



life
works

RELATIONSHIP
COUNSELLING AND
EDUCATION SERVICES

Promoting Positive Relationships

**ANNUAL REPORT
2009-10**

Promoting
Positive
Relationships

Chairperson's Report

It is with pride in LifeWorks' achievements and admiration for those who contribute to LifeWorks' important purposes, that I present this Annual Report. As I look back over the last ten years of my involvement with LifeWorks I find great satisfaction in observing how the organisation has developed and grown in this past decade. This is the result of the work of the Board and of the staff, principally of course, the CEO Kaye Swanton.

LifeWorks is fortunate in being able to attract highly skilled and committed Board members. People with expertise in a range of diverse areas including financial management, family law, human resource management, the media and communications, education, counselling and therapy. The Anglican Church and community has also give of their best to ensure that LifeWorks thrives.

It's a cliché to say that the times are complex but it is true that relationships at home, at work and in the wider community have changed dramatically in recent decades. Our individual and communal lives are shaped by economics far more than we acknowledge. Relationships are put under pressure by the demands and opportunities of work places as much as the perennial threat of the failure of friendship and love, in its many forms, to grow and develop as life changes. High levels of job mobility, overtime and 'bringing work home', unsustainable debt and unexamined assumptions about the desirability of 'more' all contribute to the difficulties of relationships. The cultural myth is that affluence will bring happiness and success in life. The evidence from LifeWorks suggests otherwise. Deep down we know that it is the quality of our relating with one another and our communal engagement which brings an enduring sense of well being.

The purpose of LifeWorks has never been more important to individuals and families nor more key to the workplaces now using our consulting and training services. Whether enabling couples to prepare for marriage or committed relationships, or assisting organisations with mediation, LifeWorks can impart knowledge and skills that take people to new levels of healthy functioning.

LifeWorks has faced new challenges in the past financial year and is stronger and more resilient because of them. The move to a new location and upgraded facilities has allowed LifeWorks to enhance its profile as the largest provider of relationship support services in Melbourne City.

I am deeply glad to have been invited to be part of LifeWorks as Chairperson since 2001. I come to the end of my term confident that those who will be continuing on the Board will be taking the organisation to new strengths and achievements, and that LifeWorks will remain an important catalyst in the wellbeing of children and all who value their relationships and want to grow in them or resolve difficulties well. When all is said and done, our deepest desires are for love to be received and given at each stage of our lives.

The Reverend Canon Dr Colleen O'Reilly

About LifeWorks

LifeWorks is a dynamic, values based organisation specialising in human relations and interpersonal communication.

At LifeWorks we recognise and value human connection. We understand the joy of relationships—in all their diversity—and the pain of relationship breakdown.

LifeWorks serves the Victorian community by promoting positive relationships for the achievement of wellbeing and the fullness of life. LifeWorks reflects a compassionate concern for those experiencing relationship difficulties, isolation and hurt and celebrates the joy of positive relationships.

LifeWorks is partially funded by both the Federal Attorney-General's Department and the Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA). These two government departments work in a strategic alliance to deliver the Family Services Program, administered directly by FaHCSIA.

LifeWorks is approved by the Federal Attorney-General's Department as both a Counselling Organisation and a Mediation Organisation under provisions of the Family Law Act 1975 and as a Marriage Education Organisation for the purposes of Part 1A of the Marriage Act 1961. LifeWorks conducts family counselling and family dispute resolution services under provisions of the Family Law Act 1975 and offers associated relationship education programs.

LifeWorks now operates eight branches in and around metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria and works in a consortium arrangement with the Family Mediation Centre (FMC) at two other sites. The head office is now located at 255 Bourke Street, Melbourne and the branches are currently located in Bayswater, Frankston, Geelong, Moonee Ponds, Preston, Wangaratta and Werribee. The Broadmeadows and Chadstone branches are co-locations reflecting our partnership with FMC.

LifeWorks is currently funded to provide services in family counselling, family relationship education and skills training, including pre-marriage programs, men and family relationship programs, and family dispute resolution.

LifeWorks, through its own fund raising efforts, is also a very significant provider of family violence prevention strategies and, in particular Men's Behaviour Change Programs.

Increasingly, LifeWorks is delivering fee-for-service consulting and training services through its Business Services unit—LifeWorks in the Workplace. Our fee-for-service efforts also include Employee Assistance Programs.

Chief Executive Officer's Report

The reporting period has been marked by settling into our new premises at 255 Bourke Street, Melbourne and continuing the very significant development of our Business Services unit—LifeWorks in the Workplace—which serves as our fund raising stream to help offset the shortfall in government funding.

In the second half of the reporting period LifeWorks has also been focused on the review and rewriting of our Strategic Business Plans along with the development of our Public Strategy Plan.

In reviewing our strategic directions for 2010-2015, we have challenged ourselves to understand the core reasons people come to seek out our services. Whether its the joy of relationship formation, a pending marriage or relationship commitment of some kind; the effort of maintaining or reconciling differences in existing relationships threatening to drift apart; or the sadness and hurt of relationship break-down, we believe clients come to us with a hope that things can be different, better, if not happy and fulfilling in the future.

We recognise that emotional obstacles are not easily faced alone. Nor are our capacities to deal with emotional difficulties necessarily innate. Sometimes, even when love is present, we simply lack the skills to navigate the vulnerabilities of people trying to relate in considerate, respectful and intimate ways. In our otherwise busy lives, there is much to get in the way: a lack of self confidence or self-esteem; insufficient beginnings that make human connection a risk; and, at worst, traumatic beginnings that create generational cycles of violence and abuse because that's what seems 'normal'; where choices seem limited and we end up in the same unsatisfactory patterns of relating.

The educational and therapeutic strategies detailed in our business plans reflect our efforts to offer considerable knowledge and expertise to members of the general public who, from time-to-time, recognise their struggles and want to make some different choices for themselves, who recognise that building an emotional skill set, or resilience, is essential to keeping hope alive.

Equally, when things fail, it is our belief that people should be able to work their way through difficulties without the emotional and financial burden that for too long has been associated with separation and the ongoing care of children. Our family dispute and conflict resolution services are offered in this spirit. They are offered with a full understanding that, where children are involved, these relationships go on well after separation.

The human psyche can be a fragile instrument. Our emotional intelligence and interpersonal capacities can be limited along with our capacity for self-reflection. With the right care and support, though, there can again be a delight in life's possibilities, in the simple joy of one's own existence and exploring, creatively, the ways in which we connect and love. There can again be the hope of connecting and joining with another. Every child and person is entitled to this and this is our endeavour in offering our services to you.

Kaye Swanton

Counselling Services

The last financial year has been a time of re-establishment after significant changes to the structure of our counselling staff time fractions to better respond to client demand, particularly demand for evening appointments, and to contain the ever increasing costs associated with service delivery. External supervision has also been re-instated and remains a fundamental aspect of LifeWorks' quality assurance and public accountability. There are now fourteen external supervisors contracted with LifeWorks.

In keeping with our strategic directions, LifeWorks continues to reduce or eliminate waiting times for clients at all branches and is endeavouring to offer an appointment time within 48 hours of initial contact. To facilitate this, all branches have moved to an electronic booking system which operates either at the local level or through the central booking system in the Melbourne City branch.

The move of the City branch to Bourke Street has allowed us to continue to expand our commitment to student placements, internships and training. Student placements offer postgraduate students a valuable opportunity to complete their supervised practical work and also offer LifeWorks an opportunity to foster the therapeutic capacities of the next generation of counsellors and therapists.

Demand for our services continues to grow with over 2,500 clients seeking out our services during the reporting period. Our own research shows that clients come to our service via word of mouth referrals from family members, friends and neighbours and perhaps this is the best indicator of the quality of our services and the therapeutic interventions that we offer.

Meredith Brown
Manager - Counselling Services

Education and Training Services Report

During the reporting period, the education team at LifeWorks has continued to provide the highest quality group and individual psycho-educational interventions to a broad range of clients throughout Victoria. Including our Early Intervention Services in Broadmeadows and Chadstone, approximately 1,000 clients have been seen during the reporting period.

Following the relocation to our new city premises in Bourke Street last year we have taken advantage of the first class education and training facilities to offer our programs and seminars in a variety of delivery modes including evening, week-day and weekend workshops. At the same time we have continued to offer our programs from branches in Frankston, Geelong, Wyndham and Wangaratta.

We have recently introduced a new program into our education suite which focuses on supporting couples through the critical life transition of becoming new parents. In addition, a newly developed series of relationship seminars is gradually being rolled-out to local government and community organisations. These seminars not only support individuals, couples and families in dealing with a variety of relationship challenges, but have also contributed positively to our fund raising efforts to help subsidise the growing costs of program delivery.

Within the reporting period an emphasis has been placed on building the team of sessional educators. Ongoing recruitment of tertiary qualified relationship educators has resulted in a committed and highly competent group of facilitators delivering our programs. The sessional model has also been supplemented by drawing upon the skills and expertise of interested counselling staff. This strategy has resulted in building an educational team offering clinical depth and flexibility and has allowed us to be extremely responsive to community demand for specialty, customised relationship programs.

Over the next 12 months we will continue to focus on developing collaborative networks with similar community organisations. In addition, we have commenced a comprehensive in-house evaluation of all existing educational programs and associated curriculum. This review will ensure our educational offerings continue to be based on the latest research, meet best practice standards and, most importantly, bring about meaningful change in the relational lives of our clients.

Cheryl Dakis
Manager - Education and Training Services

Family Dispute Resolution Report

For 2009-10 the family dispute resolution and mediation team exceeded government contracted targets for clients and internal revenue targets. Skilled and accredited staff now moving flexibly between counselling and dispute resolution has allowed a concentrated focus on expanding and consolidating dispute resolution services at Wyndham and Melbourne City. In this same way we have been able to expand mediation to our Wangaratta branch.

The Federal Magistrates Court continues to be a major source of referrals for LifeWorks along with referrals from family law practitioners. The city voluntary mediations continue to grow and offer an important fund raising stream for LifeWorks. Our Wyndham and Geelong branch continue to receive a high volume of demand for dispute resolution services for clients who have separated.

Over the last twelve months the mediation team have been focusing on building a profile amongst legal practitioners, other psychology services and community agencies in general. Continuous improvement of our dispute resolution practices, and continually reviewing policies and procedures also remains a key aspect of LifeWorks' commitment to quality services. This ensures that clients can have every confidence in the services that they seek out at a time of upheaval in their lives.

Our child inclusive practice continues to be a defining aspect of LifeWorks' family dispute resolution practices and ensures that the voices of the children are heard when parents are working through the very real and difficult aspects that are such a part of separating.

James Christoffelsz
Manager - Dispute Resolution Services

Business Services Report

The Business Services division—LifeWorks in the Workplace—has consolidated and expanded over the past year. An additional Senior Consultant and Business Services Administrator have recently joined the team to meet the growing demand for our Consulting and Training services.

LifeWorks in the Workplace includes our Employee Assistance Programs, which draws on the expertise of our core counselling, education and dispute resolution staff, and also offers an expanded range of consulting and customised training services to workplaces. The bulk of the consulting activities have been related to cultural audits, climate surveys, resolving workplace conflict through investigations, mediations and management coaching. Training has varied from Human Rights Charter and Equal Opportunity workshops through to performance management and counselling, time management, negotiation and communication skills.

Similarly, we have also developed a large range of public training courses in response to public demand for the diverse content that is derived from our core orientation toward human relations and interpersonal communication. Our training courses are designed to equip employees, work groups and organisations with the fundamental skills needed in the modern workplace. Our public offerings now include: Assertiveness Skills; Business Writing Skills; Customer Service Skills; Dealing with Difficult Customers; Difficult But Necessary Conversations; Harassment Contact Officer training; Management Fundamentals; Managing Conflict; Negotiation Skills; Personalities in the Workplace; Reflective Leadership and Role Coaching.

The division has built a reputation for providing quality, personalised service. A solid base of ongoing clients has been established, particularly in the local government and community sector, and is testimony to the emphasis workplaces now place on employee and organisational health and wellbeing.

Cynthia Logan
Principal Consultant and Manager - Business Services

Family Violence Prevention and Men's Behaviour Change Programs

In this reporting year LifeWorks has continued to be involved in state wide family violence reforms, submissions and discussions. LifeWorks' ongoing partnership in the North-Western Region Family Violence Consortium ensures that the service we offer is a fully integrated part of the regional service system. In 2010, LifeWorks also entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Women's Health West for them to provide Partner Contact work for the Men's Behaviour Change Programs in the City and Wyndham.

Work has continued on the "High Risk Client Strategy" pilot program, commenced last year with other providers of men's and women's services and the police. Service providers and the police have agreed to a process that ensures rapid police responses to protect the safety of women and children who have been identified as being at high risk of harm due to family violence.

The research undertaken during the past two years by LifeWorks, Monash University and the Brighton Rotary Club, evaluating the efficacy of our Men's Behaviour Change Programs, has now been published and attempts are being made to secure funding to extend the research to a five year longitudinal study. Our CEO, Kaye Swanton, has presented a paper at a number of conferences citing the findings of the research, with a particular focus on the early childhood trauma evidenced in the backgrounds of the men who participated in the initial research.

LifeWorks remains committed to providing placements for students of the Swinburne Graduate Certificate in Social Sciences (Male Family Violence) course to complete both observation and facilitation practicums in LifeWorks' Men's Behaviour Change Programs.

In May a number of LifeWorks' staff formed part of the Frankston and Mornington Peninsula Family Violence Network that produced a "Help and Information Card" for the police and local services to distribute to both men and women. Work has now commenced on the production of a Children's Card as an outcome of that forum.

One of the highlights of the year was the involvement of eight staff members in the "Storming Against Violence" project with the Melbourne Storm Rugby League Club. Twelve players participated in a four-session Family Violence Awareness Program followed by training to work with disadvantaged students in schools. Each player was paired with a LifeWorks' facilitator to work with a small group of year nine students from participating Secondary Colleges. External evaluation of the program demonstrated that staff, players and students had benefited from the experience. LifeWorks has been invited to continue this work next year.

Denyse McKay
Frankston Team Leader

Linda Russell
Melbourne City Team Leader

Men and Family Relationships Program Report

The LifeWorks Men and Family Relationships Program in Wangaratta and the LifeWorks and Anglicare joint programs in Wyndham and Lilydale have continued to provide counselling, groups and community education for men and their families. These services have been consolidated in the last year. Each site has continued to provide services according to the needs of the men and their families in the local area.

The Men and Family Relationships Program aims to engage men seeking help with family and relationship issues. This program was launched by the Australian Government in 1997 as part of its Partnerships Against Domestic Violence strategy.

Since this program's inception, LifeWorks has provided a range of services under this initiative, including counselling and parenting and relationship programs. As men's help seeking behaviours and awareness has evolved, so too has LifeWorks' service offering to this target group. Today, LifeWorks' primary focus is on counselling with men and their families as, overtime, it has become clear that this is the best intervention to offer in light of the often very difficult issues presented by the men and their families. In this way, LifeWorks' tertiary qualified and experienced counsellors are able to work with these clients on a wide range of issues and on an individual, couple or family basis.

LifeWorks is also actively involved with other agencies delivering services under this program via the Men and Family Relationships Network. This provides the opportunity to exchange ideas, share practice wisdom, receive collegial support, challenge current practice and policy direction and advocate on behalf of the men and their families.

Richard Brown

Team Leader Wangaratta & Men and Family Relationships Program

Corporate Services Report

During the 2009-10 financial year LifeWorks consolidated its financial position after the considerable change that happened during the 2008-09 year with the move of our CBD offices and the expansion of our Business Services work. The move provided us with the opportunity to grow our operation in the Melbourne City area, to rent our spare capacity in the city and to expand our new Business Service offerings, which were launched in the latter half of the 2008-09 financial year.

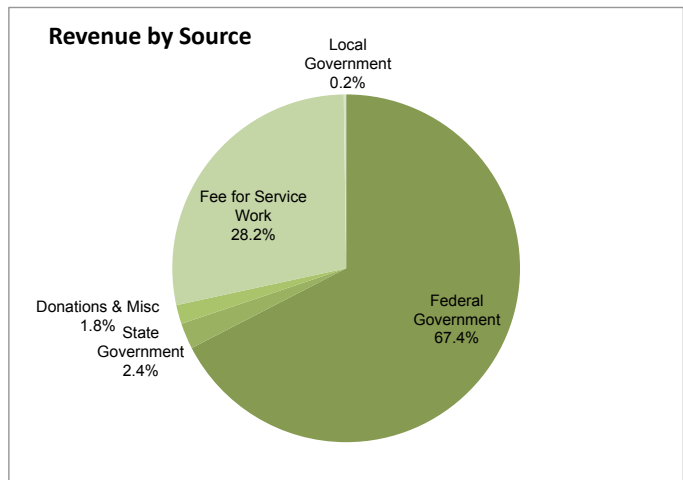
In 2009-10 we achieved a surplus of \$38,432. This was a significant improvement over our 2008-09 result and was achieved through the hard work and dedication of all of our staff, a restructure of the organisation into formal business lines, the good results in all of those lines and particularly strong growth in Business Services, which serves as our fund raising arm.

Our revenue grew by 5.3% from \$3,323,670 in 2008-09 to \$3,500,807 in 2009-10. Our expenditure reduced by 0.5% from \$3,477,422 in 2008-09 to \$3,462,375 in 2009-10.

The reporting year was spent consolidating many of our new systems including our IT network and client booking system including an SMS reminder system for our clients. Our Client Information System, that is used to provide management information for LifeWorks and to provide data to the commonwealth government, also underwent a major upgrade during the year to enable it to better communicate with the FaHCSIA reporting system.

We look forward to growing LifeWorks further during 2010-11 and to continuing to provide programs that promote positive relationships amongst families, in the community and the workplace.

Peter Holmes
Manager - Corporate Services



**Statement of Comprehensive Income
For the financial year ended 30 June 2010**

	2010 \$	2009 \$
Revenue	3,500,807	3,323,670
Employee benefit expenses	(2,407,479)	(2,431,130)
Advertising and marketing expenses	(44,729)	(75,312)
Consulting expenses	(127,410)	(115,891)
Consortium expenses	(128,852)	(139,488)
Depreciation expenses	(81,953)	(35,124)
Employee development and training expenses	(14,120)	(23,476)
Occupancy expenses	(313,585)	(355,010)
Other expenses	(344,247)	(301,991)
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	38,432	(153,752)
Income tax expense	-	-
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	38,432	(153,752)
Other comprehensive income	-	
Total comprehensive income for the year	38,432	(153,742)

**Statement of Financial Position
As at 30 June 2010**

	2010 \$	2009 \$
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	366,700	316,735
Trade and other receivables	93,824	63,117
Total current assets	460,524	379,852
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	328,606	399,066
Total non-current assets	328,606	399,066
Total assets	789,130	778,918
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	125,987	145,711
Provisions	111,280	139,303
Borrowings	50,320	41,880
Total current liabilities	287,587	326,894
Non-current liabilities		
Provisions	70,252	80,157
Borrowings	391,840	370,848
Total non-current liabilities	462,092	451,005
Total liabilities	749,679	777,899
Net assets	39,451	1,019
Members' funds		
Accumulated surplus	39,451	1,019
Total members' funds	39,451	1,019

LifeWorks is a not-for-profit organisation approved by the Federal Attorney-General's Department under provisions of the Family Law Act 1975 and partially funded by the Australian Government.

LifeWorks provides professional counselling, dispute resolution and education for individuals, couples, families, children and adolescents.

LifeWorks also provides counselling and dispute resolution for employers and employees, as well as Employee Assistance Programs for organisations.

LifeWorks' counsellors, dispute resolution practitioners and facilitators are all tertiary qualified and highly experienced.

All fees raised through LifeWorks in the Workplace are returned to the organisation to support its public programs

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