



A letter to our parents

This 'letter to parents' is from children who completed our recent *Door to Door* program. It is a compilation of their thoughts and feelings about their parents separation and the impact it has on them.

Door to Door is a six week peer support program for children from separated families. It's designed to help them understand their feelings of grief and loss and learn to move on productively.

At the end of each course, parents are invited to the celebratory session with their children where they hear a letter written by the kids to their parents. For many children this is the first time their parents have been in the same room together since the separation.

Simone, Child Counsellor



Dear Parents

- › Stop playing favourite and don't bring us into your arguments
- › Dad stop fighting and making up stuff!
- › If parents are separated they shouldn't blame themselves or the kids
- › We are happy for our parents to have new partners, but we want them to be with someone who likes us too
- › When parents argue in front of us it makes us feel scared and even if they are arguing in another room or space we get very anxious because we can hear them but don't know what is going on
- › Thank you for everything you have done and I love you dearly
- › I love her but you need to stop mucking up!!! I want to see you.

“ I needed to hear this message to be aware of my kid's feelings.”
A parent's response

Welcome from the Chair

Welcome to our 2013/2014 Impact Report.

This year we've changed the title from *Annual Report* to *Impact Report*. That's because it's easy to become focussed on the things that need to be done every day and forget about the real impact of FMC in the community.

FMC provides predominantly government funded relationship strengthening services to the community and with this funding comes community obligation. We believe that community based services are enormously important because they are the engine room that generate resilient communities. And resilience is our strongest ally.

FMC directly impacted 6,184 Victorians this financial year. We worked with our clients to develop

their own relationship solutions and ultimately to increase their families resilience. Having a functional and strong family relationship at the core has a ripple effect. In fact, our impact is far greater than the number of clients we actually see - it's the grandparents, relations, friends, work colleagues and broader social networks beyond.

Right now FMC is preparing for a future where we will broaden our impact by developing a greater number of partnerships with other community organisations, businesses and government. We know that such partnerships will consolidate our position as a valuable contributor to a diverse and cohesive civil society. With more choice and better services, consumers benefit.

On a different note, I'd like to thank our board members for their considerable commitment and contribution. Sadly Ross Hyams leaves us after four years excellent service, the last two as Deputy Chair. Ross is replaced as Deputy Chair by Gerlinde Scholz. We also welcomed two new appointments to the Board - David Speyer and Michelle Lac. You can read more about them on our website.

I'd also like to thank the staff and leadership team at FMC - you're doing a great job. Together, we are all looking forward to another great year of important and impactful work.



Julie Dixon
Chair



Julie Dixon
Chair



Gerlinde Scholz
Deputy Chair



Greg Whimp
Treasurer



David Speyer
Company Secretary



Dr Becky Batagol
Company Secretary
until March 2014



Michelle Lac



Ashley Saltzman



Ross Hyams
Retired

CEO Report

Over the last twelve months we have been responding to key issues impacting on the sector including securing a sustainable business, responding to government budget constraints and moving toward a more user-directed market system of service delivery.

With regard to a sustainable business, I'm pleased to announce that we have been successful in securing five year funding agreements for Family and Relationship services, Family Dispute Resolution, Family Relationship Centres and Supporting Children through Counselling services. Additionally, we have run a more effective and efficient organisation this year and delivered a \$60,000 surplus.

In terms of our community impact, FMC has increased the number of clients we have seen by 10%. We've helped more people resolve disputes, settle parenting arrangements, deal with personal issues and address financial issues. We're proud to say we've helped more people to be in a better position to live empowered and productive lives.

Personally, our biggest achievement this year has been the introduction of our Consumer Support Service. This small but energetic unit has helped us see over 6,100 clients and referred many others on to appropriate services. By providing these clients (consumers, carers and referrers) with a centralised contact point, we are able to provide the earliest possible intervention thereby increasing the chances of a successful outcome. We're also able to better utilise our resources and plan for service gaps. To that end we've reduced our waiting lists by almost 70%.

The Consumer Support Service receives almost 500 calls a month and, as the case study on page 16 demonstrates, helping people whatever their circumstances requires commitment and resilience. These are qualities we have in spades. It makes me very proud to know that clients are receiving a consistent, speedy, detailed and informed response when they approach us. That's not only important from a business perspective but (and more importantly) it means people are getting the help they need early enough to make a difference.

While this is indeed good news, we continue to look at how we can improve access to our services. Our focus is on what best suits our clients' needs. An illustration of this is our collaboration with Drummond Street Services. At the end of this year we signed a partnership with them to provide family dispute resolution and child counselling services in Werribee.

FMC now provides services in two of Victoria's top three growing municipalities and it is incumbent upon us to ensure we provide the best possible service options for our rapidly growing client base. Over the page you will see more of our year's highlights.

It's been a big year and I would sincerely like to thank the staff and leadership team for their effort, energy and passion. Lastly, I extend my thanks to the volunteer Board who support us all so well.

Thank you.



Kim O'Neill
Chief Executive Officer



Kim O'Neill
CEO



Nicole Artico
**Executive Manager
Client Services**



Jenni Dickson
**Executive Manager
Quality & Service
Development**



David Turen
**Executive Manager
Human Resources**



Graeme Westaway
**Executive Manager
Business & Development**



Our Achievements

Case Study*: Family Dispute Resolution

Scenario

Couple separated for 3 years, divorced 2013

John 49

Suffers anxiety, claims his ex-wife was verbally abusive to him and has mental health issues, feels disempowered as a parent

Sue 40

Also suffers anxiety, claims her ex-husband was verbally, emotionally and sexually abusive to her. Claims he doesn't respect her as a parent, is dismissive of her concerns and doesn't have the capacity to care responsibly for the children

An Intervention Order and Family Court Orders are in place

2 kids

Son (10) referred to child psychologist with suicidal thoughts. Daughter (12).

John and Sue had major issues with communication, trust and respect and struggled to put their differences aside for the sake of the children. Their behaviour towards each other was extremely antagonistic and badly affecting their son. They came to mediation to resolve shared care arrangements.

After comprehensive intake and risk assessment interviews, and taking into consideration the past history of family violence, shuttle mediation (practitioner communicating between parties in separate rooms) with staggered arrival and departure times was decided as being the most appropriate form of mediation.

Separately, John and Sue attended Child in Focus sessions to help them prioritise what was in the best interests of their children.

Outcome

- › The practitioner, using a number of techniques, was able to help the parents leave aside blame becoming more child focused and less relationship focused
- › 50/50 shared care arrangement for the children was agreed
- › Parent/parent and child/parent communications agreed
- › John felt heard allowing him to accept alternative proposals more readily
- › Sue accepted a referral for further individual counselling at FMC
- › John was supported with a referral to a local mental health service, which he accepted
- › The children's behaviour and emotional wellbeing stabilised and they appear to be happier and more settled
- › John and Sue continue to improve their communication and consult more with each other

Family dispute resolution is a dynamic process. We work with parents at their pace, sometimes demonstrating their communication dynamics as they actually happen. This allows them to recognise communication styles without prejudice or blame, which they find liberating.

Another game changer is our ability to draw on the broader expertise that FMC has onsite. In this particular case having an imbedded Child Consultant made all the difference in helping John and Sue understand the impact their behaviour was having on their children. In other cases it's the capacity to refer clients to a relationship or financial counsellor.

Natalie, Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner



*Names have been changed.

Impact

- › This is one of 3,124 family dispute resolution issues FMC conducted this year
 - › The annual cost to Australian taxpayers of family disputes in courts is \$202m¹ but the emotional cost to the parties concerned is immeasurable
- Of FMC Family Dispute Resolution clients:
- › 90% feel relationships and communication in their family are improved post mediation
 - › 93% feel that post mediation they are better able to understand their children's behavioural changes
 - › 90% feel there is less conflict in their family and they have the skills to keep their children safe.



¹ News Corp Australia July 2014.



Case Study*: Family and Relationship Services

Scenario

Married couple with 3 children.
Wife considering ending marriage:

Cath 43

Concerned about husband's focus on eldest son and escalating violence between them

Matt 45

Frustrated his strategies of managing conflict with Jack aren't working and his wife is blaming him

Jack 14

Is anxious because of the way his father puts him down and yells at him

Other children

Girl 9, boy 4

The issue wasn't as simple as communication between Matt and Cath.

The entire family needed to communicate more effectively and to do that we needed to work with them all in different ways: Cath and Matt as a couple; Jack individually; Jack and parents; and finally, the family as a whole.

Outcome

- › Divorce was no longer being considered as an option and the family unit was intact
- › Matt and Cath learned and used communication strategies such as 'Emotion Coaching' helping them to more effectively manage Jack's anxiety
- › Matt and Cath's parenting skills in general improved
- › Matt learned additional self-calming strategies to use during times of conflict with Jack
- › Jack was referred to Headspace, a support organisation specifically for teenagers going through a hard time, to provide him with additional support
- › The two younger children contributed to family sessions about the patterns of family conflict and what might be improved.

Impact

- › FMC helped 1,878 people with relationship issues this year
- Of FMC Family and Relationship Services clients:
- › 91% believe they have new skills and knowledge to use in their family relationships
 - › 92% feel they are better able to cope or deal with their issues
 - › 90% feel they are able to get support when they need it



Despite the challenges of father and son personality clashes, significant improvements were made. The flexibility with which we are able to operate plus the relatively simple interventions for reducing emotional reactivity and improving communication between all parties made a huge difference to the whole family.

Happily, these are changes that will have positive ramifications to the quality of their life together as a family for years to come.

Daniel, Counsellor

Case Study*: Supporting Children through Counselling

Scenario

Parents divorced (background of domestic violence) and re-partnered

Tom

8 years old, dealing with grief and loss issues, difficult relationship with his father

Tom's primary school asked if he could participate in a six week group course run by FMC dealing with grief and loss. Post the course, Tom continued one-on-one counselling for a short period.

Two years later, Tom's anger flared again - particularly toward his father. Tom, now aged 10, asked to join another one of FMC's groups facilitated by the same counsellor.

Outcome

- › Tom's parents attended the end of course celebration night which was the first time they had been to something together since their separation - a momentous occasion for Tom
- › Tom and his dad are now able to talk with each other and even go skating together
- › The Counsellor was truly able to engage with Tom's parents and recommend additional support services
- › Tom's mum was referred to FMC's Family and Relationship counselling service - she continues to have sessions and is making positive changes
- › Tom wrote a piece for the school newsletter urging children dealing with similar feelings to attend the FMC course
- › Due to the positive impact of the course on Tom, he asked to help on the next course bringing his journey full circle

Martha is really good she helped me get through hard things like my parents breaking up. She talks to me a lot and played games with me so I think you should go see Martha. It is good because it is just Martha and me. She is the best person to go to when you need help. And she will respect you a lot. So go see Martha she is the best person ever. Thank you for listening.

Tom, aged 10 years



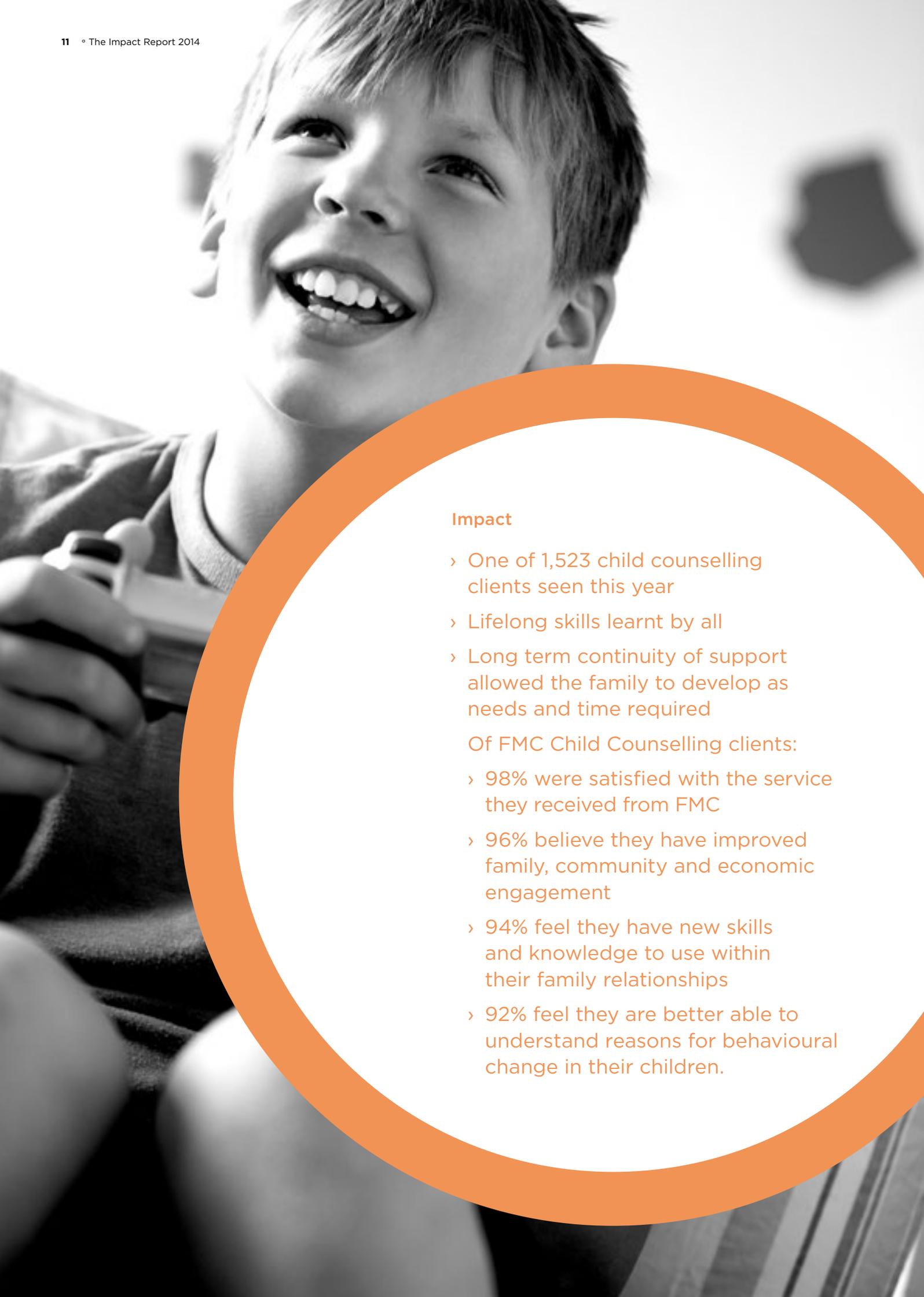
I am proud of the work this little boy has done. He has developed relevant strategies and skills to successfully manage himself and lead a positive lifestyle. As Tom transitions through life I am also confident that he will be comfortable enough to access the appropriate support service if needs be.

What I am most proud is that he has driven the idea of helping children along side of me in the next group. It doesn't get any better than that.

Martha, Child Counsellor



*Names have been changed.



Impact

- › One of 1,523 child counselling clients seen this year
- › Lifelong skills learnt by all
- › Long term continuity of support allowed the family to develop as needs and time required

Of FMC Child Counselling clients:

- › 98% were satisfied with the service they received from FMC
- › 96% believe they have improved family, community and economic engagement
- › 94% feel they have new skills and knowledge to use within their family relationships
- › 92% feel they are better able to understand reasons for behavioural change in their children.

Case Study*: Financial Counselling

Scenario

Jenny and Simon

Married, also work together running a business.

Two children

13 and 10 years.

The business owed in excess of \$120,000 in unpaid BAS and mandatory superannuation obligations.

This placed a huge strain on their relationship resulting in the couple separating.

The ATO was threatening to wind up their business unless the debt was cleared immediately.

Jenny and Simon needed FMC to liaise with the ATO and negotiate a solution to their predicament.

Outcome

- › Prepared income and expenditure statements detailing how the debt could be repaid within a reasonable time frame
- › Negotiated a waiver of \$50,000 in penalty fees and interest from the ATO
- › Negotiated a further write off of \$20,000 from the ATO due to natural disasters that affected the business during the taxable period
- › Secured approval from the ATO of a manageable repayment plan to clear the remaining debt
- › Jenny and Simon were also referred for relationship counselling through our Family and Relationship Services (FARS) program
- › Post counselling, Jenny and Simon reunited and the family is whole again

² Financial Counselling Australia Fact Sheet

³ www.ibisworld.com.au; Australian Bureau of Statistics Household Expenditure Survey, 2009-10.



By helping this couple to clarify the reality of their situation and prioritise their issues I was able to resolve their immediate financial problems and provide them with a realistic payment plan. However, because of the trusting relationship we had created, I was also able to refer them to my colleagues for counselling and, ultimately, reunite a family. This family has been through a lot and has come out the other end stronger, better informed and skilled, and together.

Sam, Financial Counsellor

Impact

- › According to Financial Counselling Australia² 74% of clients avoid legal action and 53% avoid bankruptcy by undertaking financial counselling
- Of FMC financial counselling clients:
 - › 92% feel they have increased their financial knowledge and skills upon case closure
 - › 76% are 35 years and over
 - › 65% are either single person households or single parent families with dependent children
 - › The most common reasons for financial difficulty amongst FMC clients are:
 - › Credit/debt issues (26%)
 - › Income/employment (20%)
 - › Family/relationship issues (19%)
 - › Utility issues - gas, water, electricity (13%)
- › Australians spend \$3.5m every 3 minutes³

Case Study*: Consumer Support Service



Scenario

Gavin 29

In prison for the next four years. His ex-partner has moved interstate with their infant son and doesn't want any contact with Gavin.

Gavin wants to be in his son's life and has tried unsuccessfully to access various legal support services to help him. Finally Gavin wrote to FMC for assistance as his son was soon to turn one.

Outcome

The Consumer Support Service wrote to Gavin with information on our family dispute resolution service and requesting he place FMC on his professional contact list so he could be contacted.

Wrote to Gavin's ex-partner inviting her to participate in mediation. She advised she would participate because while she didn't want to have any communication with Gavin, she recognised her son needed a relationship with his father.

Bookings were made for a family dispute resolution practitioner to visit Gavin in prison, ensuring

he understood the family dispute resolution process and to undertake the assessment process. The procedure was repeated with Gavin's ex-partner by telephone.

Mediation occurred and a parenting plan was agreed. The plan included monthly letters and photos to Gavin about his son's progress.

To celebrate his son's first birthday, Gavin was able to 'visit' his son (accompanied with a family member) via Skype.

*Names have been changed.

Gavin had been turned away time and time again by other agencies probably due to the logistical complexities of his situation. FMC, was able to overcome these hurdles through creative thinking and flexible service delivery. Despite Gavin's situation, it was important that, should it be possible and in the child's best interest, he be given every chance to have a father-son relationship.

*Nicky, Customer Support
Service Team*



Impact

- › FMC waiting lists have been reduced by almost 70%
- › Average time taken from initial booking to seeing a practitioner - 14 days
- › The Consumer Support Service receives almost 500 calls per month
- › Average call duration - 22 minutes
- › Approximately 12% calls come from FMC website visitation
- › The biggest referrers to FMC services are:
 - › Self 26%
 - › Private Lawyers and community legal services 25%
 - › Other service providers 35%

In 2013/14 FMC directly helped:



6,184

Number of clients seen by FMC



10%

10% growth in client numbers



2/3

FMC now covers two of the top 3 fastest growing municipalities in Melbourne - Casey & Wyndham



94%

94% of clients are satisfied with the service they received and/or feel it was responsive/respectful of their needs and/or cultural language background



89%

89% of clients feel they have improved family functioning, including child wellbeing



90%

90% of clients feel they are better able to cope with their issues and have improved family, community and economic engagement post FMC



20%

Adding 1 new location increases our reach by 20%



92%

92% of clients feel they are better able to understand reasons for behavioural change in their children

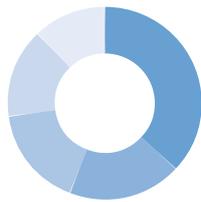
Our Clients



Gender

Female
54%

Male
46%



Highest Level of Education

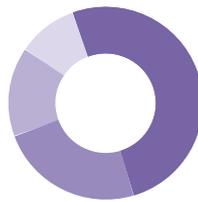
Tertiary University or Institutes
37%

Secondary Year 12
19%

Secondary Year 10
17%

Not Stated
15%

Primary
12%



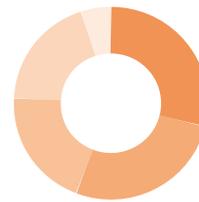
Employment Status

Employed including self-employed
51%

Not in the labour force (e.g. stay at home parent)
24%

Not Stated
15%

Unemployed - actively looking for a job
10%



Current Income

Not Stated
29%

\$0 - \$25,000
27%

\$25,001 - \$50,000
20%

\$50,001 - \$110,000
19%

\$110,001 and over
5%

What does our future look like?

We are moving towards a more user-directed 'market' system of services delivery. This means putting our consumers at the core of service planning, management and delivery.

By taking a consumer-centric approach, we are building a service culture that is constantly striving to improve services from the user's

perspective rather than one that is driven just by expert opinion. Our objective is to deliver the types of services our consumers want, in the way they actually want them.

We are developing our capacity to engage in a continuous dialogue and partnership with users of our evolving services. The boundaries between

our service users and us as providers, will soften as both users and potential users are encouraged and incentivised to take part in solution selection and formulation, service development, implementation and evaluation.

Our strategy



Financial statement

Income Statement	2014 \$	2013 \$
Revenue	7,250,497	7,069,934
Marketing expense	(77,250)	(95,452)
Occupancy expense	(429,386)	(439,372)
Employee benefits expense	(4,814,674)	(4,748,552)
Consultancy and legal expenses	(514,864)	(642,682)
Membership expense	(13,865)	(23,342)
Bank charges and interest	(59,084)	79,574
Depreciation	(372,355)	(417,208)
Other expenses from ordinary activities	(909,385)	(881,899)
Total expenses	(7,190,863)	(7,328,081)
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	59,633	(258,147)

Surplus - turn around from last year

Balance Sheet - Assets	2014 \$	2013 \$
<i>Current Assets</i>		
Cash and Cash equivalents	1,725,835	2,133,623
Trade and other receivables	230,420	89,851
Financial assets	150,357	146,260
Other current assets	47,702	54,856
Total Current Assets	2,154,314	2,424,590
<i>Non-Current Assets</i>		
Property, plant and equipment	3,153,109	3,453,655
Total Non-current assets	3,153,109	3,453,655
Total Assets	5,307,423	5,878,245

Sound cash position

Balance Sheet - Liabilities	2014 \$	2013 \$
<i>Current Liabilities</i>		
Trade and other payables	434,508	579,074
Short-term borrowings	205,008	205,008
Short-term provisions	397,248	330,551
Other Current Liabilities	284,028	569,696
Total Current Liabilities	1,320,792	1,684,329
<i>Non-Current Liabilities</i>		
Financial liabilities	392,020	614,112
Other long-term provisions	66,875	111,701
Total Non-Current Liabilities	458,895	725,813
Total Liabilities	1,779,687	2,410,142
Net Assests	3,527,736	3,468,103
Equity		
Accumulated Surplus	3,527,736	3,468,103
Total Equity	3,527,736	3,468,103

Paid off \$205K in mortgage

Strong net position for our size

Our Locations

FMC Offices

01 Moorabbin

4/1001 Nepean Highway
Moorabbin VIC 3189

02 Broadmeadows

Unit B1, 1-13 The Gateway
Broadmeadows VIC 3047

03 Werribee

Level 1, 242 Hoppers Lane
Werribee VIC 3030

04 Chadstone*

41 Stamford Road
Oakleigh VIC 3166

05 Ringwood

367 Maroondah Highway
Ringwood VIC 3134

06 Narre Warren

86-88 Victor Crescent
Narre Warren VIC 3805

07 Traralgon*

41 Grey Street
Traralgon VIC 3844

Outreach services
provided at:

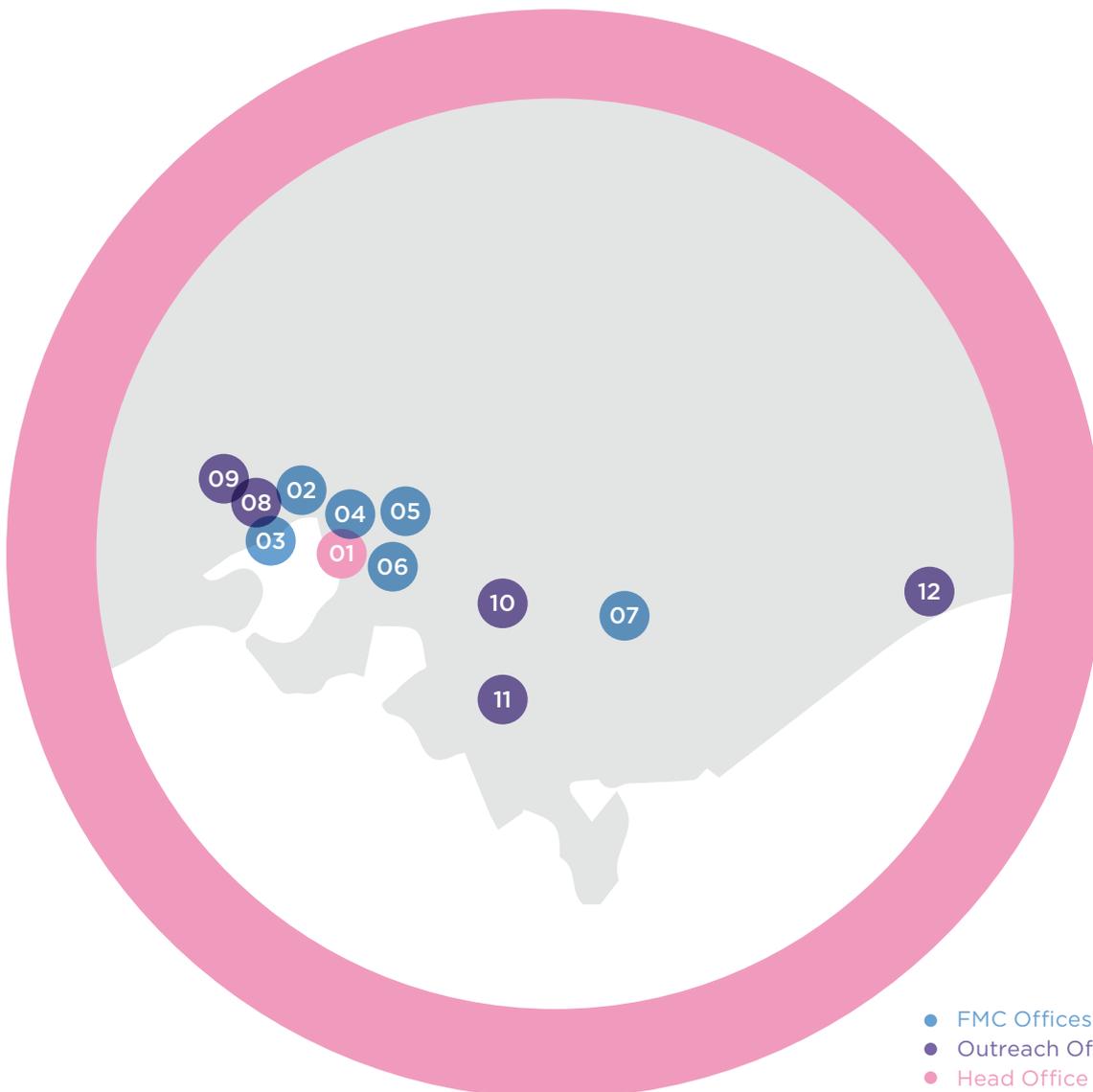
08 Caroline Springs

09 Melton

10 Warragul

11 Leongatha

12 Bairnsdale



● FMC Offices

● Outreach Offices

● Head Office

* Branded Family Relationship
Centre (FRC)