



RELATIONSHIPS FORUM

Annual Report for 2007-2008

This is the second annual report of activity of Relationships Forum Australia (the Association).

The Association is a not-for-profit organisation that aims to promote the importance of relationships as a fundamental ingredient of individual and community wellbeing. Its activities are governed by an honorary Board, formed according to its Articles, which also prescribe the way the Association must operate.

Consistent with its objectives, the Association's work is directed mainly at researching, from a relational perspective, critical issues in the areas of politics, economics, business and society, and at promoting the key findings of that research.

The focus of the year's activity has continued to be the development, conduct, promulgation and promotion of research directed at achieving the Association's objectives.

The Association also maintained its links with its "sister" organisation, The Relationships Foundation, and a number of reciprocal visits between Sydney and Cambridge were held.

Board meetings

The Board met on four occasions during the year in review, with further informal planning meetings held by teleconference. Meetings were aimed at managing and directing the affairs of the Association, including reviewing and stewarding its finances.



Overview of promotion, projects and collaboration

During 2007-2008 the Association focused its efforts in three main areas:

Promotion of relational ideas

The Association capitalised on opportunities to promote relational thinking through radio interviews and newspapers articles. These included two opinion pieces in *The Sydney Morning Herald*:

- *Homeless need good Samaritans, and good governments, too*, 11 April 2008
- *Real love has a cost we must pay*, 24 July 2008

Discussion with MPs and advisers

The Association Promoted relational thinking through discussion with key members of the Federal Government, including:

- The Minister for Finance
- Head of the Treasurer's office
- Senior adviser to the Deputy Prime Minister
- Adviser to the Prime Minister
- Adviser to the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

Preparation of proposals for new projects

Two new major project proposals were developed during the year, and discussed with potential sponsors. These were:

MOVING BEYOND APOLOGY: ESTABLISHING A NEW BASIS FOR THE FULL PARTICIPATION OF ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES IN AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY.

This proposal, developed jointly by RFA and Concordis International, was submitted to the Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs at the request of the Finance Minister. Although our proposal appears to have been well received, as yet, discussions with her department have not moved the project forwards.

RELATIONSHIPS STATE OF THE NATION.

This proposal has been developed jointly with Relationships Foundation. The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age have committed to support the project, both through funding of a new survey of the Australian population and extensive promotion of the project outcomes. Progress with this project

depends on the identification of a primary sponsor and engaging with new management at Fairfax Media to confirm their support.

Further collaboration

The Association sponsored Michael Schluter's visit to Australia during October/November 2008, during which Dr Schluter and Paul Shepanski had a series of high-level meetings with members of the government and the media in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra.

Through the year, Paul Shepanski collaborated regularly with Michael Schluter in the further development of relational thinking and its implications for public and private life.

Special thanks

The directors would like to thank executive director Paul Shepanski for his enthusiasm and hard work for the Association and its goals. Paul continued to make media appearances, deliver presentations and represent the Association professionally. He continued to secure opportunities for media comment via an opinion column in *The Sydney Morning Herald* during the year.

We also remain indebted to Shamus Toomey for his expert establishment, management and moderating of the Association's website: www.relationshipsforum.org.au

A separate financial report will be presented as part of the Annual General Meeting.

John Collins
Chairman