

AVP-WA Chairperson's Report

2012

Anna Alderson
Chairperson
March, 2013

As Chairperson of the AVP-WA Committee in 2012 I am pleased to be delivering this, my last report - and am very happy to tell you that AVP-WA continues to grow and expand.

Workshops

In addition to the two workshops on Trauma and Shame held during the Regional Gathering in January in 2012 we did another 48 workshops (nine more than in 2011) up to the end of January 2013. Amongst these were 16 in prisons including two at Broome prison (separate ones for women and men). There were 6 in schools, including one at Broome SHS and a T4F at Warnbro CHS. Of the 8 community workshops there were ones held in Derby and Broome, special focus African and Noongar workshops, and one with a women's refuge in Perth. We again delivered 4 workshops at Leederville TAFE campus for the David Wirrapunda Foundation. We have also been very pleased to be able to work with Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors (ASeTTS) this year with whom we conducted 6 workshops and graduated 6 facilitators. Thanks to Susan for her inspiration and determination in arranging these workshops and co-facilitating some of them. We are pleased that we will be able to continue our association with ASeTTS in 2014. We are also appreciative of the efforts of Olwyn at Warnbro CHS and Fae and her team in Broome for organising workshops in these places.

Overall we have delivered something like 900 hours of workshops and very roughly 3600 volunteer hours! This is truly extraordinary! And of course, this does not include many additional hours in preparation and review of workshops, organisation for them, committee meetings, etc. Many and most sincere thanks to everyone who has made this possible. Special thanks again to Sally who somehow manages to hold the organisation of workshops together and conjure up facilitators for every workshop. We still managed to not cancel any planned workshop due to a lack of facilitators.

So much of our work comes through a single person from an organisation becoming involved with AVP and then introducing it to their colleagues and/or clients. It's almost like a virus! But it's most effective.

Facilitators

We have 54 facilitators who still wish to be considered for workshop facilitation after Jim Thom conducted a survey earlier in the year to find out from those who were not active who was still interested. This does not include those situated outside of Perth. Over the year we had 37 different outmate facilitators and a dozen or more inmate facilitators who have delivered at least one workshop and most were involved in many more.

There has been a great deal of movement of prisoners from Acacia who have served AVP so well for many years. While we are very pleased that many are now moving towards release it has required many changes for AVP which the prisoners, staff at Acacia, and Sally have managed well. We are however having to put additional effort into training more facilitators there. Having inmate and outmate facilitators is a unique but very significant part of the success of AVP – an experiential learning program that works beside people not on people. So it is vital that we continue to do this rebuilding.

Training

Monthly training nights have continued to be held in Perth and two training days were held at Acacia, led by inmates. The latter sessions are also attended by outmate facilitators. Jim Thom again ably coordinated training this year and we thank him very much for this. A number of facilitators volunteered to lead sessions and share their knowledge and skills. Thank you to everyone who so enthusiastically participated and made them worthwhile. Training nights are not only about skill development; they are also about staying in touch with AVP and its ethos. They are always thought provoking – and fun.

The Committee

We have had a much more stable committee this year, and having 9 nominal members has meant that even if one or two are unable to attend a meeting we can still transact our business. Elizabeth has continued to do splendid job with our monthly minutes and keeping track of correspondence. Despite some time off for a hip replacement Sally has continued to keep our accounts and arrange most of the workshops as well as co-facilitating an inordinate number. Without doubt the growth and sustenance of AVP in WA is in very large part due to Sally's total dedication to AVP. The Broome sub-committee continues to operate as does the one at Acacia despite the large and rapid turnover of inmates there. These sub-committees greatly reduce the amount of work the Perth-based committee must do. The Broome sub-committee has organised a number of workshops and other events to publicise AVP and peace generally. Their efforts are greatly appreciated.

AVP Internationally and Nationally

Sally continues to participate in regular skype meetings nationally, and corresponds by email with all parts of the world enabling us to keep in touch with what is happening nationally and internationally. I went to Sydney in August to participate in a Trauma Awareness workshop and as a result, was invited to be a cofacilitator on the team that facilitated a Trauma Awareness workshop at the National Gathering at Silver Wattle outside Canberra in January 2013. It was great that we were able to have 7 facilitators from WA at the National Gathering.

The Newsletter

Two issues of the Newsletter were also produced during the year. These are an important way of informing others as well as members about AVP operations. Thanks to Debbi for her valuable work on these.

Other Happenings

We again held our end-of-year gathering at Acacia prison when all inmates who have facilitated or participated in workshops are invited to celebrate with visiting community AVP facilitators. This is always enjoyed by all who participate.

We've had occasional social gatherings for Perth facilitators and these too are enjoyed.

Some AVPers from Perth and others in Broome were visible in World Peace Day activities in September.

Olwyn from Warnbro Community High School also spoke about AVP at a psychologists' conference during the year.

It's important for AVP to be visible in other contexts and we are appreciative of those who chose to 'fly the flag' for AVP in their circle so influence.

Concluding comments

2012 was another very successful year for AVP-WA. We significantly increased the number and scope of our workshops. Our finances remain satisfactory and well used (thanks to Sally). We are increasingly visible in the community. Thank you very much to all involved in AVP-WA and most particularly to fellow committee members, Elizabeth, Sally, Ian, Selene, Bheena, Jim, Jo and Nick, and to others who have undertaken special tasks. I've very much enjoyed the privilege of being the chair of AVP-WA over the last three years. I hope to continue as committee member and facilitator – but with just a little less responsibility.