
Greetings friends of WAM.

In this edition of our quarterly newsletter we offer an alternate view to being tough on crime, and we seek your support to make our move to Frankston Magistrates' Court.

Whilst our core business is to help assist women at risk of criminalisation, WAM also plays a role in advocating for women, and specifically informing the wider community about the experiences of women in the justice system. Our intent here is to ensure there is a focus on dealing with the underlying causes of crime, not further punishing women because of their disadvantage.

Recently we held our Law Week event, with our guest panellists offering an alternate view to a contentious issue. The topic 'Tough on the causes of crime' is about looking deeper than '*do the crime, do the time*', being unnecessarily punitive, or using incarceration as a deterrent.

Incarceration of women has other implications, not just costing the State – an article in the Herald Sun (15th May) indicates it costs over \$110,000 to keep a woman in prison for a year - but also the detrimental effect on families, and

leads to other interventions such as child protection, further entrenching families in a cycle of disadvantage.

Over the past 10 years the number of females receiving a custodial sentence in Victoria grew by over 65%. Women may be a minority in prison, but the number is rapidly increasing each year.

We have identified that Frankston Magistrates Court has recorded the second highest number of female offenders in metro Melbourne. Rates of family violence, mental illness, alcohol and drug misuse, and Child Protection notifications are greater here than the State average.

It's time for WAM to expand into Frankston. See more on this below.

- Tricia Ciampa, Executive Officer
tricia@womenandmentoring.org.au

FRANKSTON MAGISTRATES' COURT FROM JULY 2018

Significant numbers of women in Frankston present with intergenerational issues relating to abuse, social disconnection, and family violence. These issues play a role in the woman coming in to contact with the justice system for offending that is situational.

Providing them with an opportunity to connect with a female mentor who can provide non-judgemental support on a consistent basis can be the first step to them re-integrating to the community. The impact for the woman is not only around the development of her self-esteem, it can also lead directly to positive impacts on her parenting.

There are extremely high numbers of young mothers in this area, they often do not have positive female role models to look up to or guide them through the challenging journey of motherhood.

Women and Mentoring will fill a much-needed gap in this community.

In April we were fortunate to be provided the opportunity to pitch at The Funding Network's event, and we were successful in having \$30,000 pledged towards our program expansion to Frankston. **We are seeking an additional \$7,000 from our Friends of WAM;** you can help us achieve this goal by donating via this link:

[Yes, I want to help WAM expand to Frankston](#)

TOUGH ON THE CAUSES OF CRIME

Women and Mentoring has a reputation for thought-provoking law week events, and Law Week 2018 was no exception.

Our panel of Ombudsman Deborah Glass, and Magistrates Ann Collins and Tim Gattuso spoke to the theme of “Tough on the Causes of Crime”. The discussion centred around the increasing number of women in prison in Victoria and approaches for reducing offending and recidivism.

It is no surprise that prison numbers have increased so significantly in a decade that has seen a series of “tough on crime” policies. First came a tighter restriction on sentencing options, eliminating intensive correctional orders, suspended sentences and home detention. Next came a “toughening up” of parole that makes both getting released on parole and completing parole obligations more difficult. And now there are new reforms to bail.

Our panel highlighted the need to look beyond the criminal justice system to understand the increased incarceration rate. Women are often victimised so much that by the time they are presenting at court on charges, *“you can't really make a distinction between offenders and victims”*.

Safe, affordable housing is crucial and in short supply. Problematic use of methylamphetamine (ice) - a drug with no pharmacotherapy options and limited residential rehabilitation beds - is also a factor. To get serious about reducing prison numbers, an all-of-government approach is required – including health, housing, and education.



LAWWEEK Presented by
14-20 MAY 2018 **Victoria Law Foundation**

Magistrates' courts in Victoria are not solely punitive, they can also be a place where people come to seek help. Family Violence Intervention Orders are one example of this. ARC and CISP programs seek to address underlying causes of offending behaviour prior to sentencing, and Drug Treatment Orders which include judicial monitoring have now been introduced at Melbourne Magistrates' Court.

Women and Mentoring is another example - providing a long-term, holistic, relational support to women who are facing court or at risk of offending. The Children's Court also demonstrates several effective sentencing options, including group conferencing.

With 700 women anticipated to be incarcerated at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre next year, and a recidivism rate skyrocketing to 43.6%, it is now more important than ever to question the rate at which Victorians are locking up our women. And to realise how ineffective a strategy of mass imprisonment is at reducing crime. Significant financial savings could be made, and a safer community would result, if we work together to get Tough on the Causes of Crime.

- Gen Anderson, Intake Coordinator
intake@womenandmentoring.org.au

FUNDRAISING & EVENTS

Our Fundraising & Events working group have put together a calendar of events for this year to build our Friends of WAM community, support our volunteer recruitment campaigns, and also fundraise additional funds for our programs.

So far we've had a movie night, a private fundraising soiree with guest speaker Virginia Trioli, and our Volunteer Week get together

Keep an eye out for upcoming 'Winter Warmer' social events in July & August.

OUR MENTOR COMMUNITY GROWS & CELEBRATES

The past two months have been busy. In May WAM held an information session, and from this group five women went on to undertake the training and have now been offered mentoring positions.

The mentoring program has also engaged with Melbourne University law students to begin researching a piece that will look at the impacts of mentoring within the justice context and the restorative nature of mentoring as an early intervention model.

The peer supervision meetings are growing with many mentors attending in the month of May. Whilst the session provided opportunity for necessary peer reflection, we also had time to discuss the underlying principles of motivational interviewing. Whilst motivational interviewing is not a tool used by mentors the approach considers 'ambivalence' as a tension for people attempting to change behaviours that have long-term health impacts. Mentors were given opportunity to reflect on their practice with women who are attempting to make change.

May also celebrated National Volunteer Week. WAM recognised the work of our volunteers at the Stomping Ground, in Collingwood. WAM's patron Carmel Benjamin spoke to our guests to celebrate their work as volunteers and further reinforced the art of 'listening' when mentoring.

We look forward to the coming months with more recruitment, training and celebrations at WAM.

-Sharlene Farrugia, Mentor Coordinator
volunteer@womenandmentoring.org.au



Volunteer Week celebrations

Listen

When I ask you to listen to me
And you start giving me advice
You have not done what I asked.

When I ask you to listen to me
And you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel
that way,
You are trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me
And you feel that you need to do something
to solve my problem
You have failed me, strange as that may seem.

Listen! All I asked was that you listen.
*(an excerpt from a poem written by a woman
from Dame Phyllis Frost Centre)*

Be a part of our online community, either through Facebook or LinkedIn. We often post relevant articles and keep you updated on our news and events.



www.facebook.com/WomenAndMentoring



www.linkedin.com/company/women-and-mentoring