



Strategic 3 Year Plan

2015-2018 (Summary)

INTRODUCTION

On April 11, 2015 the VANISH Committee of Management, staff team and invited guests representing mothers, adopted people, intercountry adopted and donor conceived people met to review the achievements of the past two years (2013-2015) and plan for the next three years (2015-2018).

The Strategic Plan is a crucial element in the governance of VANISH. It is the primary document that sets the broad direction and medium term priorities of the organisation. It is our opportunity to regularly review our achievements, 'imagine the future' and make plans which enable the organisation to remain strong, to deal with emerging challenges and take advantage of new opportunities.

The Strategic Plan sets the vision; goals and objectives of VANISH and are 'owned' by the Committee of Management. It is the responsibility of the manager with the Committee of Management to implement the Strategic Plan and employ appropriate timelines, resource allocations and responsible staff members to meet the objectives and priorities. The manager should report monthly to the Committee of Management on regular process together with bi-annual reporting on objectives at the time of the preparation for the Annual Report and AGM. The Strategic Plan must also be read in conjunction with the Risk Assessment Plan. The Committee of Management will review progress annually, to ensure continued relevance and to confirm that no major internal or external development demands an amendment to these key framework documents.

PURPOSE, VALUES & VISION

The **purpose** of VANISH is set out in the Constitution, but in more contemporary language our mission is:

To empower and assist those people who have experienced adoption, intercountry adoption, wardship/fostering, donor assisted reproduction or other separation from family, by providing a formal structure through which to deliver efficient and effective advice, search and support services and advocacy.

VANISH has the core **values** of:

Self help
Respect
Empowerment
Integrity
Professionalism
Inclusiveness

VANISH has the following vision:

VANISH will help those affected by adoption, intercountry adoption, wardship/fostering and donor conception to understand the process of separation from family and, where appropriate, rediscover families and rebuild connection and identity.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The activities and services of VANISH will include:

- Increased community awareness and promotion to change community attitudes to adoption, donor conception or other separation from family events.
- Explore a future vision for the Victorian community in which adoption is considered as 'redundant' and, until that time, adoption is considered the permanency option of absolute last resort and used transparently and openly where no kinship or other alternative placement is available.
- Use past learning from the 'lived experience' of our membership to advocate for a cessation in inter country adoption and commercial surrogacy.
- Provision of practical and emotional support in an individual and/or group environment.
- Facilitation of any party in their search and contact with other party, encouraging and developing self-search skills.
- Development of a regional self-help support network by linking individuals with other persons in the adoption and donor conception communities.
- Development of appropriate information to be distributed either on-line, through seminars or through a library service, concerning all aspects of adoption and donor conception philosophy, legislation and practice.
- Strong collaboration with other organisations, peer support groups and advocacy groups in the sector.
- Liaison, advocacy and negotiation with all relevant Ministers, government departments, officials and FIND for improved policies and practices.
- Promotion of relevant media coverage.
- Build upon the outcomes of the DHHS funded Workforce Capacity Development Project.

GOALS

The following information records the outcome of the review and planning process and thus represents the Strategic Plan for the period 2015-2016.

Organisational

- Maintain a well led, strong, diverse, resourced Committee of Management (CoM).
- Ensure the CoM is accountable for the implementation of the Strategic Plan and Risk Management Plan and monitors the progress of the work of VANISH.
- Ensure continued sound managerial leadership of VANISH and a strong staff team supported by the Executive.
- Continue to increase the VANISH membership
- As appropriate, maintain and negotiate renewal of the lease at North Melbourne.
- Under a continuous quality improvement framework update and develop a suite of policies for VANISH.
- Undertake a best practice review of search and support practice.
- Undertake a best practice review of support groups.
- Improve and strengthen our service delivery capacity by enhancing operational processes, including developing our staff and ensuring the effective use of technology.

Funding

- Continue to operate high quality services to ensure the continuation of core funding.
- Implement the sub-contract with Relationships Australia Victoria for the 27 month period April 2015 to June 2017 for search and support.
- Maintain MOU with Open Place.
- Maintain contract with Monash IVF.
- Broaden the organisation's funding base to provide an expanded range of services not funded under the current DHHS service agreement.
- Establish a subcommittee of the CoM aimed at increasing the small amount of donations and discretionary funding that VANISH receives and to look into other ways of obtaining non-departmental funding.
- Apply to DHHS (Health) for funding for a Search and Support Service on behalf of donor conceived people.

Service delivery

- Survey VANISH membership about their needs.
- Provide increased support to donor conceived persons
- Provide increased support to inter-country adoptees seeking funding as needed.
- Continue to maintain an integrated service model for VANISH members providing search, support, intermediary service, peer groups, statewide information and support, counselling and a secondary consultation service for counsellors.
- Continue to respect the importance of the employment of staff with adoption and/or donor conception experiences of their own (non-mandatory), together with, recognised professional qualifications and experience.
- Maintain staff stability and personal development.
- Maintain the website and Register of Adoption Counsellors and a secondary consultation service for counsellors using telephone and web-based support.
- Continue to provide a high quality two-day training package for counsellors, GPs and Allied Health Providers.

Advocacy

- Consolidate VANISH as the lead organisation in the adoption community in Victoria.
- Maintain high quality liaison with FIND, Open Place, ARMS, Origins, Independent Regional Mothers, Relationships Australia Victoria, VARTA, Lifeworks, ISS, and other peer support and advocacy groups.
- Raise the voice and profile of VANISH at state and federal government level on a number of key legislative issues, including the proposed review of the Victorian Adoption Act and Victorian information rights for the pre-1988 donor conceived.
- Consolidate VANISH as a key organisation advocating for the donor conceived and inter country adoption communities through strategic partnerships with VARTA and other relevant organisations.
- Continue to actively lobby against increased inter country adoption.
- Continue to lobby against all commercial surrogacy.
- Continue to lobby for the cessation of domestic surrogacy and work on ethical guidelines, regulations and evidence based outcomes research.

Communication, Promotion and Education

- Improve the profile of VANISH in the community and with stakeholder organisations to ensure VANISH services are known to individuals affected by separation from a child or from family, and the organisations who support them.
- Raise awareness of the unspoken story about adoption and donor conception and correct popular misconceptions about the impact of adoption.
- Make increased use of the VANISH website and social media.

Research

- Seek Australian Research Council funding for joint research projects.
- Continue to support members and others engaging in related research.
- Facilitate the appropriate use of the data and information collected by VANISH Inc. to assist the adoption community through published research.
- Maintain a strong collaboration with the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) and relevant universities, TAFES and registered training organisations.
- Explore philanthropic funding for research.

7. CONCLUSION

This Strategic Plan provides direction for VANISH for the period 2015-2018. The implementation of this Plan will strengthen and improve the provision of current service approaches. Achieving the Goals identified in the Plan will also provide increased ability to enhance and expand services and set the parameters for future directions.

The Strategic Plan, like all framework documents, is an evolving document. The Committee of Management anticipates ongoing monitoring of progress through monthly committee meetings and annual review together with monitoring of the risk assessment plan. The Committee of Management will ensure that the focus and schedule are being maintained and gauge whether external circumstances or internal matters indicate that further amendment or action needs to occur.

Approved by VANISH Inc. Committee of Management
22 July 2015