



WRISC FAMILY VIOLENCE SUPPORT INC.

# 20 23

ANNUAL REPORT







## ABOUT US

### WRISC PHILOSOPHY

Family violence is a widespread social problem that affects people, mainly women and children, in the most personal areas of their lives. Our work with women and children who experience family violence is directed by a feminist philosophy. Our responses to family violence take into account the needs and experiences of people from diverse backgrounds and communities. This means that we believe all people, women, children, and men, have the right to live free from violence and be safe. Family violence is not acceptable in any community or culture.

We believe positive change is possible on an individual, community, and systemic level. We seek to support and empower the women and children, and provide them with the information, resources, and support they need to make positive choices in their lives.

### 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:  
Innovation, Integrity, Respect, Trust.

## CONTENTS

4	10	12	14	16
Governance	Finances	Donations	Working Groups	Leadership
22	26	36	37	42
About	WRISC Programs	Therapy Dog	WRISC Groups	Special Projects
		47		49
		Orgs WRISC works with		End of Year celebration



Michelle Hunt  
WRISC President



Elizabeth Jewson  
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

## PRESIDENT AND CEO MESSAGE

Over the last 12 months the world has continued to adjust to life with COVID. In response WRISC has remained adaptable and agile but always dedicated to supporting the safety and wellbeing of women and children in our communities. Regardless of the circumstances and challenges life has presented, WRISC's commitment to the right of everyone to be safe and live free from violence has remained consistent. In the past year in a world of uncertainty and change, WRISC has focused on continuing to develop as an inclusive, collaborative, and strong organisation with the voices and experiences of women and children at its heart.

This report highlights the work and outcomes achieved by WRISC. In particular we would like to draw your attention to the work completed within each program, the special projects that have happened and have started during this financial year, the statistics, the financial report, the many groups that have occurred and of course, also the stories that are interwoven throughout the report.

WRISC has embarked on a outcome measurements project in 2022, and is working towards the embedding of this work during

the course of the current strategic plan. Through a consultant guided process, various outcomes have been prioritised and the first two to be measured are:

- \* Clients feel safe and free from surveillance
- \* Clients feel listened to and understood.  
(see page 19)

In the past year the 2022 – 2026 WRISC strategic plan has been operationalised through application of WRISC's four strategic priorities of:

- \* Intersectionality, Inclusion and Diversity
- \* Building from story
- \* Connection, partnership and influence
- \* Strong organisation, strong future

This plan sits across all components of WRISC and has been a focus for the WRISC leadership team and board. The alignment of staff, leadership, and governance priorities with the strategic plan has strengthened the shared vision of WRISC to be an accessible organisation grounded in the stories and experiences of women and children. Whilst we celebrate our achievements to date, we also recognise there remains work to be done and we look forward to strengthening our work in



this area through an organisation wide Intersectionality framework and strengthening WRISC's response to the voices of the women and children we work with. Building from story includes listening, understanding and responding to stories in many different forms and this will continue to be a focus in coming years.

Connection and Partnership is a strategic priority and a crucial value of WRISC. We recognise that we could not provide the same quality of support and safety for women, without the relationships and collaboration we have with our valued partners. We would like to particularly acknowledge and thank BADAC, DFFH, and our partners in the Central Highlands Integrated Family Violence Committee, including Women's Health Grampians, Berry St, Uniting - Vic Tas, CatholicCare, Ballarat Community Health, Ballarat CASA, City of Ballarat, Hepburn Shire, VicPol and Ballarat Regional Multicultural Council. WRISC celebrated International Women's Day this year with a breakfast and the staff of Women's Health Grampians as guests.

At WRISC, we are dedicated to offering services that enhance the safety, autonomy, and well-being of women and children. As a feminist service in the region, we recognise the important role we have in the family violence service system. We appreciate the unique position we hold, which enables us to advocate for services that meet the diverse needs of women and children in our communities. We remain dedicated and determined in our commitment to embodying our organisational values of innovation, integrity, respect, and trust in our internal and external relationships and connections.

To ensure we are well-positioned to continue delivering essential services in the region, WRISC must remain strong and innovative. We want to be the organisation of choice for feminist women who are passionate about working towards a fair and equitable community that supports women and children's safety and wellbeing. In the coming year, our focus will remain outward, serving the community, while also looking inward and striving to be a strong and supportive organisation for staff, members, volunteers and community partners.

The next financial year will focus on working through the inaugural regulation and registration process now required of community organisations. We will be consolidating our outcomes (what has changed for the women we work with), listening more deeply to our client's voices and responding to their voices, and perhaps even finding a new site that we can call home!

In closing, we would like to extend our gratitude and highest regard to the passionate, fierce, and strong women we work alongside. Whether as staff, volunteers, service users or board members we thank you for sharing your wisdom, insights, lives, and stories with us. We are in awe of your resilience, and adaptability and you inspire us to lead an innovative and inclusive organisation that makes a difference to the lives of women and children in our community.

We take great pleasure in presenting the WRISC 2022/2023 Annual Report. This report showcases the work that WRISC has accomplished and sets the stage for our ongoing efforts in the future.

## BOARD OF GOVERNANCE



From left: Sarah, Jas, Kesh, Hilary (Minute taker), Yvette, Carly, Michelle and Meegan.

### BOARD OF GOVERNANCE MEMBERS:

PRESIDENT:  
Michelle Hunt

DEPUTY PRESIDENT:  
Kesh Manton

TREASURER:  
Meegan Dunne

SECRETARY:  
Carly Burke

BOARD MEMBER:  
Yvette Gunn

BOARD MEMBER:  
Sarah Nilson

BOARD MEMBER:  
Jaswinder Bhandol

The whole Board meets monthly from February through to November. Working Groups also meet regularly throughout the year including the

- \* Finance and Risk
- \* Fundraising and Communications
- \* Continuous Quality Improvement
- \* CEO Reference Group.



## WRISC STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-26

## WRISC Strategic Plan 2023-2026

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 – Innovation, Integrity, Respect, Trust

Controlled Document



## PRIORITY 1: Intersectionality, Inclusion and Diversity

We will build on our commitment to be an inclusive organisation for women, children and people from all diverse communities, and those experiencing intersectional oppression.

<p>1. We will continue to provide a culturally safe specialist First Nations women and children.</p> <p>1. Indicators of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase collaboration with external First Nations agencies and programs.</li> <li>• Increase in funding and improved client outcomes.</li> <li>• WRISC is an employer of choice for First Nations women.</li> <li>• Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation partnership and collaboration.</li> <li>• Reconciliation Action Plan.</li> </ul>	<p>2. We will identify and respond to the impacts and experience of family violence and intersectional discrimination that marginalises and excludes women, children and all diverse communities from our service and operations.</p> <p>2. Indicators of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an organisational analysis framework with an intersectional perspective to address structural discriminations and inequalities, especially those that relate to regional and rural areas.</li> <li>• Maintain rainbow tick accreditation.</li> </ul>	<p>3. We will further develop our ability to deliver culturally safe services that are appropriate and responsive to the diverse communities we serve.</p> <p>3. Indicators of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clients, teams and board members reflect the diversity of all the communities we serve.</li> <li>• Learn more about gender diversity to explore our ongoing delivery of services to all women.</li> </ul>
--	--	--

## PRIORITY 2: Building from story

We believe that women and children who have experienced family violence have stories that could transform the world – they are experts by experience. We will make these stories the foundation of our organisation, and orient ourselves by them.

<p>1. We will use stories as part of an Outcomes and Improvement framework that responds to evaluation and feedback.</p> <p>1. Indicators of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robust processes for modifying, including how we collaborate with others.</li> <li>• Service provision improvements are directly responsive to the feedback and evaluation process, service delivery and practice.</li> </ul>	<p>2. We will be a community leader in advocacy for women and children, modelling transparency, accountable collaboration and partnerships.</p> <p>2. Indicators of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance our influence across the span of prevention, early intervention, response and recovery at a system and community level.</li> </ul>	<p>3. We will increase awareness of the causes and impact of family violence and improve visibility of WRISC across the region.</p> <p>3. Indicators of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community mind-shift through increased visibility and voice.</li> <li>• Innovative approaches to marketing and community engagement.</li> <li>• Enhanced branding and community education.</li> <li>• Increased opportunities to promote gender equality and eliminate family violence.</li> </ul>
--	--	--

<p>2. We will develop policies and processes that provide the logic for how the organisation operates, embodying the voices of women and children.</p> <p>2. Indicators of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong, safe processes created for capturing the stories of women and children who have experienced family violence.</li> <li>• Safe and respectful pathways developed for women and children's stories to be shared, if and when they choose – not speaking for, but creating opportunities for women and children to share their insights and experiences.</li> </ul>	<p>3. We will consolidate and strengthen our service delivery partnerships.</p> <p>3. Indicators of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in our contribution of story, data and expertise to research projects, discussion papers and legislative change.</li> </ul>	<p>4. We will explore opportunities for growth.</p> <p>4. Indicators of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop collaborative initiatives based on shared outcomes with a broad variety of other sectors.</li> </ul>
--	--	--

<p>3. We will use stories to effect change.</p> <p>3. Indicators of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in our contribution of story, data and expertise to research projects, discussion papers and legislative change.</li> </ul>	<p>4. We will explore opportunities for growth.</p> <p>4. Indicators of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop collaborative initiatives based on shared outcomes with a broad variety of other sectors.</li> </ul>	<p>5. We will explore opportunities for growth.</p> <p>5. Indicators of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop collaborative initiatives based on shared outcomes with a broad variety of other sectors.</li> </ul>
--	--	--

<p>4. We will use stories to effect change.</p> <p>4. Indicators of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in our contribution of story, data and expertise to research projects, discussion papers and legislative change.</li> </ul>	<p>5. We will explore opportunities for growth.</p> <p>5. Indicators of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop collaborative initiatives based on shared outcomes with a broad variety of other sectors.</li> </ul>	<p>6. We will explore opportunities for growth.</p> <p>6. Indicators of success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop collaborative initiatives based on shared outcomes with a broad variety of other sectors.</li> </ul>
--	--	--

Uncontrolled copy when printed

Author Title: WRISC Board

Date of Review: 28.03.23

Doc ID: 272

Version: 5

Page 1/1



## WRISC FEMINIST STATEMENT

WRISC is a feminist organisation that places the experiences and needs of women at the centre of our work. WRISC's core business of family violence is understood from a gendered perspective.

### WE KNOW:

WRISC, formerly managed by the Central Highlands Women's Collective, was formed in 1984 to support local women.

The founding women identified as feminist and WRISC continues to identify as a feminist organisation.

Feminist perspectives are broad.

WRISC understands feminism as a movement that works to challenge and change systems, structures, practices and actions, particularly those that oppress and create inequities for women and girls, with the ultimate goal of a just and equitable society for all.

WRISC's feminist perspective examines power and control in all social, cultural, economic, political and legal structures and strives for an intersectional lens to address fundamental difference in power.

WRISC is a feminist organisation that works to address structural inequalities that oppress

women and girls and raises awareness and educates the wider community on this issue.

A feminist perspective does not work unless it values the unique voices and subjective experiences of women and girls.

WRISC works with women and children and we understand the relationship between family violence and how it affects women and their children.

### WE VALUE:

Equality and social justice.

The empowerment of women and children.

Inclusion and understanding.

Respect and dignity.

Providing opportunities for women and their children for personal and professional development.

Being listened to and hearing the perspectives of others.

Sharing the power of knowledge and expertise.

Continually striving to examine power and the location of social and personal power as it affects our work and workplace.

Safety, healing and recovery, respecting diverse meanings.





## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATION

March 2023

The importance of Aboriginal family lead decision making and what that means to the individual woman.

Accountability to the community, women (including the women who have gone before us) and each other.

Strengthening relationships between women and their children.

### WE DO:

Listen to women's perspectives and respect their choices, acknowledging the power of service delivery providers over clients in this space.

Provide services for children and their families, which can at times include liaison with male care givers when assessed as safe.

Provide a safe space for all.

Partner with other feminist organisations to advance feminist goals and objectives.

Work to transform fundamental differences in power or structural inequities using an intersectional lens that includes but is not limited to gender, sexuality, race, religion, faith, ethnicity, disability, economic status and age.

Respectfully challenge views or behaviours that can contribute to a person's oppression, as well

as challenging and reflecting on our own views and behaviours to ensure we don't collude with oppressive behaviours.

Encourage feedback and are open and responsive to such.

Celebrate women's successes.

Promote ourselves as a feminist organisation in publications, submissions, job adverts and other organisation materials.

Share our understanding of the historical struggle of the women's liberation movement and its influence on the past and future.

Build community through a woman only workplace.

Critically reflect on our knowledge, values, and actions.

At WRISC our shared understanding of feminism is reviewed two yearly to ensure our perspective grows and changes to meet the demands of the WRISC community and the changing nature of feminism.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

I am pleased to report that the 2022/2023 financial year reports have been prepared and Audited by the team at CountPro Audit Pty Ltd. I can confirm that there were no matters identified as requiring improvement.

The Audited Reports present an operating deficit of \$351,540, and a nett equity position of \$1,911,910.

Key information from the 2022/2023 Financial year:-

- \* Due to demand for the services at WRISC in the 2022/2023 year, we had expenditure of all client brokerage supports of \$1,423,910 to help women and children in our community.
- \* Some of the funding for these brokerage supports including Flexible Support Packages (FSP's) was included in previous years financial reports as per the Accounting Standards.
- \* Funding received in this financial year for FSP's was \$1,077,946 and for other client brokerage \$ 123,863.
- \* Donations received were \$66,776 for the financial year.

The strong balance sheet will enable WRISC to continue to provide support to the many women and children affected by family violence.

Our key focus for the next 12 months:-

- \* Maintain a strong focus on delivering Flexible Support Packages to those women and children requiring our services
- \* Continue to undertake due diligence on potential new revenue streams to diversify our income
- \* Review opportunities as they become available to WRISC to improve our services

I would like to acknowledge and thank all team members at WRISC for their contributions, in particular the Finance and Risk Committee including Libby, Michelle, Anita and Sheree.

*M. Dunne*

Meegan Dunne

Board of Governance: Treasurer



Three new vehicles for WRISC



*Profit & Loss Statement for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2023*

	2023	2022
REVENUES	\$	\$
Government Grants	3,765,470	3,780,641
Investment Income	49,278	3,378
Other Revenue	292,115	263,103
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>4,106,863</b>	<b>4,047,122</b>
EXPENSES		
Salaries and Wages	2,392,133	2,032,265
Salaries On-costs	241,654	198,983
Depreciation	89,747	104,092
Client Costs	997,628	656,668
Reimbursements – Berry Street	426,285	304,170
Repairs & Maintenance	25,732	22,868
Interest Expense	13,785	16,681
Other Expenses	271,439	238,286
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>4,458,403</b>	<b>3,574,013</b>
OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	(351,540)	473,109

*Balance Sheet as at 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2023*

	2023	2022
ASSETS	\$	\$
Bank	603,825	1,744,491
Investments	1,720,000	870,000
Property, Plant & Equipment	439,826	398,090
Other Assets	67,736	35,841
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>2,831,387</b>	<b>3,048,422</b>
LIABILITIES		
Income in advance	123,288	16,564
Other Liabilities	796,189	768,408
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>919,477</b>	<b>784,972</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>1,911,910</b>	<b>2,263,450</b>
EQUITY		
Accumulated Surplus	648,777	806,763
Specific Purpose Reserve	1,263,133	1,456,687
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>1,911,910</b>	<b>2,263,450</b>

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 Chief Executive Officer.



# Ballarat Community Generosity



Ballarat Anglican Diocesan



PMT Ladies Ballarat



Donated for WRISC mothers on Mother's Day.  
Body Shop items from Sue 'Body Shop at Home' Consultant



Kesh and daughter donated their time to wrap xmas prezies at Myer



Leslie, City of Ballarat



Rachel and child made these for other WRISC children.



Donation by Louise







CBA donated \$10,000  
**WRISC Snr Exec:** Anita Koelle, Libby Jewson and Marg Cooper . **CBA:** Terry Ryan-Customer Banking Manager-Ballarat Vic and Marg Milani-Relief Branch Manager, Central Vic (far right).



Morning Tea to say Thank you to our generous Donors.  
 From left: Sue, Natalie, Marian, Cath, Maddy, Libby Anita, Karryne, Lance, Amy, Michaela, Jenny, Michael, Tracy, Marg, Shirley and Cora



Haymes Paints



Ballarat Parents without Partners



## INTERSECTIONALITY

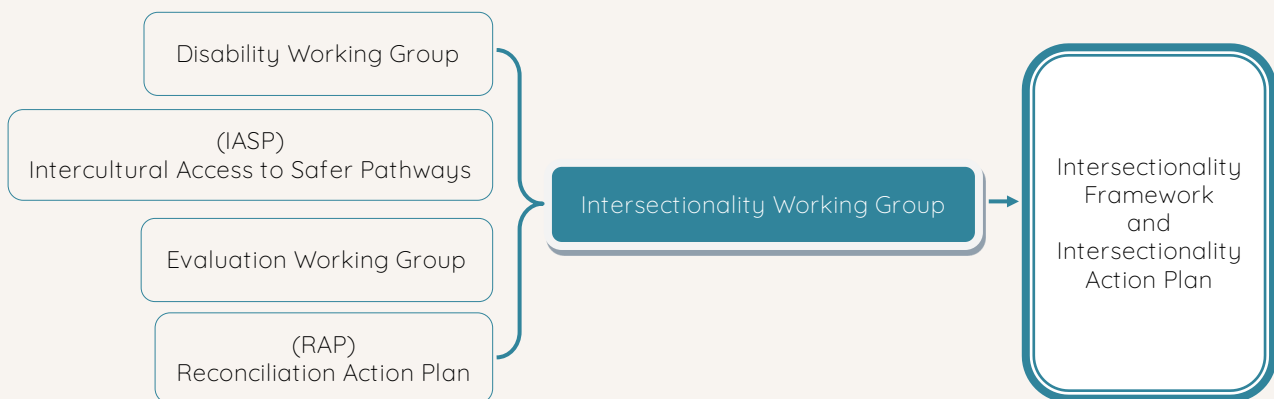


Intersectionality has long been a framework that has been part of WRISC service delivery. However, in 2022 WRISC developed a process to formalise this work, and begin to articulate what an intersectionality approach when working with our clients actually looks like.

The process began by calling for those interested in being part of an intersectionality Working Group. The members of this group were: Rachael, Nicole, Hilary, Karryne, Alex and Libby. This group met several times using the current strategic plan to firstly articulate how the priorities and key success indicators could be operationalised using an intersectional approach. During July of this year at the whole staff team meeting the document was shared, and ideas were discussed and shared as to what these dot points actually look like for WRISC.

This is still a work in progress and during the next financial year it is envisaged that this framework will be finalised, with staff/programs taking responsibility for 2-3 of the action points within each section of the priorities of the strategic plan.

### During 2023:





## FUNDRAISING & COMMUNICATIONS

In the financial year 2022-23 The Fundraising Working Group renamed itself as the Fundraising and Communications Working Group (FACWG), in a bid to align itself with WRISC's newly minted strategic plan's objective to strengthen communications and community engagement.

Enhancing communications and community engagement is viewed as a powerful tool in increasing WRISC's visibility in the sector, with the added prospect of prompting donations. Development of a marketing plan is currently underway to help meet this purpose, alongside the Fundraising plan, with the focus to also increase our reach using our social media.

The aim of the Fundraising Plan is to implement strategies to diversify our funding. This includes raising money by increasing our regular donors and corporate one-off donors throughout the financial year, providing a sustainable source of funding for WRISC Family Violence Support Inc. for the future.

The FACWG is also about giving back and being part of the community: WRISC has donated to The Ballarat Foundation's Women's focussed projects, further building our community relationships. In December 2022 we also participated in the Christmas gift-wrapping stall with Myer. We look forward to continuing this work in the new financial year.

## CULTURAL TRAINING

5th July, 2022



## CHIFVC

### Central Highlands Integrated Family Violence Committee

Leading and advocating for a strong family violence system in Central Highlands Victoria.

#### OUR PURPOSE

##### Why do we exist?

Do you believe that no-one should live with violence and that all people should be safe, respected and valued?

So do we. Knowing that gender inequality is a key driver of family violence, we want to see a future where gender equality is the norm. The principles that underpin the integrated response system include a shared understanding of domestic and family violence across all services, prioritising the safety of those who experience violence, and a proactive approach to information sharing.

##### Who does our work effect?

The scope of our work covers four key areas:

- \* The primary prevention of violence against women and children
- \* Post-crisis response services for women experiencing domestic and family violence
- \* Children impacted by family violence
- \* Services for perpetrators

Our work serves the people and communities of the Central Highlands. The Committee does this by creating value for the social services system and the stakeholders within it and works to identify, prioritise and respond pro-actively and strategically.

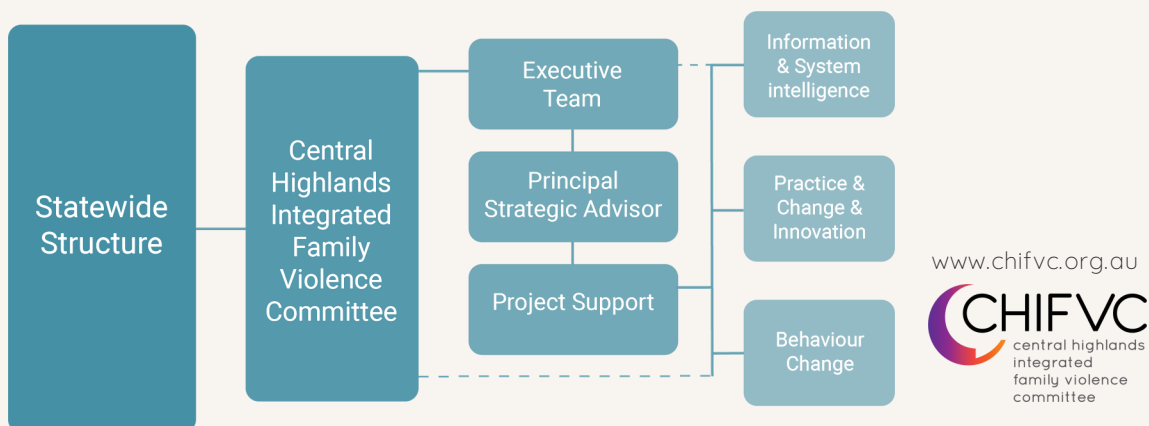
##### So how do we make change?

We believe that together we can change and improve the social services system in the Central Highlands, so it can prevent family violence, intervene earlier, effectively respond and enable recovery.

CHIFVC does this through three principal working groups that:

- \* Identify, prioritise and respond to issues and opportunities in the current system
- \* Drive practice change and innovation
- \* Influence positive change in attitudes inside and outside the system

Collective Impact Framework shapes and guides the work of the Committee based on a Common Agenda. All participants have a shared vision for change and commit to a joint approach.



## PROGRAM MANAGER

Another busy year has come and gone, and WRISC continues to meet the challenge of working to end family violence in our communities. As Program Manager I experience on a daily basis all of the remarkable work our staff do in making a positive difference to people's lives. All of them are dedicated and passionate in their work and it is a privilege to work alongside them.

WRISC continues to be an active and contributing member to the region's family violence support network, working in collaboration with local and state-wide services to support those impacted by family violence, and to bring about change in attitudes and behaviour in regard to family violence and inequality.

As a specialist family violence service WRISC works to keep up to date with State-wide reform, continuing to adopt, adapt and align practices that continually improve the work that we do to provide the best outcomes possible for our service users, and to consolidate our relationship with agencies and professionals in the sector.

WRISC is excited to have been involved in a number of new initiatives over the past year. One such initiative is the collaboration with Victoria Legal Aid and other Victorian family violence services, to support the Family Advocacy Support Service (FASS) that provides for the non-legal support needs of people engaged with the Federal Circuit Family Court of Australia. WRISC provides the Family Violence Support Worker to this program. This project is a unique opportunity to be involved in extending the support provided by the family violence service community.

WRISC is also involved with another exciting project, the Exit Pathways Project, that aims to support women and children experiencing insecure housing as a result of family violence to access more secure and long-term housing options. WRISC recognises the link between homelessness and insecure housing and family violence, and sees this project as another option to improve women and children's access to housing.

WRISC is also excited to further develop and expand opportunities for victim survivors of family violence to access group support. The group support option was significantly disrupted by the COVID pandemic and we are working to revitalise this important part of our service delivery. We see our groups program as vital to our support services and are working towards expanding our range of options to meet the needs of our diverse communities.

Our connection to, and support of, the community also extends to working with tertiary education providers to support student placement. WRISC regularly facilitates student placements every year. This is a great opportunity to introduce students to working in the family violence sector, and brings to WRISC new ideas and fresh perspectives. WRISC will continue to provide this support to students and education providers and we value our role in their education journey.

Thank you to all of our wonderful staff for all of the hard work and commitment that you bring to WRISC every day.

*Margaret Cooper  
Program Manager*

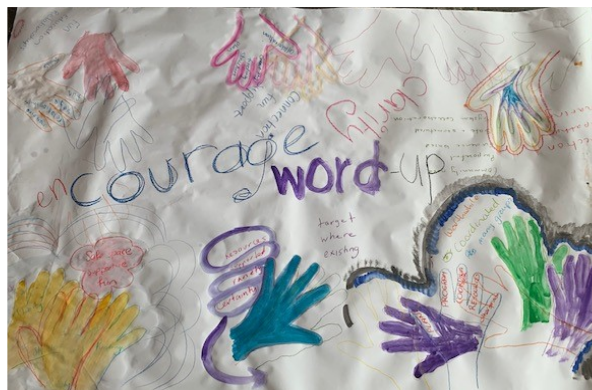


## LEADERSHIP TEAM

February 2023

The Leadership Team comprises CEO (Libby), Business Manager (BM) (Anita), Program Manager (PM) (Marg), Team Leader-Van Go Children's Creative Therapy Program (Genevieve), Team Leader-Dhurrung Wurrungurwil Aboriginal Program (Jodie) and Team Leader-Family Violence Outreach Program (Tracy).

Early in the year we spent a day planning for the year ahead and then every month this group meets for the Leadership (strategic/reflect) session. The Program Manager, Team Leader's and Senior Workers (Kelly, Cath and Darcie) also meet monthly in an Operational Leadership meeting. Additionally, the Senior Executives (CEO, BM and PM) meet monthly to plan and oversee the execution of the Strategic Plan.



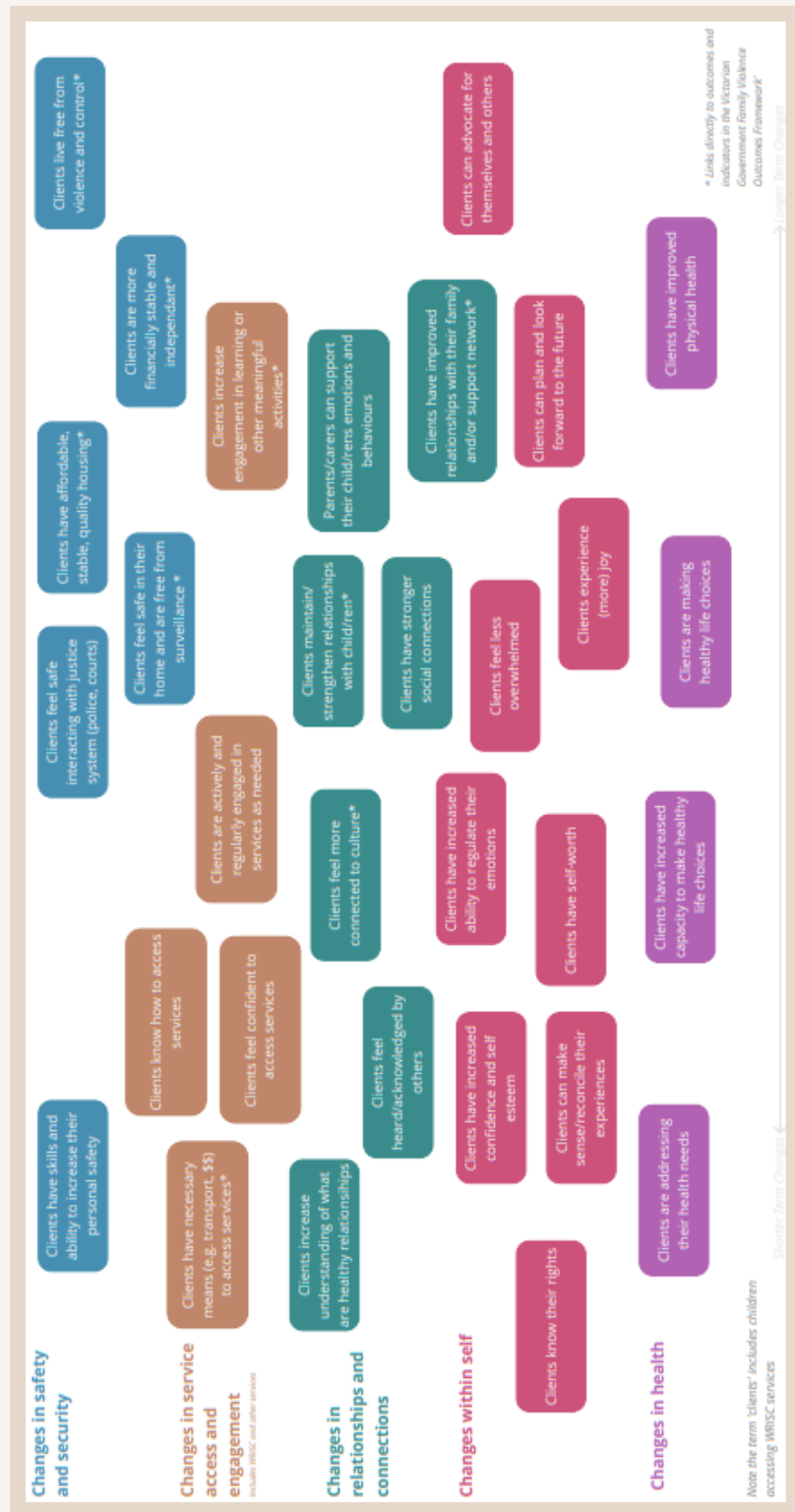
### Aspirational thinking at the leadership planning day

Karryne helped us to use creative arts to further explore our discussions and idea.

# WRISC OUTCOMES

## Development Summary

Prepared by Judy Gold,  
'Cultivating Change'  
6th December, 2022



# Listening, Learning & Sharing Day

February 2023





## WRISC-whole staff team meetings



WRISC and Berry Street - June '23

On the second Wednesday of each month (except January) the whole staff team meeting occurs. During these meetings staff are often asked to provide their input into a variety of projects and reviews. A yearly staff survey is also completed. Berry Street joined us in June 2023.

One activity was providing ideas to promote program integration which emerged from the staff survey as a priority to work on. Some meetings have also been prepared and facilitated by each program and the meetings alternate between Darley and Ballarat.



## MORE ABOUT US...

### SERVICES OFFERED AT WRISC



Moorabool Shire

Pyrenees Shire

City of Ballarat

Hepburn Shire

Golden Plains Shire

#### OUTREACH PROGRAM FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Case management support to women and, where relevant, their children.

Support includes:

- \* Assessment and safety planning
- \* Advocacy and case collaboration
- \* Family Violence Court support for clients
- \* Support to access community and service support
- \* Groups
- \* Women's Family Violence Support Group
- \* 'Steppin' Out' Walking Group

#### VAN GO CHILDREN'S CREATIVE THERAPY PROGRAM

Individual counselling using creative therapy.

Support includes:

- \* Single session therapy assessment
- \* Individual counselling using creative therapy
- \* Mobile therapy in a purpose built van (VGM)
- \* Groups
- \* Groups run in response to community needs
- \* Parent and Caregivers Groups
- \* Children's creative therapy groups

*BADAC - Ballarat and District Aboriginal Co-operative,  
B - Ballarat,  
VGM - Van Go-Moorabool*

#### ABORIGINAL PROGRAM (HOLISTIC APPROACH)

Intake and Intensive Case Management (can work in partnership with BADAC and other agencies)

Support includes:

- \* Assessment and safety planning
- \* Advocacy and case collaboration
- \* Family Violence Court support for clients
- \* Support to access community and service support
- \* Groups
- \* Aboriginal Girls group:  
(Primary & High School ages)
- \* Aboriginal Boys group:  
(Primary & High School ages)
- \* Family Violence court support
- \* Cultural Women's Group

#### ACROSS ALL PROGRAMS WRISC ALSO HAS BROKERAGE TO:

- \* Access and establish private housing
- \* Access safety and security equipment for the home
- \* Link in with a wide range of community and service supports
- \* Manage other family violence related costs
- \* Flexible Support Packages (FSPs)

## OUR TEAM

### ORIENTATION OF NEW STAFF

All new staff participate in a dedicated half day orientation information session which feedback suggests to be extremely valuable

### GRADUATES



Alex:

Master of Social Work (Qualifying)

Chloe

Bachelor Degree of Human Services and Entrepreneurship

Darcie:

Graduate Certificate in Social and Community Services

Fionn:

Masters of Therapeutic Arts Practice

Heather:

Diploma of Community Services

Tracy:

Graduate Certificate in Social and Community Services

34 Staff: Y/E 2023

2 Full-Time

30 Part-Time

2 Casual

1 Volunteer

### WELCOME

Alex

Fionn

Hayley

Lynne

Madison

Michelle

Wendy

Youzhen

### PARENTAL LEAVE

Ash

Mikala

Sarah

### FAREWELL

Chelsea

Sarah

Sharee

Suzanne

Wendy

### DEDICATED SERVICE

Over 30 years

Anita

Over 10 years

Kelly

Sandra

Over 5 years

Alison

Hilary

Libby

Sarah

Tracy



This is the reviewed and updated document completed during a whole staff team meeting.  
This is the way we aspire to work with each other.



## WRISC CLIENTS

Clients who have accessed the service in this financial year :

# 509

228: Family Violence Outreach Program

*This includes women and children*

66: Dhurrung Wunggurrwil Aboriginal Family Violence Program

*This includes women and children*

215: Van Go Children's Creative Therapy Program

151 children, 64 Carers

26 identified as ABTSI (20 children, 6 carers)

27 Identified as living with a disability (22 children, 5 carers)

41 cases closed within the financial year (92% of client met their goals)

51% Ballarat, 39% Moorabool, 2% Hepburn, 8% Golden Plains

# 62.2%

New clients in the Family Violence Outreach Program and Dhurrung Wunggurrwil Aboriginal Family Violence Program



Crisis brokerage.

Clients assisted 173.



Flexible Support Packages (FSPs):

WRISC approved 396 FSPs for the Central Highlands region (including some from City of Melton LGA) for the 2022/23 financial year.

Our target was 304 FSPs. Therefore we exceeded our target by 92 packages which is by 30.1%.

WRISC also exceeded our original FSP budget for the 2022/23 financial year by 40%.



## DHURRUNG WUNGGURRWIL FAMILY VIOLENCE PROGRAM

### Priority 2: Building from Story

The 2022/23 financial year has been a year of growth for the Dhurrung Wunggurwil Family Violence Program (DWFVP).

In July 2022, the Aboriginal Family Violence Program held a stall for NAIDOC week celebrations at the Ballarat Showgrounds, hosted by BADAC. We were honoured to be a part of such a significant event with the Ballarat community. WRISC showcased some of the artwork that the Yarning Circle children created throughout the year to make the Circle of Strength cards and we also promoted the Traineeship for the Aboriginal Program on the day. It was a great opportunity for networking and to see what all of the other services that held stalls were up to in their spaces as well.

In September 2022, after consultations with Tammy Gilson from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DEWLP) and the Aboriginal Family Violence Program, we managed to decide on a new name for the program. The new program name being, Dhurrung Wunggurwil Aboriginal Family Violence Program. This was an easy choice, given that the meaning resonates with the women and children that we work with.

### Dhurrung Wunggurwil (Doo-roong Wong-goo-wool - Heart Strong in Wadawurrung language)

Meaning of Dhurrung Wunggurwil: This represents the heart that gives us life, pumping the blood through our bodies just like our Mother earth that nurtures, cares and provides for us. The living waters once used as walking tracks connecting Country are representative of the blood that runs through our bodies. We are all connected to each other in some way. The strength is given from the river red gums we call biyal. Dhurrung Wunggurwil is the strong heart our birth mother gives us.

### Priority 4: Strong Organisation, strong future

2022/23 saw Jodie studying for a Bachelor of Community and Human Services. Darcie completed her Graduate Certificate and Rach studied for her Master of Social Work.

### Priority 1: Intersectionality, Inclusion and Diversity

In November 2022, we were lucky to welcome Madison Vranesic into the Family Violence Traineeship role. The traineeship is funded through Family Violence and Sexual Assault Traineeship (FVSAT) and has been a very worthwhile program to offer. Maddy has already shown herself to be an asset to WRISC with her passion for learning in the family violence space and the amazing work she has done with the Yarning Circle Program. It has been wonderful to watch Maddy grow in this space.

The Dhurrung Wunggurwil Program welcomed Nicole Augustine to the team. Nicole works in the DWFVP one day per week and has come with a wealth of knowledge from her 10+ years' of experience working in Child Protection roles.

We also welcomed Alex to the team. Alex successfully completed her Student Placement at WRISC and has taken on a 6 month contracted role in the Dhurrung Wunggurwil Program.

### Priority 3 – Connection, Partnership and Influence

Stakeholder collaboration is a big part of my work, and we value the collaborative relationships that we have continued to build throughout the year. The DWP worked closely with BADAC, where we co-located for 1 day per week, The Orange Door, CAFS, Uniting, CASA, Child Protection, Vic Pol and the courts are just a few of the services that we work closely with.

We are also members of the Police and Aboriginal Community Protocols Against Family Violence (PACPAVF) meetings held in Ballarat.

Another successful year for the Yarning Circle children, with the final product being finalised for the Dhurrung Wunggurrwil Strength Cards. We have approximately 1000 packs of the cards to sell and all of the proceeds will go back into the Yarning Circle Program so that we can continue to run the groups.

In 2022-23 we held three groups per week which consisted of Primary School Girls Group, High School Girls Group, Combined PS and HS Boys Group.

The young people enjoyed a variety of sessions from candle making, make-up session, dinners at restaurants, day trips and Soccer sessions for the boys with Western Vic Football Academy.

2022-23 also saw the groups reach capacity in numbers with many more young people in attendance.

A big thank you to Maddy for running the groups successfully and for providing such a variety of activities.

We are looking forward to planning for the year ahead for our group work.

*Jodie, Team Leader*





# CIRCLE OF STRENGTH : Courage Cards



Circle of Strength: Courage Cards are designed to celebrate positive qualities we notice in ourselves and in our circle of relationships. The cards can also be drawn upon in challenging times.

## HOW TO USE THESE CARDS

Choose a card to celebrate this characteristic in yourself, your family, your school, friends or your community. You may also choose a card to build on and use that characteristic in particular situations. Alternatively, select a card at random to invite more of this strength into your life.



## POSTERS



## TRAINEESHIP



I began my traineeship at the end of November in 2022, I was very anxious applying for the role and interviewing and after being successful it was a huge relief as I wanted to begin plans on building an ongoing career within WRISC (unbeknown

to them).

The start of my traineeship within all programs was difficult for me to manage as understandably each team operates very differently and I felt I needed something consistent to help me feel like I was contributing in a positive way.

When I was introduced to the Yarning Circle I immediately wanted to take control and have more of a say and understanding of the program, in November/December of 2022 we had 10-11 girls attending that were across both the primary school and high school age.

Working with the girls and getting to know them, I felt I had found my place within the organisation and found a meaningful connection that I had always strived to find. I had always wanted to work with young people and helping them in some capacity, I had previously started my Bachelor in Community Services and completed a cert IV in AOD, after some time life got in the way and I continued on until falling upon the position at WRISC.

I knew I would have to come into this traineeship and adapt as a sponge with all of the training and knowledge I have been

provided. I have very much enjoyed learning from everyone at WRISC, I am grateful for this opportunity and believe it is an amazing way to be introduced to the field.

I have been able to run a group program, do plenty of shopping, do more trainings than I can count, network, learn and upskill, assist clients, co-case manage and support the young people in Yarning Circle which has been the most fulfilling.

I have also been able to co-chair with Libby on the Aboriginal Advisory Group which I have found to be a great initiative. While we are very early into the planning and finding our feet I have no doubt it will be a wonderful asset for WRISC to have.

I was also very lucky to have the opportunity to go to Los Angeles with my Aunty (Sandra Creamer) who is the only Aboriginal advisor for the Seventh Generation Fund For Indigenous Peoples based in America, it was a great experience and a good reminder of the connection and meaning it is for me to be an Aboriginal woman.

During my interview with both Libby and Jodie I had explained that I was still trying to reconnect to my culture after being disconnected during my childhood and teens as a result of racism at school and within my family.

I feel that due to working at WRISC I have been able to safely reconnect to my culture and find myself again, which has been a nice feeling to have. I have gained more confidence in myself and feel very supported.

I would like to thank all of the staff, students and volunteers at WRISC for the help, support and guidance they have given me on my journey here during my traineeship.

*Maddy*

## FLEXIBLE SUPPORT PACKAGES

The Family Violence Flexible Support Package (FSP) Program is a statewide (Victorian) brokerage program which supports victim-survivors of family violence in their recovery from family violence. Rather than being a crisis response, the program aims to support victim-survivors as they move beyond the crisis period to a sustainable life free of violence.

WRISC is the FSP Provider Agency for Central Highlands and City of Melton LGA. This includes the local government areas of City of Ballarat, Hepburn Shire, Moorabool Shire, Pyrenees Shire, Golden Plains Shire and City of Melton. Being the FSP Provider Agency means that WRISC is responsible for the administration and delivery of the program in our region on behalf of Family Safety Victoria. This role includes management of funding, fostering and maintaining relationships with partner Applicant Agencies (including education of staff), supporting the use of the FSP Portal, accepting/assessing/approving funding applications and making payments.

The FSP Program is the most comprehensive source of funding available to victim-survivors of family violence in Victoria. The funding is used to support recovery from family violence through flexible funding packages that align with the goals of the client's Case Management plan. This may include funding safety responses (through the Personal Safety Initiative or PSI); supporting the establishment of safe, ongoing housing; supporting health and well-being and supporting participation in community. Children are recognised as victim-survivors in their own right and may apply for funding to support their direct needs. Funding is now managed completely through the online FSP Portal.

The 2022/23 financial year was one of unprecedented demand for FSP funding in Central Highlands and City of Melton LGA. WRISC's funding target was for 304 packages, yet we funded 396 packages. This was managed by WRISC having access to extra funding beyond our formal budget to cater for the demand. WRISC allocated all funding from our formal budget by early April 2023. In the last 3 months of the financial year, WRISC allocated another 40% on top of our original, formal budget. This is the highest demand for FSPs WRISC has ever experienced.

Catering for this demand translates to extra pressure on the FSP Team and Corporate Team who work closely together to ensure that eligible clients receive their funding approval in a timely manner, and to ensure that service providers and retailers are paid on time. I would like to thank Hilary for her essential work in ensuring the smooth running of the program. I would also like to thank Anita (Business Manager) and Sheree (Assistant Business Manager) who ensure the financial side of the program runs smoothly. Also, this year we have brought on board Chloe and Lynne to assist with the payment side of things. A heartfelt thank you to you all.

*Alison Crofts,  
FSP Manager, Central Highlands*

**KYM**

Kym is a young mother with 2 small children. After a serious family violence incident involving her ex-partner and father of the children, Kym moved into refuge. While in refuge, FSP funding was used to support Kym and her children with basic needs such as clothing and other material aid as the family had fled with nothing but what they were wearing. While in refuge, Kym, together with her Case Management support, was able to secure ongoing, community housing in a location unknown to the perpetrator. FSP funding was used to move the family to this new housing as well as purchase basic items of furniture and whitegoods to establish their new home.

**CARMEL:**

Carmel is 53 year old woman with a long history of family violence perpetrated by her now ex-partner. Despite a family violence intervention order being in place, the perpetrator attended Carmel's home causing significant property damage and making threats to kill Carmel and threats to harm her animals. Police were called and the perpetrator was removed from the property. He is currently incarcerated for breaches of the intervention order but is due for release in a month's time. Carmel's life is well established where she lives, including access to affordable housing, employment and the support of family and friends. FSP funding was used to repair the property damage caused by the perpetrator. FSP funding will be used to conduct a PSI Audit of Carmel's

property to assess safety and make recommendations to improve security in preparation for the perpetrator's release from prison. FSP funding will be used to fund PSI recommendations.

**BILLY:**

Billy is a 3 year old child whose life has been severely impacted by the family violence perpetrated against his mother in utero and since being born. He displays behavioural and emotional difficulties as he tries to make sense of what has happened to him and his mother. FSP funding will be used for both Billy and his mother to participate in specialist therapy sessions with the aim supporting the mother-child bond and helping Billy to regulate his behavior and emotional responses to the trauma he has experienced.

*Please note that these stories are written as examples of WRISC's work supporting victim-survivors of family violence and do not use the exact experience of any individual client. Names are fictitious.*



## FAMILY VIOLENCE OUTREACH PROGRAM (FVOP)

At the beginning of 2023, the new WRISC Strategic Plan was launched for 2023-2026, which I have included, as some of the areas below. This will be a major focus for the team to work towards, and continue to align with, moving forward.

### GOVERNANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

#### PRIORITY 4: Strong organisation, strong future

- \* The FVOP Team continue to support Student Placements and during the last year, the team supported four students, from our local Federation University and Deakin University. This is a rich learning experience for the students, as well as the team and supports these ongoing collaborations and also provides support, to the workforce. Some staff at WRISC have been past students, which is a wonderful transition from this experience
- \* The team continues to take part in the Internal Advisor process, which gives teams the opportunity to share constructive feedback to their Team Leader and create opportunities for learning and growth across WRISC. This is an ongoing process which is shared amongst the team for ongoing professional

development

- \* Safe and Equal facilitates a graduate program, which both Senim and Charlie have been linked in with during this year. This program provides opportunities for added support to new Graduates, Professional Development Opportunities and a supportive network of Professionals to connect to
- \* Some staff at WRISC have been supported to further their Education Qualifications, as part of the up-skilling of the Family Violence Workforce. Tracy completed the Graduate Certificate in Community Services through Federation University, which was supported by WRISC as part of the program, with Safe and Equal
- \* As part of an Outcomes workshop, the FVOP team have been beginning to capture some outcome data from our Case Management work, to help inform our practice, which will be ongoing, moving forward
- \* The team participated in some Case Note Training and Cultural Training during this year, as well as other individual training opportunities that staff have been interested in, to support their ongoing professional development

### WORKFORCE

#### PRIORITY 2: Building from story

The FVOP Team welcomed Heather, Nicole, Madison, Michelle and Hayley into the team during this year. The FVOP team has grown significantly over the past year and some staff are supporting specialist roles, as part of consortiums and collaborations, across the sector, which is very exciting. The FVOP team have also been supported by Yo, doing relief support work for the team

The Family Advocacy and Support Services (FASS) Role, which supports Family Violence support in the Family Law Courts space, has been supported by Sarah and more recently Hayley

Exit Pathways is a new Pilot Project, which Charlie is facilitating and working very closely with Uniting and local Real Estate Agents, to support Families, entering into the private rental market

Both Mikala and Funbi have recently taken Maternity Leave and will return to the FVOP team in the new year

Kelly, who has been at WRISC for over 11 years and a part of the FVOP team, during this time has taken her Long Service Leave. We look forward to welcoming Kelly back, very soon! Kelly is a

Senior Case Manager for the team and both Senim and Charlie, stepped up to support this shared role, during this time

#### SERVICE DELIVERY

##### PRIORITY 4: Strong organisation, strong future

- \* The FVOP team continue to receive the bulk of their new allocations and referrals from the Orange Door, participating in twice weekly allocations meetings, with local services, also providing Family Violence support
- \* Case Management support is the core support that the FVOP team continues to provide, since the opening of the Orange Door in Ballarat. This support is specifically client-centered and always guided and informed by the client, at their pace. This support is unique and individualised, to each family's needs
- \* The team also provides daily duty worker support, for external agencies, secondary consults or direct self-referral enquiries and this roster is shared across the FVOP team

WRISC Women's Group was supported by the team in the second half of 2022 and was able to return to face-to-face weekly term sessions, after

many delays due to Covid

#### STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATIONS

##### PRIORITY 1: Intersectionality, Inclusion and Diversity

##### PRIORITY 3: Connection, partnership and influence

- \* The FVOP team work alongside and very closely with The Orange Door, Victoria Police, Ballarat Courts and Child Protection, as well as other local Welfare support services, such as CAFS, Ballarat Community Health, Uniting, Catholic Care and BADAC.
- \* Working collaboratively with external agencies and supports is a big part of the Case Management work and we value these connections with other services and the opportunities to work more closely, for the benefit of our clients
- \* The FVOP team provide support in the Risk Assessment and Management Panel (RAMP) space on behalf of WRISC which is a multi-agency response and supportive space, supporting high-risk families and their needs

The FVOP team have recently been attending a new and local Communities of Practice for local Family Violence Practitioners. This is an

opportunity to share knowledge, resources and expertise moving forward

#### FAREWELL

Suzanne finished up with WRISC during the year after working at WRISC for over 6 years. Suzanne completed a secondment with the Ballarat Courts, before finishing up. Suzanne was very much the core support for the Intake space before the Orange Door was established in the region and was instrumental, in supporting this space and often holding, multiple families. We wish Suzanne all the very best in her future endeavours.

Sarah also finished up during the year, after working at WRISC for over six years. Sarah also supported Suzanne in the WRISC Intake space doing this work, pre-Orange Door. Sarah has been a part of the FVOP team during her time at WRISC and we wish her all the best moving forward.

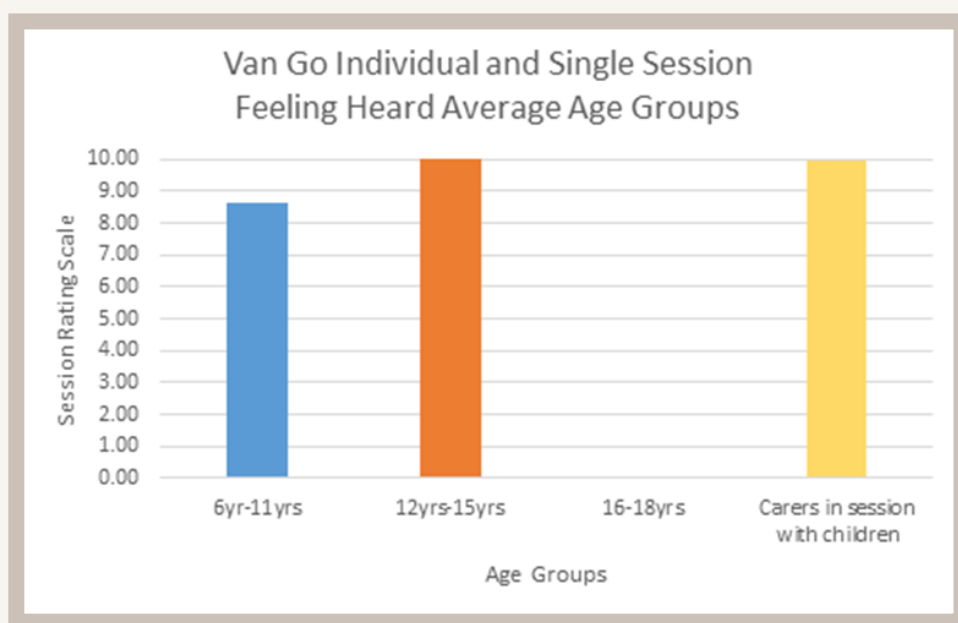
Both Sarah and Suzanne are very experienced, Family Violence Practitioners and their skills and expertise in this space will be an asset wherever they go and in future workplaces will be fortunate to have them on their teams!

*Tracy  
Team Leader*

## VAN GO CHILDREN'S CREATIVE THERAPY PROGRAM

Van Go use creative therapies in their approach to working with children who have experienced family violence. Creative therapies are effective for people and children who have experienced family violence because traumatic memories are often visual and sensory in nature, and are stored in the brain in a way that limits a person's ability to translate these experiences into verbal narratives. Over time Van Go has employed therapists from a range of disciplines such as Art Therapy, Music Therapy, Dance Therapy and Play Therapy. Children engaged in Van Go have benefited immensely from the ability to process their experiences in nonverbal ways that feel both inviting and safe to them. Currently the majority of our staff use Creative Arts Therapy, Play Therapy and Pet Therapy. Creative Arts Therapy is a multi-approach to therapy, where the therapist is trained to support the child's needs using creative processes to explore their feelings and regulate their emotions. Play Therapy is an evidence based form of psychotherapy. It is particularly suited to children who have experienced trauma because the child sets their own pace through the therapy (child-led) and is able to make choices about how much or how little they reveal about their history (trauma informed). Pet therapy is when a trained therapy animal such as a dog joins an accredited handler and/or therapist in a session with a client. The presence of therapy pets has been shown to improve the well-being of children and young people and lower anxiety levels. Van Go is now offering pet therapy within the Single Session space. Read more about Van Go's therapy dog "Spot" on page (26).

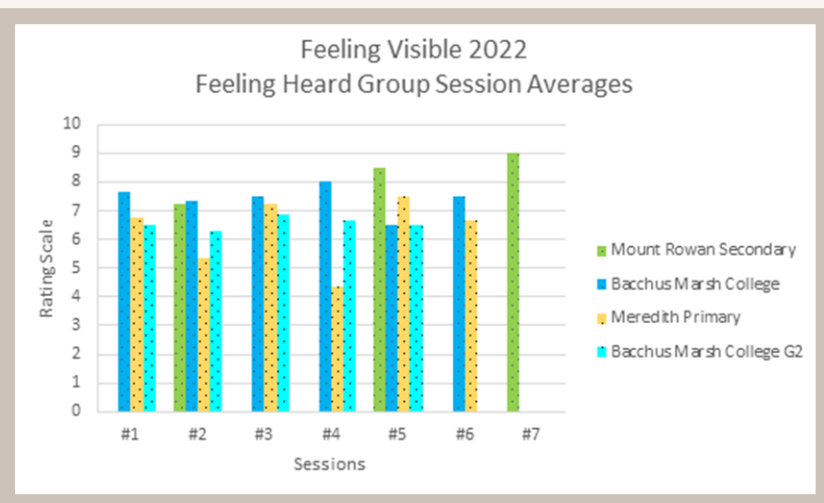
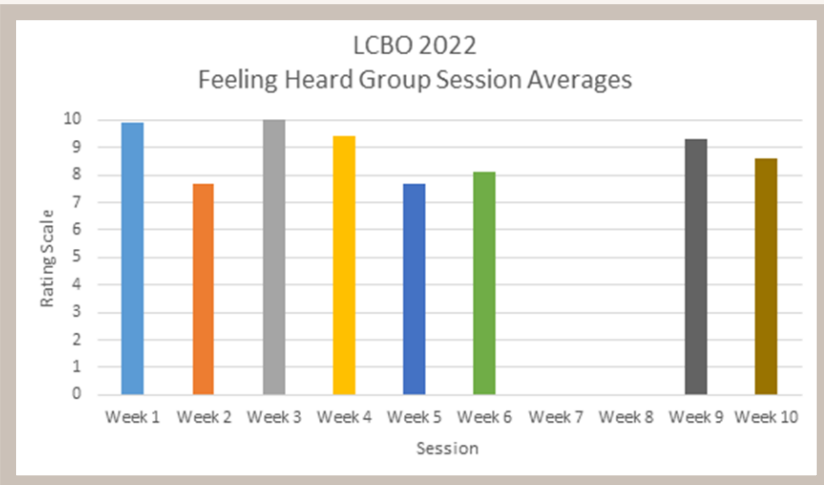
This year Van Go contributed to WRISC's organisational outcomes for the priority area "clients feel heard and acknowledged". Data collected from individual and single session clients over a period of six months indicated highly that children engaged in Van Go felt heard, understood and respected in their sessions (see fig 1 graph).



Data collected from Van Go therapeutic groups Little Children, Big Outcomes under 5's dyadic group and Feeling Visible young people's group also indicated highly that children, and carers in case of Little Children, Big Outcomes group felt heard, understood and respected in these group sessions. (see fig2 Little Children, Big Outcomes graph) (see fig 3 Feeling Visible graph).

Van Go is part of the Family Violence Creative and Therapeutic Services (FV-CaTS) consortium along with Berry Street and Ballarat Community Health. This year the consortia continued to work together and build on our work providing therapeutic services to children and their caregivers in the Central Highlands region. The consortium is developing a outcomes framework to measure the impact of the consortium's services within our client group, this work will inform expansion of the consortium into the future. The FV-CaTS Therapeutic Intake worker role continues to develop the centralised referral process across the programs. The therapeutic teams of each program continue to meet bi-monthly to

offer peer supervision and both the governance group and operational group also meet regularly. FV-CaTS are planning a reflective practice day for all the programs of the consortia as we continue to expand opportunities and services for the shared goal of supporting children and their families.



*Genevieve  
Team Leader*



## MEET 'SPOT', THE THERAPY DOG:

The Van Go Program at WRISC offers clients engaging in Single Sessions access to a Therapy Dog during their session. The presence of companion animals, such as Therapy Dogs, have been shown to improve the well-being of children and young people and lower anxiety levels.



The Single Session Therapist Carolyn, is a Certified Therapy Dog handler, the Therapy Dog will be under the command of the Single Session Therapist for the duration of the session, she will determine when appropriate for the Therapy Dog to participate in the session.

The positive impacts of having a Therapy Dog in Single Sessions will be;

- \* provide an innovative service in line with well researched benefits of having a trained therapy dog in session for children who have experienced trauma.
- \* assist children in session in communicate regulate emotions when discussing their experiences of being exposed to family violence.
- \* Children can benefit educationally and emotionally, increase their understanding of responsibility and develop empathy and nurturing skills through contact with a dog. In addition to these benefits, children take great enjoyment from interaction with a dog.

Aims of the therapy dog single sessions

- \* Children will experience a positive experience of therapy
- \* Children will feel more relaxed and calmer
- \* Children nervous systems will regulate
- \* Children will have a sense of self mastery joining in instructing dog commands

A Therapy Dog may give confidence to children as they make amazing listeners, providing the children with a sense of comfort and love. Therapy Dog's role is specially to help those clients in a Single Session who are feeling vulnerable, have suffered trauma or are going through upsetting/difficult times.



*Carolyn*

## “FEELING VISIBLE”



After a successful pilot at Mount Rowan Secondary College, Feeling Visible has run another 5 times at Meredith Primary School and Bacchus Marsh Secondary College for over 30 participants. It has become a valuable opportunity for young people unable to access services relating to their experiences of Family Violence to engage therapeutically. Each of these structured six week programs generally has 8 participants. Students develop allied peer connections while engaging with art making materials to build their understanding of self. One participant acknowledged that they “...actually spoke with someone today!” Participants are challenged to gain an understanding of their own boundaries and capacities – *“I got 5% out of my comfort zone!”*



## “LITTLE CHILDREN, BIG OUTCOMES”



This year we have run two successful Little Children, Big Outcomes Groups. These groups offer very young children and their safe female caregivers an opportunity to reconnect and play creatively together after experiencing traumatic disruptions to their relationship caused by family violence. Very young children grow and thrive in safe caregiving relationships. We offer therapeutic creative play opportunities

that support children's growth and development after violence. Families report really enjoying this opportunity to reconnect.

An important part of meeting the needs of a very young child is to meet the needs of their primary caregiver. We have designed the Little Children, Big Outcomes groups so that women have a chance within each group session to spend time together separate from the children, to focus on their own needs and enjoy the freedom to talk. A surprising outcome for us was to observe how much the children enjoyed their own group time while their caregivers were busy, exploring and experimenting with their peer relationships and being supported in their social development. Thankyou to Moorabool Shire Council and UFS Dispensaries who support the Little Children, Big Outcomes groups to run.

*Cath*

## “PLATYPUS”



Platypus Group is a group for primary school students to explore their lived experience via art making. All participants have lived experience of family and/or relational violence, due to identifying with the LGBTIQ+ community. It is a safe space for young people to build confidence, community and safety with other young people through shared lived experiences and exploration via art making.

The name Platypus Group was chosen as the platypus is representative of diversity, discovery and possibilities; it is symbolic of evolving potentialities yet to be explored and discovered; it is made up of many parts, a monotreme of evolving and infinite possibilities.

*Fionn*



## “WOMEN SUPPORT” (Ballarat and Bacchus Marsh)

Women's Support Groups underwent a shift from case management to a therapeutic focus following interruptions from Covid-19. These facilitated groups follow a structured trauma-informed, strength-based program enabling women post-case management the opportunity to engage with other women at a similar stage as they navigate their engagement with their communities.

### Narrative feedback from the group participants throughout 2022:-

- \* I can openly talk about what is going on
- \* No-one else wants to listen or hear what I want to say and I can't talk in front of the children, so group allows me a space to talk freely
- \* Group is a space for me to vent, talk, share, listen, where people understand
- \* People understand, you can let go and share
- \* I have gained insight from hearing others stories, I am not flawed or wrong, Perpetrators deliberately target you, I did nothing wrong!
- \* One participant stated that the group provided her support, friendship and a sense of belonging in a foreign place. She stated that she made a friendship connection from the group and they are keeping in contact and have been meeting socially outside of the group space.

I am very thankful for the support the group provided to me and I had a sense that I talked your ears off in group (: you are amazing! Thankyou for everything

There is a participant contact list for 2023 as well as a list for women requesting an after hours group and to contact them if WRISC facilitates one, as well as some women who will make contact, when the time is right for them to attend, in 2023.

The group finished up with 6 women attending and all women were given a tool kit, a first aid kit and a \$50 gift card, as gifts. The women were very thankful for these gifts and made comments such as, "This is really appreciated", "I really need this right now".

My personal reflections on facilitating the women's group this year is that all of the women had a lot to say. There was a consistent theme that their journeys had been going on for many years and the Family Law space was the most challenging space to navigate and it was constantly re-traumatising. They loved being able to share, be honest and feel supportive by each other, with women who had been through similar things. It was rich in sharing and learnings and provided very meaningful support, for everyone that attended.

*Tracy*



## “WOMEN SUPPORT” (Ballarat and Bacchus Marsh)

*Dear Karryne,*

*I wanted to take moment to express my sincere gratitude, your support along with the respect, attention to detail and due diligence - I have received from WRISC. The compassion, personalised individual support with first class touch of attention to humility, including personal care, patience and most of all the guidance to empowerment. At point of time in my life with sever anxiety/depression with the continued cycle of abuse from my previous ex de facto partner who abducted my son on false allegations of abusing my own child, whilst attending at the time of burial proceedings of my late mother.*

*My first session was on Thursday 4 May 2023 and I remember clearly walking in trigged, exhausted, lifeless, hopeless, defeated and extremely emotional and barely able to control my tears. However as I continued to attend the sessions I learned to reflect of the various forms of abuse I have endured and accept that I am a survivor and still surviving abuse however what the “Woman’s Group - Van Go Art Therapy” has reminded me there is a light at the end of the tunnel to the journey from victim to becoming victorious!*

*I feel admirably blessed and very honoured by the support from especially you Karryne! There is something very magical when I see your smiling face it beams brightly like the sun and your laugh is gloriously infectious. Fhione (apologies for the misspelling of your name) there is something in you that your evoke my spiritual side and your demeanour of strong resilience and gentle side of your character has a profound calming affect on me. So I want to say thank you. Charlie my best ever cheerleader in the whole wide world. Wow, your wisdom and your calm*

*softly spoken tone and your patience honestly is first class professionalism. I have no words to express how grateful I am for your personal support expect to say thank you. And of course the rest of the staff I have meet along the way thank you for your smiles and undivided attention at all times.*

*At lastly the art therapy, the grounding exercise and the various forms of art modalities we use in the sessions each week in my view is the new age form for the modern day psychology. This style of therapy unlocks dimensions of trauma/abuse and has gentle way to the journey of healing. I truly believe our government should invest into this style of education and embrace it more seriously.*

*So please with my permission accept my multiple versions of hearts in my art work below. Like I tell my son “I love you to the moon and back and to the depths of the oceans and right back again. I love you infinitely within the space of the whole universe!”*

*This is the same kinda love and respect I have for WRISC.*

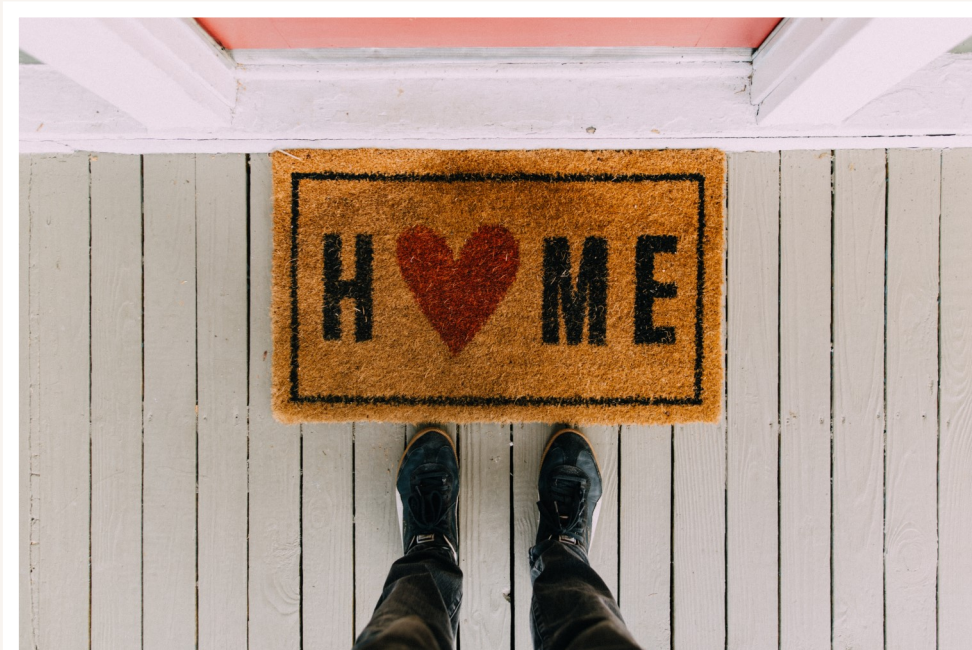
*Hari Om Tat Sat ॐ  
Light, blessings and love*





When the cocoon is connected, its viable, and butterflies emerge.





## EXIT PATHWAYS PROJECT '23

The Exit Pathways Program aims to support women who have escaped family violence to gain sustainable housing. The Program is focused on supporting exit pathways from refuge and crisis accommodation to private rental. As a broader impact of the Program across the Central Highlands region, WRISC and Uniting hope to achieve two aims: create movement in refuge and crisis accommodation, improving wider access for victim survivors who require critical intervention; and build relationships between real estates and family violence services, reducing barriers to the private rental market for victim survivors.

The Program has a target of supporting five victim survivors and their children who are living in refuge or crisis accommodation to achieve independently managed and sustainable housing within the rental market. The Program operates as a small coordinated case management process with the Project Officer, the housing worker, family violence case manager and the client—all working towards achieving sustainable housing. The Program offers financial and tenancy support to increase housing sustainability and reduce barriers to accessing the rental market.

It is a pilot program governed by Family Safety Victoria and Service Development Branch, DFFH. The Program is a consortium between WRISC Family Violence Support and Uniting Housing Service. WRISC are actively supported by Uniting throughout the Program, particularly working close with the Private Rental Assistance Program (PRAP) Plus Team to develop relationships with real estate agents and support rental application processes. The Program has a reference group which includes collaboration with WRISC, Berry Street, The Salvation Army, Uniting and PRD Real Estate. WRISC is involved in working groups with other services who are operating the pilot program across Victoria and DFFH. This is an opportunity to provide feedback; discuss and plan for risk management; and develop and share strategies for reducing barriers to the rental market.

*Charlie*

## STUDENT EXPERIENCE

I started with WRISC in mid-February as a Master of Social Work student on final placement with the Family Violence Outreach Program. It took me a few days to settle in and get my bearings and potentially the team was a bit cautious of new people at first, but they warmed up to me. Everyone was very kind and took time to show me different processes and answered my questions.

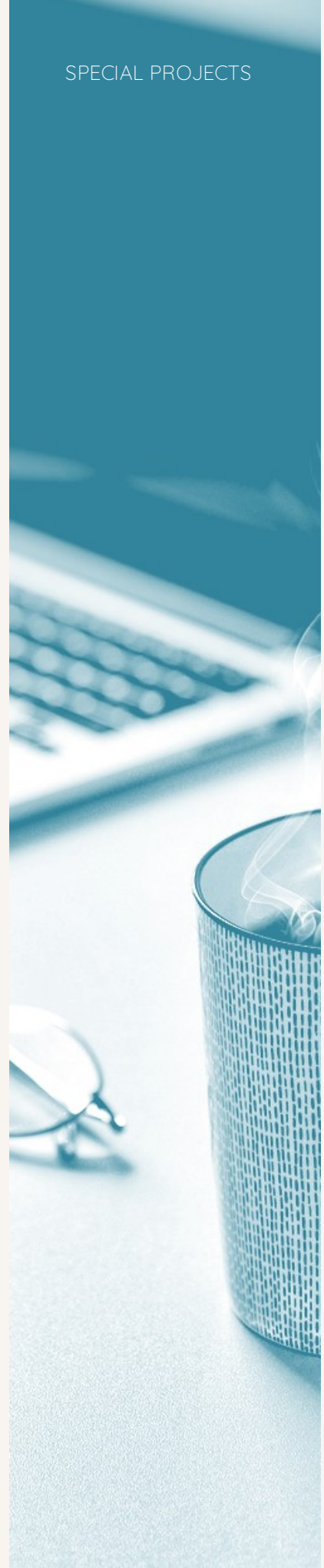
On occasion, once I started holding my own case load (about mid-way through placement) there were days that were challenging. The team really rallied around me to make sure that I was alright and had the space to talk and process things that were happening. It was always interesting to hear from different people what they did to maintain their mental and emotional health in the role.

I think that one of WRISC's strengths as an employer is that when the going gets tough the workers pool together to support each other, rather than fracturing. They share resources and volunteer to pick up extra if needed which is really important, especially in smaller organisations. It's a lovely culture to be a part of that workplace culture.

I found the environment at WRISC very conducive to my studies. I was supported and it was easy to be reflective and look for opportunities to improve. There were lots of different experiences provided to me as a student – training, reflective practice sessions, court activities, home safety audits, kid's groups, etc. People were very willing to show me the different work activities of their teams. Part of what I enjoyed was being able to do lots of different things over the space of the week, rather than repetitive work.

Sometimes as an unpaid student on placement you can feel like you are being used as an additional worker for an organisation without a lot of support to do that work. I never felt like that at WRISC. I'm very grateful for my experience. I'm grateful for the opportunity to be a part of the organisation and to hear the stories of the women and children that we support.

*Alex*





## STREETSMART GRANT

As part of my studies on placement for my Bachelor of Social Work, I was required to undertake a small research task relevant to WRISC. At first, I was lost for ideas until Marg suggested I could undertake some research in relation to the Street-Smart Grant. The grant was specifically targeted at young children who have experienced trauma and aimed to meet the immediate needs of this cohort. My research involved speaking to staff across all teams at WRISC to identify some of the needs they had recognised in their experience working with children, and what they believed would best make up a 'care pack'. I then researched the cost of such items, whether packs needed to be general or individualised and how they would be distributed. I created a project proposal outlining my recommendations for how a portion of the grant money could be spent, and how much would need to be spent per child.

With the help and initiative from Maddy to get the ball rolling with this project, we began to put together school bags full of goodies, in addition to finding some bargain priced school shoes in a range of sizes. Suzanne was the first to access a few of these items for her client's children, reporting back that a little girl was so excited as this was "all mine".

After some reassessing and further budgeting, it was decided to add some further items to each

of the school bags in addition to purchasing some grocery vouchers for immediate and crisis need. There are now 13 school bags full and ready to walk out the door for children in crisis need, with vouchers on their way due to a few technical difficulties.

A big thank you goes out to Marg, Maddy, Gen and Jodie for being a part of this project and helping guide my research. Gen and the Van Go team are currently working on allocating the remainder of the grant funding towards the Van Go creative spaces. We can't wait to see what they come up with!

*Melissa  
Student*



## THE PUPPET PROJECT



Mock-up of the mural printed on aluminium tiles

During the Covid-19 pandemic lock downs, Van Go Children's Creative Therapy Program needed to find a creative way to support children to engage with online therapy. We reached out to the community of Ballarat and Moorabool, asking for them to create sock puppets that could be sent out to clients and for staff to utilise in online sessions. The significant response from the communities was unexpected and heart-warming. With an abundance of beautiful, expressive puppets made from many individuals, schools and aged care centres, Van Go staff wanted to find a way to further extend the life of the puppets. From here, the idea of Puppet Project began.

The Puppet Project is a portable, community mural aimed at creating inclusive conversations and to build relationships between service users and the community. We have been fortunate to gain some funding to have the mural tiles printed and this has been recently completed! The printed tiles look fantastic (above), and we have a vision of exhibiting them at a site-specific location (to be decided) and launching it with the children and families we work with during Children's Week in October. Our hope is to spread awareness and give voice to children who have experienced family violence, enabling shared power and responsibility.



*In recent years, we've seen an increase in violence against women and children. The puppet project is about keeping children front and centre.*

Please stay tuned and pass on to your clients and other service providers.

*Bec*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



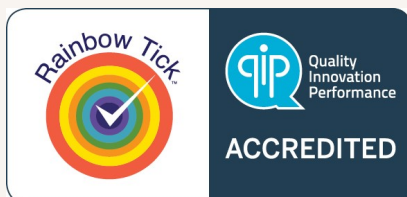
WRISC acknowledges the support of the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services for the provision of funding. This support is sincerely appreciated.



We acknowledge the Wadawurrung Peoples as the traditional owners of these lands and waters and we pay respect to Elders past and present.



WRISC is inclusive of women from all backgrounds, gender identifications and experiences and offers an environment which is free of exploitation and discrimination



# ORGANISATIONS WRISC WORKS with...





# AGM 2022

Venue: Oscars Hotel & Café, The Garden Room





End of year  
Celebration  
December '22





WRISC Family Violence Support Inc.  
205 Dana Street, Ballarat, 3350  
PO Box 92, Ballarat, 3353  
03 5333 3666  
[wrisc@wrisc.org.au](mailto:wrisc@wrisc.org.au)  
[wrisc.org.au](http://wrisc.org.au)







