

From the CEO - EDVOS AGM



I attended my first Annual General Meeting as EDVOS CEO in late October. The board and staff were pleased to see the meeting well attended by a wide range of valued stakeholders, partners and volunteers.

We were thrilled to have a video presentation from EDVOS Patron, Christine Nixon, about her goals and aspirations for EDVOS and the wider system's response to women and children experiencing family violence.

A previous EDVOS client who now volunteers with the Speaking Out program also shared a moving account of her experience, opening up about her family violence journey and expressing her gratitude to EDVOS for their support and advocacy. We acknowledge this intelligent and articulate woman for trusting us with her story, a true privilege for our AGM audience.

As 2016 draws to a close, I am overwhelmingly proud of what EDVOS has achieved during this significant year of change, both for the organisation and the sector at large. I give my sincere thanks to our board, staff, volunteers and stakeholders for their continued hard work, passion and dedication.

Jenny

Jenny Jackson
CEO

Our Vision

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



New family violence funding: transforming lives

This year marks a sector milestone, with significant commitments by the Victorian Government to fund the Royal Commission into Family Violence recommendations. This landmark opportunity represents a \$4.65 million funding boost to EDVOS, enabling development of a new organisational structure to increase capacity; improve access to services and build a broader, more integrated family violence response for Melbourne's inner and outer east.

This funding has enabled the organisation to create a number of new teams:

The new **EDVOS Universal Services Case Management team** will provide specialist family violence services within Universal settings, for the entire eastern metropolitan region (EMR). Team members will be out-posted in a variety of settings including community health organisations, hospitals, primary and tertiary health services, early childhood settings, schools, local government, mental health and alcohol and other drug (AOD) services.

EDVOS is currently recruiting full-time case workers for each of the seven EMR local government areas, with additional team members to be engaged in higher referral areas. These positions will provide strong expertise in assessment, planning, case management and will be able to receive referrals directly from the services in which they are based.

The new team is truly innovative in that it places specialist staff with family violence case management experience in the community. This gives women easy access to integrated services under one roof in a community setting, enabling them to seek support where they otherwise may not. It also helps those organisations build their respective understanding of family violence, and their ability to identify and respond in their own settings.

The Case Management team focus will be on providing short term, ongoing support for clients with complex and multiple needs, those at high risk, those who may have experienced system barriers or those who require further advocacy and support focusing on client goals and continued risk assessment and safety planning.

Guided by a skilled team leader, the team and its services will be consistently reviewed, evaluated and optimised. EDVOS is also pleased about the additional opportunities it will create for EDVOS staff.

The new **EDVOS Intensive Case Management team** will focus on providing family violence support to clients with very high risk, complex or more intensive needs (for example women from culturally diverse backgrounds or women with a disability) offering longer-term case management and support for up to six months.

Designed to provide a high-level co-ordination function, the team will also offer continuity of service to those women and their children who are repeat clients of the family violence system.

This service will provide extra support to those clients identified as Risk Assessment Management Panel (RAMP) high-risk clients.

EDVOS has created a new **Flexible Support Team** to help plan and manage additional Flexible Support Package (FSP) funding made available to EDVOS.

FSPs provide critical, multi-purpose support to women and children experiencing family violence. Designed around their circumstances, the packages help to overcome financial difficulties that often create barriers. They are highly flexible and goal-directed in that they address the specific objectives of the women and children involved, for example improving their safety in the home or enabling them to leave safely.

Support can range from private rental assistance, household goods, uniforms, clothing, legal support, home security, pet accommodation, moving costs and extra-curricular educational activities such as music and sport to keep children engaged at school.

FSPs also connect women and children with increased counselling options through a continued partnership between EDVOS and the Australian Children's Foundation. Additional funds have enabled a dedicated family violence counsellor to be placed at Inspiro Community Health in Yarra Ranges, helping to address demand for accessible, local support in the outer eastern region.

EDVOS has allocated a dedicated family violence advocate to strengthen the **Animal and Pet Safety** portfolio, sharpening the focus on risk assessment and safety planning for animals and pets in family violence situations.

All animal and pet safety referrals now go through this dedicated advocate, who can give expert, dedicated advice and guidance in this area while other case workers concurrently provide family violence support.

Building on the decade-long EDVOS Pets in Peril program established to provide safe, short-term care for animals and pets, this resourcing aims to broaden short and long-term care options.

Interested in volunteering?

Volunteers significantly boost the capacity of EDVOS to deliver much-needed services, so if you or someone you know has time to spare, why not consider volunteering? Please email us at edvos@edvos.org.au or call **03 9259 4200** for more information.



Holiday season opening hours

EDVOS will be open as usual over the holiday season, but will close on the main public holidays:

Monday 26 December	(Boxing Day)
Tuesday 27 December	(in lieu of Christmas Day)
Monday 2 January	(in lieu of New Year's Day)

Changes in the EDVOS Board

After three years in the role, EDVOS Board Chair, **Paula Piccinini** has resigned from her board position.

Board Treasurer **Alex Wood** has also left the EDVOS board.

EDVOS sincerely thanks Paula and Alex for their passionate contribution and hard work during their respective tenures.

EDVOS Founder, **Judy Johnson** also resigned from board during the year, after more than two decades building the organisation. EDVOS is grateful to Judy for her tireless service and wishes her well for the future.

A new Board Chair, Deputy Chair and Treasurer were appointed at the November board meeting:

EDVOS welcomes current board member, **Lilia Szarski** to the position of Board Chair. Lilia has strong board experience and has served the EDVOS board for two years. She is a professional child and family psychologist with extensive experience in family dispute resolution and counselling. Read more about her background [here](#).

Current board member, **Margaret Hodge** has been elected Deputy Chair, having dedicated nine years to serving the EDVOS board. Margaret has worked in family services for two decades.

Christine Bell has been appointed as the new Board Treasurer. Christine holds qualifications in Accounting and Business Administration and currently works at the Victorian Legal Services Board, where she has held various roles for more than 20 years. Christine is completing an Advanced Diploma in Governance, Risk and Compliance.

EDVOS also welcomes new board member **Leanne Turner**, who brings a wealth of governance experience and knowledge and has a strong health background in addition to Quality and Risk oversight. Leanne holds qualifications in nursing, health and business administration. She held senior management positions at Austin Health before moving to her current role in 2013 as Executive Director with the Royal Dental Hospital Melbourne.



Extended hours

EDVOS is pleased to announce that from January 2017, it will extend its service hours and operate between 9am and 8pm, Monday to Friday.

The extra hours will extend access to family violence services for women and children in the region at more convenient times. An intake worker and case worker will now be available until 8pm, in addition to the ECARS worker who is currently available during the evenings.

EDVOS is also planning to provide additional services on Saturday. Hours will be confirmed once staffing and rosters are in place for the extended weekday hours.



Gifts for Women Program

As the year draws to a close many families often find themselves in times of financial hardship.

The EDVOS Gifts for Women Program tries to ease the burden by giving women and children the opportunity to select Christmas, birthday or special event gifts for each other.

Thanks to Share the Dignity, a number of gift packs that take a particular focus on caring for women will be distributed to clients in the lead up to Christmas. Their #inthebag campaign has kindly donated pre-loved handbags full of items that make a woman feel special including cosmetics, clothing, accessories, personal care products, books and even movie tickets. EDVOS has also received donations of toys and gift packs from Salvation Army (Croydon), Pinchapoo, Mums Supporting Families in Need and donations from the general public.

EDVOS staff and board members are complementing this with additional gift packs to provide women with a few small luxuries they often can't afford at this time of year.

Generous donations have also resulted in EDVOS receiving a large amount of toys to ease the financial burden of gift giving, and bring joy into the lives of children at special times of the year.

To make a donation or learn more about this program, please contact **EDVOS** on **03 9259 4200** or **edvos@edvos.org.au**



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today.

-  EDVOS acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land and we pay our respect to Elders past, present and future.
-  EDVOS respect the many women and children who have been responding and continue to respond to the multiplicity of gendered acts of violence in their lives and their pets and animals.
-  EDVOS is a child-focused and child safe organisation.
-  EDVOS is a not-for-profit organisation, primarily funded by the State Government of Victoria.  EDVOS also receives grants and donations from other sources.