



Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service Co-operative Ltd.

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FEEDBACK FORMS

The information below is based on the feedback forms that participants of the FVF filled out at the end of the day. VALS received sixteen feedback forms and unfortunately this is not representative of the amount of people who attended the FVF, as over 100 people attended.

The table below contains the answers of participants of the FVF who completed the feedback forms.

Question	Yes	No
1 Did you find the Forum Informative?	16	0
2 Were the topics discussed useful?	14	2
3 Was the forum structured well?	11	2

1 Did You Find the Forum Informative?

VALS Analysis of Feedback Forms

One hundred percent of participants of the FVF answered in the affirmative that the FVF was informative. In an attempt to prevent information overload presentations were kept to five minutes long. One person commented that five minutes presentations were not long enough. This raises the debate between coverage of issues and depth of the issues covered. VALS was well aware of this debate in preparing the FVF and how difficult it is to please everyone when attempting to balance issues of depth and coverage. VALS chose to keep the presentations to a minimum to achieve the optimum coverage of the issues. It also made sense to keep the presentations short to enable enough time for productive discussion groups and question time. VALS produced the 'Family Violence Initiatives Booklet' so that the presenters could assume the participants had some background knowledge which enabled the presenters to delve deeper into issues than they otherwise would have.

Content of Feedback Forms

Positive Comment

- There were lots of interesting presentations and it was good that they were short.
- There was great sharing of information and networking. It was good to hear what other organisations are doing in the area of family violence.

Negative Comment:

- Five minutes presentations were not long enough.

2 Were the Topics Discussed Useful?

VALS Analysis of Feedback Forms

An overwhelming majority of participants thought that the topics discussed were useful. Some participants were critical that the FVF overlooked certain topics or spent too much time on certain topics. However, given that the FVF only went for one day VALS was not in a position to satisfy everybody by discussing every relevant topic.

Content of Feedback Forms

Negative Comment

- The topics discussed were the same issues that have been highlighted in past forums. There was not enough information on what is happening in programs or about positive progression.
- Once the forum was opened up to the floor personal opinions clashed with community outcomes.
- The topics raised seemed to be focussed on funding and we should be more focussed on the issue of community development. There are other avenues as the Indigenous Australian community can become self sufficient without relying on funding from the Government.
- Some what.

Positive Comment

3 Was the Forum Structured Well?

The overwhelming majority of FVF participants felt that the FVF was structured well. The FVF provided an opportunity to open the communication lines between and amongst men and women, and the structure of the forum reflected this. Men and women attended separate discussion groups and then resumed into one group.

VALS Analysis of Feedback Forms

It appears from feedback from participants of the IWF that there was mixed opinions about the structure of the FVF. VALS concedes that the way in which the FVF was structured was optimistic at best. This would explain why the FVF was running up to 40 minutes behind schedule at one point. The issue of being behind schedule was not assisted by presentations going over time and as a result the VALS presentation on the Victorian Law Reform Commission review of the Crimes Family Violence Act 1987 was deleted from the program. Out of necessity the structure of the FVF was amended and the

FVF was run in a flexible manner. The beauty of such flexibility was that a member of the Indigenous Australian community, who was not scheduled to speak, was able to take the floor and have her say and the overwhelming response to this was positive. Despite running behind schedule it was possible to devote one hour to discussion groups. This was done by collapsing the last two sessions of the day into one (ie: Report back on discussion groups and Recommendations – Where to from here?).

Content of Feedback Forms

Negative Comment

- There was need for more than 5 minutes blocks for the presentations.
- There was need for more breakout sessions and clear topics/questions to be addressed in those sessions.
- The forum needs to be over a few days to get beyond the surface of the issues.
- The structure seemed ok, but it is how we best utilise time and I do not think it was used effectively. It seemed rushed because the forum was behind time.
- It seemed some people were more focussed on Elder's opinions. If the forum is focussed on family why did we not hear from the youth as we are the future so why not hear us out?

Positive Comment

- There was a good balance of presentations, discussion and question time.
- It was good to allow for a relaxed atmosphere and not strictly follow the program.
- The forum was structured well as it was flexible but still followed the agenda.

4 What Was The Most Important Topic Discussed For You?

VALS Analysis of Feedback Forms

VALS is pleased with the positive feedback provided on what were the most important topics discussed at the FVF. The favourite topics of the participants range from personal experience, service provision (both Indigenous and mainstream), strategies for dealing with family violence, accessibility of services and funding for services etc. VALS endeavoured to provide a wide variety of presentations and there were eleven in total, ranging from policy issues to community action. In particular VALS was pleased with the manner in which the FVF provided a unique outlet to given consideration to men's issues.

Content of Feedback Forms

Positive Comment

- To actually hear from Jo McGuinness who spoke about her own experience was a reality check for me.

- Access to mainstream organisations/services for Indigenous Australian people.
- Mainstream organisations versus Indigenous Australian organisations.
- Service provision.
- Men's services.
- It was good to have men's issues on the agenda.
- Indigenous services (eg: Elizabeth Hoffman House).
- Court and prisoner programs updates.
- Confidentiality at community organisations as a situation where a family member deals with family issues could be seen to be a conflict of interest situation.
- Putting dollars into programs that deliver to the Indigenous Australian community.
- Still no resources, only referrals.
- It helps to make correct referrals and know where to refer people.
- Government initiatives.
- Koori Liaison at the Family Violence Court.
- Grass roots communication.
- Preventative strategies.

5 Are There Other Topics That Need Addressing?

VALS Analysis of Feedback Forms

VALS wishes to highlight that VALS' analysis of questions 3 and 4 above need to be read in light of question 5. VALS would be interested in the future to have conversations about topics that participants indicated need more discussion (ie: all parties involved with family violence, in particular youth, children and extended family).

Content of Feedback Forms

Negative Comment

- Creating a public space for Indigenous Australian identity in a way that encourages non-Indigenous Australians to relate positively with Indigenous Australian culture.
- After speaking to a young person after the FVF we both agreed there needs to be more focus on children and young people. There needs to be an opportunity for young people to participate in forums and have their views heard.
- The inclusion of all parties involved with family violence. It is great that our Indigenous women are strong role models, but it seemed segregated with men over here and women over there. There was no youth input.
- Not too much was mentioned regarding children and the impact of family violence on them.
- More discussion is needed about what is available for families, especially children affected by family violence.

- More men and non-Indigenous Australians need to attend forums on family violence like this.
- Violence in relationships other than partners needs to be discussed (ie: family made up of mum, dad, brothers, sisters, uncles and nephews etc).
- More money.
- What victims want and need.

6 Further Comments:

VALS Analysis of Feedback Forms

It appears from participant feedback that they were satisfied with the FVF overall.

Content of Feedback Forms

Positive Comment

- Well done.
- Great day.
- There was a great turn out.

Other Comments

- I would like to see a perspective given from families, women and children that highlight their experiences. The question needs to be asked how could the issue of family violence be addressed, what would be good practice for families? This is a practical thing and will be able to give families successes. Families need to be the ones that identify barriers to services and then I think we can collectively work on strategies to overcome these.
- There needs to be more energy directed into activities for families, children and healing. Healing does not have to start in a building, it can happen right now.
- Family violence needs to be addressed by all members of the family, mum dad, sisters, brothers and all immediate family. Everyone is to be included in the counselling session not just the victim and perpetrator.
- More family and community groups should be supporting family violence counselling for improvements to occur. It is one thing to complain about a service or problem but the issue is what the individual does to rectify their problem or enquiry. This is about empowerment which then educates all family members about what is accepted by family and community.
- There is a need for Communication Workshops where everyone will receive help on how to express themselves emotionally by talking, through song, poems and painting etc.
- If communities become more self sufficient Government grants will become a thing of the past. Governments do not educate or encourage self sufficient Aboriginal communities or Aboriginal programs which would give communities a real sense of job security, financial stability and family members a sense of

belonging and contributing to community economic growth. Business development in communities would help: self confidence, financial stability, community involvement and most of all empower Aboriginal people to be proud and happy in the community created business of their choice.

- It would be interesting and very useful to see how all the family violence focuses and developed strategies will fit with one another.
- There is a gap when programs and strategies are proposed as there is no emphasis on how the proposals compliment the existing network of services. Proposals are still being done in an isolated approach.
- How will consistency be achieved when Indigenous Australian cases are presented in the Family Violence Court? The principles of how Elders and Respected Persons contribute to the Koori Court needs to be implemented into the Family Violence Court process.
- At times there was noise in the background from venue staff which made it hard to hear.