



ANNUAL REPORT

2018/19



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERSHIP

Conflict Resolution Service acknowledges that Canberra has been built on the lands of the traditional owners. We pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging. Conflict Resolution Service welcomes and celebrates the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and their ongoing contribution to the ACT Community.



ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

VISION

A restorative canberra
built on relationships
that positively
transform conflict.

MISSION

To repair and strengthen
relationships by
preventing, managing and
resolving conflict.

VALUES

PROFESSIONAL
EFFECTIVE
ACCESSIBLE
ENABLING

CONTENTS

Message from the CEO6

Message from the Chair8

Message from the Treasurer 10

Conflict Resolution Service Organisational Structure 11

Conflict Resolution Service turns 30..... 12

Conferences 20

New Branding..... 22

Restorative Network..... 23

Alternative Dispute Resolution 24

Neighbourhood Disputes..... 25

Living in the Community Disputes..... 25

Family Dispute Resolution..... 26

Family Support Program 27

In the Spotlight..... 30

Mediation Training Program 34

Supporters 34

Mediator Panel..... 34

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



The organisation has certainly had its challenges over the years and especially in the past year undergone many changes to form a position that allows for continued growth and stability for many more years to come. The 2018 / 2019 year has achieved many key objectives to ensure a stable future. These include:

Working with ACT Government to streamline our funded programs to ensure the most vulnerable people that find themselves in conflict situations through our referral organisation like the Magistrates Court and SupportLink can resolve their dispute quickly with minimal stress and financial burden.

We continue to work with ACT Housing to educate tenant managers on how to manage conflict with their tenants. When disputes escalate facilitating conversation between neighbours to ease the stress and create a more harmonious neighbourhood community.

Our Family Tree House Program had a name change to the Family Support Program. This better reflects how we support young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness due to family conflict. This program works in partnership with other agencies to support young people and their families. It names the conflict and works on strategies to promote positive communication to rebuild the relationship. Our aim is for families to be Strong, Engaged & Connected.

At the AGM in November last year we launched our new website and logo. This has enabled us to have a brand that is recognisable / adaptive and relates to all areas of our business. A special thank you to Justin Huehn Design for developing a brand that will meet the organisations needs over many more years to come.

The engagement of Threesides Marketing was a positive step in identifying and communicating the important role and service Conflict Resolution Service provides to the community. Covering all disputes within the Family, Community and Workplace.

A restructure of our Mediator Panel ensured CRS has highly experienced and skilled mediators with a variety of backgrounds. This enables us to manage all types of disputes no matter how complex.

The organisation developed a more robust and structured fee for service program. Restructuring of our fee for service programs was a purposeful step in ensuring the organisation has a continued revenue pipeline. This included a more streamlined approach to our training programs and alternative dispute resolution services. A noticeable increase to workplace and commercial mediations has been a direct result of these changes over the past year.

In 2019 the organisation celebrated 30 years of service to the Canberra Community. The evening was MC'd by Board member Genevieve Jacobs followed by a keynote address from the Attorney General, Gordon Ramsay. The organisation is fortunate to have one of the founding members

David Purnell OAM still very engaged with the service. David's speech provided an insight to the early years of the organisation and how it evolved over the 30 years.

All of our achievements over the past year would not have been possible without the continued support of our partners. Thank you for sharing this journey with us. We look forward to continuing our relationship with you over the coming years.

I would personally like to acknowledge our Board Chair, Clive Rodger and all Board members for your continued guidance and active participation over the past year. Your support is truly valued and appreciated.

To the amazing team at Conflict Resolution Service. Your passion for what you do is admirable. Each one of you make a positive difference to people's lives every day. Thank you for your humility and comradery. It has been an absolute pleasure working with each and every one of you.

MEL HALEY
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



I am delighted to report that the existential threats that faced CRS over the last couple of years are past. CRS is now in a good place with outstanding leadership, a balanced budget, high levels of staff engagement and an invigorated sense of purpose. Most importantly we can focus on our vision of creating a restorative Canberra built on relationships that positively transform conflict.

This year we celebrated 30 years of serving the Canberra community. This is a significant milestone and achievement. We celebrated in March and other sections of this Annual Report feature aspects of that celebration. It was pleasing to hear the Attorney General Gordon Ramsay MLA acknowledge the huge contribution of CRS.

Vision alone cannot sustain an organisation. History is littered with groups with wonderful ideas and ephemeral longevity. The enduring quality of CRS has been the commitment of staff, dedicated and highly trained and experienced mediators, government support and good governance. A good business model alone will not sustain supporting those in the community without any or with very limited resources seeking to resolve conflicts.

Many conflicts escalate into destructive life changing events particularly if participants enter the criminal justice system. This is why CRS is increasingly focusing on early intervention and preventative measures. Proactively equipping those in conflictual situations to help resolve issues makes a significant difference. Other conflicts however require skilled mediators to assist parties understand the issues, the others'

point of view and to be actively engaged in the process of reconciliation. Unlike legal judgements the outcomes are not imposed. Outcomes that are imposed often leave parties feeling disenfranchised and disempowered.

Last year I mentioned a number of issues which The Board saw as priorities to facilitate CRS' mission of repairing and strengthening relationships by preventing and managing conflict. I will report briefly on each.

- 1. Staffing:** A number of dedicated and experienced staff have retired over the past 12 months. We thank them for their outstanding contribution. Younger staff have been recruited which has changed the culture of CRS. We are leaner and very focused on service delivery and efficiency. Mel Haley our CEO has done an outstanding job in managing a difficult transition process while maintaining high staff engagement and morale.
- 2. Community Awareness:** Last year I referred to the fact that CRS had hid its light under a bushel. Our CEO's Report notes our efforts to lift community awareness by engaging professional assistance, Our new logo, website, and increasing radio and media exposure has helped with brand recognition and in securing grants to assist our work.

3 Training: CRS Training courses have been revamped, modernised and professionalised. We have an offering we can be proud of. Those who attend and are accredited are enthusiastic about the way they are equipped to assist in resolving conflict. It is a mind set change equipping attendees with utilising restorative practices whether in the workplace, community, legal, policing or welfare sectors.

4. Family Disputes: FDR has been an important part of CRS's service offering. The Board undertook a review which highlighted the costs of providing the service. As no specific funding is received it was agreed the current model of service provision was unsustainable. CRS has implemented a fee for service arrangement to assist with providing greatly valued services without imposing cross subsidies.

I wish to thank Mel and all the staff for their dedication. Mel in her first year has achieved a huge amount for CRS. We are all in her debt. Our mediators and trainers offer a wonderful service. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. My fellow Board members have worked with dedication, energy and commitment. CRS is now on a new trajectory with exciting times ahead.

CLIVE RODGER
BOARD CHAIR

MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER

We continue to demonstrate our objective in re-establishing the financial position of CRS following the large deficit incurred in financial year 2016-17. In this regard, I am pleased to report a consecutive year of surplus for the financial year 2018-19.

Our surplus for financial year 2018-19 is mostly attributable to the restructure of our fee-for-service programs, training and consulting activities. This is important to CRS given we have not yet seen an increase in our core grant funding, despite our best efforts in engaging with the ACT Government. That being said, we are pleased to have all our current funding agreements extended for a further three years. The improvement in our income earning activities has allowed CRS to fund expansion of our office premises, invest in new office equipment and technology, invest in brand awareness and exposure of the organisation. I am also pleased to report that CRS' ability to invest in these key areas throughout financial year 2018-19 achieves some of our key strategic and financial goals we set in late 2017.

Throughout financial year 2018-19 we have actively monitored our cash position and our liabilities. To that end, our cash position as at 30 June 2019 sets a strong foundation for CRS to achieve its objectives in financial year 2019-20 and beyond. Coupled with the results we are beginning to see from the investment in our brand awareness and the incredible staff at CRS, we are better positioned to continue serving the Canberra community and surrounding regions in what is an ever-increasing demand for the crucial services that CRS provides.

TOM DALY
TREASURER

BOARD MEETING ATTENDANCE 2018 / 2019

BOARD MEMBER	ELIGIBLE	ATTENDED
Clive Rodger	5	5
Matthew Casey	5	5
Tom Daly	5	5
Zac Hatfield-Dodds	5	5
Genevieve Jacobs	5	3
John Ramadge	5	5
Anya Aidman	5	3
Louisa Osborne	5	4

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SERVICE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



CONFLICT RESOLUTION SERVICE TURNS

30

From our chair discussing the future of conflict resolution in the ACT, to our founder looking back at our organisation's rich history, Minister Gordon Ramsay delivering a moving speech about the power of relationships and their role in building a restorative Canberra, and some of our practitioners providing an insightful glimpse into the life of a CRS team member, the night was high in emotions and memories.

A wonderful evening, thank you to everyone who has contributed to the CRS community, we look forward to what the next 30 years will bring!



MINISTER GORDON RAMSAY'S SPEECH

It's been a wonderful evening. I am so pleased to have the honour to speak to you to mark the important occasion of the Conflict Resolution Service's (CRS) 30th Anniversary.

For 30 years, CRS has provided the people of Canberra with services that repair and strengthen relationships by preventing and resolving conflict. This is a mission that is particularly close to my heart.

Before becoming Attorney-General, I served my local community in Canberra as a Minister of the Uniting Church for 20 years. When you are out in the community doing that work every day, speaking with people about their lives, you know that relationships mean everything. Relationships are what keep us going. And when they fall apart, we fall apart, and our families and our community suffer.

So I cannot emphasise enough how much I value the work that CRS does. I became a politician because I believe that Government can and must be at the forefront of efforts to build safe, supportive and connected communities, and that starts with positive relationships.

CANBERRA AS A RESTORATIVE CITY

That is why I am personally committed to the vision of Canberra becoming a restorative city. In 2016, the Legislative Assembly called on the Canberra community to "work towards the declaration of Canberra as a restorative city." The Government is committed to this work and I am optimistic and excited about where it will take us.

So what does this mean exactly? A restorative approach starts from a relational understanding of human beings – of who we are, what we do together, and what we need from one another. A restorative city is at its core a 'relational' city, one that pays careful and constant attention to relationships, as a goal in itself, not as a means to an end.

The value of relationships is at the heart of the work of CRS. It is a key partner in the transformation of Canberra into a restorative city, and its ethos and expertise needs to be widely shared.

For Canberra to become a restorative city, the value of relationships has to be at the centre of everything we do in Government – our laws, our services, our systems. A relational Canberra means we must organise our systems around people, rather than people organising their lives around our systems. I'd like to give you a few examples of how this is happening at the moment – how people and relationships are being put first.



Kimberley Roberts-Salee and Melissa Haley.



John Hawkins, Jenny Devlin, Susan Rockcliff and Janine Brissett.



Genevieve Jacobs and Minister Rachel Stephen-Smith.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE UNIT

Canberra already has a strong tradition of restorative practice in the criminal justice system. Since 2005, the ACT's Restorative Justice Unit has provided a space for victims, offenders and their communities of care to meet to discuss the aftermath of crime. The process facilitates active, safe and meaningful participation by all involved. It focuses on acknowledging and repairing the harm caused by a person's wrongdoing, and engaging the circle's collective knowledge and wisdom in seeking win-win solutions.

The Restorative Justice Unit has recently expanded the scope of its work. It now accepts referrals for sexual offences and family violence. This means that restorative justice can now be accessed by victims of all offences, including those that cause serious harm and demand the highest levels of accountability.

But as my predecessor, former Attorney-General Simon Corbell pointed out, restorative practice is not limited to the domain of justice. We should be thinking about how to apply restorative approaches across the board, "in the places we live, learn, work, play and pray."

CONFLICT RESOLUTION SERVICE – FAMILY TREE HOUSE

The work of CRS has strong intersections with the justice system but is much broader, applying restorative principles and practices in numerous other settings. The Family Tree House service is an excellent example. This particular service supports teenagers who are homeless, or who are at risk of homelessness, because of conflict in their home.

The Family Tree House engages the whole family to address problems in the home in a way that is workable for everyone. I recently read about the success of the service in diverting a young teenager Eleanor, from homelessness. Eleanor and her mother were in constant conflict at home, and she wasn't attending school. The family support worker addressed the complex patterns of conflict within the family, and talked to Eleanor about what she liked about life and her relationships with her family. The family support worker encouraged Eleanor's parents to cease using negative language, and encouraged the whole family to think about their hopes for their future relationship. Eleanor's relationship with her family significantly improved.

The Family Tree House service demonstrates the value in resolving conflict using restorative principles that build relationships of respect and empathy, and where each person's perspective and needs are recognised.



Minister Gordon Ramsay, Chair Clive Rodger and CEO Melissa Haley.

UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA – RESTORATIVE PRACTICE IN HEALTH

Another example of restorative principles being applied in practice is the University of Canberra Collaborative Indigenous Research Initiative. This project uses restorative health practices to give voice, accountability and healing value for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities in hospitals. The project seeks to reduce the gap between the health outcomes of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, which is an unacceptable inequality in our community.

The project uses traditional Yarning Circle methods in modern corporate governance in hospitals to explore contemporary issues in Indigenous health.

The Yarning Circles are a safe space for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to connect and build relationships and skills in positive dialogue. This is crucial given that research suggests poor communication is a primary contributor to mistakes in the health system.



Founding Members: Sue Sheridan, David Purnell OAM, Charles Foley and Tim Johnstone.



Martin Fisk, Sandra Fisk and Lynlea Rodger.

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

For tonight, the final contemporary example of restorative practice I'd like to mention is the National Redress Scheme set up following the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse – noting that today in the Assembly, we passed the next, and very significant, piece of legislation following on from the Royal Commission's recommendations.

A core part of redress under the Scheme is that survivors have the option to receive a direct and personal response from the institution responsible for their care at the time the abuse occurred. This empowers the person who has experienced abuse, if they choose, to have their story heard, and the impact of their abuse acknowledged by a representative of the institution where it occurred. It also offers an opportunity for the institution to provide the person harmed an apology or statement of regret as well as an assurance that it will take steps to prevent the abuse from occurring again.

These innovative initiatives demonstrate the versatility of restorative practice. The Government continues to look at new ways to make Canberra more restorative. In my portfolio, I am currently looking at whether restorative practices can be built into our processes for coronial inquests, so that families in particular feel valued and involved in the process. There is strong support for this in the community and I am optimistic that change will be embraced in this area.



Jenny Devlin.



Board Chair, Clive Rodger.

CONCLUSION

I have no doubt that Canberra is on its way to becoming a restorative city.

I commenced my remarks this evening by telling you how much I believe that relationships are the essence of what makes us human. And while the term "restorative practice" is relatively new, the concept is timeless. The great English poet John Donne said, in the sexist language of his time some 400 years ago, that:

"No man is an island entire of itself. Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main... Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind."

Events over the past week have reinforced how important it is to affirm our common humanity and the pain that is shared whenever one is hurt. The work of CRS, and restorative practices generally, celebrate our common humanity.

I wish to congratulate all involved in CRS tonight on your contributions to the Canberra community over the past 30 years. The work you do every day resolves conflicts in our community in a meaningful and enduring way. I cannot think of a better endeavour. Thank you.



FOUNDER DAVID PURNELL OAM

It is a pleasure to be able to be part of this event and to share some of my impressions about CRS and its journey in conflict resolution and mediation. The genesis of our organisation was the formation of the Community Justice Centres pilot project in NSW in 1980 "to provide a means of settling the sort of disputes that conventional court-based procedures are unable to resolve satisfactorily". The focus was on domestic and neighbourhood disputes, and centres were established

in Surry Hills, Bankstown and Wollongong. The scheme was made permanent through legislation in 1983 and extended to Campbelltown, Penrith and Newcastle. Both sides of politics supported it, and the Law Foundation of NSW monitored the scheme. The first director of the CJC's was Wendy Faulkes, who was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 1982 to study mediation and dispute resolution in the UK and USA. She became a passionate advocate for mediation, and was instrumental in spreading the profession into other parts of Australia, including here in the ACT. The CJC's were from the beginning funded by government and incorporated into the government bureaucracy. Reflecting on community mediation later in a journal article in 2006, Wendy Faulkes said part of the impetus for the mediation movement was that people

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movements reacted against state control and wanted to choose a form of conflict resolution that gave them power and self-determination. The outcome was the training of mediators from all sections of the community as 'process professionals' rather than 'content professionals'. This training drew on political science, peace studies, education, policing, government, town planning and the social sciences. Here in Canberra, a number of people had already been trying to use alternative approaches to resolving conflict, and heard of the CJC initiative. Accordingly in 1986 we convened a public meeting at ANU to hear from Wendy Faulkes. From this a committee was formed to begin working for a similar service in our region. Among those who became involved were Jeremy Long, the Commissioner for Community Relations (who succeeded Al Grassby), Charles Foley (mediator from USA), Mary Hinchey (who was part of interfaith conflict resolution), Tim Johnstone (a lawyer), Jennifer Deveney (now Rivers), and Ray Polglase (community activist). We sought and obtained incorporation in August 1988 as an association, and I became the first president of the management committee, with Jennifer Deveney as vice-president. We then lobbied the federal Attorney General's Department to set up a mediation service. Once the ACT became separate, we turned our attention to the incoming

government (led by Rosemary Follett) and managed to persuade them to set up a pilot scheme. We were assisted during this time by John Langmore, one of the ACT's federal MPs. The funding for the pilot scheme was \$100,000 in the 1989-90

ACT budget. At the beginning of 1990, after a selection process, three people opened the doors of CRS at the old Acton House. They were David Syme, coordinator, Sue Sheridan as assistant coordinator and Intake officer, and Fere Hooshmand, as administrative assistant and ethnic liaison person. They were joined soon afterwards by Rhian Williams working on a youth mediation project. There was a panel of 45 mediators, trained with the assistance of CJC's Linda Fisher, who later became president of the Australian Dispute Resolution Association. In the first year, there were 371 referrals and 170 mediations, covering a wide range of disputes.



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In the annual report in 1991, David Syme said the following about the response to the Service - "Most people using CRS welcome the neutrality, impartiality and skills of the mediators, and the accessibility and quality of the service generally.... 90% of parties attending a mediation session reached an agreement...and 95% expressed satisfaction with the service. It is estimated that each dispute accepted by the service represents a saving to the community of over \$1700 in costs associated with litigation, violence and continued conflict". There was outreach through the media, talks in schools, the police, and neighbourhood groups. From the beginning, CRS mediations were free of charge to clients. This changed later when budgetary pressures increased. Sue Sheridan, as Intake officer, reported that "difficulties with communication, refusing to negotiate, and harassment, were issues that were common to all types of disputes". She commented on the increasing number of family disputes coming to CRS even then. Two-thirds of disputes were referred by other agencies. Fere Hooshmand, who oversaw the Migrant Access project, ensured that people from non-English backgrounds were among the panel and the clients. Fere made contact with ethnic groups, and worked with the Migrant Resource Centre to raise awareness of the value of mediation for cross-cultural misunderstandings.

Rhian Williams led the youth mediation project called Resolve. Rhian commented in her report that year that "mediation is regarded as developmentally appropriate for adolescents and other young people in that it provides a balance between autonomy and interdependence". A successful innovation in Resolve was the training of young mediators between 14 and 25 to work with CRS. A program to train homeless young people in mediation was also introduced. All four of the staff just mentioned have gone on to other significant work in mediation and other community advocacy. David Syme went to work for the National Alternative Dispute Resolution Advisory Council (NADRAC) in the Federal Attorney-General's Department; Sue Sheridan became a counsellor to the LGBTIQ community and later coordinator of Parentline, among other things; Fere Hooshmand now runs her own agency called Fere Hooshmand Mediation Services; and Rhian Williams also has her own business called Dispute Management Services. I would also like to acknowledge the excellent contribution made by Katrina Spyrides, who led the CRS for ten years before going on to be one of the leaders of



Lyn Walker, Susan Rockcliff and Janine Brissett.



CEO, Melissa Haley.

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the NSW Community Justice Centres. Government funding for CRS rose from the initial \$100,000 to \$134,000 in the second year (after the pilot became an ongoing service), and \$198,000 in the third year. In 1991-2 there were 220 mediations, including many rental bond disputes which were automatically sent to CRS at the end of tenancies when issues of releasing the bond money were involved. Training was stepped up to ensure mediators had a good grasp of family mediation, tenancy law, business, youth and cross-cultural issues. Referrals were coming from police, legal aid, private solicitors and ACT government agencies. In February 1992 there was an Open Day at which certificates of accreditation were presented to mediators by the then Attorney-General Terry Connolly. By this time it was clear that CRS was making an impact on the Canberra community. It was also setting high standards for mediator training and accreditation, and this proved important in contributing to the Australia-wide growth in mediation and the need to achieve national standards. CRS was also being asked to train people in such agencies as the Women's Information and Referral Centre, the ACT Planning Authority, the Tax Office,



Woden Community Service, the ANU and the Defence Department. Expansion in 1993 and 1994 saw the number of mediators reach 50, and the annual funding rise to over \$400,000. Specialist training for family law mediation was increasing. CRS even made a submission to the ACT Legislative Assembly's study on 'Canberra in 2020' predicting that "consensual rather than adversarial dispute settlement will predominate". We're getting close to 2020 – how are we doing? I could go on reciting the way in which CRS grew in every way during the 1990s. Its primary role in resolving conflict remained clear – to offer a space for people to listen to each other, to be heard, and to work through to outcomes that were mutually agreed and beneficial. Whether we were assisting individuals or groups, we used a co-mediation model which had the advantage of modelling good communication, mutual support, and being matched with those in dispute (eg male/female, old/young, anglo/other). The feedback remained very positive from clients, the training was constantly developed, and the intake staff became increasingly pivotal to an effective service. After thirty years, we are going through another transition in CRS, and I hope the ideals and values that have stood us well in the past will continue to guide and strengthen all involved in the future. I found a quote from Frederick the Great who said "My people and I have come to an agreement which satisfied us both. They are to say what they please, and I am to do what I please". I think we can do a good deal better than that as we provide a place for people in our community to listen and work together in solving the problems we all face in bringing about a more peaceful world.

CONFERENCES

NATIONAL MEDIATION CONFERENCE

CRS was a major sponsor of the National Mediation Conference at the National Convention Centre Canberra. The conference hosted over 600 attendees from all over the country. The theme of the conference was: 'Over the Horizon, expanding the Dispute Resolution Landscape' and CRS is proud to have been a major sponsor of the event.

There were over 132 sessions available to attend during the conference. One of the highlights was a presentation by our very own Janine Brissett from our Family Support Program. Janine spoke on supporting adolescents and their parents with communication and facilitated conversations, offering valuable insight and new perspective.



L Jenny Devlin, Lyn Walker, Melissa Haley, Janine Brissett, Elizabeth Woods

FAMILY RELATIONSHIP SERVICES AUSTRALIA CONFERENCE

BEING THE CHANGE: LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND.

The FRSA National Conference is one of the largest annual gatherings of practitioners, academics and policy makers working to support children, families and communities. It was held in Cairns at the Cairns Pullman International Hotel from the 20th to the 23rd of November 2018. Again, our own Janine Brissett presented on The Family Treehouse who support adolescents and their parents with communication coaching and facilitated conversations.



NEW BRANDING



NEW LOGO

One of the highlights of the 2018 / 2019 financial year was the rebrand of Conflict Resolution Service.

The new logo is made up of three overlapping circles. Each circle is coloured individually with their colour changing in the areas they overlap. The central area is the darkest and strongest as it is the point where all three components share a common area. These three circles represent the three members of mediation. The mediator and the two conflicted parties.

The central common area is a metaphor for 'strength in common ground' as it relates to mediation.

NEW WEBSITE

Conflict Resolution Service received a grant to upgrade the website to provide awareness and information to address the growing issue of Elder Abuse in our community. Sadly, the issue of Elder Abuse is a real concern for the Canberra Community. Referrals on information for Elder Abuse increased by 23% over the 2018 year.



RESTORATIVE NETWORK

Conflict Resolution Service is proud to be part of the Restorative Community Network. The Network is key to fulfilling the Government's agenda on Canberra being a Restorative City.

The Network was involved in the following submissions:

- Review of Child Protection Decisions in the A.C.T.
- Building Strong and Safe Communities for Learning
- Adoption reform: dispensing with consent consultation

Conflict Resolution Service hosts the network meetings on the third Friday of each month. Everyone is welcome and no RSVP's are required. A light lunch is also provided.

Over the coming year all CRS staff and other network members will become Accredited Restorative Practitioners. A project that has been supported and funded by the ACT Government.



'It was interesting to be part of the mediation process. We were able to listen to the views of the other parties and present an alternate solution that had much better traction with most of the other parties.'

'The session was well divided into joint mediation and individual reflection with the mediator. I felt I was able to vent my frustration at the individual sessions yet was able to communicate calmly and proactively at the joint session. The mediator was very supportive and understanding of both our concerns and was very effective in assisting us to communicate positively and in a genuine and constructive manner'.

'The slightly informal tone set by the mediator assisted in relaxing most people and developed a sense of trust.'

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

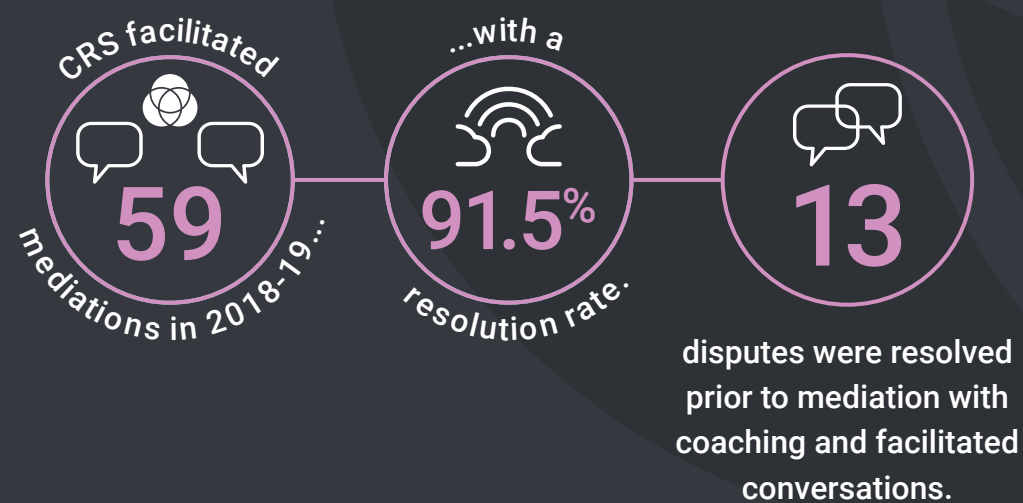
OVERVIEW



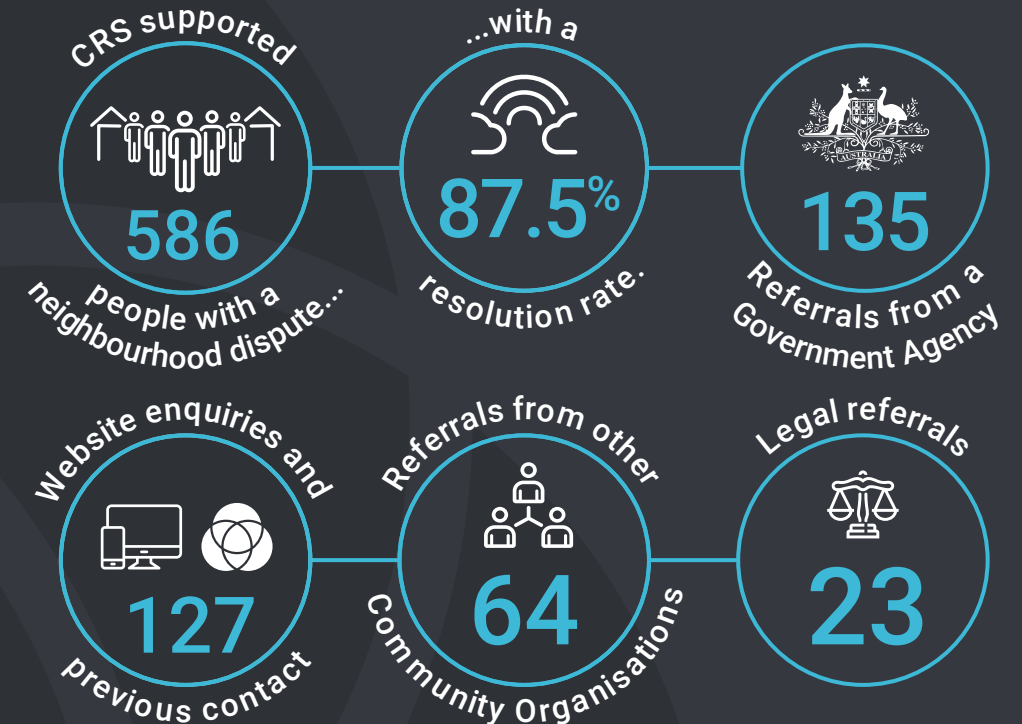
REFERRAL SOURCES



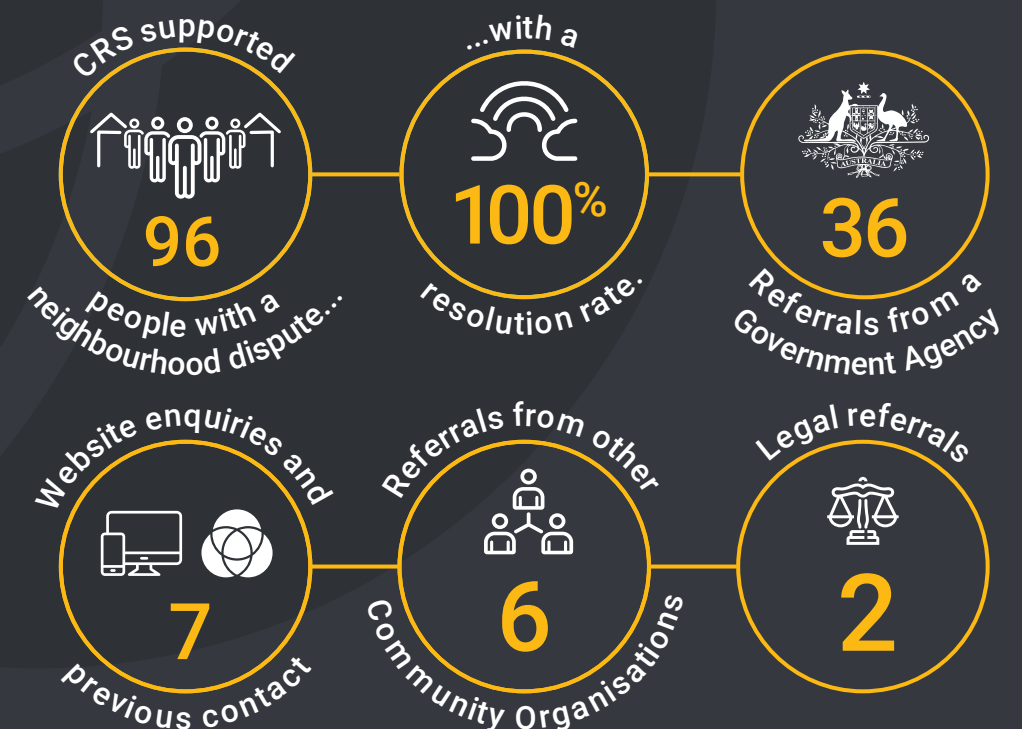
MEDIATIONS



NEIGHBOURHOOD DISPUTES



LIVING IN THE COMMUNITY DISPUTES



FAMILY DISPUTE RESOLUTION



CASE STUDY (Names changed to protect privacy)

Bill and Sarah separated when their son, Louis was 3 years old. Mandy re-partnered and subsequently had a new baby. Louis is now 5 and spends weekends with his dad.

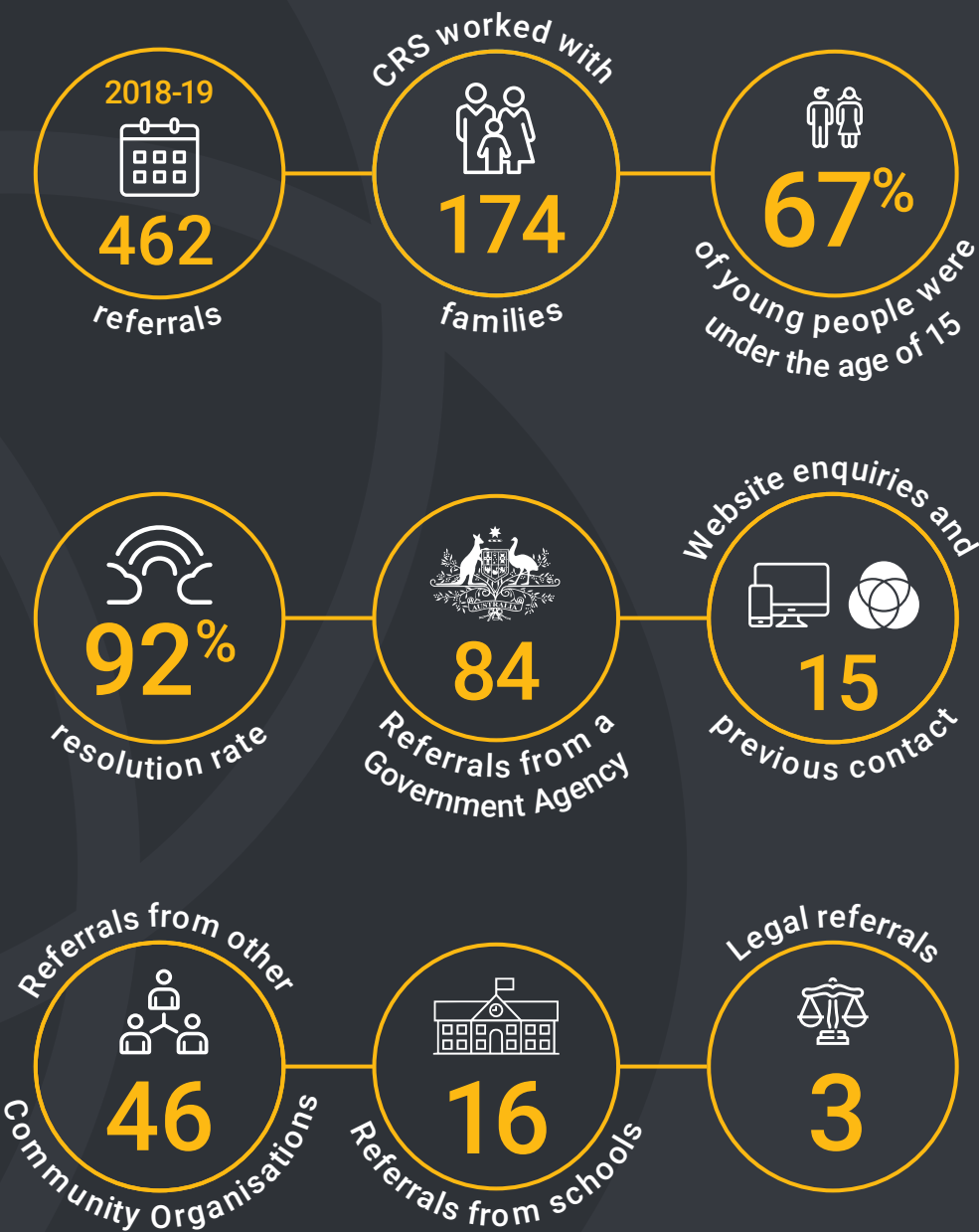
Bill is very keen to change the arrangement for Louis to 50/50 week about. However, Sarah feels Louis is too young for this arrangement. Sarah finds the whole concept completely daunting.

There is no history of family violence but Bill and Sarah have caused each other a lot of damage over the years. Communication has been terse and limited. Sarah is keen to end the misery and put their

relationship on a friendly co-parenting footing. Both Sarah and Bill acknowledge each other are good parents.

During mediation both Sarah and Bill discuss how a 50/50 arrangement could work. The mediators assist both parents to consider the concessions they both could make to the way they communicate with each other for a 50/50 arrangement to be a practical solution. Keeping a focus on Louis' best interest, ensured the mediation was driven by the most appropriate outcome for Louis in the future, not focusing on the tense relationship between Bill and Sarah in the past.

FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM



CASE STUDY (Names changed to protect privacy)

FAMILY DETAILS

Young Person

Daniel, 17

Mother

Beth

Young brother

Sam, 11

SOURCE OF REFERRAL

Beth called FTH upon the recommendation of Daniel's counsellor at MensLink

Summary of Issues

Daniel and Beth were referred to FTH due to ongoing fights and arguments between them at home. Fights were only verbal, but there were concerns that they could escalate further. The conflict between Daniel and Beth caused distress for Sam, who has moderate Autism and requires care from Beth. Daniel also has Asperger's, and this led to some difficult behaviours.

Beth reported that she often felt Daniel undermined her role as the parent; Beth described Daniel as trying to 'co-parent' Sam. Daniel's overstepping of his eldest brother role caused fights, and often distressed Sam.

A few nights before Beth called FTH, she and Daniel had got into a very intense fight which resulted in Beth telling Daniel to leave home. Daniel spent a few nights with his girlfriend, but eventually ended up residing with his elderly grandmother. This situation was not ideal as it took Daniel away from his College, and his grandmother's health was declining.

Daniel stated in his intake interview that he and Beth have a good relationship; however, they just can't resolve their own conflict in a constructive way. Daniel described Beth's parenting style as 'dictatorial', and that he often felt that Beth tried to invalidate his opinion or perspective.

Both Daniel and Beth stated that they wanted to resolve the issues between them, and for Daniel to move back home.

Service User Participation

Both Daniel and Beth engaged very well in the Family Support Program.

Beth attended 5 individual sessions since support for the family began. Beth was reflective, and very eager to receive coaching and support.

Daniel has attended 8 individual sessions with a Support Worker. Like Beth, Daniel was very receptive to the coaching provided; he enjoyed discussing the topics raised and attempted to implement new communication skills into his 'toolkit'. Daniel was not able to get into Civic, so all meetings with Daniel were conducted at the Tuggeranong Child and Family Centre.

During the support period, the Support Worker has facilitated 2 family meetings for Beth and Daniel. After both mediations they have felt a greater sense of understanding of each other, and a sense of closure regarding past fights. Beth and Daniel have agreed to attend a 3rd family meeting.

Support Provided

As stated above, considerable support has been provided to Beth and Daniel, through individual coaching and facilitated family meetings. Some of the coaching and support provided to Beth and Daniel included:

- Conflict Styles
- Feelings, Needs, and I Statements
- Barriers to Effective Communication
- Values and Goals
- Restorative Dialogue

Outcomes to Date

Beth and Daniel have both stated that they have noticed improvements in their relationship. After each family meeting, Beth and Daniel felt that they had a better understanding of each other and how they can work together to avoid conflict. Increasingly, Daniel is spending more time within the family home with Beth and Sam, and they hope that Daniel can move home permanently as a result of the 3rd family meeting.

CASE STUDY (Names changed to protect privacy)

FAMILY DETAILS

Young Person

Emma, 15

Parents

Leslie and Jarred

SOURCE OF REFERRAL

Network Student Engagement Team, ACT Education Directorate

Summary of Issues

Emma was referred to FTH because of her non-attendance at school which the referrer believed was due to family conflict and mental health concerns. Emma refused to attend school and had not attended school fulltime for 18 months.

Leslie often became frustrated when challenged by Emma, and this was a significant cause of distress for both of them. The referrer stated that Emma often became oppositional and verbally abusive towards Leslie, and that this would cause Leslie to become emotionally distressed.

The mother/daughter relationship was heavily damaged; they would often not speak to each other for days. When conflict occurred between Emma and Leslie, Jarred would become involved and offer support to Leslie. Emma resented her father's unwavering support of Leslie, and refused to have any meaningful interactions with him.

Leslie and Jarred had reached the point of presenting an ultimatum to Emma: go to school or leave home.

Service User Participation

Leslie and Jarred actively engaged with the Service. They were often proactive, calling the family support worker to provide updates and seek advice.

Emma willingly engaged in the service, however due to her reluctance to leave the family home and not having a mobile phone, there were times when the family support worker found contacting Emma difficult. The family support worker was eventually able to assist Emma in getting her own phone, this supported them to maintain contact.

The family lived in the Tuggeranong region and were often unable to attend appointments in Civic. The family support worker often met the family at the Tuggeranong Child and Family Centre. The centre provided a suitable space to hold client appointments and mediations.

Support Provided

The family were provided a significant amount of support. In total there were 20 client appointments that took place. Emma received 5 individual appointments and coaching sessions, Leslie attended 7 and Jarred 5. During the period, the family support worker facilitated 3 mediations; 2 involved Emma and Leslie, and the other was between Jarred and Emma.

Outcomes to Date

Through the support provided, the family's situation improved significantly. Emma slowly began to reattend school in late 2018, and fulltime in 2019. Leslie and Jarred have gained a better understanding of the impact that their parenting styles have had on Emma, and have made strides in changing the way they relate and communicate with their daughter.

Emma and Leslie have been able to reconnect as mother and daughter. Emma has reported that since starting the family support program she has noticed changes in her mother; Leslie is no longer harsh or controlling towards Emma.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT


Conflict Resolution Service has been proactive in highlighting to the Canberra Community the Impact of Conflict within the Canberra Community. Such achievements include:

Conflict Resolution Service Canberra
1 April · 🌐

The RiotACT
31 March · 🌐

Arguments over fences were the number one cause of disputes between neighbours in the ACT in 2017-18, including disagreements over maintaining or replacing fence...

[See more](#)



THE-RIOTACT.COM

Canberra's neighbourhood conflicts: Fences, noise, trees and being too scared to talk | The RiotACT

1

Conflict Resolution Service Canberra
22 February · 🌐

Thank you to 2XX 98.3 Community Radio for speaking with Susan and one of our Founders David, exploring the topic of Conflict within our community, nationally and internationally.



Conflict Resolution Service Canberra
12 August at 16:05 · 🌐

Happy International Youth Day. Youth are our future, so let's educate them and raise them well.



5

Conflict Resolution Service Canberra
18 June · 🌐

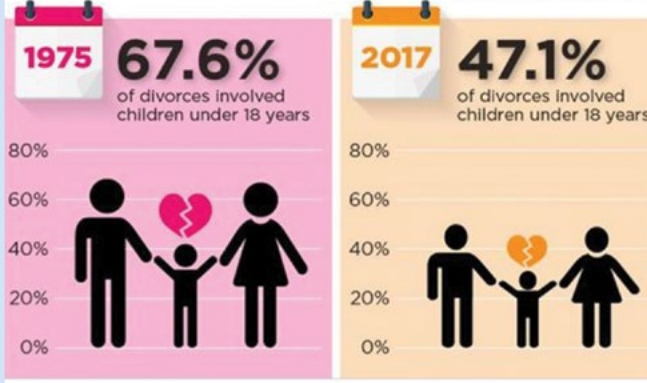
According to @AustralianInstituteofFamilyStudies the proportion of divorces involving children under 18 has been falling. While this is great news, 47.1% of divorces still involved children under 18 in 2017. By using a mediator, family disputes can be settled and managed smoothly. If you would like to know more, contact us.

DIVORCES INVOLVING CHILDREN
from 1975 to 2017

The proportion of divorces involving children under 18 years has been falling.

Australian Institute of Family Studies

Year	Percentage of divorces involving children under 18 years
1975	67.6%
2017	47.1%



1

2 comments

Conflict Resolution Service Canberra
25 June · 🌐



ABC.NET.AU

How do you negotiate with noisy neighbours without losing an eye?

Conflict Resolution Service Canberra is at 2XX FM.
25 March · Canberra, ACT · 🌐

Thanks to 2XX FM for having us this morning!



Conflict Resolution Service Canberra
17 July · 🌐

If you're tight on time but still keen to upskill, our two-day Conflict Resolution Training courses can teach you strategies to prevent and resolve disputes in the workplace, family & community. Learn about the program bit.ly/CRS-CR-Training



Conflict Resolution Service Canberra
17 April · 🌐

We actively work to reduce family conflict and reduce the risk of youth homelessness. Our Family Support Program supports adolescents who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless due to family conflict. If you or someone you know is in need of support, contact us.




CRS.ORG.AU

Family Tree House - Conflict Resolution Service
Parent / Youth Support Our Services For 30 years, our network of professional...

2

Conflict Resolution Service Canberra
6 August at 16:00 · 🌐

This week is Homelessness Week, which aims to raise awareness that on any given night over 116,000 Australians are homeless. We offer support to adolescents who are at risk of or are experiencing homelessness due to family conflict. To find out more, see <https://crs.org.au/family-tree-house/>



Conflict Resolution Service Canberra
15 April · 🌐

70% of homeless youths left home to escape family violence, child abuse or family breakdown. [Youth Homelessness Matters Day](#), on Wednesday 17 April, is a reminder that youth homelessness can affect us all and it's time to have a discussion and take action.



[YOUTHHOMELESSNESSMATTERS.INFO](#)


Youth Homelessness Matters Day 2019 | Youth Homelessness Matters

👍👎 8 1 share

Conflict Resolution Service Canberra
7 May · 🌐

Are you looking to upskill within your current role? Perhaps you're thinking of a career in mediation? From 13-22 May, we are running our Mediation Training Program, which will equip you with the insight required to respond well to conflict and will give you strategies for different contexts including workplaces and families. If you're interested, get in touch with us to secure a spot in our program!


<http://bit.ly/CRstraining>



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Conflict Resolution Service Canberra
30 May · 🌐

Did you know that 1 in 6 older people have experienced abusive behaviour in the last year? Conflict Resolution for Seniors (CR4S) aims to improve the awareness of older Canberrans, their families and assisting professionals on the benefits of dispute resolution services for the prevention of intergenerational conflict and elder abuse. To find out more, see our website.



[CRS.ORG.AU](#)

Conflict Resolution for Seniors - Conflict Resolution Service


Conflict Resolution for Seniors Our Services For 30 years, our network of...

👍 7 1 comment 1 share

Conflict Resolution Service Canberra
5 June · 🌐

Imagine this... You're 16, young, eager and you have your full life ahead of you. Yet, due to family conflict or other factors, you face becoming homeless. Shocking? Yes, but this is a very real issue for many young people living on our front doorstep, right now.

To learn more, or to see how CRS is playing a key role in making sure doors stay open for these young Canberrans, read this recent article from The Canberra Times.



[CANNBERRATIMES.COM.AU](#)


What happens when you're too young for a homeless shelter?

Homeless children in Canberra are being turned away from shelters because...

👍 2 1 share

Conflict Resolution Service Canberra
14 June · 🌐

In a world full of unique individuals, we all sometimes struggle with our relationships, the actions of others, or how to resolve conflict with those important people in our lives. While this may be a challenge, you aren't alone! To find out how we can work with you or a loved one in need to positively transform a conflict, contact us today.



👍 1 1 share

Conflict Resolution Service Canberra
25 June · 🌐

Last year alone, our Family Support Program worked with almost 500 young people at risk of becoming homeless, resulting in an impressive 88 per cent success rate for families.

Announced today, an exciting partnership with [The Youth Coalition of the ACT](#) and the [ACT Government](#) means that we can amplify our early intervention work, critical in keeping families together safely, and work to further reduce the incidence of youth homelessness in the ACT.



[CANNBERRATIMES.COM.AU](#)

The new plan to close Canberra's youth homelessness gap

Sam left home at 13 with no money, no phone and no shoes. She soon ran int...

👍 10 1 comment 1 share

Conflict Resolution Service Canberra
28 June · 🌐

Did you know that on any given night in Australia, 116,000 people will sleep without a roof over their head? Unfortunately, when it comes to supporting young homeless people in particular, the ACT has fallen behind. But what does this mean for the homeless youth of Canberra and what can we do to help?



[CRS.ORG.AU](#)

Youth Homelessness in the ACT - Conflict Resolution Service

Every night in Australia, there are around 116,000 people who sleep without a...

Conflict Resolution Service Canberra
29 April · 🌐

Are you thinking of a career in mediation? Our course will provide you with up-to-date theory and opportunities to practice in role plays, workshops and coaching. See our website for details.



[CRS.ORG.AU](#)

Mediation Training Program - Conflict Resolution Service

Mediation Training Program The Program Inclusion of Mediation as a preferre...

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MEDIATION TRAINING PROGRAM

16 NEW ACCREDITED MEDIATORS

Conflict Resolution Service is Accredited by the Mediation Standards Board to train interested people in becoming Mediators.

CRS Mediation Training combines up-to-date theory and practice with opportunities for role plays and workshops, one-on-one coaching and personalised feedback.

THE COURSE WILL TAKE PARTICIPANTS THROUGH:

- The philosophy, principles and ethics of mediation
- Understanding conflict
- Cross-cultural issues
- Power dynamics
- Screening and assessing disputes
- The stages of mediation
- Debriefing and reporting
- Building a career as a mediator
- Legislative and industry frameworks
- Operating as a sole or team practitioner

PARTICIPANTS WILL GRADUATE WITH:

- The practical skills to diagnose and respond to conflict;
- The insight to tailor practices and strategies to different settings, including workplaces, commercial relationships, families, neighbourhoods and schools;
- Confidence in working within difference cultural contexts, and responding appropriately to individual relationship dynamics and emotional needs; and
- Pathways to a rewarding career in mediation.

SUPPORTERS

- ACT Government
- A Counting Edge
- Magistrates Court
- Australian Federal Police
- Community Services Directorate
- Youth Coalition
- Legal Aid ACT
- Justice & Community Safety
- Marymead
- Mediator Standards Board
- SupportLink
- Wot-Link
- Child Youth & Protection Services
- Menslink
- Relationships Australia
- Education Department
- Ernst & Young

MEDIATOR PANEL

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Nigel Biginell | Anthony Robinson |
| Jenny Devlin | Vesna Flower |
| David Purnell | Anna Wynne |
| Jack Quaid | Janine Brissett |
| Jamie Royal | Dr Anne Macduff |
| Judy Scott | Grant Edward |
| Lydia Stanhope | Dr Hanna Jaireth |
| Terry Watson | Mary-Ellen Doyle |
| Renee Toy | Kerry Henderson |

“The delivery of the materials was excellent. Thank you for bringing your expertise and immense knowledge and skills. You moved us through a huge amount of content yet it never felt rushed. There was always time for comments and questions.”

“The balance between learning content and practice was excellent!”



CRS

CONFLICT
RESOLUTION
SERVICE