

## AVP WA Chairperson's report for 2020



### Introduction

This short report will be my personal experiences as the Chairperson of the AVP WA Committee 2020. What a year! I think we will all have personal memories of 2020. Some not so good and some amazing. It has been exactly the same for AVP WA. Covid has caused problems but it has also created opportunities. If you would like to see the specific details for the year can I please refer you to Marks comprehensive Admin Report.

### Workshops

Covid meant we had to shut down our workshops (Prison, Schools and Community) for part of 2020. We dropped from 47 workshops last year to 38 workshops this year. Richard Back suggests "There is no such thing as a problem without a gift for you in its hands". When workshops, and even the National Gathering were cancelled our innovative facilitators went straight to work with Zoom. Jim and Selene started by facilitating a number of National Zoom Workshops which were quickly picked up by the rest of AVP Australia and copied many, many times. This option will reach people who could not attend our normal workshops. A fantastic achievement by Jim and Selene.

We now have a national training programmes to develop our Zoom facilitators. Trying to compare the Zoom experience and numbers to normal workshops is difficult. If we look at total numbers in normal workshops contacts in 2019 it is 550. For 2020 it was 436. But in 2020 we also had an extra 862 Zoom contacts from all over the world.

### Facilitators

Our volunteer facilitators are the core of AVP WA. Without them nothing would happen. You all have my deepest thanks for the work you do. In 2019 we had 49 new facilitators graduate. This year it is 36. But more qualified facilitators are coming via the Zoom training programmes and post lockdown T4Fs

### Why Should we do AVP

Over this year a number of documents have passed through my hands.

AVP WA was invited to apply for the United Nations Association of WA, Human Rights Award. We were not successful, but in their email reply they said "Your organization is doing very good work for the community, and is very much the type of work that will inspire others and help improve our society".

In my research for the Human Rights Award I also found an email from Acacia Prison Resettlement Manager saying, "We have been involved with AVP for approximately 14 years and the co-ordination for the running of the Alternative to Violence programme within Acacia Prison. Being a voluntary programme that assists inmates with looking outside the normal realms of thinking, learning how to deal with problems. This has been a huge success here at Acacia Prison, approximately 3000 inmates have participated in the AVP."

AVP WA receives a donation from the May Trust each year to assist with our running costs. In their last letter they said, "The Trust believes it is an honour to be able to support AVPWA. With best wishes for stamina and hope, the Trust sends thanks to each and all at AVP, whether committee members, trainers, facilitators or volunteers for your work towards skilled peace keeping in our community".

A month ago I interviewed 6 new graduate facilitators at Acacia Prison. They did not use the same words but the message was very clear, they were all "looking for a new direction for their life". They all saw AVP was a critical element of that "new direction".

Should we do AVP? I think the feedback from participants and agencies clearly tell us that we should.

### Thanks

Firstly, I must thank all of the committee for their hard work this year. Bheena: Vice Chair for backing me up, Collette: Treasurer, for balancing our books, Niki: Secretary, for our prompt minutes, Selene for being our social media innovator and to Jim, Kymble, Ghazal, Sally, and Mark as committee members. Thank you.

Secondly, Marks specific role as Administrator is critical to the operation and survival of AVPWA. He basically makes sure everything happens. Drafting our new abbreviated manuals was particularly helpful. Many thanks Mark.

Finally, to our facilitators who volunteer so much of your valuable time. If you did not turn up for the workshops each time, AVP WA would simply 'stop happen'. Thank you.

### Conclusion

Thank you to you all for supporting me in the role of Chairperson. I need to leave the role because of my health but I know I am leaving behind a vibrant, innovative organization that will continue to develop and grow with every new challenge.

**Greg Rusha (Good Greg)**

**AVP WA Chairperson  
1 February 2021**