



wrisc
Family Violence Support Inc.

Annual Report 2017-18



Celebrating



1988 - 2018

Centre to assist victims of domestic violence

By KIM OREGSON

Melbourne lawyer, author and feminist Jocelyn Scull, this week opened the new Ballarat Women's Resource Information and Support Centre, at 32 Barney St.

More than 50 women, including those in pre-trial and community service, attended the opening of the centre, which was the former Ballarat East Community Health Centre.



lives, especially those in their very communities," she said.

It is important for women to talk to people who have been themselves from the violence they will end up living in an every day.

Second speaker, Ms. Lettice, spoke about support resources in the Women's Network, and she will look at why women are involved in violence and government assistance.

Women have to look to be heard. This is an important step for them," Ms Lettice said.

The centre will be staffed by four paid

women, an avenue to

mutual support.

The establishment of

the centre is the result

of initiatives by 12

Central Highlands

Women's Collective

which has been recog-

ising the domestic violence

issue for seven

years.

The centre has not

been funded to provide

accommodation for

women and their chil-

dren in crisis, but will

work closely with the

Central Highlands

Women's Collective

and other services.

The centre will be

staffed by four paid

Country women miss out

Community Services Victoria have once again ignored the needs of isolated rural and country women in the Central Highlands.

The Women's Resource, Information and Support Centre located at 22 East Street, Ballarat East has been in operation for twelve months on partial funding from Community Services.

The centre exists to provide resources, information and support to women and ch-

ildren and incest, as well as providing community education relating to these issues throughout the region.

Despite acknowledging the necessity of a vehicle to the viability of country services, Community Services have not provided funds in the latest round.

The Central Highlands' Women's Collective, who operate W.R.I.S.C., are angry that the priorities

pared to similar services in Melbourne.

They have requested that Mr Spyer, the Minister for Community



New funding for violence victims

AUG 96

By ELISE SULLIVAN

Ballarat West MLA Paul Jenkins and Ballarat East MLA Barry Traynor yesterday announced \$82,271 in funding for victims of family violence in the region.

Mr Traynor said the Ballarat

It is vitally important that we reach out and help victims of violence.

size preventative services and offer more outreach to victims," he said.

"It is critical that we begin helping them sooner, rather than later to minimise the damage to their lives and begin working on solutions before reaching the point of a refuge

Milestone for WRISC

By Emma Brown

THE Central Highlands Women's Collective and the Women's Resource Information and Support Centre celebrated a milestone last week during its annual general meeting, turning 21.

WRISC family violence support service was formed in 1988 after the Central Highlands Women's Collective sought funds from the State Government to set up an organisation to assist women who were living with domestic violence.



LEFT: from left, president of the Board of Governance CHWC Cora Wierenga, lawyer and family mediator Penny Wright and WRISC Program manager Lynden Baxter

Over the years Ms Wright has seen a big change in the way society deals with and acknowledges domestic violence.

"There is less passive acceptance of domestic violence

in the community now," Ms Wright said.

President Cora Wierenga said during the last 21 years the organisation had helped thousands of Ballarat women and given them the opportunity to be safe, to reflect on their future and to make choices and pursue their own goals free from family violence.

"Members of the Board of Governance and WRISC take pride in their work, and in the organisation and value the opportunity for contribution

that can make a difference for clients and within the community," Ms Wierenga said.

WRISC program manager Lynden Baxter said the organisation had just relaunched a new website.

The website provides information for individuals experiencing domestic violence or for those who want to help somebody who is.

For more information you can visit the WRISC website at www.wrisc.org

205 Dana Street

May 17 2017—7:00AM

State government injects \$4 million into Ballarat region for family violence responses

N ever doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead
American Cultural Anthropologist



President's

Report

This year WRISC celebrates 30 years of family violence support to our local communities. I sincerely thank the original group of women from Ballarat and Daylesford who formed the 'Central Highlands Women's Collective' with the aim of securing funds to operate a support service for women experiencing family violence. Five years later, funds were provided by the Ministry of Housing and Women's Resource Information and Support Centre (WRISC) commenced family violence support. Continually growing and evolving as a high-quality support service, we have moved to accommodate our clients' needs from Ballarat East to Lyons Street North before purchasing 125 Eureka Street. With increased funding and staffing largely associated with implementing the recommendations of the Family Violence Royal Commission, we also outgrew Eureka Street and moved to new premises in Dana Street. I acknowledge the contribution of all staff, volunteers, board members and WRISC members who have worked tirelessly over the last 30 years to empower and support our clients.

WRISC Family Violence Support continues to provide quality services in the Ballarat, Moorabool, Hepburn, Golden Plains and Pyrenees Local Government areas (LGAs) to meet our clients' needs and to work collaboratively with other departments, services and agencies to tackle the complex challenge of Family Violence that impacts on women and children. WRISC is one of the leading agencies in the Family Violence Support sector in this region working in partnership with other stakeholders to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission to further contribute to the wellbeing of women and children affected by Family Violence.

The Board recognises the significant contribution and expertise of our staff, volunteers and teams who work timelessly to support women and children affected by Family Violence. On behalf of the Board, I congratulate our staff, volunteers and Executive Officer, Libby Jewson for their commitment and expertise in supporting and empowering our clients. I commend Libby for her positive leadership in 2017/2018 and in particular her efforts to foster greater levels of cooperation and partnership with community organisations and agencies. Her involvement with Domestic Violence Victoria, Safer Pathways, the Central Highlands Homeless Alliance and the Central Highlands Integrated Family Violence

Committee is of significance, providing state and regional perspectives for WRISC to enhance our work as well as involvement in projects alongside other agencies.

We are extremely pleased to have finalised the sale of 125 Eureka Street and to be fully operational from our new premises in Dana Street. Despite the best efforts of our professional staff and volunteers, meeting the demand for our services remains a challenge given staff and financial constraints. A significant challenge for WRISC is the primary reliance on government funding. We will continue to work with our donors, community, local businesses, and philanthropic supporters to increase funding sources to meet ever-growing needs and demands.

As an organisation we are proud of:

- ◆ the development of the new strategic plan 2019-2021 setting twelve priorities focused on: sustainability, partnerships, our people, accessibility and reach
- ◆ increased collaboration with community stakeholders and agencies that promotes collective effort and joint work to support those affected by family violence including shared care plans and joint projects
- ◆ the strong partnership with the Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative which has continued to strengthen, producing extremely positive results with staff from BADAC and WRISC working together on numerous joint projects
- ◆ the quality of our teams in providing flexible support packages, outreach, case management, counselling, court support, single sessions and creative children's therapies
- ◆ the success of the innovative 'Van Go' project in the Moorabool LGA in providing a mobile outreach therapy service to children affected by family violence

This year we welcomed two new board members who along with existing board members have built a strong Board that optimises members' skills to enhance and renew the WRISC Board of Governance. Throughout the year, we farewelled two board members Joanne Gilbert and Laura Springer. I thank them both for their dedicated service and contribution to WRISC.

All Board members have contributed to the development of the new Strategic Plan and undertaken cultural awareness and financial training in 2017/8. Board members and staff also contribute to the working of our organisation by volunteering on four key working groups— Finance and Risk Management, Continuous Quality Improvement, Executive Officer Reference Group and Fundraising. I sincerely thank the Board and staff involved for their efforts and contributions.

I wish WRISC Family Violence Support the very best into the future and I look forward to seeing our organisation grow and evolve into the future.

Julie McMahon
Board President

BOARD OF GOVERNANCE

Julie McMahon
President

Kate Hearn
Deputy President

Di Cassidy
Treasurer

Wendy Baker
Secretary

Jodie Kennedy
Board Member

Emma Leehane
Board Member

Meeta Narsi
Board Member

Kate Davis
Board Member

Carly Burke
Board Member

For the year ended 30th June 2018

PROFIT & LOSS STATEMENT

REVENUES	2018	2017
	\$	\$
Government Grants	3,350,245	2,292,499
Investment Income	6,010	4,154
Other Revenue	229,060	51,330
Total	3,585,315	2,347,983

EXPENSES	2018	2017
	\$	\$
Salaries and Wages	1,872,912	1,098,932
Salaries On-costs	175,239	96,983
Depreciation	79,971	33,148
Client Costs	584,558	407,753
Reimbursements – Berry Street	397,559	322,126
Repairs & Maintenance	27,217	13,770
Interest Expense	17,439	23,318
Other Expense	556,470	268,867
Total	3,711,365	2,264,897

OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	(126,050)	83,086
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BALANCE SHEET

ASSETS	2018	2017
	\$	\$
Property, Plant & Equipment	293,999	958,662
Other Assets	1,270,278	975,032
Total ASSETS	1,564,277	1,933,694

LIABILITIES	2018	2017
	\$	\$
Bank Loan	-	434,984
Income in advance	713,915	626,833
Other Liabilities	333,013	228,478
Total Liabilities	1,046,928	1,290,295

NET ASSETS	517,349	643,399
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EQUITY	2018	2017
	\$	\$
Accumulated Surplus	517,349	643,399
Total Equity	517,349	643,399

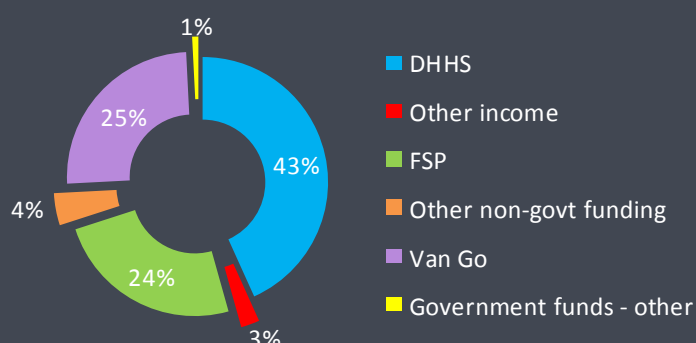
Please Note: The Summary Statements have been derived from and are consistent with the full audited Financial Statements which are available on request from the Business Manager. The loan from the Bendigo Bank was secured by a registered first mortgage over the property previously owned by the Association situated at 125 Eureka Street, Ballarat, Vic, 3350.

Note to 16/17 Annual report - 2 printing errors: Financial Statement Headings - read as June 2016 should have been June 2017

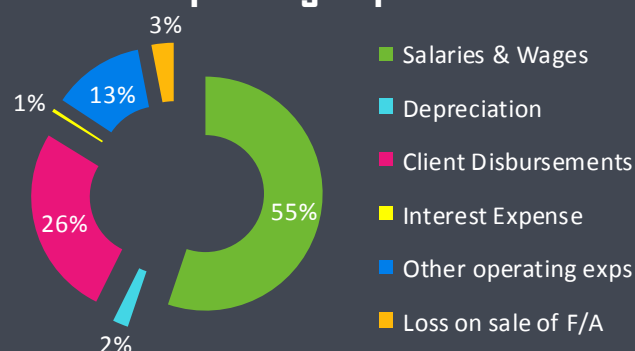
Operating surplus - read as \$86,086 should have been \$83,086

'A copy of the full financials is available upon request'

Sources of Revenue



Operating Expenditure





Treasurer's REPORT

W RISC posted a deficit of (\$126,050) for the 2017/18 year, this was within the Board's expectations. Factors contributing to this result were -

Revenue:

- DHHS core funding increased by 4% on the previous year
- Funding for the Van Go Moorabool project was for the full year
- Funding included a 27% brokerage increase in Flexible Support Packages which WRISC administers for the region.

Expenditure

- An increase of 35% in costs associated with client brokerage
- As a result of the Board's review of the award classification structure and revised position descriptions in late 16/17, total Salaries and Wages increased from 51% to 57% of total revenue
- Due to the delay in the sale of the Eureka St property, both mortgage interest and rent on the Dana St properties was incurred for 9 months of the year.

Non-Operating

- Loss on Sale of the Eureka St property was (\$113k)

Excluding the non-operating loss on sale and the additional mortgage interest incurred, the Operating result for the year is a small surplus of \$5k.

The Finance and Risk Group regularly reviewed financials, core budget variances, risk registers and all other statutory requirements throughout the year.

I would like to thank the members of the both the Finance and Risk Group and the Board for their continued support.

Di Cassidy
Treasurer



Executive Officer

Report

Introduction:

I said it last year, and I say it again....it has been an extraordinary year for WRISC and for Family Violence in Victoria, nationally and internationally. It has been said by many in the sector and beyond, that Victoria, Australia is leading the way in responding to Family Violence. The challenge for our region, state and nation is to work closely together to provide a collaborative and coordinated approach to addressing Family Violence in the general community through the spectrum to the most high risk clients. There have been many plans updated and developed during this financial year and they include: *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children (2010-2022)*, *Building from Strength*: the 10 year industry plan for Family Violence prevention and response, *Strong Culture, Strong Peoples, Strong Families*: Towards a safer future for Indigenous families and communities, *Free from Violence*,: Victoria's strategy to prevent Family Violence, Victoria's *Gender Equality Strategy* and *Change the Story*: A Shared Framework for the Primary Prevention of Violence against Women and Their Children. This year Family Safety Victoria transformed from concept to reality and with this came the concept paper and then the roll out of the first

phase of the Support and Safety Hubs in Victoria.

The Victorian Government has committed to addressing all 227 recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence and this has been done at feverish pace. A challenge for these reforms is to ensure that everyone works together and knows what each area is doing so that responses are coordinated and collaborative.

Governance and Sustainability

The WRISC Board has wholeheartedly supported the operational work at WRISC through strong and secure governance procedures and processes. Sincere thanks goes to all Board members for their volunteer time and input throughout the year, not only at Board meetings but through active participation in various Board working groups. Particular thanks goes to the president, Julie McMahon, the secretary Wendy Baker and Deputy-chair Kate Hearn, for their support to me through the Executive Officer Reference Group. Thank you!

The Board has also overseen the development of the new Strategic Plan and completed a number of Policy and

Procedure reviews as well as overseeing the whole governance picture as it relates to WRISC.

The decision to move more centrally into larger rented premises over two sites in Ballarat has proven to be of great benefit to the organisation and clients, despite some challenges. The Van Go team has settled in very well to the colocation of offices as part of the Moorabool Shire Offices in Bacchus Marsh and has enabled all WRISC workers in Bacchus Marsh to work more closely together under the one roof.

The development of the Senior Executive comprising Sally (project manager for the Van Go Demonstration Project [VGDP]) and Anita Koelle has been a great addition to the support of the Executive Officer role and together with the Leadership Team these women have really developed their leadership thinking and modelling and add depth and strength to WRISC. Thank-you team! The Leadership Team comprised ongoing members Angela and Susie and bade farewell to Nici (who returned to an Intake role) and welcomed Tracy (Team Leader for the Children's Counselling Program) and Kristen Sheridan (Team Leader in the Family Violence Outreach Program [FVOP] and Project Coordinator) and Kate (Clinical Lead in the VGDP). Sincere thanks to Nici, Ruth Turvey (who returned to her counselling role) and Annie (who gained other employment) for their reliable contribution to the Leadership Team and advocacy for their team in general.

This year saw the ongoing development of the Central Highlands Integrated Family Violence Committee (CHIFVC). This group is responsible for the overall coordination of all aspects related to Family Violence in the region and has been ground breaking in its use of a shared priorities and active working groups. This includes the support of the Central Highlands Communities of Practice: a multi sectoral themed approach for practitioners and managers to meet in relation to Family Violence practice. I have had the privilege to be a part of the CHIFVC Executive in the role of Co-deputy Chair and have gained enormous learning from fellow executive members. WRISC has been ably represented on other regional networks including the Family Law Pathways Network, the Central Highlands Homelessness Alliance (CHHA), Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE), Grampians Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group (GIFVRAG), Hepburn Family Violence Action Group

(HFVAG) Koori Engagement Action Group. (KEAG) and the Risk Assessment Management Panel (RAMP)

Workforce:

WRISC's workforce is an amazing group of very dedicated and passionate women centring on a feminist framework to support women and children who are victims of Family Violence. This is demanding and challenging work, for all staff including paid and volunteers. I would like to sincerely thank everyone for their dedicated and passionate work. All regular program and whole staff meetings have continued both in Ballarat and in Bacchus Marsh. The development of the FSV 10 –Year Industry Plan has made a start to addressing the specific needs of staff working in Family Violence making staff health and wellbeing a state wide priority into the future. The focus here at WRISC has been to confirm a consultant to work with the organisation to address workplace culture and morale. This project is called Building Better Organisations (BBO). The completion of the whole staff survey provided valuable feedback for everyone to work on during this year. Professional development was a priority for staff both internally and externally this year. The FVOP project carried out by Kristen entitled: Centring Safety and Accountability: Improving the Safety of Women and Children, and the Accountability of Perpetrators in the Family Violence Outreach Program was mostly completed during this year, with the final report and guidelines due in September 2018.

In this financial year, we recruited in the Ballarat office: Sheree Holding, Mikala and Barb as well as Kristen Sheridan from relief work to a more substantive role. During this time we also farewelled Bernadette, who resigned after 5 years of employment with WRISC. Thank you Bernadette for your work in Intake and Case Management, for your interest in feminist principles and your valued contribution to the women's groups with which you worked. In the Bacchus Marsh office as part of the VGDP we welcomed: Rebecca, Erin, Kate, Lauren, Leah, Belinda and Catherine. During this time we farewelled both Belinda and Catherine and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Belinda and Catherine for their valued contribution to the VGDP.

Stakeholder Collaboration

The emergence of Family Safety Victoria (FSV) and the merging of two Victorian Government Departments into the

912 210
711

Children's Counselling Program (CCP)

Family Violence Outreach Program (FVOP)

New support periods

68%

Above our targets in the CCP and FVOP combined

17.4%

Of our total number of clients in the FVOP were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

62.3%

New clients in the FVOP program, (they had never received a service from WRISC before).



Housing Establishment Fund (HEF)

32
Clients

Safe at Home (SAH)

63
Clients

Private Rental Brokerage (PRB)

22
Clients

Flexible Support Package (FSP)

273
Clients

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has set the scene for an even larger focus on stakeholder collaboration and partnerships. This was enacted with our close liaison with Ballarat and District Aboriginal Cooperative (BADAC), Ballarat Centre against Sexual Assault (CASA), Victorian Legal Aid (VLA), SalvoConnect Western, Centacare, Ballarat Community Health, Child and Family Services (CAFS), Grampians Community Health, Uniting Western, Women's Health Grampians, Domestic Violence Victoria (DV Vic) and the City of Ballarat. The intentional partnering with Moorabool Shire with the VGDP has had benefits beyond our imagination and we wait in anticipation for the possible announcement of ongoing funding for this project. Another exciting stakeholder project was the development of a joint WRISC/ Berry Street services document that is used by both services to explain the details of each service articulating our differences and our similarities. This has been the result of two years of working together from our practitioners through to senior management, and represents a step forward in joint collaborative work with Berry Street.

The Flexible Support Packages (FSP) program has had an enormous boost in funding and has been of enormous benefit to all nine partner agencies with whom we work and the women and children they support. WRISC also worked closely with Women's Health Goulburn North East and Good Shepherd Microfinance to setup the Family Violence No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS).

Strategically, staff members have been part of a number of feedback requests for a variety of projects. I have also been part of the inaugural Specialist Family Violence Services EO's Leadership Group which acts as a reference group for DV Vic, FSV and others. We have gained feedback of our services through focus groups, family fun days, surveys, interviews with groups and feedback forms. Using action research we are endeavouring to respond and understand this feedback.

Service Offering

WRISC continued to operate well above its funding targets. Overall we delivered 921 new support periods for

the year which is 68% above our targets in the CCP and the FVOP which includes the Aboriginal Program. We continue to experience demand well beyond our capacity to respond, and have worked closely with DHHS and Berry Street in this year to attempt to address the situation. WRISC also administered 273 Flexible Support Packages to clients from WRISC, Berry Street, Salvo Connect Western, Grampians Community Health, Uniting Western, Centacare, Good Shepherd in Melton and Ballarat Community Health. The reforms in relation to information sharing have also revolutionized the sector, providing a more informed approach to our case management and safety of our clients.

A sincere thank-you to all teams, programs and their team leaders who work tirelessly to deliver their programs throughout the region.

The future

The development of the new strategic plan is now complete, as well as the development of program guides and continuing with partnership building and development.

There is no doubt that there has been enormous gain in addressing Family Violence in Victoria this year. The specialist Family Violence services in Victoria clamber every day to keep up with the reforms, and all that encompasses these reforms. My role in all this is to support my staff to do the best job they can amongst all the changes and developments, so together we can work to provide the best service for the women and children with whom we work.

Through collaboration, healthy workplace culture and morale using the partnership principles of diversity, equity, openness, mutual benefit and courage, I have no doubt that WRISC will lead the way in provision of services in Family Violence for women and children well into the future. I look forward to seizing this opportunity with staff, clients, volunteers, WRISC members, our stakeholders and Board members.

Elizabeth Jewson
Executive Officer

Donations

Winter woolies



United Threads



Girl Guides - toiletry Bags



Share the Dignity





Business Manager

Corporate Team Report

Wow! Thirty years. Incorporated initially as the Central Highlands Women's Collective on the 18th April 1988 (changed to WRISC Family Violence Support Inc in 2014), we have grown from a very small organisation into one that employed 38 staff in the year ended 2018 supported with a steady volunteer pool. Over the years our size, sustainability, viability and operational focus have all been questioned. We have managed all the above and more. We flourish as an experienced key provider of family violence services and one that is staffed by women only. The Royal Commission into Family Violence (2016) reinforced the importance of understanding family violence from a gendered perspective. Additionally, a United Nations committee into gender equality in Australia stated 'Services that are not targeted and gendered are less likely to be approached by those in need, and less likely to provide the required sense of safety and security'.

Monetary donations this year totalled an impressive \$23,427.90. This was comprised from numerous individual donors who utilised the paypal facility on our webpage. Other donors included: Grill'd, Woodworkers Guild, Bunnings, Dancing Ballarat, Hop Temple, Ballarat Grammar and the Ballarat East Rotary Club. Catherine Farrah ran a self-defence class of which the appreciated proceeds came to WRISC. A heartfelt thank you to all.

Grant funding was received from the following sources: Ballarat UFS, Commonwealth Bank (for our Girls' Art Therapy Group), Streetsmart, UnitedWay and the Ballarat Foundation. These grants enable valuable brokerage funding that enhance our operational diversity and complements all programs.

Joint projects were undertaken with Women's Health Grampians (Enhanced Pathways to Family Violence Work), Ballarat and District Aboriginal Corporation (Yarning Circles and Therapeutic Demonstration Project), Lifeline (for DV Alert training) and the Central Highlands Housing Alliance. The expansion in joint projects compared with previous years, and highlights our increasingly collaborative work and partnerships.

Our major fundraiser for the year was the screening of 'Finding Your Feet' with support from the Regent Ballarat. This comedy saw 'Lady Sandra mingle with her sister's colourful group of defiant and energetic friends that led to new lease of life'. We also raffled a gold class screening voucher for 18 people which was kindly donated back to WRISC and gratefully

utilised by our Aboriginal Yarning Circle participants.

Donations in-kind were also generously given – a lot for the provision of rather lovely personal care packs. Donors included: Soroptimist International (Ballarat), Hair and Beauty on Dana, Share the Dignity (provision of sanitary products), Lateral Plains, Central Highlands Water, Hammonds Paints (paint and supplies for the Children's Studio), Bunnings (assisting with the beautification of the exterior thanks to the Activities Organisers – Kelli and Maddy), Girls Friendly Society – St Johns Anglican Group, and Lap Rugs made by Winter Woollies for Ballarat. Many of the above helped on more than one occasion. Stunning patchwork quilts were lovingly made and donated to us for women and children by Uniting Threads. Children's books were supplied for distribution from the Alfredton/Lucas Lions Club and the CFMEU.

Alison made a successful submission to WESNET for WRISC to participate in the WESNET/Telstra Safe Connections Program. We distribute free mobile phones and \$30 pre-paid credit to eligible clients along with tech safety planning assessments and information about staying safe around technology. Telstra has provided a dedicated 1800 number for all Safe Connections phone activations with specially trained staff. What a fantastic program!

Hilary is the secretary of the Ballarat White Ribbon Day committee. This is a leading Australia wide campaign to prevent men's violence against women. White Ribbon Day is November 23 and the committee have organised a breakfast featuring guest speakers from the Brodie's Law Foundation. As with all the Corporate team staff, Hilary has assorted roles including minute taking for Board meetings, policy and procedure review and accreditation. She and a case manager also attended the Clunes Family Day to represent WRISC.

We are in the midst of preparing for Rainbow Tick accreditation. Our agency will be formally accredited next year to demonstrate LGBTI inclusive practice and service delivery. Two staff members undertook How2 (create a LGBTI inclusive service) training at Latrobe University with a vision of WRISC extending 'Beyond a Rainbow Sticker'. Hilary is our Rainbow Tick coordinator after having successfully gained funds to assist our and other organisations gain accreditation.

Our volunteer workforce continues to greatly support our

organisation and consistently go above and beyond. Sandra is our volunteer co-ordinator and manages all aspects of recruitment, training and retention. We hope our volunteers have a rewarding experience and we look for ways to enhance this with training opportunities and celebrations during National Volunteer Week. Eleven volunteers to give thanks to this year are: Pauline L, Kylie K, Jenny C, Liana T, Astrid E, Sharon P, Kris O, Sue M, Sheree H, Marg S and Hilary P. Volunteers assist at reception and undertake a wide variety of responsible administration tasks.

Sandra oversees the overall administrative and IT functions at WRISC. She undertakes the yearly stocktake and maintains the asset register. She (with many others) attended the Fire Warden training – we take our Occupational Health and Safety very seriously.

Alison manages our website, writes and distributes the regular newsletter and administers our Facebook page and says 'the response has been overwhelmingly positive and we have a loyal group of followers as well as an expanding reach in the social media space. I feel it is necessary to keep a balance between promoting the values and work of WRISC as an organisation, while keeping the WRISC Facebook page a safe space for readers, a proportion of whom have experienced family violence themselves'. Alison also assists with radio interview and community liaison. During the year she was asked to attend the Dancing Ballarat competition and judge the best dressed!

Sheree joined our team in July 2017. She does an invaluable and sterling job assisting Anita with the finances, human resources functions and Alison with the Flexible Support Packages program. She is also on the Finance and Risk subgroup which meet monthly to scrutinise reports prior to the Board meeting.

My job is underpinned by having a dedicated, skilled and efficient team. It is supported by Libby as our esteemed Executive Officer, Di as our most capable Treasurer and Jodie as HR mentor. I can envisage (not for myself...) another 30 years of program development and networking – a sad indictment of the prevalence of family violence but nonetheless a committed organisation to deal with it.

Anita Koelle

Family Violence Flexible Support Packages

WRISC is the lead provider agency for the delivery of the Family Violence Flexible Support Package (FSP) Program in the Central Highlands region of Victoria. Funding for this program is received from the Department of Health and Human Services (Victoria) via Family Safety Victoria. WRISC made the original submission to become the lead agency in mid-2015, and since this time, the program has grown significantly. In 2017-18 WRISC approved \$935,961.88 in funding for 273 packages, an average of \$3,428.43 per package. The funding for the FSP Program now constitutes approximately a third of WRISC's budget.

WRISC is now in partnership with 9 other agencies and receives applications for FSP funding on behalf of eligible clients across the Central Highlands region. The aims are twofold: firstly to increase access to a diverse range of clients, and secondly for clients to have access wherever they live in our geographical region. The FSP Program acknowledges the gendered nature of family violence where the significant majority of perpetrators are men and the significant majority of victim/survivors are women and their children. This is reflected in the primary recipients of FSPs being women alone and women with children. However, through engaging in partnerships with other agencies that provide support to a diverse range of clients, WRISC endeavours to also acknowledge the diverse experiences of family violence experienced by Aboriginal people, people from culturally diverse backgrounds, people with disabilities, people from the LGBTI community and older people experiencing elder abuse.

FSPs are available to people who are experiencing or have experienced family violence, and who satisfy eligibility as set out in the Program Guidelines. Through a risk assessment and thorough case management/safety plan, FSPs are designed to support victim/survivors as follows:

- To establish sustainable arrangements that support their long term health and wellbeing
- In preventing intervention by child protection
- In leaving their current family arrangements in which family violence is occurring.

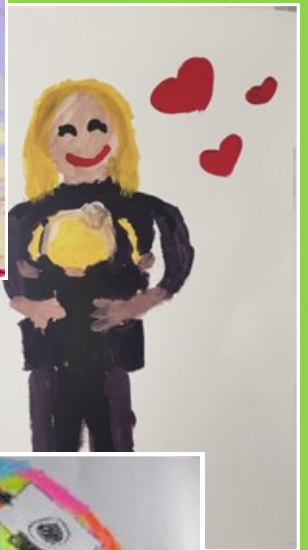
Clients work with their case managers to set goals and prioritise spending within the package with the aims of stabilising and improving safety, the ultimate outcome of which is recovery from family violence.

Alison Crafts
FSP Project Officer

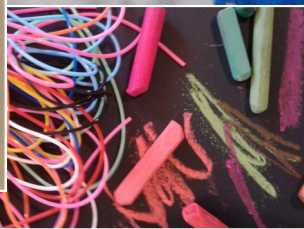
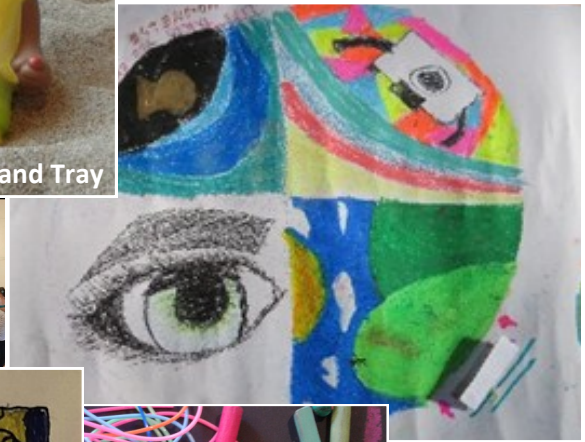
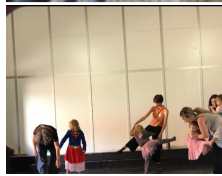
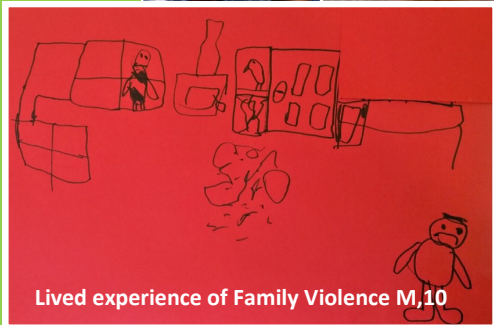




Girl's Art Therapy Group



Play Therapy Sand Tray



Children's Counselling

Program

Ballarat & Moorabool

The year 2017/2018 continues to be one of change in the Children's Counselling Program. The team in the CCP is focussed and dedicated to the women and children we work with. We aim to provide or access supports to vulnerable children who have experienced family violence. Our team collectively works across two main areas. The single session worker acts as the intake for the CCP program. They provide brief counselling support for a timely response, then, dependent on need, will refer children to the longer term therapists or other support that will benefit them. The Art and Play Creative Therapists in the CCP team are in a fortunate position of being able to work 'longer term' with clients. The benefits of this style is to build relationships founded on support, reliability and consistency to give the child space to build resilience in themselves and time to understand their own thoughts, feelings and reactions. 'A calmer inner world translates to a calmer outer world'.

It has been a challenging time for staffing this year. Sadly in 2017 Annie left CCP to pursue other goals and Sally went to head up Van Go. Annie's position was not replaced and there was some EFT movement to cover some of this deficit. We gained Barb in September 2017 as our new Art Therapist. More currently our staffing consisted of; Ruth our Play Therapist, Barb continues as our Art Therapist, Leanne is our .2 admin support person and Tracy is the CCP Team Leader and Single Session Therapist.

Jo our Girls Art Therapy Group facilitator, is an integral part of the ongoing support offered to girls ranging from 9-15 years. Jo receives referrals into the group generally through the Single Session worker. The group runs in the school terms, and this year is funded through a grant from the Commonwealth bank.

In 2017-2018 year CCP received to 247 new referrals and provided support to 330 women and their children (213 children). These were 39 Aboriginal referrals and 13 Girls Art Therapy Group (GATG).

146 women and children attended a single session.

The CCP team members are involved in working closely with other agencies, attending network meetings and advocate strongly for support for the children we work with. The CCP team are also involved in working groups; Tracy, with the Feminist working group, Barb is a major contributor to planning and support for the backyard beautification project and Leanne is an OH&S representative.

Tracy Anscombe
Team Leader and Single Session Therapist

Girls Art Therapy GROUP

Snapshot 2017-2018

Open communication is encouraged within each session beginning with a sharing of the individual's thoughts and continuing throughout the session by use of 'emotion' and 'visual' cards to consider the intrinsic worth of each participant. Mindfulness practice is implicit in all that the girls experience in the group. By including visual and creative practices it is evident that unconscious thoughts become the focus of therapeutic considerations. Each session incorporates some of the following - drawing, painting, face masks, collage, clay, objects and symbols.

The aim of this group is to provide a forum that encompasses a sense of feeling safe, being listened to, considered and respected. With girls in this age bracket, the effect of living through domestic violence can influence a considerable amount of how they are managing their role in the family, their interactions with peer and friend relationships, and stress levels in relation to school demands. This year began with considerable emphasis on how deeply the effect of living through domestic violence can continue to influence in many ways. Whilst the girls are motivated to participate in group discussion and art work, it is also obvious that healing can be slow and difficult. Quiet reflective times allow the participants to see and feel how their emotions are unravelling and hopefully provide them with skills to use in problematic times.

Ja Scherger
Psychotherapist

Van Go Moorabool

A year is a long time in a pilot project! It's been a very eventful 12 months where we have created an office, employed a team of dedicated workers and provided therapy to 71 families and 283 clients in Moorabool Shire since April 2017.



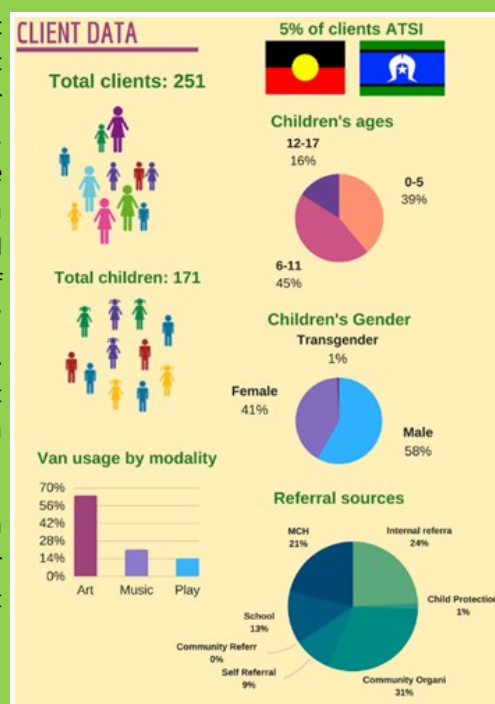
Staff mandala of the first 12 months:
A challenging time: hearts and flames.

We were very fortunate to partner with Moorabool Shire to pilot a mobile creative therapy team in the Shire of Moorabool. "Van Go" attends schools, kinders and local parks to provide music, play or art therapy to clients aged up to 18 years of age and their parents who have been impacted by family violence.

The following chart summarises our client data from September 2017 to July 2018. During this time frame 80% of children felt Van Go helped them and 83% of children 'enjoyed' coming to therapy. One hundred percent of children felt safe in the van.

The following is a summary of our major discoveries in the last 12 months

Unexpected clients: In the



beginning our referrals were for children under 5 years of age as a result of working closely with Maternal and Child Health Services, Moorabool Shire. This was fantastic news due to the early intervention aspects. We engaged Dr. Wendy Bunston to support us in our abilities to work with babies and infants. Over time, schools have increased referrals as have Family Services resulting in a broader representation of ages. We are currently working on our engagement with adolescents and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in Moorabool Shire.

A big bold van is safer than we

thought: The van is not exactly subtle. The unintended outcome of this has been a recognition of our service and a greater ability to keep an eye on workers and children in the van. In addition, it serves to remind communities that family violence is present.



Partnerships with Local Government are a match made in heaven: As local governments do not provide direct service, we do not compete for funds. This has built a very strong partnership where residents in Moorabool receive additional services from Van Go and we are supported by the Council's local community infrastructure, knowledge and resources. It is a mutually beneficial partnership that ultimately benefits families in Moorabool Shire.

The importance of outreach services for social isolation: Sometimes our bus goes 5 minutes down the road to see clients. As a result of the outreach model, many families who attend Van Go are facing complex intergenerational challenges and many barriers to attending a centre based service. The outreach model is able to provide service to the most marginalised in local communities ensuring that all children can access therapy at school when required.

Family fun days and evaluation: We provide family fun days every school holidays as a means of collecting feedback from our clients. We provide a range of activities where families tell us what they like about our service and what we can do better. We have found some creative ways to listen to children's voices. We report back about the results of our evaluation activities and what we have done in response to feedback.

CHANGE IS POSSIBLE

"Treated like little people, totally different kids, would have just sat in the corner, now look at them, they seem so happy, thank you!"

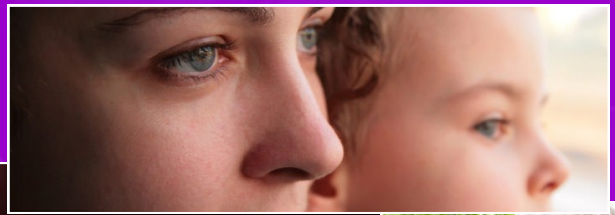
Carer at family fun day

CREATIVITY IS BOTH ENGAGING AND HEALING.

"Umm, well I do art therapy too, I'm honestly not the best at art, and you know that doesn't matter because it's about what you portray in your art not the quality or what it looks like umm it's just really good to express your feelings in a different form rather than just talking about it."

O, 15 – Quote from the Expert Show

While the uncertainty of a pilot project creates challenges, we appreciate the amazing opportunity provided by Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Family Safety Victoria (FSV) in piloting the Van Go project until June 30th 2019. Thank you to a large team of people from WRISC, supportive local agencies, Moorabool Shire, schools and our clients who have helped to bring this 'dream' to life.



*"A journey of a thousand miles
must begin with a single step."
Lao Tzu.*



Family Violence Outreach

Program

The wider Family Violence Outreach program team is split into two teams, Intake and Case Management, with Kristen taking on the dual role of Intake Team Leader and Centring Safety and Accountability Project Coordinator. Susie continues in the role of Case Management Team Leader. The team is made up of two intake workers and up to five case managers with one based in Bacchus Marsh. Staff cover outreach areas of Hepburn, Golden Plains, Pyrenees and Moorabool. We have had three students in our team this year that have not only learnt new skills but also contributed significantly to the program. We also have wonderful support from relief staff in intake when needed.

2017/2018 has been another big year for the Family Violence Outreach Program with once again an increase in requests for assistance and support. This service is continually responding to increased demands for service and cases with increased complexity and risk.

Growing service demand and complexity triggered the need for an evaluation process to ensure that our service provision is as effective as possible with the best outcomes for women and children experiencing family violence. The Centring Safety and Accountability project was born from this identified need and completed within 2018. Staff and client focus groups were held to evaluate current practice and identify gaps. Recommendations and new guidelines for the Family Violence Outreach Program have been developed as a result of the evaluation and will be actioned this new financial year.

Key goals of the Family Violence Outreach Program will be to

- ◆ Improve the safety and well-being of victim-survivors,
- ◆ Lead a co-ordinated community response to perpetrators of family violence that places responsibility of violence on the perpetrator.
- ◆ Provide a fair and equitable service to victim-survivors and to improve the broader community's understanding of the nature and cause of family violence.

This year has been an exciting year of change in the progression of Victorian Government reforms which aim to create a more collaborative, integrated system that will help improve outcomes for women and children. Members of the Family Violence Outreach Program have had the opportunity to provide ongoing feedback into current reforms such as the Multi Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM) and

Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme.

In the last twelve months, we have only had a short term increase to the workforce in the Family Violence Outreach Program, which has been of assistance. As increasing client requests continue, this is an area that needs to be addressed to be able to deliver the timely and efficient service we aim to provide to our clients. We also need to be aware of staff capacity, workloads and the extra pressure on staff.

Staff look after their personal and professional well-being by participating in regular supervision, both operational and clinical on a monthly basis. Staff also attended specialised training (for example, Common Risk Assessment Framework training), and undertaking in-house professional development. All staff in the program regularly attend team meetings, program meetings and professional development sessions. These meetings allow for a flow of communication between staff.

The Family Violence Outreach Program continues to build strong relationships within the sector. In working with our clients, staff have worked collaboratively with many services in advocacy for clients, referral to and from, and providing secondary consults. Family Violence Outreach Program also co-facilitates the women's group WEAVE, working collaboratively with Ballarat Community Health Centre.



Presentation at
Bannockburn Women's Health Day

Staff regularly attend network meetings and have the opportunity to present at various forums and conferences. Attending these presentations and conferences enables staff to further enhance their skills through the preparation of presentations, as well as networking and collaborating with other services.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the team for their passion and commitment in the work they do and look forward to leading them in the next 12 months.

Kristen Sheridan and Susan Muller
Team Leaders

**In the last thirty years
the definition of "family violence" has changed
to include more than just physical violence.**

WEAVE

Group

The women's group WEAVE (Women Engaging After Violence) continues to run successfully as a joint project between WRISC and Ballarat Community Health. It is conducted twice a year and is comprised of a weekly session once a week for eight weeks. The purpose of the group is to provide a comprehensive psycho-educational group that delves into forces that allow family violence to flourish in intimate and family relationships.

Participants are guided through the eight weeks via educational materials, self awareness activities and discussion around individual, social and cultural manifestations of family violence. The overall aim of the group is to help women understand the overarching structural and cultural forces that create and sustain family violence. Developing this understanding helps the participants recognise that responsibility for the violence sits with the person who uses violence as well as with the community structures that support these attitudes, rather than individual recipients of the violence. This group model was developed using the Duluth 'Response Based' framework of holding offenders accountable and keeping victims safe.

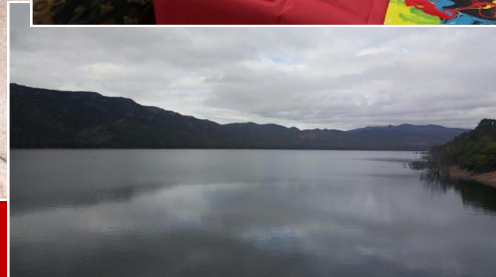
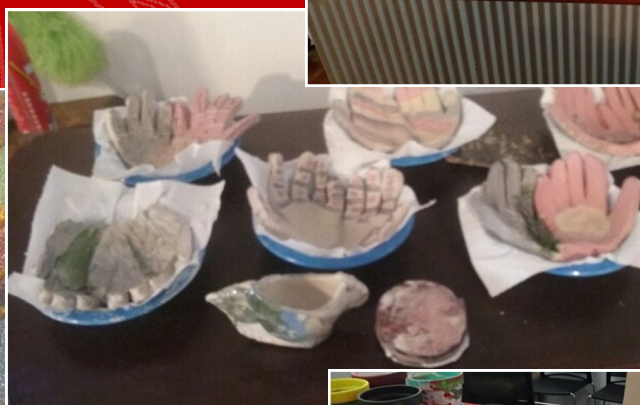
WEAVE is a group co-facilitated by WRISC and Ballarat Community Health. The group started in 2005 and has adapted and changed over the years to meet the needs of both clients and facilitators, and to incorporate new research and theories relating to family violence, responding to trauma and the promotion of recovery. The overall purpose of the group has not changed however the delivery has, with changes to some of the content, some of the symbolic activities and overall running period.

WEAVE uses post-group evaluations to guide future group development. To date feedback is largely positive and most concerns relate to the running times and accessibility of venues. Group facilitators also make assessment of the group and fine tune activities according to participant needs and group dynamics.

In the last year both the two groups have engaged 12 women in total, six women in each group. Participants are referred from across the community health sector and are in various stages of their journey. Those participants who completed the groups found the experience beneficial, with many women referring friends and family for future groups and after the eight weeks have finished many women stay in touch with each other on an informal basis.

**In the last thirty years
we have seen a change in attitudes to family violence from a
private to public issue that is a community responsibility**

Photos from the Yarning Circle Group



Aboriginal

Program

25

WRISC Aboriginal Program continues to grow and has become a well-known, trusted and safe place for local Aboriginal families to link in with. With our holistic approach to the support that we provide as a team, the families are always at the centre of our support. We work through a trauma informed lens which is culturally sensitive and safe, with all members of the family within the supportive space.

Our team has continued to grow and is now the biggest it has ever been. In collaboration with our local Ballarat Aboriginal Co-operative, our team is part of a Demonstration Project as part of the Royal Commission Recommendations, which started in July 2017 and has been re-funded until June 2019. This enables our team to work very closely with the new Family Violence team at BADAC as well as have a greater focus on therapeutic support and a greater capacity to support our young people's Yarning Circle Groups. Angela, Lyndel, Tracy and Darcie are still a part of the team and we have been fortunate to welcome back Mel to the team this year, who has previously worked for WRISC and the Aboriginal Team. We are also in the planning stages to have our very first student placement in the program. Our team pride ourselves on how well we work together, with a mix of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Women supporting each other as well as the local Aboriginal community. The work that we do can be tough and sometimes heart breaking, so the team culture is of a high priority. This enables the work that we do to be sustainable, heartfelt and of a high standard.

We have many wonderful and ongoing working collaborations, with multiple agencies in Ballarat such as BADAC, our local Aboriginal Co-operative, Berry Street, CAFS, Uniting, Ballarat Police, Ballarat Courts, Child Protection and DHHS, local Ballarat schools, Ballarat Community Health, CASA, Ballarat Health Services and Lifeline. Angela has been assisting in delivering several Aboriginal DV Alert specific training sessions throughout Victoria this year as part of our continued collaboration with Lifeline Ballarat.

Within the local Aboriginal Community we have attended the NAIDOC celebrations , Aboriginal Children's Day, Sista's Day Out, the Football and Netball Carnivals, Hoops against Violence as well as being a part of Ballarat Koori Police Protocols, Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group and RAJAC.

Our Yarning Circle Groups have grown now to three separate groups with one Boys Group of mixed ages, one primary school Girls' Group and one high school Girls' Group. The whole team support these groups along with others within our local community. This gives the team a wonderful respite from the sometimes tough on the ground work, which enables a good balance of different work roles which supports long term sustainability.

Tracy Chettleburgh
Acting Team Leader

Yarning Circle GROUP



Every school term WRISC Aboriginal Program facilitate Yarning Circle Groups for young Aboriginal children in the local Ballarat community. Since the groups began in 2015, where there was one group of girls of mixed ages, the groups have now grown into three separate groups this year. We now have one primary school aged Girls' Group, one high school aged Girls' Group and one Boys' Group of mixed ages. Over the past year, we have supported over 20 local Aboriginal children who have been able to make connections with their peers through the group space, establish relationships with the WRISC Aboriginal Program Team and Children's Team, as well as others within the local Ballarat community and the local Aboriginal community.

In July 2017, our team together with the WRISC Children's Program were able to take nine girls from our groups to Halls Gap for a 3 day Cultural Camp visiting Bunjil Caves as well as the many sights around Halls Gap. This was a very rich experience for all who attended and the visit and story to Bunjil Caves was one of the highlights of the camp.

The groups are all funded by contributions from WRISC and our local Aboriginal Co-operative, BADAC as well as funding from KIFVRAG, which is applied for through funding grants.

The young people that attend the Yarning Circle Groups are referred to the groups from within WRISC, through BADAC, Child Protection as well as the local Ballarat primary and high schools. The young people are in a variety of placements such as with Mum or Dad, kinship with Grandma or Auntie as well as foster care placements. Our team aim to support all of these placements to be long term where possible.

Some feedback from the young people at group, "It's like my family", "I make new friends at group",

"I love coming and meeting new people" and "It's a safe place to let anger out".

Our regular term activities include visiting a local pottery studio where the young people are able to create their own works of art in a safe and supportive environment, which is certainly a favourite activity for most who attend. We also do arts and craft activities, visit local community places as well as having end of term celebration dinners. Our school holiday Cultural Day trips this year included the camp to Halls Gap and visit to Bunjil Caves, attending NAIDOC celebrations at BADAC, a day trip to a Birthing Tree near Trentham for a story and picnic lunch as well as participation in the Young Luv Project.

Due to changes in placement for some of our young people, we have begun case managing some of the young people individually when the need arises to provide support, advocacy and assisting them to navigate the system and ensuring they have a voice.



Bunjil Shelter is located in the Black Range Scenic Reserve near Stawell and this is the only rockart painting of Bunjil known. It is widely regarded as one of the most significant cultural sites in south eastern Australia. Bunjil does no harm; I think he does well. These words were spoken by John Connolly, of the Jardwadjali people a little north of here, and recorded by A.W. Howitt. In 1884 Connolly added that Bunjil was a man, and was the father of all his people.

Content: Grampians Tourism

ORGANISATIONS we work with...

Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative (BADAC)

Ballarat Art Therapies

Ballarat Community Health

Ballarat Health Services

Ballarat Pride Hub

Barwon Child Youth & Family

Berry Street

Blossom Tree Psychology

Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre

Budja Budja Aboriginal Cooperative

Centacare

- Family Law Pathways Network
- Family Mental Health Support Service
- Family Relationship Centre
- Integrated Family Services
- Victims Assistance Program

Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA) | Ballarat

Central Highlands Community Legal Centre

Central Highlands Primary Care Partnership

Central Highlands Water

Child and Family Services (CAFS)

- Ballarat
 - ⇒ Step Up Program
 - ⇒ Mentoring Program
- Hepburn
- Moorabool
- Men's Family Violence Programs
- PACT Community Support

Child FIRST

Courts Victoria

- Ballarat
- Bacchus Marsh

Department of Health & Human Services

- Child Protection
- Disability
- Engagement Officers Program
- Family Safety Victoria
- Housing
- Local Connections Community Participation
- Youth Justice

Department of Justice

Dhelk Dja

Djerriwarrh Health Services

Domestic Violence Victoria

Eureka Mums

Federation University

Gay & Lesbian Health Victoria

Good Shepherd - St Abans

Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative

Grampians Community Health

Grampians Integrated Family Violence Committee (GIFVC)

Headspace

Hepburn Health Service

Karrung | Housing

Lifeline

Meminar Ngangg Gimba

One Life Health Group

Primary Health Care Network

Private Practitioners

Quality Innovation Performance Ltd (QIP)

Relationships Australia

Salvation Army social Housing Service (SASHS) - Sunshine

SalvoConnect - Western

StreetSmart

Uniting Ballarat

- Children's Resource Co-ordinator
- Open Doors

United Way and the Ballarat Foundation

Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS)

Victorian Council of Social Services (VCOSS)

Victorian Legal Aid

Victoria Police

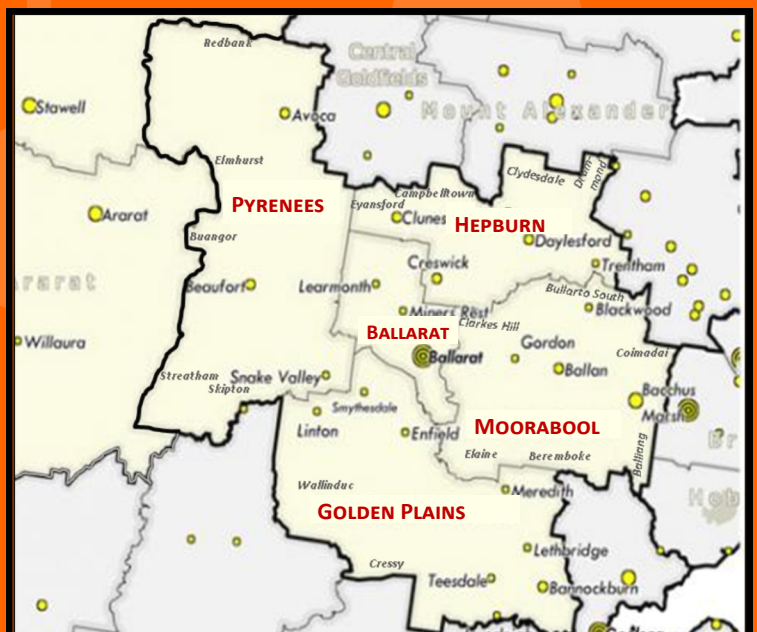
Wimmera Uniting Care

Women's Health Grampians

Local Government

- City of Ballarat
 - ⇒ Maternal Child Health - Early Years
- Golden Plains Shire
- Hepburn Shire
- Moorabool Shire
 - ⇒ Maternal Child Health - Early Years
- Pyrenees Shire

SHIRES





WRISC Family Violence Support Inc.

205 Dana St, Ballarat, 3350 | PO Box 92, Ballarat, 3353
T. 03 5333 3666 | E. wrisc@wrisc.org.au | W. wrisc.org.au