

### Felicity Rorke

#### **emcee**

Felicity has over 30 years of experience across local and state government, and national and international NGOs. Her work has focused on building effective teams in complex settings, with expertise spanning child protection, family support, and gender-based violence. Felicity's career includes direct service delivery, policy development, program design, and capacity building, both in Australia and overseas. She holds a Bachelor of Social Work and a Master of Social Work, and has worked across various sectors including local government, the court system, and the Department of Human Services.

After working in South East Asia with trafficked women and children, Felicity returned to Australia to manage Berry Street's Northern Family Violence Service from 2005. She later joined the Good Samaritan Inn in 2018, retiring as Director in July 2025. Felicity was a founding member of the NIFVS Family Violence Regional Integration Committee, serving for over 15 years, including two years as Deputy Chair. She is proud to return as MC today as a final gesture to the northern metropolitan region.

### About Aborigines Advancement League

Women's Health In the North (WHIN) and Northern Integrated Family Violence Service (NIFVS) acknowledges Victorian Aboriginal people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we provide our services. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and recognise the ongoing living culture of all Aboriginal people. We express commitment to Aboriginal self-determination and our hope for reconciliation and justice and acknowledge that sovereignty has never been ceded.

We are very grateful to be at the Victorian Aborigines Advancement League today. We pay our respects to Dr Esme Bamblett, CEO, and her staff here at the League.

Founded in 1957, the League is the oldest Aboriginal rights organisation in Australia still in operation. Initially, the League objectives included achieving citizenship rights for Aborigines throughout the Commonwealth, working towards integration of Aboriginal people with the rest of the community without compromising on culture, and attempting to coordinate the various Aboriginal welfare organisations operating in Victoria at the time.

The Victorian Aborigines Advancement League currently works to promote and support Aboriginal culture and identity, as well as self-determination, self-sufficiency, and self-management throughout the Aboriginal community of Victoria.

Today, the League aims to provide programs to improve the social, economic, and cultural significance of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Victoria, which they do via a range of initiatives, including the Victorian Aboriginal Funeral Service, to Gurwidj Koori Neighbourhood House, the Lady Gladys Nicholls Hostel, as well as their Family Services Program, among many others.

**Britt Baillie (she/they) - PANEL MODERATOR**

**MARAMIS & Workforce Development Coordinator, NIFVS**

Britt lives, works and plays on unceded Wurundjeri Lands. Britt is a social worker with more than a decade of experience in the Family and Gender-Based Violence Sector.

Britt has worked in family violence response and therapeutic practice with adult and child victim-survivors and with people using violence. Britt's practice has been across mainstream and LGBTIQ+ settings, working closely with communities to drive responses which reflect the needs of communities.

Britt is experienced in leading innovative projects, advocacy, research, and working collaboratively across sectors to enhance practice responses. Britt is passionate about bringing research, policy and practice together to improve responses to gender-based violence.

**Sonali Correia (she/her)**

**Senior Manager, Family Violence Supported Accommodation and After-Hours Crisis Response, Salvation Army**

Sonali has 7 years of direct experience working in the Family and Domestic Violence sector, having worked across various programs including Intake, Refuge, Afterhours Crisis Responses and Transitional Accommodation.

Sonali has devoted her career to the critical field of family violence services. With a deep-rooted passion for advocating for victims-survivors, Sonali has been instrumental in driving positive change, developing and implementing innovative programs and initiatives that address the complex issues surrounding family violence, providing essential support to victim survivors of family violence, empowering them to break free from the cycle of violence and embark on their journey to recovery.

Sonali is committed to raising awareness about the prevalence and devastating consequences of family violence, advocating for increased resources and systemic changes to prevent and respond to this National Crisis.

**Michael Douglas (he/him)**

**Dardi Munwurro**

Michael (Mick) is a proud Gunditjmara and Ngarrindjeri man, living on Wurundjeri land in the north of Melbourne with his family. Michael has worked in numerous roles with Dardi Munwurro, providing cultural healing, behaviour change, advocacy and group facilitation with Aboriginal men who have used family violence. With work in residential programs, case management and prisons, Michael is able to create a safe and non-judgmental opportunity where men are more likely to open up and want to do the work.

Michael's lived experience creates a better understanding of where the men are at in their healing journey and offers men hope that change does happen, if they want it. Acknowledged with a Wurreker Award in 2024 for outstanding work as a private sector employee, and the Dr Alf Bamblett Award for outstanding education achievement in 2022, Michael has completed a Cert IV in Community services and is currently completing a Diploma in Community Services.

### **Joelle Chaperon (she/her)**

#### **Strategic Project Manager, InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence**

With decades of experience as a youth worker, primary prevention and recovery practitioner, and yog instructor, she brings a trauma-informed lens and embodied practices to her work facilitating inTouch's Recovery and Survivor Advocate programs. Joelle is a passionate advocate for the agency, safety, and wellbeing of culturally diverse and marginalised communities. As a people and program leader, she supports diverse teams working in critical environments to harness their strengths, develop their capabilities and innovate to drive systemic, culturally responsive change across the family violence and community sectors.

### **Andrew Rush (he/him)**

#### **Clinical Governance and Practice Lead, Dardi Munwurro**

Andrew was born, raised and still lives on unceded Wurundjeri land in Melbourne's north. He has worked in the wellbeing and social justice field over the past 35 years, across community service organisations and Local Government, including roles at Drummond Street Services, Kids First, Berry Street and the City of Stonnington.

Currently working with Dardi Munwurro in a Clinical Governance and Practice Lead Role, Andrew has held leadership and practice roles working alongside communities in a diversity of service responses including child and family services, family violence, fatherhood services and youth services. Valuing lived experience, Andrew has developed knowledge and skills in the co-production, implementation, delivery and evaluation of child centred, family focused therapeutic programs, underpinned by intersectionality, recovery-oriented and trauma informed principles. Andrew's qualifications include Graduate Diploma of Social Science, Master of Arts, Bachelor of Arts – Honours, and Graduate Diploma in Recreation.

### **Brittany McCormack (she/her)**

#### **Statewide Disability Inclusion Advisor, Safe and Equal**

As the Disability Inclusion Advisor in the Response, Policy and Evidence Team at Safe and Equal, the Victorian Family Violence Peak Body, Brittany works with Safe and Equal member services and other community organisations to strengthen service responses to victim-survivors with disabilities.

Brittany has had a rich career in Family Violence response and working with people with disability. Brittany's passion is in working together to improve responses for adults and children with a disability across the family violence and broader service system.

### **Jessica Sheridan (she/her)**

#### **Service System Navigator, Family Safety Victoria**

Jess has been the Service System Navigator within Family Safety Victoria since November 2022, working as part of The Orange Door Network.

Jess spent 15 years as a social worker in child protection in Melbourne's North and Sheffield in the United Kingdom.

**Ally McLeish (she/they) - PANEL MODERATOR**

**Practice Lead, Elizabeth Morgan House**

Ally is the Practice Lead at Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Service, supporting culturally safe, therapeutic and advocacy-based responses for Aboriginal women and children. Ally has worked in the community and mental health sector for six years, with a focus on family violence, child protection, and Aboriginal social and emotional wellbeing. Ally has a strong interest in culturally responsive, trauma-informed practice and supporting neurodivergent and LGBTIQ+ clients.

Ally's work is grounded in the understanding that family violence is a colonised construct—imposed on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through dispossession and the breakdown of kinship systems. Ally is committed to decolonising responses and centring cultural healing and community-led approaches to safety.

Ally is currently leading the implementation of EMH's 'Walking Beside Women' model and co-led the development of EMH's service delivery manual. Outside of work, Ally is building a grassroots campaign to honour Aboriginal women lost to family violence.

**Ashleigh Atkinson (she/her)**

**Aboriginal Practice Leader, VACCA & The Orange Door**

Ashleigh's mob is Yorta Yorta. Ashleigh has spent the past 10 years working across various roles within Community Controlled Organisations, including as an AOD Worker, Youth Justice Worker, and, for the past six years, within the Family Violence sector. Most recently, Ashleigh has had the privilege of being part of an Aboriginal team delivering cultural safety training across the state to The Orange Door network.

Ashleigh's passion is culture and being in spaces where she can both learn from others and share cultural knowledge. Ashleigh carries this with her into her current role as an Aboriginal Practice Leader in the family violence sector, where she continues to advocate for culturally safe, responsive, and community-led approaches.

**Christine Tsoi (she/her)**

**Clinical Lead, Headspace**

As the Clinical Lead of the service and an accredited Mental Health Social Worker, Christine provides support to staff, young people, and their families accessing the service.

Christine has nearly 10 years of experience working in the mental health and alcohol and other drugs (AOD) sector. Christine takes a trauma-informed and dual diagnosis approach to ensure best practice in her work. She is currently training to become a fully registered EMDR therapist.

**Rujeko Tsiga (she/her)**

**Family Services Team Leader, Drummond Street Services**

With over a decade of experience in mental health and a robust background in psychology, Rujeko is passionately committed to enhancing the psychosocial wellbeing of families and individuals navigating life transitions. Rujeko has demonstrated expertise in achieving positive outcomes in family reunification, community development, and mental health advocacy.

Rujeko is also an advocate for family violence reforms and the safety of families, ensuring a comprehensive and trauma-informed approach to family wellbeing. In her role, Rujeko spearheads multiple family services programs, including the Adolescents Who Use Violence in the Home program, and provides clinical supervision to a team of multidisciplinary practitioners, fostering a collaborative and evidence-based practice environment.

**Adrienne Buhagiar (She/Her)**

**Senior Clinician, Restoring Childhood, Take Two Berry Street**

Adrienne has worked within the community services sector for 10 years, with the last 8 years focusing on supporting families who have experienced trauma. Her current role as senior clinician involves providing clinical interventions to infants, children, and caregivers who have experienced family violence. Adrienne is a registered psychologist with specialised training in Child-Parent Psychotherapy and Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR).

Adrienne is passionate about the importance of advocacy and education for early intervention and infant mental health within the family violence sector. In addition to clinical work, Adrienne is a published researcher including presenting at the World Congress of Infant Mental Health on the importance of narrative/meaning making in early infancy parental reunification and the impact of prosocial engagement on positive youth development.

**Simone Gibby (she/ her)**

**Infant and Family Practitioner, Kids First Australia**

Simone currently lives and works on the lands of the Wurundjeri peoples. She holds approximately 5 years of experience in the community service sector including roles within Integrated Family Services, specialist family violence support services and family violence counselling.

This work has attuned her to sensitivity of the varied and complex issues faced by those accessing family violence support. Simone recognises the invaluable role of a compassionate, holistic and ethical approach to client engagement.

In her current role with Kids First Australia, she works as an Infant and Family Practitioner, partnering with caregivers to strengthen the quality of family relationships and achieve safety and stability.

**Olivia R. (she/her)**

**Counsellor/Advocate, Northern Centre Against Sexual Assault (NCASA)**

With over three years of experience in the sexual assault sector and a background in family violence, Olivia currently works with individuals aged 12 and over. Olivia is passionate about working with young people and her practice incorporates a variety of creative therapeutic approaches, including EMDR, art therapy and nature-based healing.

Olivia provides individual counselling, prevention work in schools and facilitates a gardening group designed to support victim survivors of sexual assault.

**Lil Mitchell (she/her)**

**Counsellor/Advocate, Northern Centre Against Sexual Assault (NCASA)**

Lil is a Mental Health Social Worker, Counsellor Advocate at NCASA and Senior Mental Health Clinician in ICYMHS. Lil's Social Work career spans 15 years and several countries, working predominantly in Youth Mental Health, Refugee and Homelessness sectors.

A passion for empowering young women and gender diverse people coupled with an interest in complex trauma led Lil to the sexual assault sector. Lil provides one to one therapy, facilitates community education/prevention work and provides a crisis response. In her spare time Lil is learning how to produce electronic music and enjoys long walks in nature with her staghound Pudding.