
MEDIA RELEASE

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Supporting Families through Tough Times

Family Relationship Services Australia (FRSA) welcomes the establishment of the Community Response Taskforce to advise the Federal Government on responses to the economic hardships caused by the global financial crisis.

“Individuals and families affected by financial loss, unemployment or the impact of prolonged uncertainty will often turn to community organisations first for much needed support and advice” said Samantha Page, Executive Director, FRSA.

The role of organisations is much broader than traditional ‘welfare’ or crisis response such as emergency food or accommodation. Often the point of first contact may be with a counselling organisation or parent support service because of the strain on relationships caused by financial difficulties or stress. For example, Mensline Australia reported a 34% rise in suicide-related calls between October and December 2008, a rise that appears to be caused by greater financial pressure. The Relationships Indicator’s Survey conducted in August 2008 found the number of people who identified ‘financial insecurities or difficulties’ as negatively impacting on relationships had more than doubled compared with the last survey in 2006.

“Encouraging people to get help early rather than wait until they are in crisis can be the key to preventing financial ruin, relationship breakdown or mental health problems. Family relationship services are uniquely placed to identify when relationship issues are intertwined with financial issues and there is potential to avoid events such as mortgage foreclosure, eviction, repossession of assets or breakdown in communication with lenders”.

“This would be much easier to do if sound, unbiased professional financial advice was more readily available. Currently there are gaps for those who cannot afford to purchase private services but are not yet in financial crisis or eligible for priority access to public services.”

In our submission to the 2009 Federal Budget FRSA has called for

- A nationally coordinated prevention campaign to encourage people to be proactive by investing in their relationships, planning for the economic downturn and knowing where to get help; and
- Funding for a joint project between relationship services and community based financial counselling services to enhance early access to financial advice and counselling, jointly supported by the Australian Financial Counselling and Credit Reform Association (AFCCRA).

A copy of the full submission is available from www.frsa.org.au or admin@frsa.org.au.



Linking services, supporting relationships

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