

DVRCV's focus:

It's the small changes that are the most profound



Social and systems transformation are what the specialist family violence sector has always focused on. But the most recent reforms have been some of the most in-depth, the most expansive, the most expensive, and the most significant we have seen as a sector. When we are in midst of such transformational reform it can sometimes feel like an uphill battle with little end in sight. We can become so immersed in the daily grind of our work that we lose sight of the small and incremental changes we are making. We can also feel alone in our work and forget that we are all part of a bigger collective creating that social and systems change.

This edition of DVRCV's Advocate asks us to pause, refocus and take stock of the progress we, as a sector, are making, however big or small that may seem.

When we reflect on progress, we tend to imagine how good it feels to have achieved a long-term goal or experienced a major breakthrough. These are the big wins, but they are rare in a long term social change journey. It's the everyday, cumulative progress that we need to acknowledge, recognise and value as the small wins that lead to major change. By highlighting some of the response and prevention work being done across the sector, we trust that this edition of the Advocate shows just that – namely, that our everyday work and our ability to connect with one another is contributing to a more cohesive and strengthened system, and is sustaining us through the long journey of social transformative change.

Our article on Flat Out's 'Family Violence Justice Project' demonstrates how a specialised and coordinated approach can improve criminalised women's access to family violence services and response. This is a huge job for a small organisation and the ground they are making with limited resources shows just how much can be done to improve the gaps in the service system to keep criminalised women safer.

Our article about the Eastern Community Legal Centre's MABELS program shows the

ingenuity and effectiveness of a small legal team connecting with the health sector to reach out to women before crisis point. By embedding innovative approaches into their daily roles, and developing solid and trusted relationships with organisations that they don't normally engage with has made the world of difference to those who need it most – the women and children experiencing or at risk of family violence.

At DVRCV we have also been working hard to reach out and connect with isolated prevention practitioners through our Communities of Practices. These have provided a forum for professionals to come together to articulate their issues and learnings; to be seen as leaders and experts in their own field; and to have the opportunity to connect and work with each other. So

when everyone goes back to their individual workplaces, they feel galvanised and part of something significant.

Ultimately it is all of these small wins that works to strengthen systems. Long-term generational change is something that we can only see in hindsight so we shouldn't lose perspective of that. At the end of the day, our work in both prevention and response is a very humanistic endeavor, with a great number of us working to build bridges to connect one another to keep the momentum alive. We hope that our final Advocate for 2019 is a reminder that we are all in this together, and that our collective small wins will ultimately add up to the biggest win in history. And every single one of us in Victoria are leading the way. ■

