



MEDIA RELEASE
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Common Ground in Alternate Dispute Resolution
FMC hosts official Chinese Law Society delegation in Australia on study tour

A ground-breaking delegation from the China Law Society (CLS) consisting of law and policy makers from across 19 provinces in China were in Melbourne this Thursday to study and review the family dispute resolution (FDR) policies in Australia. On Thursday, FMC Mediation & Counselling (FMC) hosted 25 official delegates from the China Law Society at its headquarters in Moorabbin to learn about Australia's system of FDR. The CLS is the official national organisation for the Chinese legal academic profession in China and includes sub-institutions of different fields of law, such as jurisprudence, constitutional law, civil law, and criminal law.

Tim Wilson, Federal Member for Goldstein and Cr George Hua for the City of Kingston opened the afternoon tea event to provide the welcoming address on behalf of the Australian Government. "It is a honour to welcome you to Australia on the behalf of the Australian Government." He said.

The event included keynote speeches from FMC Serge Sardo and FMC mediation practitioners, who delivered a comprehensive presentation on the process of FDR and Elder Abuse in Australia ending in robust discussion between both parties, the opportunity for networking and a tour of the facility with the Chinese delegation to explain the mediation process in detail.

FMC's CEO Serge Sardo said "The child's best interest is paramount under the Family Law Act and FDR mediation provides a means to support these rights. Similarly, the rights of the older person should be protected. Organisations like FMC offers dispute resolution services that provide an effective way to resolve conflict for families without the cost and potential trauma of the legal process. FMC is leading in the area of developing a preventative approach to Elder abuse."

The Chinese delegation were able to learn about and experience first-hand how FDR could be used address conflict, enable parties to exercise autonomy and reduce the stress of going through the legal system. The Chinese system of alternate dispute resolution is closer to Arbitration in Australia, where the outcome is determined by the practitioner. Mr Lan, interpreting on the behalf of the Head of CLS, Mr Yin, said, "We do not have a system in place similar to Australia to resolve conflict, so we want to review how the Australian system works so we can take this back to China to inform our own legal processes."

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.

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