



EDVOS News - April, 2020

"Women's rights is the unfinished business of the 21st century" - Hillary Clinton



Our Vision

A community free from family violence, where everyone feels safe.



From Interim CEO

Dear Friend and Supporter of EDVOS,

I hope you all had a relaxing break over the Easter Long Weekend.

As a result of Australia's response to COVID-19, the demand is rapidly growing for our services that enhance safety, provide emotional support and material aid. The number of people reaching out to the assessment and response team has nearly doubled in the past few weeks. EDVOS are prepared for this increase and are keeping up with the demand, whilst also continuing strong levels of engagement with clients and no increase in waiting times. We continue to embrace new requirements in an innovative manner as well as implement responsible ways to provide continuous service delivery during these unprecedented times.

Deemed an essential service, our role is to continue to support the many women, including LGBTI+ communities, children and their pets, who are responding to any form of family violence, whilst also focusing on the safety and well-being of our staff. At this point in time we are maintaining a face-to-face service for women attending unexpectedly, women who explicitly request this, and for material aid provision. We are performing these duties with set COVID-19 risk assessment protocols in place for face-to-face interactions and outreach work, ensuring all required safety measures are taken. We are operating in-line with our sector's and department's expectations. Our clients, referral agencies and the broader community are thanking us for this.

We will continue to monitor and respond to any new directives and keep you informed as to any changes to our delivery service.

I would like to acknowledge and thank our extraordinary staff for their dedication to the important work they do every day in keeping women and children safe. A special mention to our After-Hours Family Violence crisis response team who ensured that women and children were supported outside of our normal operating hours over the Easter break. It's a privilege to work alongside such highly qualified, Specialist Family Violence Advocates who do not waver in their commitment to our clients and especially during these difficult times, continue to demonstrate they are creative, adaptive and resilient.

On behalf of the EDVOS Board and staff, we wish you good health as we continue to take care of each other. We look forward to strengthening our friendship throughout 2020 as well as sharing with you the important work we do to create a community free from family violence, where everyone feels safe.

If you have any further queries, please contact myself – Liz Billings, Interim CEO on 03 9259 4200.

Warm Regards

Liz Billings
Interim CEO



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Eastern Domestic Violence Service Inc.

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EDVOS Strategic Priority 1 – Person-Centred Practice

“Embedding and evaluating Person-Centred Practice for women and children accessing services”

EDVOS Specialist Family Violence Services remain operational during COVID-19

EDVOS remains committed to ensuring that women and children experiencing family violence are supported during this time.

As the demand continues to grow for our services, the number of people reaching out to the assessment and response team has nearly doubled. EDVOS are absolutely prepared for this increase in demand and continue to experience strong levels of engagement with clients.

EDVOS are implementing flexible work arrangements so we can continue to provide family violence support services in a manner that is safe for our clients, staff and the community.

EDVOS continues to offer services using telephone, text and attend anywhere software where necessary. We are very aware of the additional risks for those experiencing family violence during this time, and have added screening questions for COVID-19 to support our risk assessment and safety planning.

We continue to support the community with secondary consultations and co-case management via phone, email and teleconference facilities.

“We are ever grateful for the wonderful staff we have who continue to focus on their important work at this challenging time”- Kelly, General Manager Services



EDVOS continues to be available by phone (03) 9259 4200 or email: edvos@edvos.org.au opening hours are Mon-Fri 9am-8pm, Sat 9am-5pm. Closed only on public holidays.

For more information on how EDVOS can help, visit our website: edvos.org.au and follow us on Facebook [@edvosFV](https://www.facebook.com/edvosFV)

For those people living in immediate need, state-wide support is available by contacting Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre on 1800 015 188 or in an emergency please call **Police on 000**.

“My relief is enormous, thank you. Can't tell you how thankful I am, particularly in these days of social isolation...Thank you so much to everyone for the work they've done to bring this to a happy conclusion.”
- EDVOS Client



EDVOS Strategic Priority 2 – Accessibility for all

“Increasing EDVOS service responses for targeted priority groups”

Welcome Baby to Country Ceremony keeping families connected

In partnership with Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service and thanks to a grant from the Eastern Metropolitan Dhelk Dja Regional Action Group, on 17th March 2020, EDVOS led the **Welcome Baby to Country Ceremony** that welcomed eight children to country by Elder, Auntie Zeta Thomson, a proud Yorta-Yorta and Wurundjeri women, in amongst their families.



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The **Welcome Baby to Country Ceremony** is a significant cultural event that acknowledges these children's connection to the traditional lands on which they are born, as well as their family and community.

This traditional event was opened with a smoking ceremony by Simone Thomson and her mother, Elder Aunty Zeta Thomson. During the ceremony, women and children came forward to have their cloaks smoked and cleansed.

Each child experienced their individual Welcome to Country by Aunty Zeta and Aunty Daphne. In total, eight children were presented with a certificate and a Welcome to Country book by Aunty Joy Murphy. After the ceremony, the children were painted with ochre and put on emu feathers to have family photos taken.

Afterwards, all took part in a shared lunch catered by Torres Strait Islander owned and run catering company, Mabu Mabu, enjoying kangaroo sliders, island marinated chicken stew, wattle-seed falafels, damper and pavlovas topped with native fruit.

As a lead up to the Welcome to Country Ceremony, on the 3rd March 2020, nine women and six children attended the **Possum Skin Cloak Making Day**, that involved sewing two cloaks together and burning designs onto the skin. These designs could be totems or things significant to each women's Mob or area they grew up in. Wurundjeri woman Julie Kitto Welcomed everyone to Country to begin the proceedings, then Elder Aunty Daphne Milward spoke about the significance of possum skin cloak making and led the group in making their children's cloak. It was a memorable day for all.

EDVOS Strategic Priority 3 – Efficiency, Effectiveness and Sustainability

“Deliver more efficient and effective services and programs at EDVOS”

EDVOS supports trial of student cohorts affected by family violence project

The **Supporting Student Cohorts Affected by Family Violence** initiative trialed since June 2018, is aimed to enhance Australian schools' ability to identify and intervene more effectively with students affected by family violence and at risk of disengaging. This initiative was trialed at nine schools in Melbourne's Outer East and EDVOS was one of the main partners as the leading specialist family violence service provider in the East.

EDVOS delivered fifteen, all staff training sessions to nine pilot schools which included tailored information on the existing family violence training content areas relevant to the trialing schools' roles, responsibilities and practices, and practice consideration in partnership with ACU and DET.

EDVOS received glowing feedback around our engagement and training quality from all the stakeholders and participants and EDVOS plan to continue engaging and supporting the schools alongside DET.

The partners included the Department of Health and Human Services (Child Protection), Anglicare, Child FIRST, Department of Education and Training (DET: Family Violence Practice Branch (FVPB) and the North Eastern Victoria region), Victoria Police, ACIL Consulting for evaluation research, Australian Catholic University, PwC Australia and nine schools in the Outer East.

For more information contact EDVOS Education and Training on email: training@edvos.org.au or phone: (03) 9259 4200, Mon - Fri 9am – 8pm, Saturday 9am – 5pm.



EDVOS Strategic Priority 4 – Workforce Capacity and Wellbeing

“Implement a comprehensive Workforce Capacity and Wellbeing Plan”

EDVOS encourages student placement pathways into family violence workforce

The **Enhanced Pathways to Family Violence Work Project** is a flagship initiative of the Victorian Government’s [10-year plan for Victoria’s future family violence workforce](#). The project is designed to:

- ✦ Strengthen pathways for new workers into the specialist family violence and community services sector
- ✦ Build capabilities of students and graduates to be more “work-ready”.

EDVOS have a strong commitment to providing a strong culture of learning for students and workers and to the provision of high quality student placements. EDVOS are currently undertaking the **Enhanced Pathways to Family Violence Work Project** as both a host and participating organisation and have nine student placements booked to be completed during 2020. Our Student, Caitlyn is currently completing a 500 hour placement at EDVOS as part of her Social Work Degree and had the following to say about working and learning at EDVOS.

What has been the highlight so far working at EDVOS?

My highlight at EDVOS so far on student placement has been the support from all teams and staff members. EDVOS is extremely welcoming and supportive and I have felt very comfortable and part of the team. The work culture and environment is friendly, warm and inviting! I can go up to any staff member and they will provide great information, advice, and support and be super friendly.

EDVOS has great opportunities for students that allows them to expand their knowledge and skills into practice and I have learnt so much about family violence and supporting women and children. There have been great opportunities to shadow case managers and intake workers and learn from their knowledge, skills and experiences. There has been opportunities to engage with the clients to support them and provide resources, information and referrals.

What are your thoughts about the opportunities given to students at EDVOS, as a result of the Victorian Government’s Enhanced Pathways to Family Violence Work Project?

It makes me happy that there are student opportunities to get into the family violence practice with support, as going from a student to a social worker is quite scary and can feel overwhelming.

Are there any other comments about your experience that you’d like to share?

EDVOS has been amazing and I have never actually felt like a student. I feel part of the team and I am treated like another work colleague. The services EDVOS provides to women and children is incredible and the work the staff members do is admirable!

For more information on Student Placements contact EDVOS Human Resources on email: humanresources@edvos.org.au or phone:(03) 9259 4200, Mon - Fri 9am – 8pm, Sat 9am – 5pm.





EDVOS Strategic Priority 5 – Services across the continuum from Primary Prevention to Recovery “Delivery of more EDVOS Services and Programs across the Family Violence Continuum”

EDVOS continues to collaborate with key partners and stakeholders to bring about change

The EDVOS Primary Prevention team in partnership with many organisations and stakeholders in the Eastern Metropolitan Region of Melbourne, continue to deliver outcomes that address the underlying cause of violence against women, across the family violence continuum.

Our approach aims to change the social and cultural conditions that excuse, justify or promote gender inequality and violence against women and children in our community.



Level Playground is an EDVOS primary prevention initiative. It's a project for parents, caregivers and early childhood educators that provides helpful information and activities to support them in the day to day work of raising children free from gender stereotypes.

Loren, Level Playground's Project Coordinator, was recently invited to be on Kylie Camp's podcast. The Kylie Camps Podcast is all about cultivating more confidence, happiness and making small changes to make a big difference in your life. The episode that Loren is part of is about the importance of being aware of just how prevalent gender stereotypes are for little ones. Loren shares lots of great tips that you can do as a parent to help your children grow up being whoever and whatever they choose to be. Access the podcast [here](#).

The team has been working hard on a pilot project in conjunction with Yarra Ranges Council and the Yarra Ranges Gender Equity Early Years Working Group to develop resource tubs for early childhood services. The tubs provide early childhood educators with age appropriate information, activities and resources to support them in the day-to-day work of raising children free from gender stereotypes.

The Gender Equity Resource Tub includes:

- books
- activities
- equipment
- posters
- games
- fact sheets



We are planning to deliver the tubs to the early childhood services at the start of term two. EDVOS will work with these services to determine the best way to progress this project during COVID-19.

Over the next couple of weeks Level Playground will be sharing a series of social media posts, which will include lots of fun and educational activities and lessons that you can do with children in your home. If you have little ones around you, make sure you follow us!

**Visit our website: levelplayground.org.au Follow us on [instagram](#) & on [facebook](#)
For more information about Level Playground you can email: contact@levelplayground.org.au
or phone: (03) 9259 4200 Mon-Fri 9am - 8pm, Sat 9am - 5pm**



As part of the #WEAREALLEQUAL: LATIN AMERICAN WORKING TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY Workshops, Latin Stories Australia in conjunction with EDVOS and Unpresentable Ego have delivered a series of free workshops for Latin American women focused on gender stereotypes, gender inequality and the 3R's of family violence. These workshops were delivered September 2019 - March 2020, in five different areas across Victoria.





Three training sessions were delivered per location and included - reflective training sessions by EDVOS, theatre play on the topics of abused women, women's rights and lack of equality, handout documents with information and strategies and the inclusion of this information on Latin Stories Australia's website.

[Listen to EDVOS Trainer, Ann Nicholls](#), talk about gender equality.



Women Supporting Women in the Yarra Ranges Program is a therapeutic support group program for women who are recovering after their experiences of family violence. It provides an environment where women can share common experiences and bring about positive change in their lives



Women Supporting Women

The project is innovative in its flexibility and consumer-led approach. Women are able to choose a strengths-based, self-esteem building therapeutic intervention in their local area that will suit their needs and wants, and recovery pathway.

Since December 2019, EDVOS has delivered multiple art therapy workshops lead by Jacqueline Grace, a local Creative Arts Therapist in the Yarra Ranges. Evaluations have shown:

- 100% of participants strongly agreed they enjoyed participating in the sessions
- 100% of participants strongly agreed they felt safe while participating in the sessions
- 100% of participants strongly agreed they felt like the sessions were helpful for their recovery
- 100% of participants strongly agreed they felt a sense of connection with the group

EDVOS is in the process of planning another nine workshops for women.

Thanks to the sponsorship from local Community **Bank Branches of Bendigo Bank**, we are able to provide this support to women in our community who are recovering after experiencing family violence.

For more information, please contact Brianna Myors, EDVOS Program Manager of Primary Prevention and Education on email: brianna.myors@edvos.org.au or phone: (03) 9259 4200, Mon - Fri 9am – 8pm, Sat 9am – 5pm



EDVOS acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community. EDVOS pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.



EDVOS acknowledges people from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) communities, their children, pets and other animals, who are responding to family violence in the community.

EDVOS respects all people who are responding to family violence, regardless of ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age and ability.

EDVOS is a child-focused and child safe organisation.



EDVOS acknowledges funding from the Victorian Government.

DONATE NOW

Donate Now and Support women, children, their pets and animals experiencing family violence.

EDVOS is a not for profit organisation that relies on Government funding as well as donations from the community.



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