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## WRISC Family Violence Support

### Response to the Royal Commission into Family Violence: 29<sup>th</sup> April 2015

WRISC is a small not for profit organisation in Ballarat Victoria that provides case management (including outreach) for women and children who have experienced family violence. WRISC also provides services in children's counselling, Aboriginal outreach and court support, as well as various women's and children's groups. The WRISC team gathered together to respond to the themes outlined in Royal Commission issues paper. Notes were taken and the following is a written response to the verbal discussion.

In the vast majority of our clients and for the purposes of this submission, it is assumed that Mum or the woman is the victim and Dad or the man is the perpetrator.

#### Focus Headings:

- A. Safety/response
- B. Making the person accountable for their violence and helping them to change.

#### 1. RESPONSE REGARDING VICTORIA POLICE (VicPol)

- a. Responses from VicPol are inconsistent and WRISC workers remark that there is huge variation in response '*depending who is on the desk*' from VicPol
- b. Response times to 'call outs' vary enormously

**IMPACT:** This places women and children at increased risk due the lack of trust and confidence in appropriate response from VicPol, and delayed time when VicPol are able to attend family violence incidences.

#### SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS:

- Thorough Family Violence education for VicPol members both as ongoing Professional Development and also during initial training. Children are considered and comforted when arrests are taking place, as children are often terrified
- Arrests or drop-ins could be made when children are not present



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- More well trained police so response times are shorter and responses are more appropriate when they occur e.g. aware of the gendered nature of FV and child-sensitive

## 2. FAMILY LAW AND FAMILY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION ORDERS

- a. There is very little coordination and integration between Family Law and Intervention Orders.
- b. There is poor communication and very little working together of these 2 systems
- c. Example: When a man with an intervention order doesn't return the children at the agreed time and there is no Family Law Order, there is nothing the woman can do, and the children are placed at the centre of a broken system.

**IMPACT:** Women and children are extremely vulnerable and continue to be controlled. Women feel frustrated and rendered helpless. Situations quickly escalate and the women and children are placed at even more risk.

### SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS:

- For Magistrates to always make interim parenting arrangements whenever an Intervention Order is granted and there are children involved. .. If the presence of family violence is established enough for an IO to be made to keep the male away from the woman, then this man should be kept away from the children until, and if, the children can SAFELY spend time with him. Handing over children is often an unsafe time for both women and children. It does not make sense for often traumatised children, (who have in many cases witnessed their mother being harmed), to then have to spend time with the person that inflicted that harm on her. The children are often also exposed to continued violence in the form of hearing put-downs of their mother and witnessing other violent or disrespectful relating being modelled by their father.
- Simplify the Court system in general so that the general public can easily navigate the system.
- Use evidence based service coordination concepts to improve the coordination and integration of the 2 systems
- Educate Magistrates and Family Law judges about family law or state family violence law and about Family Violence in general and it's impacts on children specifically as a matter of course.

## 3. FAMILY LAW

- a. Judges display inconsistent responses and seemingly poorly understood concepts regarding the principles of family violence



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- b. Judges do not intervene and display strong decisions when it comes to placing the health of the child at the forefront of decisions

**IMPACT:** Children who are embroiled in family violence often sustain ongoing developmental problems due to the violence, an underlying atmosphere of stress and unhappiness and/or anger, the ongoing unhealthy interactions between parents and the trauma relating to often protracted indecision in the Family Court.

**SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS:**

- Use best practice principles regarding the welfare of young children in all decision making regarding the children
- It may be better for the child not to see the perpetrator (the Dad) until the Dad has proven himself to be reformed and not resorting to family violence as a solution to a problem
- The child needs one secure attachment and if this is the Mum, then that is whom they should be with until the Dad is able to display non-violent behaviour
- Safety should override the access to the Dad when there is family violence
- It is CRITICAL for the lifelong physical and mental health of individual children and the prevention of family violence in the future that safety is understood in a broader sense in relation to children, Children's development and therefore their life

**4. EMOTIONAL/ DEVELOPMENTAL TRAUMA**

- a. This is often unrecognised as a form of violence '*I need to wait until he hits me until the law will intervene....*'
- b. Systems and processes can be so drawn out '*I am going to keep you in court forever...*' which will ruin her emotionally and financially and often physically (from the stress); which in turn ruins her ability to parent well which ends in very damaged, sad, confused and angry kids
- c. Strong decisive decisions in family courts based on lots of evidence about the nature of the impacts of family violence on women and children could avoid protracted court proceedings AND would, we believe, make a HUGE difference to the quality of life of these women and children AND the health and well-being of these children for their entire lives.

**IMPACT:** This protracted and indecisive situation continually wears Mum down, and she suffers greatly in every aspect of her life. Women become desperate, children suffer both short term pain and long term developmental damage.

**SUGGESTED SOLUTION:**

- Decisions need to be more decisive so that Dad cannot continue to abuse Mum and therefore the children via the court system in the protraction of attempted resolution.
- Emotional trauma and Developmental Trauma for kids needs to be recognised as a serious form of family violence



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- The law needs to be much firmer in recognising and responding to protracted emotional/developmental trauma

## 5. COURT

- Families are continually being dragged to and from court, and the process may last years
- This is at an enormous cost to the State
- This is also an enormous cost to the women, who often spend property settlement money through legal costs for family court.
- This is also at great detriment to families but especially to children
- The whole system is complex and extremely frustrating

**IMPACT:** Prolonged and unpredictability of the court system has untold effects on the women and children. They are at the mercy of the lawyers, magistrates and feel vulnerable, anxious and insecure.

### SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS:

- Magistrates and lawyers must be up skilled to understand family violence
- Identify and make use of the space where there can be influence 'ask the men why they are doing this ...'
- Reduce the incidence of 'cross applications' by implementing strong service coordination principles
- Strengthen the laws and at the same time provide SUPPORT for the perpetrators and victims
- Let the men know AT COURT 'What the impact is on the kids'
- Make Parenting Plans that really are in the best interests of the child – with full consideration of their developmental vulnerability
- General increased understanding of what family violence is and how to recognise it and how to respond to it
- To overcome the common problem of "you" can't prove it, perhaps the man should be made to prove he is NOT violent and his behaviours are not having a negative impact on the children. Change the onus of responsibility. Currently, if there is any uncertainty about the violence and any "benefit of the doubt" given, it is the women and children that are rendered unsafe. This is particularly concerning for children as they are so vulnerable to long term damage. Surely the money spent on court costs could more wisely be used to support and educate these parents in the needs of their children. AND we as a society, via the law CAN do something. These children's rights to THIS form of safety and our responsibility to our children HAS to be paramount. Perhaps the definition of safety in the family law act has to be revisited again to include developmental safety, and include safety from drawn out court battles! (i.e. a long period of exposure to toxically stressed parents who are quite possibly uneducated about the impact this is having on their children, and



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who could be using the time to de-stress and create positive relationships, happy memories and healthy neural pathways for their kids)

## 6. BREACHES OF INTERVENTION ORDERS

- a. Breaches of intervention orders occur over and over again with very little repercussion
- b. VicPol and others do not adequately respond to breaches of intervention orders
- c. Intervention orders are only active when they are served, and have to be served in person. The system breaks down when men cannot be served in person (even though the opportunity existed at the intervention hearing). Sometimes it takes months for an intervention order to be served.
- d. The onus is on the man who has to pick up the order in Court. This is a fundamental flaw in the system. Men often respond *'I haven't been served, it is not active and there is nothing you can do.....'*
- e. There are often breaches before the order can be served.
- f. The team could site numerous examples where horrific breaches continue to occur with only a warning being served.
- g. Women and Aboriginal clients suffer the opposite where if they are issued an intervention order and it is breached it acted upon swiftly by VicPol and others.

**IMPACT:** Women and children are at huge risk every day whilst the intervention order is waiting to be served. They are also under higher risk if there are no repercussions following a breach.

### SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS:

- Intervention orders should be active from the moment the perpetrator leaves the court
- The orders could be served electronically or using social media
- There needs to be consistent responses to all breaches where the men are held accountable
- The perpetrator should be 'held' in court until the order is served

## 7. OUTREACH FACILITIES

- a. There are no active measures for confidentiality or anonymity in Court structures especially country courts
- b. Names are called from the court in a public domain where anyone can hear
- c. Perpetrators and victims can mingle freely, there is no place where the women feels safe



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**IMPACT:** The woman feels humiliated and very unsafe during the court process. She feels she is not being treated with dignity. The person working with the woman also feels unsafe

**SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS:**

- Design courts to have designated places for the victim and the perpetrator where they cannot mingle
- Review the processes so that those designated to appear in court do not have to wait outside or under the public eye.

## 8. WORKER SAFETY

- a. All trauma work is very difficult and this is not recognised by funders
- b. Workers don't have options regarding their work so they have to work solely in the trauma space because of the funding allocations.
- c. There are pay discrepancies between trauma services. '*....CASA workers are paid at a higher rate compared to family violence workers....*'
- d. Experienced family violence workers are often not attracted to positions due to poor remuneration, resulting in inexperienced workers being responsible for very high risk clients.

**IMPACT:** Family Violence workers feel overworked, underpaid and undervalued. Family violence workers are at a high risk of burnout as they work with the most traumatised and vulnerable. WRISC workers often feel unsafe when they work with high risk clients and thus high risk perpetrators. Family violence workplaces are placed under enormous strain due to the dearth of experienced workers.

**SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS:**

- Give more recognition to 'traumatic growth' and recognise the positive impacts that this work is having all day every day
- '*For this work to be healthy for FV workers there needs to be sufficient time to do your job well and to have the time to reflect with your client about the positives about what is happening and about self care and care of the children – rather than only having time to do the bare minimum practicalities*', e.g. apply for an intervention order, change locks, talk to school, get bank accounts changed, phone numbers changed, etc.
- There also needs to be sufficient staff to cover demand for services.
- Provide an opportunity for a mixture of case work and community education or project work

## 9. DEMAND

- a. There is a huge demand on our system, continually and with very little or no reprieve



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- b. Our intake workers are faced with the decision every day to triage the 2 most serious cases out of the 15 calls that we could work with which receive every week. Additionally, we receive many calls each day which don't make it past the Intake desk and either have to be refused any service or receive a minimum service due to '*not being serious enough*'
- c. The workers feel they can't do the job properly
- d. The workers constantly listen to stories of horrific trauma and this translates into compassion fatigue
- e. There is an acute lack of crisis properties which means that workers are continually struggling to place clients into safe housing if it is deemed they cannot stay at home.

**IMPACT:** The workers suffer from burn out and compassion fatigue. They are constantly frustrated due to broken systems, and feel hopeless and helpless in their role. Managers continually feel overburdened by inability to support staff adequately.

#### **SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS:**

- Enough funding to meet demand.
- Provide funding for a case mix of case management and early intervention projects
- Increase options for public housing and crisis properties
- Aim for diversity in generic Position Descriptions funded by State and Federal Government

#### **WHAT IS WORKING?**

- Creative therapies for children
- All the information and training on impacts on child development of family violence
- Educating parents on the impact of family violence on children based on the training we are receiving
- This information, training and then education and therapy based on neuroscience research is really helping in terms of providing therapy but also in prevention of future violence. Healing and educating children and their parents (regardless of gender) is **CRITICAL** to reducing violence in the future.
- Wrap around model for case management, this is especially evident in our aboriginal program where we walk with the client
- The Million Stars Project based around family violence and prevention of violence against women
- Working alongside and in partnership with other services
- Case coordination with other services



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- Advocacy and *'going in for the battle'*
- There have been observable changes within VicPOI and the legal system, but much more needs to be done
- FV being on the social agenda – lots of reporting, lots of publicity for FV services, events and cases
- Gender Equity/ Family Violence Prevention project with WHG at the Courier and Ballarat Community Health Centre

### WHAT ELSE COULD BE DONE?

- Increase the gender equity conversation so that community attitudes continue to change
- Media campaign
- More police advocating e.g. build on the work of Christine Nixon and Ken Lay and that they are the leaders in changing men's behaviour and attitudes
- Continually improve avenues of communication and working relationships with VicPol
- Increase financial resources to the sector so that they can work with all 15 possible clients rather than having to choose 'the worst'
- Improve systems to make them more streamlined and co-ordinated
- Work through the eyes of the victim and the children
- Provide a service for men where they can tell their story and be supported and educated about healthy relationships with women and children
- Recognise the importance to children and to a future non-violent society of having systems NOW that both hold people accountable for their behaviour AND teach and support them about the value and importance of relating well and non-violent towards each other.
- We as the enactors in our system and society need to act in a way that what we are wanting our citizens to. That is, the systems (legal, welfare, education, economic) and their operators need to be responsible, well-educated, mature, gentle, supportive, accountable and effective.

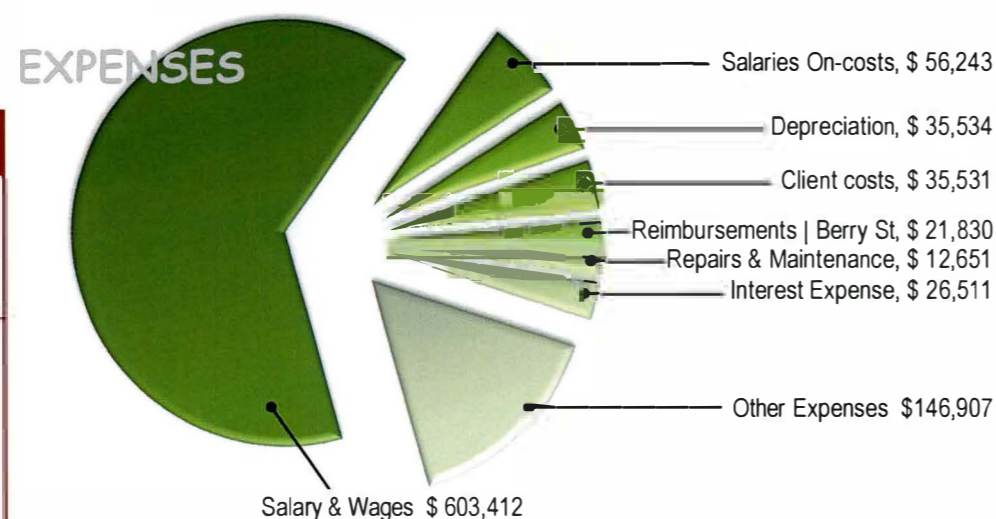
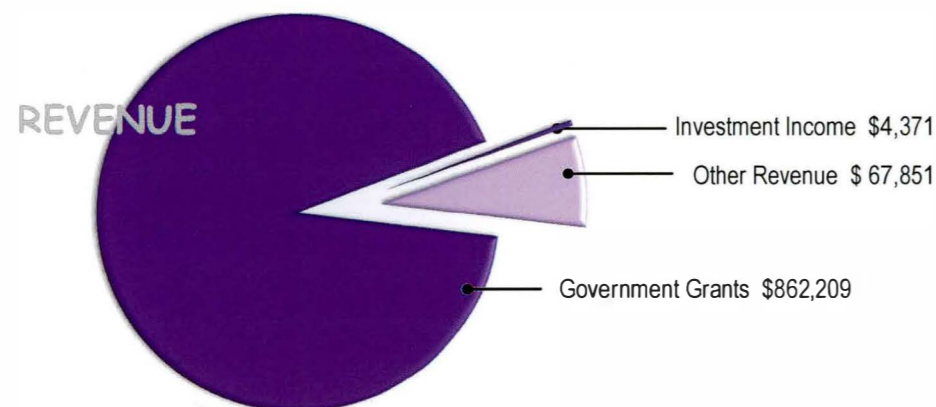


# Annual Report 2013 - 14



## Finances

The Summary Statements have been derived from and are consistent with the full audited Financial Statements which are available on request from the Executive Officer



BALANCE SHEET	
As at 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2014	
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Property, Plant & Equipment	\$ 890,980
Other Assets	\$ 203,778
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 1,094,758</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
Bank Loan	\$ 473,229
Other Liabilities	\$ 102,313
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$ 575,542</b>
*The loan is secured by a registered first mortgage over the property owned by the Association at 125 Eureka St	
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 519,216</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>	<b>\$ 519,216</b>
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>\$ 519,216</b>

## The Future

Family Violence is being placed firmly in the public arena in 2014 and beyond. To this end **strategic planning at WRISC has begun for 2014—2017**. The WRISC Board has identified the following key result areas and goals. From these, program plans and work plans are being developed.

### Key Result Areas

1. Governance and Sustainability
2. Workforce
3. Service Offering
4. Stakeholder Collaboration

### Goals

1. Strengthen all aspects of governance, leadership and sustainability
2. Improve all aspects of workforce capacity
3. Increase understanding and uptake of services in the community
4. Increase opportunities for stakeholder collaboration

www.wrisc.org.au

## Our Vision

Safety, equality and opportunity for all people

## Our Mission

To promote respectful relationships through services which enhance the safety, autonomy and wellbeing of women and children

## Our Values

The organisation works from a feminist perspective, and values : Respect, Integrity, Responsibility, Engagement, Innovation, Diversity, Leadership, Trust, Optimism, Creativity, Co-operation, Acceptance and Knowledge through learning

## Acting President Report

I took over the role of Acting President after our President resigned. It was an honour for me to take on this role at a crucial time for our organisation, which has been regarded as "leading in the family violence sector".

We have farewelled Board members and staff members whom have resigned through the year. We also farewelled Jacinta Wainwright our Executive Officer who after 2½ years resigned to travel the world with her partner and son. Grateful thanks to Jacinta for her dedicated and passionate work in the family violence sector.

For me, some WRISC highlights this year include:

- We all enjoyed the showing of "I am a Girl!" which was an excellent fundraising event for the organisation and the community sector with Rebecca Barry, (Director) to answer questions after the film
- We prepared for the mid-term quality improvement audit during this financial year.

WRISC continues to experience very high demand with which dedicated staff continue to manage in a caring and efficient manner, intent on helping as many women and children as possible.

*Marjorie Pickford*

## Executive Officer Report

On behalf of Ms Jacinta Wainwright the immediate past Executive Officer, I am pleased to submit the Executive Officer Report for the period July 1st 2013 to June 30th 2014.

During this time a number of events occurred, the most significant being the resignation of Ms Jacinta Wainwright as the Executive Officer. Jacinta began this role in August 2010. Jacinta's leadership at WRISC during this time ensured that WRISC maintained its strong presence in the Family Violence sector both regionally and at a State level. A sincere thank-you to Jacinta for her contribution at WRISC. Additionally sincere thanks is extended to Juelz Sanders who resigned as Project worker during this financial year.

Throughout the year the Indigenous, Women's and Children's Case Management, Intake, Outreach, Court Support, Financial and Administration and Children's Counselling teams all delivered strong and consistent services despite being overwhelmed by demand. A huge thank-you to all staff and volunteers for their time and dedication. WRISC continues to be one of the leading services to support women and children who are or have been victims of family violence in the Central Highlands region. On behalf of the whole team at WRISC, supporting these women and children has been an honor and a privilege.

*Elizabeth Jewson*

## WRISC Team Member

We feel privileged to work with children who utilise creativity and play to recover from the impacts of family violence. Their courage, insight and desire to heal provide us with inspiration and hope. The most heartbreaking part of our job involves hearing stories of children who need counselling and being unable to meet their needs due to resourcing. *Sally Goldstraw*

## WRISC Women

I was grateful to have the support from WRISC. I was very frightened and overwhelmed by the court system and I was glad to have Gayle with me, as she knew the process. *Client*

## WRISC Child

"My family is getting better." *12 year old boy*  
 "If my Dad came back I would tell him that there is no violence at our house anymore." *10 year old girl*

## WRISC Women for Safety and Justice Group

As a participant in the WRISC group, I have found it to be s-o-o-o beneficial. At last I am not just a voice in the dark, I am with a beautiful group of women who understand "the journey". Thank you! *Group Member*

## WRISC Volunteer

**Why Volunteer?** We relocated to Ballarat in July 2012 and knowing no-one, decided that volunteering was a good way to meet people. I also have a love for people and wanting to do "my bit" for the community.

**Why WRISC?** I was told about the Uniting Care website which is a very useful tool when new to an area, and was able to choose areas where my interests lay. Well, joining WRISC has been wonderful! Just love all the beautiful people working at WRISC and my time here has been extremely rewarding. *Sue Macquet*

## WRISC Board Member

"We are a dedicated and diverse group of women that govern WRISC! In these uncertain economic times we often have to make tough decisions but we face such challenges together, pooling our energy and resources in the best interests of WRISC's clients, staff and volunteers. It's a consistently exciting Board to be on that actively supports the organisation to eradicate violence against women and children, one of the largest problems facing society today. I can't wait for the monthly meetings which makes a refreshing change from other Boards I've been on." *Ingrid Irwin*

2014 Victorian Election

**NO MORE DEATHS**

Keep women and children safe from family violence.



## Contributors

### Grants:

United Way | Safety Assist  
 United Way | Children's Art Therapy Group  
 United Way, Ballarat Foundation | Website Development  
 Ballarat City Council | Space & Time  
 StreetSmart | 'Free to be me' Children's Counselling  
 Uniting Care | HEF Reimbursements

### Partnerships | Joint Projects

Women's Health Grampians | ACT @ WORK

### Donations:

Country Women's Association  
 Private Donations  
 Soroptimists Melbourne  
 Stefan, 61 Design  
 Rotary Club Ballarat Sth & Beaufort  
 Ballarat Community Health | WD Event  
 'I am a girl' fundraiser  
 Wendouree Lions Club  
 Ballarat Grammar | WD Event  
 La Vie en Rose Massage & Spa Therapy

## Brokerage

Housing Establishment Fund	23
Safe At Home	54
Safety Assistance (United Way)	32
Private Rental Brokerage	15
Uniting Care Accommodation	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>134</b>

*Total Number of Women Assisted: 86*

## Farewelled 2014

### Staff:

Jacinta Wainwright | Executive Officer,  
 Juelz Sanders | Project Worker.

### Volunteers

Fayth Andrews | WRISC Board President  
 Dianne Jacono | WRISC Board Member  
 Rebecca Van Hemert | Volunteer Admin  
 Maree Ives | Reception | Volunteer Admin  
 Talitha Prendergast | Reception

## Organisations WRISC works with:

- ◇ Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative (BADAC)
  - ◇ Ballarat Community Health
  - ◇ Ballarat Health Services
  - ◇ Berry Street
  - ◇ Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre
  - ◇ Budja Budja Aboriginal Cooperative
  - ◇ Centacare
    - ◆ Family Law Pathways Network
    - ◆ Family Relationship Centre
    - ◆ Integrated Family Services
  - ◇ Centre Against Sexual Assault (CASA) | Ballarat
  - ◇ Central Highlands Community Legal Centre
  - ◇ Central Highlands Primary Care Partnership
  - ◇ Child and Family Services, (CAFS) |
    - ◆ Ballarat
    - ◆ Hepburn
    - ◆ Moorabool
    - ◆ Men's Family Violence Programs
    - ◆ PACT Community Support
  - ◇ Child First
  - ◇ Courts Victoria
    - ◆ Ballarat
    - ◆ Bacchus Marsh
  - ◇ Department of Human Services
    - ◆ Child Protection
    - ◆ Engagement Officers Program
    - ◆ Local Connections Community Participation
    - ◆ Youth Justice
  - ◇ Department of Justice
  - ◇ Goolum Goolum Aboriginal Cooperative
  - ◇ Grampians Community Health
  - ◇ Grampians Integrated Family Violence Committee (GIFVC)
  - ◇ Grampians Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group (GIFV RAG)
  - ◇ Karinya | The Salvation Army
  - ◇ Karrung | Housing
  - ◇ Meminar Ngangg Gimba
  - ◇ UnitingCare
    - ◆ Opening Doors
  - ◇ United Way and the Ballarat Foundation
  - ◇ Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS)
  - ◇ Victorian Legal Aid
  - ◇ Victoria Police
    - ◆ Ballarat
    - ◆ Bacchus Marsh
  - ◇ Wimmera Uniting Care
  - ◇ Women's Health Grampians
- Local Government
- ◇ Ballarat
  - ◇ Golden Plains Shire
  - ◇ Hepburn Shire
  - ◇ Moorabool Shire
  - ◇ Pyrenees Shire

*Please note: this list is not exhaustive.*

## Programs

### Women's & Children's Case Management Program

It has been another busy year for support workers in the Women's and Children's Support Program. The program continues to provide case management, advocacy, safety planning, court support (Ballarat and Bacchus Marsh), housing/accommodation support and financial assistance through various programs to assist women and children to remain safely in their home. WRISC provides outreach support to the Ballarat, Moorabool, Hepburn, Pyrenees and Golden Plains Shires.

### Indigenous Program

We are now working in a holistic way with our families and whilst this has its challenges we are finding there is a lot of benefit to our families by doing this. Our program has grown and we are seeing some great outcomes for our clients along with improved relationships with other services for the clients. 78 Aboriginal women and their families were provided with assistance through the Indigenous Program. This is a 100% increase in support periods compared to the previous financial year.

### Children's Counselling and Group Work Program

The children's program employ 1.5 workers (full time equivalent) and are funded to provide services for 88 clients. The counselling program had 174 referrals and of these 168 utilised one or more of individual play or art therapy, drumbeat or art therapy groups, child focused single sessions or parent support services.

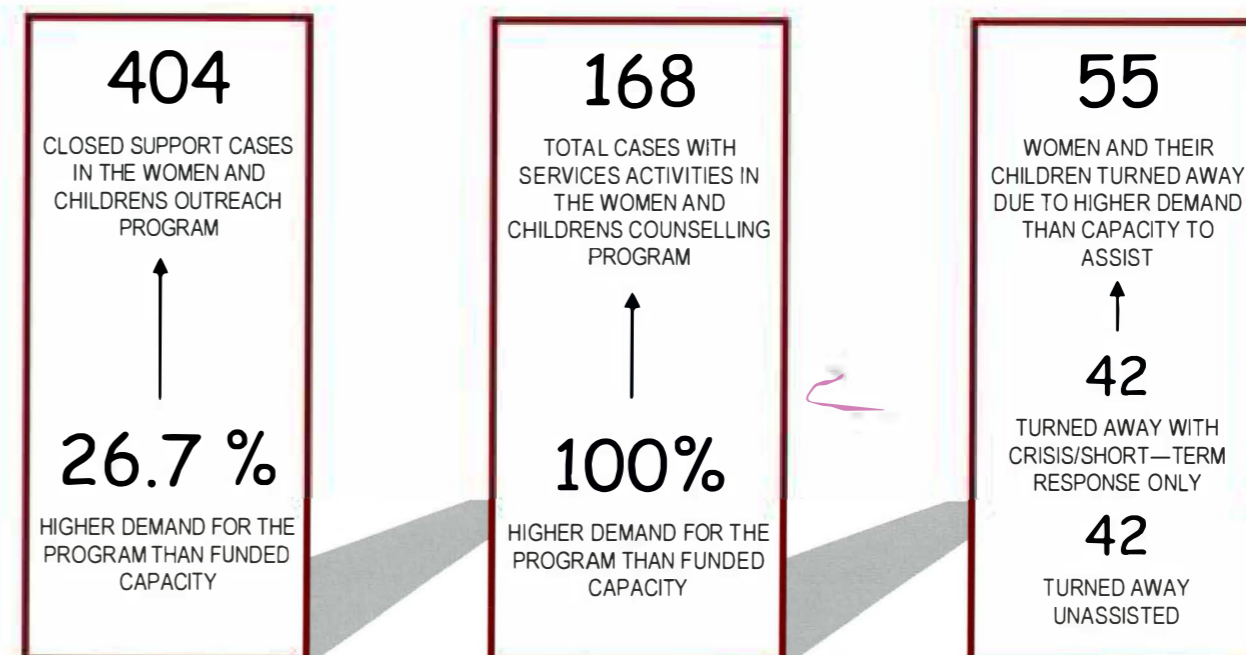
Of the 168 clients, 92 were children predominantly of primary school age who were offered counselling and 76 women received advice around ways to support their children following exposure to family violence. Five women and eleven children identified as aboriginal.

Twenty three children participated in four drumbeat groups, eleven women attended 'women for safety and justice' group and nineteen children attended the children's art therapy group over the year.

### Women's Group

The ongoing women's group continued in 2013-2014. The group meet on Tuesday mornings here at WRISC. The aim of this group is to help women to care for themselves and to stop feeling alone in living with family violence. Although each woman's story in the group is unique, there is always a common thread, and that is why sharing stories and ways of responding to family violence can be so powerful.

## Some Statistics



Overwhelmed  
discouraged  
disappointed  
frustrated  
~~admiration for women~~

## What does WRISC offer?

WRISC can help by providing:

- A person to talk to about what is happening at home or in your relationship
- Information about family violence and what help is available
- Safe accommodation or assistance to make your home safe
- Services and support for your children - counselling, art or play therapy, group participation
- Culturally sensitive support through our Indigenous Program
- Assistance with practical and material needs
- Help to see a lawyer for information and advice
- Support through the court process
- A women's support group

## Who do we support?

- Women and children affected by family violence from a partner, parent, or other family member or Aboriginal kinship or community relationship.
- Women and children of all ages, backgrounds and spiritual or religious beliefs.
- Women with a disability.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.
- Culturally and linguistically diverse women and children.
- Women who choose to remain with their partner who is using violence and women who have left or wish to leave.
- Women of all sexual orientations as well as transgender women and intersex women.
- Women and children who are currently being affected by family violence and who have been affected by it in the past.

**We believe that everyone has the right to be safe, to be treated equally and to have access to the same opportunities as everyone else.**

## Important 24 Hour Contacts

**Police** 000

### Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service

Statewide 24 hour crisis support and safe accommodation for women and their children.  
Ph: (03) 9322 3555 or Toll Free: 1800 015 188

### Centre Against Sexual Assault

A confidential 24 hour emergency or crisis care service for victims who have recently been sexually assaulted.  
Ph: 1800 806 292 (24 hrs) or Ballarat: 5320 3933

### Kids Help Line

Counselling for children and young people, under 18 years via telephone, email and online.  
Toll Free: 1800 551 800

### Child Protection Crisis Line

To report concerns of physical and/or sexual abuse of a child Ph: 131 278 (24 hours, toll free)

### Lifeline

Lifeline provides access to online, phone and face-to-face support and suicide prevention services.

Ph: 13 11 14 or [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)



125 Eureka St, Ballarat  
(03) 5333 3666  
[wrisc@wrisc.org.au](mailto:wrisc@wrisc.org.au)  
[www.wrisc.org.au](http://www.wrisc.org.au)

*WRISC is managed by Central Highlands Women's Collective Inc.  
WRISC acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government, along with generous donations from community organisations, grants and private philanthropists. All donations are tax deductible.*

*If you have a complaint about WRISC, please talk to us directly or contact the Homelessness Advocacy Service on 1800 066 256*

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**WRISC works for women and children who have experienced violence or abuse in a family or intimate relationship.**

**We provide services across the Central Highlands region of Victoria, and our service is free and confidential.**

## What is Family Violence?

Family violence is also called domestic violence or intimate partner violence and can occur in any family or intimate relationship. It does not have to be in the home to be called family violence.

Family Violence includes any behaviour that controls or dominates a partner or family member and causes them to fear for their own or another person's safety or wellbeing. It happens in all kinds of family or intimate relationships and across all ages, communities and cultures.

It may include violence from one partner toward another partner, from an adult toward an elderly parent, from one sibling to another sibling, from an older child to a parent, between family members, from a carer towards a person they are caring for.

### Abuse can take many forms and includes:

- isolating from family and friends
- controlling access to money or how it is spent
- name calling, belittling and putdowns
- making all the decisions and controlling what she does
- preventing practicing of cultural or spiritual beliefs
- intimidation
- making threats
- physically harming
- sexualised violence

## Facts about Family Violence

- Violence in family and intimate relationships is mostly committed by men against women.
- Men's violence against women is a leading contributor of poor health for women.
- Violence and abuse is about power and control. The person using the violence is seeking to control their partner or family member's behaviour or choices. Using violence is always a choice made by the person using violence.
- Violence is never the fault of the victim. Victims of violence always resist violence (even if that resistance is not obvious to everyone else) and try to protect themselves or others as best they can
- Violence and abuse of any form is unacceptable and a breach of human rights.

## Are you a victim of family violence?

Being a victim of abuse, violence or controlling behaviour in any relationship is scary. It is hard to know what to do or where to get help. It is even harder when the person using violence against you is someone you care about and is someone who is supposed to care about you.

But there is help available.

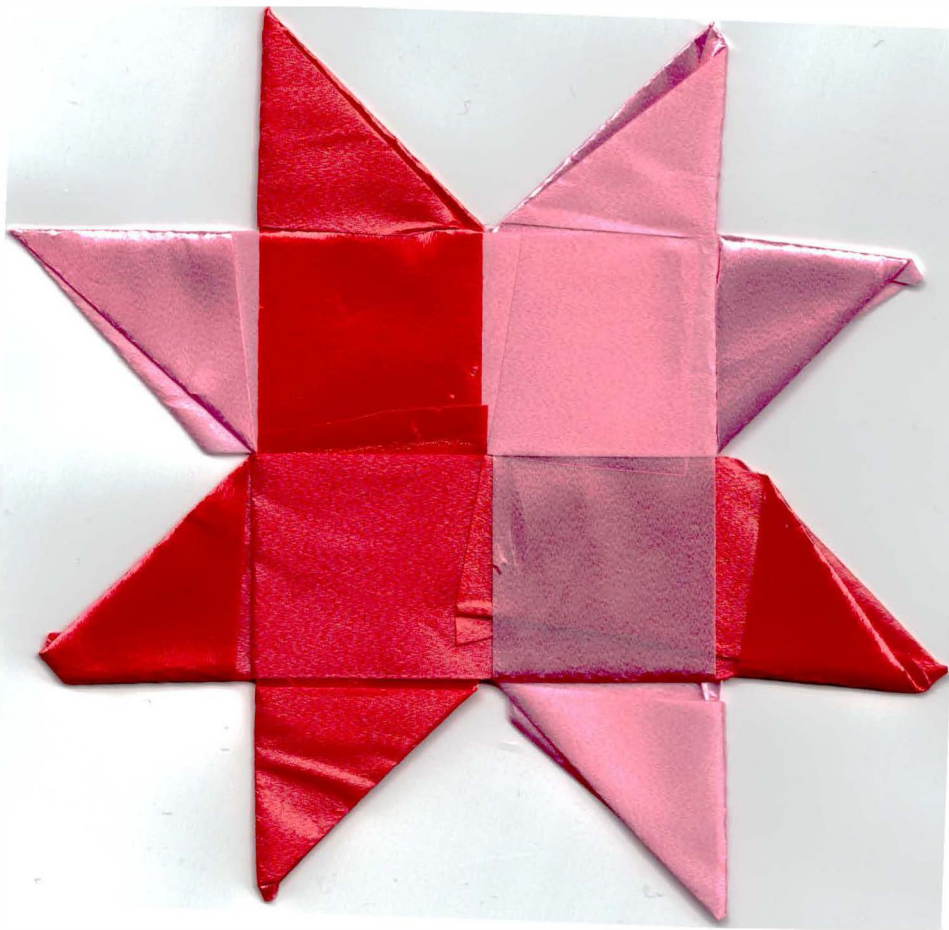
*If you would like help or to talk to someone about what is happening you can:*

- Tell someone you trust and ask for their help. That could be a friend, family member or neighbour.
- Call and speak to a worker at WRISC or another counselling or support service.
- Always call the police on 000 in an emergency. Victoria police have a code of practice that guides them in how best to help both victims and those choosing to use violence.

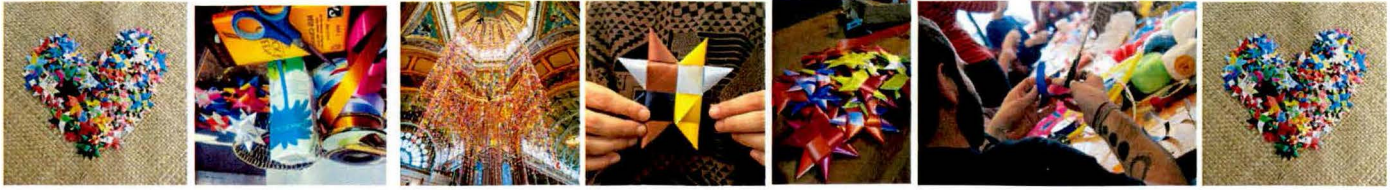
"A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step."

Lao Tzu





## ONE MILLION STARS TO END VIOLENCE BALLARAT



*"Returning hate for hate only multiplies hate, adding more darkness to a night already void of stars. Darkness can not put out darkness, only light can do that. Hate can not put out hate, only love can do that." Martin Luther King*

To whom it may Concern

In 2012 Jill Meagher was raped and murdered in Brunswick. The response to this horrific crime sent shock waves throughout our communities. This crime drew our attention to violence against women on the streets. We also know that women are not safe in their own homes. Family violence statistics tell us that one woman is murdered per week by her intimate partner in Australia.

**For the sake of our daughters, sisters, mothers we must make a stand to ensure violence against women is not tolerated.**

People react to these crimes in many ways. One woman - Maryann Talia Pau - began weaving stars. Now, her movement to increase people's awareness of violence against all women has spread. Her message has been to shed light on this issue through love not hate by the weaving of one million stars.

We are extending an invitation to you and your organisation to join in with other Ballarat and district schools/groups/organisations and contribute to the awareness of anti -violence against women by weaving stars. We want to create 10,050 - 3 times 3350 stars (Ballarat's postcode 3350 times the 3 years of the million stars project) and have these displayed in a public place by December 2015. After they have been displayed they will be sent to Brisbane to help towards a goal of a million stars by 2018.

The official launch for this important project here in Ballarat will be in **March 2015** - we are hoping you would like to get on board and be a part of this important campaign.

What do you need to do?

- Say yes! Agree to get a group of people together and weave stars. Pledge to make stars - the number is your choice but between us all we are aiming for 1050.
- Agree to come to the official launch in March 2015
- Agree to have a fundraiser to pay for the ribbon that you will need

Attached is the webpage for you to find out more about the movement. If you would like more information before committing to this important cause please contact us and we will be happy to help.

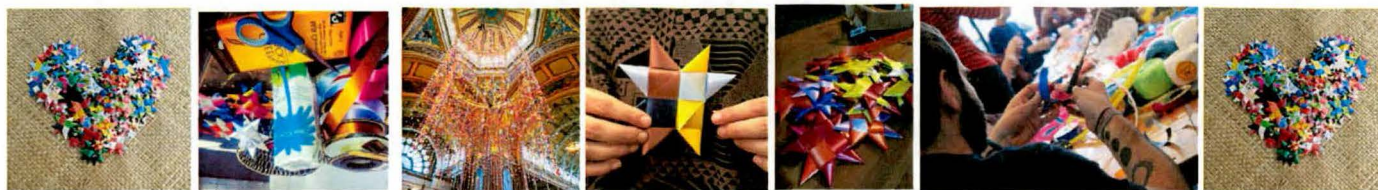
We look forward to hearing from you and hope that you will want to be a part of the Ballarat community that wants to **say no to violence against women**, respects all members of the community and does so with courage.

Yours Sincerely

*Weaving communities with courage 3350 x 3 working group*

Be inspired by reading more about this international project: <http://www.onemillionstars.net/#!about/c1enr>

## WEAVING COMMUNITIES WITH COURAGE 3350 X 3



### WORKING GROUP

<b>BALLARAT GRAMMAR SCHOOL</b>	Students and teachers – Lillian Hearn, Emma Weigall and Kath Milne
<b>WRISC FAMILY VIOLENCE SUPPORT BALLARAT</b>	Staff, volunteers and clients
<b>THE CRAFTY SQUIRREL</b>	Drop off point and you can pop in and be taught how to make stars Open Thursday & Friday 10am to 5pm and Saturday 10am to 4pm. Cnr Errard & Urquhart Sts, Ballarat Central
<b>VICTORIA POLICE</b>	Family Violence Unit
<b>STOCKLANDS SHOPPING CENTRE</b>	Centre management
<b>MADE</b>	Board and staff

### LET US KNOW HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Joining the action group
- Promoting the project in your workplace and organising a star making session
- Making stars at home
- Donating materials or funds (to purchase florist ribbon etc.)
- Installation
- Storing stars
- Marketing the project
- Any other ideas to help us

### CONTACT:

Email addresses: WRISC: ph 53 333 666 [sallyg@wrisc.org.au](mailto:sallyg@wrisc.org.au); [asham@wrisc.org.au](mailto:asham@wrisc.org.au)  
Ballarat Grammar: ph 5338 0700 [Kath.Milne@bgs.vic.edu.au](mailto:Kath.Milne@bgs.vic.edu.au)



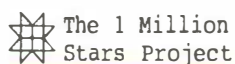
**BALLARAT  
GRAMMAR**



**Stockland**  
*it's your place*



**MUSEUM OF  
AUSTRALIAN  
DEMOCRACY  
AT EUREKA**



The 1 Million  
Stars Project





# Women's program

- \* Safety is our priority
- \* Approach that recognises women's resistance to men's violence
- \* Case work, court support, advocacy
- \* Referral for crisis accommodation and counselling
- \* Referral to children's program
- \* Women's group

# Recovery



A woman's journey

From tragedy, silence,  
entrapment to peace,  
happiness and love

