

**Family Group Conferencing Network**  
Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2007  
2:00 – 3:30 pm  
Venue: Melbourne Citymission 19 King Street Melbourne

## **FGC Network Minutes**

### **1. Attendance**

Paul Ban: Private practitioner/consultant; Judith Newbold: Regional Extended Family Services (REFS); Rani Cornell MCM; Dom Swift: Department of Human Services Child Protection (DHS CP); Nigel Polak: Greensborough Family Relationship Centre (GFRC)

**Chair:** Paul Ban

**Minutes:** Nigel Polak

### **2. Apologies**

Mandy Baxter: Melbourne City Mission (MCM); Margaret Brittain: Glastonbury Family Services (GFS); Yasmin Thomas: MCM; Eddy DeNardis: DHS CP; Margaret Armstrong: educational consultant; Debbie Moore: Glastonbury Family Services; Margaret Kearsley, Anglicare Family Services (Eastern)

### **3. Previous Minutes (23/05/07): not distributed – overview provided by Judith from notes**

- (i) **Information Kit & Tool Kit** produced by MCM for Youth Focused Interventions include information of Family Group Conferencing.
- (ii) **Youth Homelessness Conference** held recently by MCM including workshops on Transformative Mediation and Family Group Conferencing.
- (iii) **International Restorative Practices Conference** – Marg Armstrong is on the organizing committee. Flyer has been distributed by Nigel.
- (iv) **FGC Training (Burnside)** confirmed by REFS for July 07.
- (v) **Nathan Harris (ANU researcher)** – discussion of his research mapping FGC in Australia.

### **4. Business Arising**

#### **4.1 Meeting Structure**

Suggestions:

- (i) the theme for the next meeting be set the current meeting and a speaker/presenter assigned.  
Topics: practitioner experiences; theoretical discussion; specialist views; restorative practices in the wider context; Collingwood Neighbourhood Justice Centre; FDRP Accreditation.
- (ii) space for information exchange, updates, upcoming events and other goings on.
- (iii) opportunity to raise general discussion.

### **5. Standing items**

#### **5.1 FDR Practitioner Accreditation**

(Note: Nigel is now an FDR Practitioner at GFRC)

Nigel, Paul & Marg Brittain have drafted a response to the removal of FGC as a competency in the new FDRP National Competency Framework, that became current as of 1 July 2007, and will be required for all FDR Practitioners by 1 July 2009.

**Action: response to be distributed for comment.**

Agreed that inclusion of FGC in the Competency Framework is important for the legitimacy of FGC in the family context, and for FGC to be valued in different training/professional pathways.

**5.2 FGC Training**

Training 10-13 July in Melbourne was undersubscribed and has now been postponed to end of September. Flyer has previously been distributed. **Please distribute through networks.** Wadonga training was *oversubscribed*, and a second Wadonga training will be offered.

**4.4 Restorative Practices International Conference 16-19 October 2007**

Marg A is seeking presenters in the children & families sector on behalf of the organizers. Please contact Marg A directly if you are interested.

**4.4 Discussion – FGC in the Social Context**

Paul is interested in the common & differentiating features alternative dispute resolution (mediation), FGC and Restorative Justice models. Hypothesis is that the centrality of the systemic/kinship concept behind decision-making. i.e. distinction between individualistic vs collective (kinship) ways of being. Paul is undertaking a training tour of the UK meeting with current practitioners to reflect on and further practice – he will report back on outcomes/thoughts at next meeting.

Dom identified the importance of distinguishing between family therapy; family mediation / dispute resolution and FGC, both for users, professionals and practitioners. At the same time, the importance of counselling and mediation skills for FGC practitioners was noted.

Judith echoed requests in earlier meetings for a mapping of different models of dispute resolution/decision-making in different fields/contexts.

At the core of this discussion is the Network's role in raising the profile and legitimacy of FGC in the community.

**Next meeting:                    Wednesday 24 October 2007  
    2.00-3.30pm**

**Topic:                                Melbourne City Mission, 19 King Street, Melbourne CBD  
    feedback and discussion from Paul Ban's UK experience.**

**Note from 23/05/07:**

**"Proposed item for future discussion:**

- **where does the convenor role best sit: legal/community/welfare/families?"**