

Relationships Australia[®]

VICTORIA

Since 1948



**Strategic Plan
2019–2023**

From our President and CEO

It is with pleasure that we present our Strategic Plan for the next four years. The plan has been developed collaboratively by the Board and managers of Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV), and with the involvement of our workforce.



It outlines our vision, focus, strategic goals and objectives, as well as the core values that guide our work with clients, colleagues and stakeholders.

With over 70 years' service delivery experience, our plan is informed by our extensive knowledge and a deep understanding of the Victorian community. Meeting the needs of our clients has always been the motivation for RAV, and we work to relieve suffering, distress and helplessness, and to enhance physical, social and emotional wellbeing.

Throughout our history, a culture of best practice, innovation and adaptability has been fundamental to our organisation's success and impact. This culture is evident in our new Strategic Plan, including in our objectives for digital transformation, leading practice, influential research, prevention strategies, and evidence-based practice improvement.

Recognising the different needs of diverse members of our community, we are focused on ensuring that our services are relevant and accessible. This includes to those from vulnerable and disadvantaged, culturally and linguistically diverse, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, and to members of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual (LGBTIQA+) communities. We have committed to significantly increasing the number of Indigenous clients we support each year across the life of our plan.



As an organisation that is acutely aware of the growing and increasingly complex needs of our clients, we remain focused on service design excellence within our client-centred response services. We recognise, however, that the community is facing a range of systemic, intergenerational and pervasive societal problems, including family violence, trauma and mental health issues.

In these circumstances, response services that are provided in isolation are not always sufficient. We believe that evidence-informed prevention and early intervention services are essential in eliciting societal-wide change that reduces the occurrence and impact of such issues for future generations. Over the next four years, we will utilise our experience and expertise to develop, implement and evaluate prevention services that will have a measurable and demonstrable impact upon the prevalence and consequences of these pervasive issues.

Our strategy includes an ongoing commitment to demonstrating the effectiveness of our services, and to undertaking important and credible research that influences service design and improvements. The plan empowers us to authoritatively contribute to and influence policy areas related to our specialist expertise. We will actively seek opportunities to provide thought leadership – to government, within our sector, and directly to members of the public – for the benefit of our clients and the community.



This is particularly important given the significant reform and review that is currently occurring in our sector, with the continuing implementation of the Royal Commission into Family Violence (Victoria) recommendations, the release of the Australian Law Reform Commission's report on the review of the family law system and a number of other relevant Royal Commissions and inquiries underway. These proceedings offer fundamentally important opportunities for us to advocate for our clients and best-practice service delivery for the future.

With the rapidly growing use of digital technologies in society, it is also timely for us to consider how such electronic tools, systems and resources can be used to positively impact service efficiency and effectiveness in the future. Over the coming four years, we will seek to build upon our strong foundations and further integrate technology into both our business and operations, including through the development of additional innovative and responsive online services. These initiatives will empower clients to choose accessible services that meet shifting needs and expectations.

While we do not know what the future will hold, we are confident that with our robust governance, professional workforce and commitment to practice excellence, RAV is well placed to respond to challenges and opportunities arising in the years ahead.

Professor Lyn Littlefield OAM
Board President

Dr Andrew Bickerdike
Chief Executive Officer

About us

Relationships Australia Victoria began in 1948 as the Marriage Guidance Council of Victoria: a modest but aspirational organisation that primarily provided marriage education and couples counselling. We now deliver a diverse range of prevention, early intervention and response services from centres across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Our organisation was established by a group of professionals, including clergy, doctors and lawyers, in response to concerns about the increasing prevalence of divorce following the Second World War, and the impact on families and society.

In the early years, volunteers and some professionals primarily offered marriage education and couples counselling, to prevent marriage difficulties and support couples to stay together.

In the mid-1980s, we began offering mediation services, now known as family dispute resolution (FDR), in recognition of the need to support couples who were separating to fairly resolve parenting and property disputes, while avoiding litigation.

In the early 1990s, as one of the first organisations to receive family violence funding from the Australian Government, we introduced family violence prevention programs for male perpetrators. RAV is now the largest provider of men's behaviour change programs and family safety contact services in Victoria.

In recent decades, we have grown and diversified significantly, and now offer a range of professional services across the prevention, early intervention and response spectrum, which extend well beyond our original marriage guidance origins.

Our diverse suite of services now includes counselling, family dispute resolution, relationship education and group programs; family violence, mental health and workplace services; responsive case management programs and professional training.

We deliver these services from more than 15 locations and additional outreach locations across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria, including through Family Relationship Centres and headspace centres, and via telephone, video and online platforms.

As a secular, community-based, not-for-profit organisation, we are proud to provide services for all members of the community, regardless of religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, lifestyle choice, cultural background or economic circumstances. We believe that all people, in all their diversity, have the right to live their lives safely and with dignity, with their families and within their communities, and to enjoy positive, respectful, safe and fulfilling relationships.

For more information, visit www.rav.org.au/about-us.

Vision, focus and values

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.

Strategic goals and objectives

Goals

GOAL 1

Thought Leadership

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

GOAL 2

Response Services

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

Objectives

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.

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.

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Accredited by HDAA. 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.