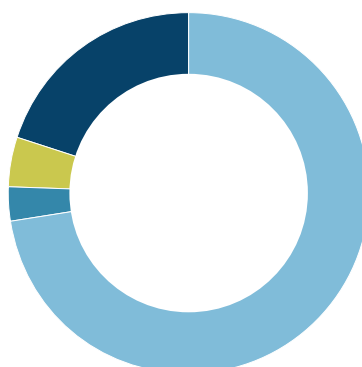
OUR FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Revenue



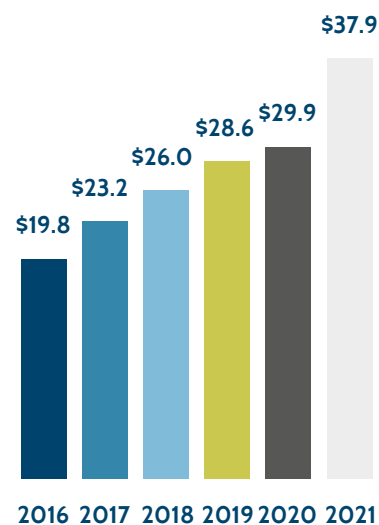
- Government funding 90.8%
- Client fees 5.4%
- Other income 3.8%

Expenses



- Employee costs 72.7%
- Other operating costs 19.8%
- Depreciation and amortisation 4.5%
- Occupancy expenses 3.0%

Revenue growth (M)



Independent Audit Report to the Members of Relationships Australia Victoria Limited

We have audited the summarised financial report of Relationships Australia Victoria Limited comprising the Summary Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2021 and the Summary Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2021 in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards.

In our opinion, the information reported in the summarised financial report is consistent with the annual financial report from which it is derived and upon which we expressed an unqualified audit opinion in our report to the members dated 28 September 2021.

For a better understanding of the scope of our audit, this report should be read in conjunction with our audit report on the annual financial report.

GRANT THORNTON AUSTRALIA

BROCK MACKENZIE
PARTNER

Summary statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 30 June 2021

	2021 (\$)	2020 (\$)
REVENUE		
Government funding	34,374,919	26,285,500
Client fees	2,041,157	2,305,604
Other Income	1,439,744	1,333,819
Total revenue	37,855,820	29,924,923
EXPENSES		
Employee costs	26,856,878	21,662,143
Occupancy expenses	1,089,812	872,380
Depreciation and amortisation	1,664,165	1,543,689
Other operating costs	7,309,712	5,117,101
Total expenses	36,920,567	29,195,313
SURPLUS	935,253	729,610
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		
Net gain on revaluation of non-current assets	677,000	-
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME	1,612,253	729,610

Summary statement of financial position as at 30 June 2021

	2021 (\$)	2020 (\$)
ASSETS		
Current assets	24,978,647	19,204,023
Non-current assets	10,405,255	9,881,135
Total assets	35,383,902	29,085,158
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities	14,045,451	9,846,055
Non-current liabilities	4,142,838	3,655,743
Total liabilities	18,188,289	13,501,798
NET ASSETS	17,195,613	15,583,360

OUR PEOPLE

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM



Dr Andrew Bickerdike
Chief Executive Officer



Shiranthi Sivarajah
Chief Financial Officer
and Company Secretary



Michael Beres
General Manager Operations
* Until December 2020



Suzanne Ichlov
General Manager Operations
* From April 2021

Prior to April 2021
Senior Manager Operations
South East, Senior Manager Risk
and Compliance



Anastasia Panayiotidis
General Manager
Clinical Services



Carl Beeston
Senior Manager ICT
Operations



Anna Clarke
Senior Manager
Communications
and Marketing
* Maternity leave September 2020



Sharon Greenhill
Senior Manager
Human Resources



Donna Plavljanic
Senior Manager Training
and Development



Fiona White
Senior Manager
Operations North West



MANAGEMENT TEAM*

Rose Byrnes

Senior Manager Western
Melbourne

Amanda Exley

Centre Manager headspace
Bairnsdale and Sale

* Until March 2021

Danielle Kamien

Manager Communications
and Marketing

Michelle McDonald

Senior Manager Open Place

Shelley Watson

Manager Shepparton

Cate Chaiyot

Centre Manager headspace
Wonthaggi

Andreana Harrison

Programs Manager Family
Violence Services

Carolyn Last

Senior Manager Kew

Suresh Ramachandraiah

Senior Manager Southern
and Eastern Melbourne

* As at 30 June 2021

Hayley Davidson

Centre Manager headspace
Bairnsdale and Sale

Jo Huggins

Senior Manager Gippsland

Christine Lye

Manager Northern Melbourne

Lisa Stockheim

Manager Melbourne FRC (Acting)



BOARD



Professor Lyn Littlefield OAM

President

Governance Committee member

Member since October 1993



Kaye Frankcom

Vice-President

Clinical Governance Committee Chair

Member since April 2016



Michael Hunt

Audit and Finance Committee member

Clinical Governance Committee member

Member since January 2018



Kimberly Hunter

Clinical Governance Committee member

Member since October 2011

* Retired April 2021



Ronda Jacobs

Governance Committee member

Member since October 2018



John Lovell

Member since October 2008



Michael Shaw

Audit and Finance Committee Chair

Member since October 2018



Paul Staindl

Governance Committee Chair

Member since January 2018

* Retired October 2020



Professor Colin Royse

Governance Committee member

Member since October 2020

Board performance

Our Board is composed of committed, skilled and experienced individuals who are focused on driving organisational success and achieving our vision through data-informed decision-making. Our Board members' collective experience spans the not-for-profit, commercial and private sectors including health, mental health, service delivery, finance, law, banking, government policy, strategy, business development and ICT.

RAV's robust Corporate Governance Framework and the work of 3 Board committees underpins the work of the Board across the areas of strategy, governance, financial and risk management, sustainability and high-level operations.

Committees

The Governance Committee is responsible for ensuring the Board and its committees are composed of individuals who are appropriately skilled, accredited

and trained to enable them to discharge their responsibilities as directors having regard to the law, the RAV constitution and highest standards of governance.

The Audit and Finance Committee assists the Board in fulfilling its oversight responsibilities for the organisation's ongoing financial performance, compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, financial risk management practices, and the endorsement of RAV's annual operating and capital budgets.

The independent Clinical Governance Committee safeguards RAV's responsibilities and compliance against clinical governance standards. Members oversee the analysis of clinical services and practices and provide specialised advice to the Board and RAV's leadership in relation to new services and practice models, continuous clinical quality improvement and risk management, in order to provide safe and positive outcomes for clients.

CONNECT WITH US



Ballarat

1025 Sturt Street
Ph: (03) 5337 9222
ballarat@rav.org.au

Boronia

83 Boronia Road
Ph: (03) 9725 9964
boronia@rav.org.au

Cranbourne

2/199 South Gippsland Highway
(cnr William Street)
Ph: (03) 5990 1900
cranbourne@rav.org.au

Cranbourne North

405 Narre Warren Road
Ph: (03) 5911 5400
cranbournenorth@rav.org.au

Greensborough

Banyule Community Health,
3/25-33 Grimshaw Street
Ph: (03) 9431 7777
greensborough@rav.org.au

Kew

46 Princess Street
Ph: (03) 9261 8700
kew@rav.org.au

Shepparton

634 Wyndham Street
Ph: (03) 5820 7444
shepparton@rav.org.au

Sunshine

1st Floor, Harvester Centre,
4 Devonshire Road
Ph: (03) 8311 9222
sunshine@rav.org.au

Traralgon

59 Breed Street
Ph: (03) 5175 9500
traralgon@rav.org.au

Central Office (Camberwell)

(Training and Administration)
1183 Toorak Road
Ph: (03) 8573 2222
enquiries@rav.org.au

Family Relationship Centres

FRCs provide information, referral and FDR for parenting and/or property and financial matters, to support couples and families experiencing relationship difficulties, including separation. RAV manages 4 FRCs in Victoria.

Berwick

38 Clyde Road
Ph: (03) 8768 4111
enquiries@berwickfrc.org.au

Greensborough

79 Grimshaw Street
Ph: (03) 9404 7800
enquiries@greensboroughfrc.org.au

Melbourne

379 Collins Street (enter
via Queen Street)
Ph: (03) 8625 3666
enquiries@melbournefrc.org.au

Sunshine

1 Clarke Street
Ph: (03) 9313 0444
enquiries@sunshinefrc.org.au

headspace services

headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation, providing early intervention mental health services to young people aged 12 to 25. RAV is the lead agency delivering headspace services in Bairnsdale, Sale and Wonthaggi.

headspace Bairnsdale

171 Main Street
Ph: (03) 5141 6200
info@headspacebairnsdale.org.au

headspace Sale

453 Raymond Street
Ph: (03) 5184 5000
info@headspacesale.org.au

headspace Wonthaggi

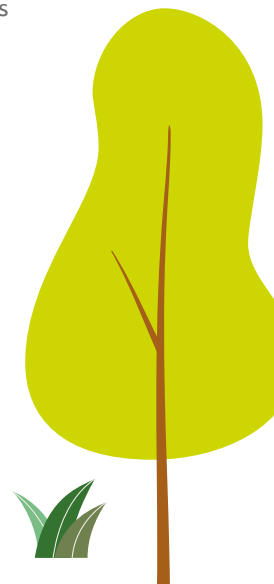
headspace centre in Wonthaggi and 5 outreach locations across Bass Coast and South Gippsland.

5b Murray Street
Ph: (03) 5671 5900
info@headspacewonthaggi.org.au

Open Place

Free support for people who grew up in institutional care in Victoria prior to 1990, known as Forgotten Australians/Pre-1990 Care Leavers.

1/8 Bromham Place, Richmond
Ph: 1800 779 379
info@openplace.org.au



Relationships Australia®

VICTORIA

My counsellor was incredibly helpful and understanding, talking through issues in detail, trying to find ideas that worked for me and referencing relevant research.

RAV FDR client

Open Place has given me support, an ear to talk to, and are still assisting me today.

Open Place client


I am satisfied that RAV are taking cautious and considered steps in responding to the COVID-19 situation to ensure staff safety and wellbeing.

RAV staff member response taken from the COVID-19 Staff Engagement Survey, 2020

 www.relationshipsvictoria.org.au

 @RelAustVic

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 @Relationships-Australia-Victoria



Accredited by HDA. Achievement of Accreditation to ISO 9001:2015 provides service users with confidence that Relationships Australia Victoria has effective management systems in place that are regularly reviewed.