



PRESS RELEASE

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**Through COVID-19 Family Services Australia Expands
Domestic and Family Violence Support in Southern NSW**

**Family Services House
Illawarra-Shoalhaven Community Services Hub**

Stockland Civic Plaza,
211 Lake Entrance Road, Shellharbour City Centre NSW

FSA Illawarra-Shoalhaven, Sutherland, SW Sydney, Southern Highlands, Northern
NSW, Tweed Heads NSW, Gold Coast and Ipswich QLD, Australia.

Through self-funding and the combined support of community, government and the corporate sector, Family Services Illawarra Limited, trading as Family Services Australia (FSA) announced today it had expanded its Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) – Healthy Relationship Program (HRP) in Southern NSW, from the Illawarra to Nowra and Ulladulla.

FSA's HRP is a therapeutic eight-week support group for DFV Survivors, working with women, children and men to change personal behaviors, ensuring people are able to move from surviving to thriving in life, to develop love and awareness of self and healthy relationships with new partners and children that reach their full potential.

DFV Survivor and Thriver FSA's HRP Lead Facilitator, Ms. Kim Edwards said, *"The Healthy Relationships Program is designed to create an accepting, unprejudiced and nurturing space for women to gain learning and awareness in developing and sustaining healthy relationships in their lives. I am particularly conscious of the privilege we have been entrusted by each Participant as they make the Program part of their life story."*

Ms. Edwards said, *"Their story begins as a **victim** of Domestic Violence. We acknowledge them and empower their strength to move them to a place of being a **survivor** of Domestic Violence. As we progress through this Program the women experience a level of **healing**. And our future vision is for these amazing women to move into a place of **thriving** where they can be instigators of healthy relationships and future influencers of others in their life. HRP is a place where women can be understood and given a platform to create a new future for themselves."*

The HRP is an Outcome Rating Scale (ORS) evidenced based program supporting any member of community from all walks of life, including a wide array of community members not limited to First Nations peoples, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD), LGBTIQ+, people on

temporary visas and people with disability (ability).

DFV Survivor and Thriver FSA's DFV Practice Leader, Ms. Fiona Murphy said, *"We have recently delivered services to 63 HRP participants from ages 18 to over 55years, providing 38 personal and home security packs, with an average of over 90% of participants showing up to a 400% improvement in personal capacity, interpersonal skills, and social engagement."*

Ms. Murphy added, *"100% of participants agreed they learned new things about DFV that will help them in the future, learning new skills and ideas to assist parenting after DFV, feeling more confident to identify healthy relationships for self and family and that the program information was relevant to all participants."*

DFV Survivor and Thriver FSA's Managing Director and Company Secretary, Mr. Gary Jackson said, *"As a child male survivor of DFV, I was shown what not to do in life. DFV can affect anyone as a silent killer, physically, emotionally and spiritually. Learning to forgive is one thing, although brain trauma doesn't forget, learning to manage potential triggers in life in advance of them occurring, is where I and we survivors and thrivers, all need help."*

Mr. Jackson said, *"HRP prepares us to move from survive to thrive, to love self-first, and to be able to harmonise one day again in the full surrender of love in safety, trust and protection with our new partners, children, family and friends. HRP and its facilitators are life changing from my own personal experiences of being vulnerable."*

Mr. Jackson added, *"During COVID-19 pandemic recovery DFV incidents are up over 36% with no social or geographic boundaries. Personally, I appeal to everyone in our communities, to do more to identify, prevent and support DFV responses, that enable government to urgently fund this important work, on the basis of serious immediate community interest and intergenerational therapeutic risk that is measurable in recovery."*

FSA is currently seeking support funding of A\$150,000 P.A. to continue the expansion of the Domestic and Family Violence – Healthy Relationship Program services where it has a presence in NSW and QLD.

For Government, NGO and Corporate inquiries to assist, please reach out to Media Contact, Lisa Frost EA Community Engagement lisa.frost@familyservices.org.au or speak with the HRP Lead Facilitator, Kim Edwards on 1800 372 000 Option 3 Domestic and Family Violence service stream to discuss the HRP program in more detail.

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About FSA's Healthy Relationship Program – Participants View

“Amazing educators. Good communication and support”, “The Facilitators always kept in contact and were understanding and supportive”, Fantastic knowing a Facilitator had personal experience. It was reassuring and gave credibility”, “I feel confident to take the next step with all this knowledge”, “The venue was comfortable, practical and easy to access”, “Friendship, connection, knowledge, confidence and empowerment”, “The empowerment, knowing I am not alone”, Strength and knowledge”, “How to recognise red flags better”, “I have found this program very helpful and would recommend it to other women”, “Very positive! I was scared to begin with; however, I am so glad I participated”, “I feel strong and confident going forward”, “I have walked away with a lot of knowledge that will benefit my future”, “I absolutely thoroughly enjoyed the program and found it extremely informative, encouraging and empowering”. “This is like being at a trust and safety resort”.

Week One: Introductions, Expectations, What is DV, Cycle of Violence, Myths and Facts

Week Two: Tactics & Brainwashing, Power & Control, Rights Paddock, Head Hurt Gut, Fight Flight Freeze Flow

Week Three: Scarless Song, Healthy vs Unhealthy Relationships, Equality, Using Instincts, Self-Care Mindfulness

Week Four: Positive Anger, Dear Daddy Let's Change the Story, Nurturing Children, Gender Equality, Self-Esteem & Self-Confidence

Week Five: Hopes & Dreams, Grief & Loss, 1st Impressions: Effects of DV on Brain Development, Repairing Relationships, 10 Tips for Parenting

Week Six: Understanding Boundaries, Values Compass, Setting a Boundary, Talking to My Mum Resource, Strengths Card

Week Seven: DV Guest Speakers, eSafety Questionnaire, Ques to Ask Yourself About Your New Partner, Art Interpretations, Meditation & Journalling

Week Eight: Review & Discussion, Art Interpretations Presented, Community Information, Celebration, Self-Care 60 Gifts

About Family Services Australia (FSA)

Established in 1992, FSA aims to keep clients *Safe, Well, Strong and Connected* through direct services to local children, young people, parents and families who are striving to achieve this but face multiple and sometimes insurmountable challenges.

In 2016 a revised multi-disciplined service commitment was launched to holistically support unmet client needs in multiple geographies in Southern and Northern NSW and in South East and South West QLD, later expanding from (2) to (34) sites.

Currently **FSA Client Satisfaction (CSAT)** is 97.5% and **Employee Satisfaction (ESAT)** 90%, representing our values of **Compassion, Accountability, Respect, Empowerment (CARE) with Integrity.**

Throughout the regions it operates, FSA has been established to continue its community support journey through Merger and Acquisition (M&A), Community, Philanthropic, Government, Non-Government Organisation (NGO) and select Corporate sector partnerships.

For more information visit www.familyservices.org.au or call 1800 FSA 000 (1800 372 000)

About Family Services House

Family Services House is a unique facility designed and located in the community interest, representing a trusted place to go when our community needs support. FSA are grateful that through the dedication, therapeutic care and life outcomes our staff consistently provide, a long term easily accessible facility has been secured in the community interest on 30year recurring terms.

Keeping children, young people, adults and families *Safe, Well, Strong and Connected*.

Built with dedicated Telstra fibre to the premises technology supported on-site by the industry leading Virtual IT Group, Family Services House is also home to a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) South Coast Academy (SCA), Mission Australia, Edmen Community Staffing Solutions and a Campos Coffee Community Café, Signora's Café and Deli.

Together on-site with FSA's six integrated child and family service streams available to clients through referral in the Illawarra-Shoalhaven regions and throughout NSW and Australia online:

1. Early Intervention (EI) – Park and Play, All About Play and 21 evidence-based Group Work programs, Children and Creche Services and Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) supporting the Shoalhaven;
2. Child Youth and Family Support (CYFS) – Including Families NSW;
3. FSA Psychology, Mental Health Support and Wellbeing (MHS&W) – Child, Adolescent and Adult psychological services and Online e-Consult Child Mental Health Services (CMHS) including available telehealth services for ages 4-18 throughout NSW schools;
4. Disability Management Services (DMS) – Disability Employment Services (DES) and Specialist Mental Health Services;
5. Domestic and Family Violence (DFV) – Staying Home Leaving Violence (SHLV) and both Child and Adult Victims Counselling Services; and
6. Intensive Family Preservation (IFP) – Together with Drugs and Alcohol in Pregnancy and Parenting Services (DAPPS)

About FSA Psychology – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Support and Wellbeing

Est. 2012 and now with a Community Reach of more than 26,757 Occasions of Service (OoS) per annum, FSA Psychology provides a range of counselling and personal development services in a friendly environment for kids, teens and families in the Illawarra-Shoalhaven and through e-Consults Online, helping to protect and promote client well-being.

FSA Psychology offers an uplifting environment that continues to create long-lasting solutions to some of the most demanding health challenges facing society and communities today. Our FSA Psychology Child Mental Health Services (CMHS) service stream has been founded on a model that acknowledges that the best progress occurs for vulnerable people when there is a strong base of support around them. For more information see www.FSApsychology.org.au or call 1800 FSA 000 (1800 372 000) Option 2.