



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**24 August 2017**

**Boosting Communities with Support Services**  
*New outreach services in Wyndham in the fight against family violence*

The population of Wyndham is the largest growing municipality in Victoria<sup>1</sup>, with 86 babies being born every week<sup>2</sup>. Many people are on substantial mortgages and this carries with it substantial family stress. This stress in some circumstances may lead to issues involving family violence. Wyndham has recorded the fourth-highest number of family violence incidents in the state, as reported to police in a 12-month period between July 2015 to June 2016.<sup>3</sup> With a lack preventative services to assist families in these times of emerging stress, this is a concern.

On Thursday, FMC Mediation & Counselling (FMC) announced the availability of its suite of preventative services comprising of Family Dispute Resolution, Family and Relationship counselling, Child Counselling, Financial Counselling and bulk-billing Psychologist services to local residents at its new location at IPC Health Wyndham Vale.

Federal MP for Lalor Joanne Ryan, IPC Health CEO Alex Johnstone and FMC CEO Serge Sardo delivered the opening address at the morning tea event for individuals from local schools, community health, health, legal and Government organisations based in Wyndham.

FMC's CEO Serge Sardo says "In the past year we have seen over 300 residents in Wyndham involving incidents of Family Violence. Providing the local community access to preventative services and meeting the demand to areas of great need is a priority for FMC."

"Some of the issues they come to us with are situations such as conflict when separating, children experiencing difficulties both at home and quite often in school, and people in dire financial circumstances where they need their debts to be negotiated. Our services are invaluable for providing relief to people who suffer from family and financial related stress."

"Providing easy access to quality support services and actively linking up with community, legal, health and Government organisations may help encourage people facing family and relationship issues to seek early help and intervention before their situation escalates by creating a safety net for the most vulnerable."

**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](http://www.mediation.com.au) & [www.financialfirstaid.org.au](http://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](mailto:Yuffie.yeo@mediation.com.au)

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016, Estimated Resident Population

<sup>2</sup> Maternal and Child Health Service Wyndham City Council 2016, Birth Notifications Received.

<sup>3</sup> Crime Statistics 2016-2017.