



Chairperson's report 2017 (Including RTG in January 2018)

2017 was a very successful year for AVP WA. We ran 58 workshops in prisons, schools and the community, which is a 16% increase on 2016. These included 32 in Acacia, Karnet, Wooroloo and Bunbury prisons, and 2 in Wandoo Reintegration Facility. Community workshops included 4 in Perth and 8 in the Pilbara, 2 ASeTTS workshops, 4 special community (PSO) and 2 special community (Kimberley). 1 school youth workshop was held as well as 4 HIPP workshops.

We also assisted with programmes in Darwin and Melbourne.

Prison Workshops

As in previous years, there was a high demand for AVP workshops in Acacia Prison in 2017, and we once again facilitated more workshops there than any other prison. We successfully trained 18 new apprentice facilitators and 2 assistants at this facility.

We have successfully completed 6 workshops in each of Karnet, Wooroloo and Bunbury prisons this year, although it has been challenging to train new facilitators due to the short-term nature of the time spent at these facilities by the inmates.

Negotiations are underway with the Senior Prison Support Officer at Casuarina to conduct workshops with the aboriginal prisoners next year. The plan is to engage some of the PSOs who have been trained this year.

Negotiations initiated with Bandyup Women's Prison were unsuccessful due to a change in personnel. Many attempts were made to contact the relevant persons at the new Melaleuca women's prison but these contacts were not returned.

Community and School Workshops

1 Basic and 1 Advanced workshop was held at ASeTTS, with 2 Basic and 1 Advanced held for Aboriginal Prison Support Officers in the community.

In South Hedland, we conducted 8 workshops with the Bloodwood Tree Association and Well Women's Centre. The aim there is to have enough facilitators who can lead workshops with the clients of these organisations and to eventually start in Roebourne prison.

1 Basic, 1 Advanced and two T4F workshops were held at Helena College junior school during the year, from which 14 new apprentice facilitators were trained.

A T4F youth workshop was held at Sowilo School for students at educational risk.

Although 3 Basic and 1 Advanced workshop were held in the community in Perth, we were unsuccessful in getting enough participants for a T4F workshop. However, 1 community participant completed the T4F in Acacia Prison, and is now an active facilitator.

2 Basic workshops were held in the Aboriginal Community of Bidyadanga. This year, we hope to train facilitators there and do some workshops in the school.

We supported Darwin, by helping to facilitate 12 workshops, including 3 in the community and 9 in prison.

1 facilitator travelled to Melbourne to run a Training Day on HIPP and the Youth Programme, and then to Geelong North to lead a workshop with Years 10 – 12 students.

Management Committee

In 2017, our management committee started the year with 10 members. These were Selene Moonbeams (Chairperson), Bheena Sewnarain (Deputy Chair), Amy Thom (Minute-taker), Sally Herzfeld (Treasurer), Collette Chesters (Assistant Treasurer), Mark Newhouse, Peter Fry, Sallie Hosking, Jim Thom and Merril Stokes (General committee members). However, we were very sorry to lose one member, Peter Fry, from the committee during the year due to ill health.

We meet monthly in Mount Lawley, and also exchange emails between meetings in order to make decisions which can't be held off until the following month's meeting. An hour and a half for each meeting never seems to be sufficient time to adequately deal with all the issues that arise.

Administration

Mark Newhouse has been invaluable in his part-time role as AVP WA Administrator in 2017, and the committee was unanimous in their decision to renew his contract for 2018.

Mark does a wonderful job performing many administrative tasks, including website updates, keeping workshop kits well stocked, maintaining a complete database of facilitators and ensuring prison clearances are updated. He also liaises with prison staff and ensures as far as possible, the smooth scheduling of workshops. This includes not only confirming dates for workshops and putting facilitation teams together, but also ensuring inmate and community facilitators get together for team preps and that reports are sent to staff and inmate facilitators as soon as possible after each workshop.

He submits an extensive monthly report to the committee.

Sally has been the liaison person at Wooroloo Prison this year, but Mark will take over this role for 2018.

AVP WA Reunion

On Saturday 28th October, we had a reunion to which we invited all who have been involved with AVP WA since its beginning in 1994. There were over 50 of us gathered for the afternoon at the Rise in Maylands where we renewed old connections and celebrated the achievements of AVP WA over the last 23 years – more than 700 workshops! We enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea courtesy of Merril.

Some of our past members felt re-inspired and will hopefully become active once more. The reunion was an initiative of Jo Vallentine, who unfortunately was too sick on the day to attend.

Regional Training Gathering

From 5th – 10th January 2018, the Regional Training Gathering was held at Guildford Grammar School over 6 days.

17 facilitators (some full time and some part time) attended from Perth, 15 from other states, and 1 from each of the Philippines and Nepal.

We had a strong and dedicated planning team for the gathering, with facilitators from all states helping to facilitate some very interesting and worthwhile sessions. We received some wonderful feedback from attendees, and an extensive report was formulated with contributions from many facilitators who ran sessions at the gathering. Sessions included reports from states and other countries, The new light and lively supplement, Advanced topics, Resiliency, Empathy, Interfaith, Teams and feedback, Trauma and AVP, Discernment River of Life, Marketing, AVP and preventing violent extremism, Mental health and AVP, Ideas from Nepal, Mental health first aid, All about facilitators, Raph's journey to AVP and New ideas. The AVP Aus general meeting was also held plus issue arising from state reports.

AVP WA sponsored 1 facilitator from the Philippines and 1 from Nepal to attend the gathering. They were both very appreciative of the sponsorship and proved to be valuable contributors at the gathering. We also sponsored a Burundi man who facilitates in refugee groups in Sydney, and his contribution to the gathering also proved invaluable.

Peter Fry was a very accomplished Master of Ceremonies for our talent night during the gathering, and we were all wonderfully entertained by a very high calibre of gifted performers.

8 HIPP facilitators joined the gathering one morning and ran a very enjoyable and worthwhile session for RTG attendees. Several parents also attended the session, and were very impressed with the children's facilitation skills.

26 RTG attendees also attended a session at Acacia prison, although we were disappointed that Protection inmates were not allowed to attend the session due to staffing shortages. 5 Mainstream facilitators did attend and it was a very worthwhile session. Some of the community facilitators who attended had never been in a prison before, and it was quite a moving experience for some. Both inmate and community facilitators co-facilitated the session and a wonderful afternoon tea was provided by the prison.

Training

Monthly training nights continued throughout the year, with pizza and socialising time provided before each session. These training nights are important for facilitator connection, fun and honing of skills.

We also held 2 training days and a Christmas gathering in Acacia. These gatherings help inmate and community facilitators stay connected, and the prison facilitators appreciate these days.

Australian, Regional and International AVP

During 2017, regular Skype meetings were held in order to share happenings and ideas from around the country and overseas. Information and queries are often then fed back to the AVP WA committee.

May Trust

Once again, we received a considerable sum of money from our anonymous donor. It is this that has allowed us to fund a part time administrator and extend our operations to prisons throughout the state. It has also helped to reimburse transport costs for facilitators to attend workshops, sponsor 2 active AVP WA facilitators to attend the International Gathering in Nepal in November, and sponsor 1 interstate and 2 international facilitators to travel to the Regional Training Gathering in Perth in January.

Personal Reflections

Being Chair of AVP WA for 2017 has been a rewarding experience for me. It has been a privilege to work with such a committed and inspirational team of volunteers. I was very grateful to Bheena for filling my role as Chair for several months during Spring so that I could go on an extended bush hike, and I was confident that AVP WA business was in excellent hands during my absence. I am constantly in awe of the continued dedication of committee members in performing not only their considerable roles on the committee, but also finding time to facilitate workshops throughout the year.

Of course, AVP WA could not flourish as well as it has this past year without the dedicated team of active facilitators who have volunteered their time and energy to facilitate workshops throughout the year. Their commitment to the collective desired outcome of a more peaceful world is highly commendable.

Thank you for your confidence in me as Chair for 2017, and I wish the new committee another very successful year ahead.

Selene Moonbeams
AVP WA Chairperson
1 March 2018