



MEDIA RELEASE

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A Decade of Community Outreach
Targeting Family Violence & Youth Unemployment through Prevention

La Trobe Valley has the highest per capita rate of reported family violence in Victoria,¹ with figures from Victoria Police showing an 11% increase of family violence incidents being reported from 2015-16.² Family violence is one of the forms of domestic violence that can take place in the form of physical, emotional, sexual, social, economic and spiritual abuse. It cuts across all social-economic groups and does not discriminate against sexuality, culture, race or religion.

FMC's CEO Serge Sardo says "The rise in figures of family violence in the community are a cause for concern. Our family mediation and counselling services has seen a 20% increase in demand the recent years in response to increase of family violence incidents at our Traralgon site. The greatest challenge is how we can create better access to services in response to the growing need in Gippsland to those who may need it before they hit crisis point. It cannot be understated the importance of a community-based approach to family violence through the collaboration of local police, legal, mental health and family organisations."

With the recent and impending closures of several large employers in the region, the demand for our services will continue to rise. The youth unemployment rate in the Latrobe-Gippsland is already one of the highest in the region.³ The most vulnerable in our community will be the heaviest affected.

In the 10 years that our Traralgon Family Relationship Centre (FRC) has operated, it has had a long history of providing quality care and services to the community and offers a range of family and parent dispute and resolution, relationship support, and property and financial services to the community.

Working towards prevention and creating easy access to support services that can turn lives around helps create a safety net for the most vulnerable. FRC's commitment to the delivery of services with its "No Wrong Door" Approach, building alternative technology pathways using Skype and video-conferencing, and developing strong links to community, legal, health and community organisations aims to reduce the incidents of abuse and people know that help is available.

FMC BACKGROUND

FMC is a not for profit organisation established in 1985. FMC provides services across Victoria from over 20 locations to over 7500 clients each year. FMC supports individuals, couples and families (including children and young people) through their conflict issues, financial, relationship and mental health issues. 52% of our clients have a household income of less than \$50,000, 40% have the presence of Family Violence in their situation. FMC can be seen at www.mediation.com.au & www.financialfirstaid.org.au. FMC is funded to provide Family Law services, Family Dispute Resolution Mediation services, Relationship and Family Counselling services, Specialist Children Counselling and Early Intervention services for children, Support services for families experiencing mental health issues, Financial Counselling and Financial Capability services. FMC also conducts community education.

For more information or interviews, please contact **Yuffie Yeo, Social Media & Communications Coordinator** at **(03) 9556 8335** or email at Yuffie.yeo@mediation.com.au

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¹ Summary of family incidents with the Crime Statistics Agency, 2016

² Data of family violence incidents with the Crime Statistics Agency, 2016

³ Data from the monthly Labour Force Survey with ABS, 2016