

# Relationships Australia

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **NATIONAL DIRECTOR APPOINTED**

Australia's highly respected voice on relationships, Relationships Australia, has appointed a new National Director, Ms Mary Mertin-Ryan, who has now taken up the position. Mary has a strong record of achievement, including a significant role in national and international representation, experience in policy advisory roles and program management in the public, private and community sectors. She has led and developed policy across the public sector at the Australian and State and Territory Government levels.

Ms Mertin-Ryan said the appointment could not have come at a more exciting time when the Australian Government in the last Budget committed nearly \$400 million over the next four years to the reform of the Family Law System.

"Family separation is complex, emotional and difficult for parents, children and in many cases extended family. Factors that are important in determining outcomes for children post separation include the quality of the relationship with each parent, the ability of parents to deal with conflict and having a stable and secure environment which is appropriate to their development stage.

"As a key national organisation assisting families, Relationships Australia supports the establishment of Family Relationship Centres to assist families in sorting out their arrangements with children. This is an important priority for us. We will be assessing how we can apply our existing range of services within this context without losing sight of the importance of early intervention and prevention services we currently offer the Australian community.

"As an experienced mediator, I am aware of the issues parents face in separation and I fully appreciate the value of focusing on the needs and best interests of the children. The child inclusive practice being undertaken by Relationships Australia organisations, in partnership with La Trobe University, will lead the development of practice in Australia and the early results of the research are most promising.

"I am excited about the new family law reforms and the roll out of the Family Relationship Centres. This service delivery model provides a significant opportunity for the sector, the community, the courts, academia, the legal profession and the Government to work more closely together to provide an easier system for people to navigate their way through."

Ms Iyla Davies, the National President of Relationships Australia, welcomed the appointment and noted that "Ms Mertin-Ryan has a breadth of experience and knowledge to offer. This combined with her passion and determination in advancing the state of relationships in the Australian community will provide a sound direction and ensure a thriving future for our organisation."

**ENDS**

**For further information contact Mary Mertin-Ryan, National Director, Relationships Australia on 02 6285 4466 (telephone) or 0410 623 030 (mobile) or [www.relationships.com.au](http://www.relationships.com.au)**