

ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT WA INC

Annual Report of the Chair for 2025

Introduction

2025 was the 31st year of the Alternatives to Violence Project in WA. It was a busy and successful year. In summary some of our achievements are listed below:

- Have run 46 workshops.
- Held training sessions in and out of prison
- Trained 48 inmate facilitators
- Trained 3 new community facilitators and refreshed several “old timers”
- Had 3 in person attendees at the national gathering in NSW
- Had regular committee meetings
- Maintained an active Facebook page
- Circulated regular newsletters to facilitators and supporters
- Had a treasurer managing several different accounts
- Geared up our publicity campaign
- Had a presence at Peace One Day and the Darlington Arts Festival

I would like to thank:

- All facilitators both inmates and community for their dedication.
- The staff at the various prisons in which we work who help us navigate the sometimes complex regulations
- Lauren Pemberton for helping us with marketing
- Pete Zawacki for hosting our website
- Our administrator, treasurer, minute taker and all committee members
- The Religious Society of Friends who allow us to use their premises as an office base and for some functions

Workshops

We held a total of forty six workshops during the year which was an increase of four on the previous year. These were spread between Acacia Prison, Karnet Prison, Bunbury Prison, Wooroloo Prison Farm and the general community. We also assisted in three community workshops in Broome. There were 23 Basic, 13 Advanced, 10 T4F with a total of 469 participants. We also commenced our initial workshop at Albany regional prison but this was not completed due to a lockdown. We are hopeful of continuing this project next year.

Facilitator Days

We held facilitator days for community facilitators as well as two in Acacia prison and two in Wooroloo prison farm. These days are invaluable for two reasons. One is improving our skills and learning from each other. The other is to get to know one another better which is essential when working together on teams. We also had one “Bring a Friend” day which helps to introduce more people to AVP and how it works.

We intend to repeat this each year. On the final community facilitator day this year we celebrated the imminent 90th birthday of Sally Herzfeld.

Publicity and Marketing

One of our challenges is getting information out to the general public as well as our own facilitators and supporters. I would like to thank Selene Moonbeams for her work with Facebook. We have daily inspiring and informative posts which have attracted a large following. We also boost various posts to target audiences. Thanks also to Selene for producing the newsletter. She now does this on a monthly basis which gives more regular information to our members. Hosting of our website has been taken over by Pete Zawacki which is not only free of charge but changes are more rapidly attended to. Lauren Pemberton, who has vast experience in the area, has been helping us with marketing and website and pamphlet design. Lauren has introduced us to online marketing through platforms such as Google and Facebook. We hope this will help us reach a larger and more targeted audience. Pete Zawacki also purchased some Frisbees with our logo and marketed these at Peace One Day and the Darlington Arts Festival. Sally Herzfeld organised for AVP to have a stall at these events.

AVP Australia

This group which connects AVP people around Australia has Zoom meetings on the second Wednesday of each month. We try to ensure that at least one of our committee attends each time. We had three of our facilitators attend the national gathering in person in August. Several of us also attended the hybrid sessions.

AVP International

May saw the 50th anniversary of the commencement of AVP in Greenhaven prison in New York State. Although none of us attended in person we were represented by the performance of Sally's Rap – written several years ago by Sally Herzfeld. Also by the display of photographs of our wooden mandalas. These were artistically decorated by our inmate facilitators. We also had on display photographs of our aboriginal design mandalas.

Funding

In the absence of a regular donation from the May Trust our invested funds will dwindle. We applied unsuccessfully for a synergy grant.

The Committee

Our committee worked together well and respectfully during the year. There was lots of enthusiasm and sharing of the workload. We continued to use Zoom for our meetings. Although this has disadvantages we decided that the convenience and efficiency override these concerns.

Our committee during the year was:

Jim Thom (Chairperson)

Sue Reid (Deputy Chairperson) – resigned in August
Collette Chesters (Treasurer)
Sallie Hosking (Minute Taker)
Sally Herzfeld (Member)
Sue Mulholland (Member)
Bheena Sewnarian (Member)
Selene Moonbeams (Member and Administrator)
Jacob Gunnink (Member)

I would like to thank the 2025 committee for their hard work and commitment during the year.

Our Challenges

Challenges for the coming year are:

- 1) Training new facilitators in the community remains a priority. We hope that our improved marketing strategies will help resolve this.
- 2) Retaining the engagement of new facilitators, both within the community and on release from prison.
- 3) Finding funding or income to allow us to continue at our current level.
- 4) During the year we held a meeting with some ex-inmates about the possibility of presentations to school pupils. We named this the Alternatives to Prison Project. It is currently on hold but we would like to continue once we have the time and personnel.

The Future

In 2026 we would like to be able to continue to offer workshops at a similar level to 2025. We would also like to start a program at Albany Regional Prison. We would like to attract and train new community facilitators who have the time and the desire to help run workshops in prisons. Ideally we would like to reach out to younger people, either through workshops or presentations to inform them about the various alternatives to violence when dealing with conflict.

Jim Thom
Chairperson AVPWA
1st February 2026