



30 June 2020

New CEO at Eastern Domestic Violence Service (EDVOS) to lead innovative approaches to family violence

The COVID-19 pandemic and the extended periods of lockdown since March 2020, has seen EDVOS, a specialist family violence service provider in Melbourne's eastern metropolitan area, record an increase in all family violence services and a significant increase of risk to women and children experiencing family violence during this time.

In particular, there was a significant rise in demand for services in May and June, and very regularly, almost 50% of our total police referrals are being assessed as high risk. Many of these situations have been exacerbated by COVID related factors, including isolation from accessing support networks, travel restrictions, and reduced opportunities to access services or leave violent situations. Referrals from other services also increased by 20% between March and May, and as restrictions are easing, more women are seizing the opportunity to reach out for support.

Christine Mathieson, newly appointed Chief Executive Officer (CEO), joined EDVOS on May 25 and will lead innovative and evidence-informed approaches to family violence service delivery as EDVOS maintains its strong focus on the safety and wellbeing of victim survivors.

Christine has extensive professional experience as a transformational leader in the community and public sectors and a strong value base that demonstrates her alignment with the EDVOS purpose. "I'm deeply committed and motivated to reducing all forms of violence and abuse against victim survivors and addressing the structural and systemic inequities that discriminate against women", says Christine.

Christine explains that EDVOS demonstrated great strength and agility in its immediate and ongoing response to the challenges associated with service continuity, as a result of COVID-19. EDVOS continues to remain focussed on ensuring women and children experiencing family violence are supported to be safe and free from harm in these unprecedented times.

Christine joins EDVOS at a pivotal time as the organisation embarks on the development of new strategic directions, builds on innovative service initiatives and manages the increase in demand for services.

EDVOS is committed to providing timely and responsive support to enhance safety and wellbeing as well as empower women to achieve their individual goals. EDVOS continues to hold perpetrators of violence to account for their choice to use violence and recognises the strength, resilience and courage of women and children as it works to create a community free from family violence, where everyone feels safe.

The EDVOS Board values its staff and the ongoing, collaborative working relationships with all stakeholders and sector partners. If you have any queries you can contact Christine on (03) 9259 4200 or email: edvos@edvos.org.au.

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