

BERYL

CANBERRA WOMEN'S REFUGE ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT



1980-81

THE REFUGE

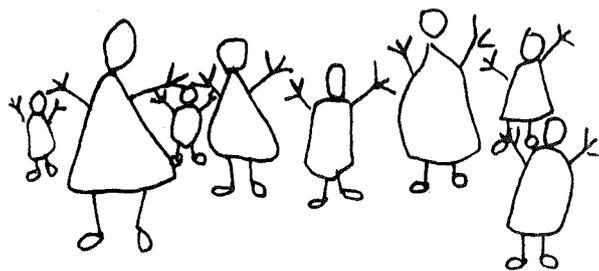
The refuge is the place for women and kids
The people are friendly and you learn
to be more confident.

The kids are looked after every afternoon from
Tuesday - Friday by three lovely workers,
Jessica, Carolyn and Lynn.

Armid, Maryanne, Pat, Bonnie, Rosalie, Margaret,
Robyn, Biff and Joan help mothers who are in
trouble.

We have found the refuge a lot of
help.

We hope everyone at the refuge goes to
a house or somewhere safe.



Love from
Grace, Rosemary,
Frank, Angela,
Santina, Amedoe,
Melinda and Mary.

XXXXXXXXXX
OOOOOOOO

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A WOMEN'S WORKER

LOOKS BACK < < > >



It has been more than four years now since I rang the front door bell at the Women's Refuge wanting to be a volunteer worker. Wanting to find out and learn about women, why they come to refuges, what refuges can do for women and what women do for refuges and much much more.

Well, I have been a worker for four years now paid and unpaid and I have learnt! What I have learnt has often been shocking and horrifying and painful as well as exciting, joyful and moving.

It is shocking and horrifying to see so many women battered and raped both physically and mentally. To see women and their children wide-eyed with fear and despair. It is painful to see women trying to start a new life, many times taking three steps forward and two back (if not three), trying to beat a system which is stacked against them in so many ways. It is painful to learn and to know how vulnerable and oppressed we are as women in our present system and society.

It is exciting however being part of women making changes, growing stronger and fighting back. It is a joy to be among women working together. Laughing and crying together, forming friendships and understanding each other especially well because we are women. And it is moving to be part of all this, the joy and the horror.

I have changed and will keep on changing, as all women who have come through the refuge as residents, workers or visitors have changed. The refuge too has changed. Rooms have been added, our garden is much larger, there is a house for the children to play in, we have our own mini-bus to provide transport and take the children for outings, clean linen is provided twice per week, the kitchen and laundry have been renovated - all of which make the refuge a more bearable place to live in. The number of workers has increased from two to ten part-time workers giving time for more individual talking and caring, for women and children.

What has not changed, however, are the reasons for which women come to the refuge. What has not changed are the use and abuse made by men and the system!

Women are fighting for change and will continue to do so with the refuge movement as part of the fight. We shall continue to fight until we gain that what is our right. To be wanted, seen, heard and listened to as equal, respected and complete human beings: Women.

- Marjanne



P o e m

Each woman is an island
 An island to herself,
 And each one thinks her island
 Peculiar to herself.

As everyone is different
 Yet everyone the same,
 Some lack communication
 Or in some way is lame.

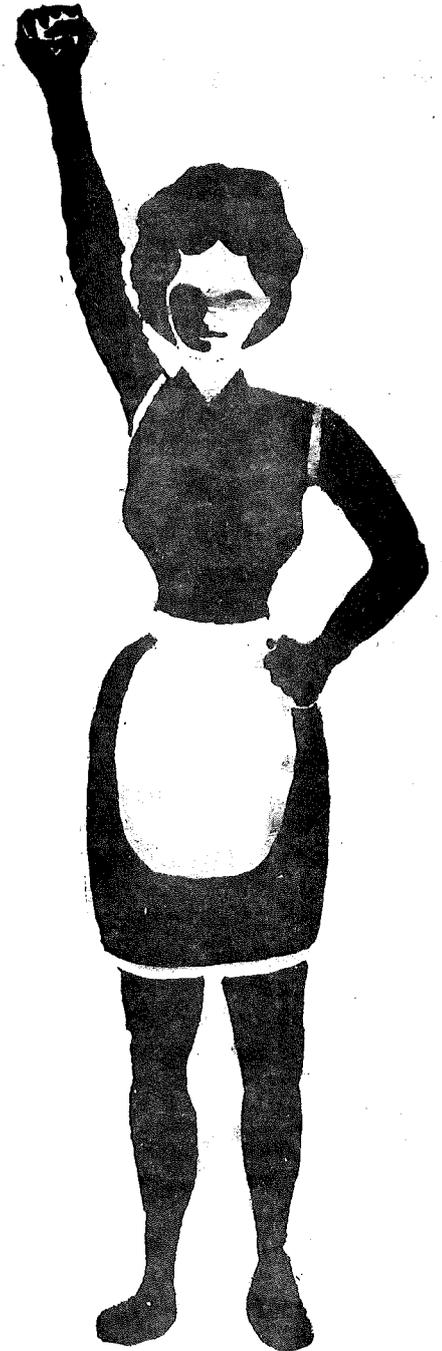
Difference is the very fact
 That each inside herself
 Needs someone to reach out to
 And that someone needing help.

Each one then is reaching
 For touch and sense and sound,
 The very fact of knowing
 There is some common ground.

So each can share the feeling
 That no one is alone,
 Just living brings us problems
 To that we are all prone.

If we then share a moment
 Perhaps an hour or more,
 To listen, really listen,
 To another's heartache sore,

We'd find in fact our problems
 Are less than half when shared,
 For women helping women
 Is knowing each one cares.



- Julie

Shirley Maclaine.....

Cosmopolitan, Feb.76

One of the troubles I have with the women's movement is that I think it's foolish for us to be demanding equal rights to participate in the same kind of contaminated values men have. We should be working to change the values.

We are, Shirley, we are! That's what the women's movement is all about!

ADMINISTRATION . . .

Administration has for some time been an isolated function in the Refuge. The women involved in administration have had the unshared burden of it, the collective has been confused about it, and job change-overs have been a nightmare.

Our attempts this year have been to change all that, to find a way to make administration a collective responsibility, and yet still maintain the high degree of competency and efficiency that is required to manage Refuge finances.

We have to work through a good deal of confusion and chaos during this process, but we believe we have now achieved these goals.

There have been two important factors which helped to bring about this change. We have moved out of the tiny bedroom in the Children's Annexe which was once the office. We now have the two large adjoining rooms next door - where it is pleasant to work and the other workers, and residents and ex-residents, can come and sit, to talk or to find out what has been going on. This has been the case: women do come up to the office and do get involved.

The new book-keeping system, which has finally become fully operational, has helped too. Now clear financial information is available all the time, and you don't need a course in accountancy to understand it. (It would seem, however, that the same could not be said about the petty cash!)

This year we received in total \$97,057.95. In terms of size we are one of the three or four largest Refuges in Australia. We receive substantially less funding than most Refuges of equivalent size.

- Joanna

. . . GETTING BETTER

SINCE SEPT . 1978 WE HAVE BEEN
GETTING \$6.49 AN HOUR. THREE
AND A QUARTER YEARS IS A
LONG TIME TO GO WITHOUT A PAY
RISE ! !

STAFFING



In previous Annual General Reports, we have not specifically indicated our staffing pattern. This year, we have decided to correct that anomaly.

<u>Staffing at 1.7.80</u>	<u>Positions</u>	<u>Staffing at Dec. 1981</u>
Obi Olgrin	Childcare 1	Obi Olgrin
Jessica Aan	Childcare 2	Jessica Aan
Gill Shaw	Childcare 3	Liz Blackrose
no position	Childcare 4	Genna Macdougall
Pat Walker	Women's C'r 1	Pat Walker
Armide Reid	Women's C'r 2	Armide Hill
Marjanne Rook	Women's C'r 3	Bonnie Jackson
Raylee Wilson	Women's C'r 4	Annie MacLean
Anne Sinclair	Follow-up	Rosalie Knox
Helen Burnie	Administrator	Biff Ward
Jo Callaway	Book-keeper	Jo Callaway

In these same eighteen months, the following women have held either short-term permanent positions or temporary positions while permanent workers were on leave:

Margaret Neil

Glenda Hickey	
Vicki Robbins	
Sue Waddell-Wood	
Rosalie Knox	
<u>Bonnie Jackson</u>	<u>Women's Co-ordinators</u>
<u>Robin Frencham</u>	<u>Follow-up workers</u>
Mireille Boehm	
<u>Carolyn Traill</u>	<u>Childcare Workers</u>
<u>Anabelle Langdale</u>	<u>Book-keeper</u>
Di Ralph	
<u>Robin Batterham</u>	<u>Administrators</u>
Maree Corkery	Bus Driver

Workers are employed for a period of two years, extendable to up to three years on agreement by the Collective. Workers are encouraged to take up to three months leave during their appointment, to guard against 'burn-out'. Every six months, a Special Collective Meeting is held at which all workers have a chance to evaluate themselves and their work, and to receive feedback from other members of the Collective.

All positions receive equal pay, on the basis of 20 hours paid work per week.

Following-Up Ex-Resident

Women

The follow up programme was initially funded as a pilot Family Support Service Scheme for two periods of eighteen months. This pilot scheme is now in its third year. Hopefully this funding will continue next year as this work has become an integral part of refuge work.

The programme provides continued support to women and their children who have left the refuge and it is essential to many of the ex-residents. The majority who use this service are those who realise the difficulty of establishing a home by themselves in a new community. Others who return to their old situations may ask for support whilst trying to improve their previous relationships.

Since Anne Sinclair resigned and I became the follow-up co-ordinator we have attempted to alleviate the isolation of the follow-up worker. This has been achieved by sharing the home visits to ex-residents by all of the refuge workers. This sharing enables the follow-up co-ordinator to spend more time in the refuge (replacing one of the women's co-ordinators) and therefore getting to know the residents before they leave. I feel this organisation is more effective in continuing the close bonds that form between certain residents and workers and the follow-up co-ordinator is not isolated from the other refuge workers.

An indication of the frequency of use from 1/1/81 until 30/6/81 is as follows:

No. of women who resided in refuge	95
No. of women who moved interstate or left no forwarding address	31
No. of women returning to previous situation (and not asking for help)	27
No. of women followed up	37
No. of women returning to previous situation and asking for help	3
No. of women establishing new households and asking for help	34

The pattern of usage during the same period involved 204 personal visits to ex-residents,
 138 telephone calls with ex-residents
 40 phone calls or visits on behalf of ex-residents
 305 visits to the refuge by ex-residents
 16 meetings with ex-resident groups

It should be noted that these figures are all underestimates as much of this information is often not recorded.

Contact with each ex-resident usually tapers off as the women adapt to their new situations although further visits are made as the need arises. Attendances at Ex-Residents Days fluctuate and the weekly meetings are discontinued at present. Structured meetings may happen again in 1982 if there are enough women interested in attending. Many of the women form close groups whilst in the refuge and so initially keep contact and have an interest in meeting regularly. However, as they form their own new neighbours and friends, this interest is lost. An alternative I should like to look at is monthly get togethers at the ex-residents homes.

- Rosalie



And Children

Childcare workers form loving bonds with children. In order to maintain these bonds of trust it is necessary to 'follow-up' children when they leave the refuge.

This childcare follow-up is fraught with practical problems. How to find the time? The children are often in schools all day and after school we spend time with the resident children. This leaves our days off, nighttimes and weekends to do follow-up. Working large amounts of unpaid extra time on a regular basis is just not on. To thoroughly fill the need for kid's follow-up would take another 80 working hours a week.

To follow-up children is difficult even when there is time. In most families it is a struggle to get time alone with the children. They are constantly in sibling groups within which there can be problems that they may need to talk about. Apart from that, a break from the family would be beneficial anyway. The more children in groups we are with, the further our energy is stretched and the less we can offer.

Despite all the present problems with doing kid's follow-up some does get done. Sometimes on Wednesday afternoons if there is enough time and enough workers we can go visiting. Sometimes if there are few resident children we take them visiting ex-resident kids. About three times a year we have enough funding to take ex-resident kids on a weekend camp. Sometimes when crises arise we go to see children at night or on the weekends.

This state of affairs will continue until we get funding with which to do childcare follow-up.

- Genna



CHILD CARE

From June 1980 to June 1981 there have been 238 women and 356 children (143 under 5) resident at the refuge. This report attempts to explain the experiences of children who come to the Refuge and our perceptions of the status of children.

CHILDREN ARE AN OPPRESSED CLASS.
THEIR OPPRESSION IS CLOSELY TIED WITH THAT OF WOMEN.

Children have less access to material wealth than adults.

Children are thought to have inferior mental abilities to adults.

Children are thought to be emotionally weaker than adults.

Children are considered to be less able to make decisions and form opinions than adults.

Children have less right to repel the physical approaches of others than adults.

Children are taken less seriously than adults.

All of these attitudes apply to women in relation to men also, and they are oppressive attitudes.

This oppression of children, or disrespect for their personhood, is carefully concealed by popular image-making which depicts children as happy, innocent and cute. It implies that childhood is an enviable stage of life. This is a myth that oppresses children. Children are not perpetually trouble-free and happy, and when they are seen to be unhappy or angry adults usually dismiss their behaviour. They're only tired, cranky or spoilt 'problem' children. This denies that it is reasonable to be unhappy or angry if you've been ignored or treated badly.

Childcare workers are seeing and feeling the oppression of the children with whom we work. Children respond in many different ways to this oppression. Some are angry, some resentful, frustrated or pained, timid and withdrawn. We try to help them cope with the double messages that the oppression of children dictates: you're a darling angel/ you're unimportant and annoying. It's a hard battle. The best we can do is try and be non-oppressive ourselves, to really hear and see children, to treat them like people.

- Genna

Refuge children: is their experience different to that of other children? No, except that they have the opportunity to talk and act out their life experiences with more than one woman, in a safe and supportive environment.

Many children have seen their mothers being victims of male violence; they themselves have often been the victim of male (father) violence. They carry with them the fear, anger and pain of their powerless situation, their violent experiences being reflected in behaviour to women and to other children - aggression or fearfulness or withdrawal and indifference are the three main ways in which children cope with violence.

Childcare workers attempt to create physical and emotional space for children to express their feelings in a positive way, rather than against each other or women (particularly their mothers). The Afterschool Programme involves us in being with the children, taking them on outings, listening to their stories, their fantasies, their fears, playing with them and encouraging them to feel good about themselves.

Many children have images of themselves and women as victims: 'weak' and 'powerless' because they have experienced male physical violence against them. Fathers are 'the man behind the desk', the 'man on the street'. The Refuge plays an important role in influencing these images in a direction of change. Here they see women as creative and active beings, doing non-traditional work, sharing, caring and laughing together. They learn co-operation and the importance of looking after each other's needs.

All women take some responsibility for childcare, as opposed to childminding, so that the children have the opportunity to develop many different kinds of relationships with women.

Childcare is caring for and about children.

Child minding is meeting a child's physical needs only.

- Liz



WHAT I HATE ABOUT BEING A KID!!

I hate being a kid
'Cause everyone bosses you around
no-one takes any notice of what you're doing
I feel like digging a hole and hiding myself in it.
I just feel like a nothing. Cause no-one cares
I could get run over and no-one would care
They would just go on with things like before
I can never get involved in my own fantasyland
Always they're saying make ya bed, get dressed
Do this. Don't do that. I hate being a kid !!!!!

10 yrs. old.

MIGRANT WOMEN and WOMEN'S REFUGES

One of the issues arising out of the National Women's Refuge Conference in March 1981, was that of the needs of women of different ethnic backgrounds, who come to Refuges. What are their needs? How do we meet them?

All agreed on the need for migrant ethnic workers in Refuges. A delegation from the Conference met with the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs who agreed to fund a further meeting with State and Territory representatives who could prepare a National submission requesting funding for Migrant Workers in Refuges.

On August 20-21, 1981, Co-As-It (the Italian Welfare Committee) hosted a seminar for this purpose. Marjanne and I flew to Melbourne to attend. (A word of warning - if you ever go to a new city with Marjanne, be prepared to walk for miles - till your feet drop off!)

There were Refuge representatives from all States and Territories (except Tasmania) at the seminar, as well as social workers from particular ethnic communities, the Women's Co-ordinator from Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and a representative from the Office of Women's Affairs.

Most of the first day was devoted to women from specific ethnic communities (Indo-Chinese, Turkish, Greek, Yugoslav) outlining the cultural backgrounds women were coming from and the immense difficulties they faced in making a decision to come to a Refuge. The vital importance of having a worker in the Refuge who could relate to a migrant woman on equal grounds, ie not only to speak her language but have personal experience of her culture, was stressed again and again. We recognised that existing services within the community, such as the Telephone Interpreter Service, whilst performing essential functions, simply do not have the resources to meet the needs of ethnic women in crisis in a Refuge.

It was also obvious that one ethnic worker would not meet the needs of women from many different cultural backgrounds. So the Seminar concluded that what was needed was a Migrant Worker Resource Fund - a pool of money which would enable Refuges to employ a various number of women from time to time, women who had the particular language and cultural knowledge as they were needed. Ideally these workers would be ex-resident so that they really understood the needs of women in Refuges. The workers involved would also need to work closely with child care workers in order to recognise and meet the special needs of children.

On the afternoon of the second day we met with the Minister, Mr Macphee, and put forward our basic recommendations. Mr Macphee encouraged us to complete and forward our submission and assured us of his support. However, he quietly cautioned us 'not to hold our breath', referring us to the fact that everything has a priority status and to the lack of money available for new services

//

...the lack of money available...the lack of...Hey! the record's stuck again!

We recently received a letter from the Migrant Women's Task Force (a sub-committee of the Migrant Settlement Council). They are seeking to determine the extent to which migrant women use Refuges in the Canberra region. I'm unsure as to whether this request for information is a positive response to the National Submission - or an indication of the buck being passed.

Oh, well, let's be incredibly optimistic and hope that this Government does recognise the needs of women in our multi-cultural society and that they (eventually) fund the project.

- Jessica

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The Refugee

The refuge is where you go
When you have nowhere to go.
No one to turn to,
Your only solace
From the cold grey world.
It helps you to readjust
To being alone,
Gives you the confidence
To go it alone,
To laugh at things that
Have gone wrong,
And to start building your life again
After everything looked so
Ragged and worn.

- Bonnie K. 18 May 1981



CONFERENCES . . .

THE VIGIL . . .

FUNDING . . .



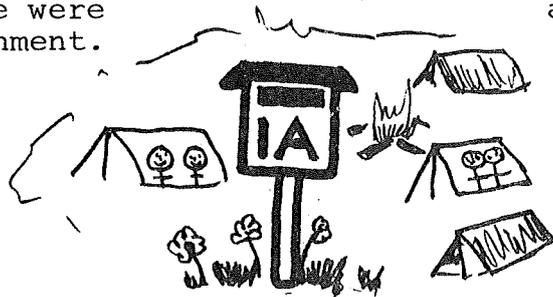
In March 1981 a National Women's Refuge Conference was held in Canberra. The Conference was organised and administered by a collective made up of workers from Beryl and Louisa, the Queanbeyan Women's Refuge.

About 150 women came together, from all over Australia, and we shared our problems. A new spirit of togetherness emerged; it was seen that an attack of any individual Refuge anywhere was an attack on all of us, insofar as we are the Refuge movement. So naturally we came up with many solutions - we took our suggestions to Parliament House, where we had meetings in representative groups with many Ministers. After all, who better to solve the problems than those who control the purse-strings.

But they didn't listen: in fact four months later the Federal Government drafted a bill to hand over funding of refuges to state governments. They also intended to hand over funding of all Rape-Crisis Centres, women's health centres and abortion clinics. This was seen as a divide and conquer tactic, since several state governments are known to be very unsupportive of all women's services.

Again we came together, we set up our tents, we lobbied, we were thrown out of Parliament House. We didn't get the support we were asking for from the Federal Government. Refuges and other women's services were left with state governments being responsible for all funding.

We were angry that the Government its back so completely to Australian women. For to receive funding from state anything from nothing at all is barely adequate for survival. We took down our tents but not our contacts. The Refuge Movement solidified.



and shocked Federal should turn completely on many refuges, governments meant

to the status quo which

Two NSW regional Refuge conferences have been held since the bill was passed. I have learnt of problem after problem for the women who work in Refuges and the women who use Refuges for shelter, all attributable to this non-caring attitude of the Federal Government.

Still, I do have hope, and I know that no matter how differently we are funded, we are still all together in spirit. Just as hard as the Government tries to split us with administrative differences, we all know we are together in cause and that we

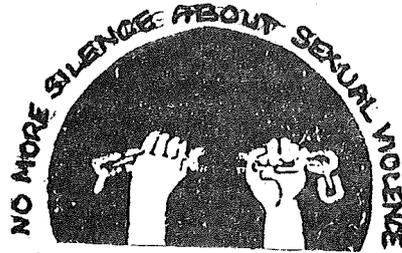
will continue to come together.

We are joined like a woven cloth: all our ends join others and all are united with the centre. They can't comprehend our strengths; we must push through the problems and keep on weaving.

- Obi



INCEST AND ACCESS



Incest - child sexual assault, father/daughter rape, or whatever term you prefer - is an issue of importance to the Women's Refuge. It has been the experience of women from Canberra Women's Refuge and from Refuges all over Australia, that an alarming proportion of children who come to the Refuge have at some time or another been victims of incest.

This is not simply a case of the incidence of incest rising - it is more a case of women being prepared to talk about a topic which has been taboo. Once women realise that their family is not unique, hear other women talk about their own experiences, and listen to what their daughters and the daughters of other women say, they are more prepared to talk and confront the shame and guilt experienced by them and their children.

Women's Refuges have played a significant role in this process of uncovering and forcing community recognition of the extent of incest - mainly because a Women's Refuge is a place where women can come and talk to a caring women who will believe her or her own child when they relate their experiences.

At the NSW Regional Women's Refuge Conference (Sydney, October, 81) women who work at the Single Women's Refuge near Kings Cross claimed that nine out of ten of the young women who come to the Refuge have been the victims of incest - some since the time they were five years old. These young women had no-one to tell or were not believed by their families, for years, and once they talked to women who did believe them and understand the shame and guilt felt by them, the main reaction was incredible anger at their powerlessness.

A related concern raised at this Conference is that women are powerless even when they accept the fact that their child has been sexually abused by a male relative. There have been custody cases in which the courts have maintained a father has an absolute right to have access to his children - despite the preparedness of doctors, welfare workers, refuge workers and mothers themselves to give evidence of years of molestation.

If a woman attempts to deny access for fear of putting her daughter at risk, the police are obliged to enforce the order. Until the law is changed, the only solution appears to be the establishment of access centres in which supervised access can be carried out. So far, there are no such centres in existence.

- Annie

F*A*M*I*L*Y*

The term 'family' was first used to denote a social unit, the head of which was a man who ruled over wife, children and slaves. Under Roman Law he (the patriarch) was vested with the right of life and death over them all. 'Famulus' means 'domestic slave' and 'familia' was the total number of slaves belonging to one man.

A REFUGE FOR SINGLE WOMEN

Over the last few years it has become increasingly apparent to the Collective of Beryl that there is a definite need in Canberra for a Single Women's Refuge, a place where all forms of support can be offered to those women from age 16 onwards who are in crisis and/or homeless.

The Women's Refuge itself does not have the facilities or human resources to cope very adequately with single women as well as with the women with children whom the Refuge is designed to support and accomodate... although until a Single Women's Refuge is established they are doing just this and are considerably overworked.

Since the Women's Refuge Collective is running on every ounce of strength they can muster, a new Collective has been organised to cope with the bureaucratic processes involved in setting up a Single Women's Refuge. This Collective has co-opted new energy from interested women who also see the need in their day to day activities.

In order to get any funding for a Refuge we must put in submissions to Dept. of Social Security and Dept. of the Capital Territory. We have been working for a few months now, drumming up support from all the welfare agencies in Canberra. We have talked to organisations ranging from Lifeline to Woden Valley Hospital to the secondary colleges. The need is definitely there and is recognised by all.

We are in the process of drafting our first submission: all we have to do is pull together all the information and statistics we have received.

The Collective, as with most, can always use more energy. The more energy we have, the sooner the Single Women's Refuge will become a reality. If there is any unchannelled energy floating around, please direct it our way!

IMPRESSIONS FROM THE MEDIA . . .

[This article was published in The Australian. The Refuge on which it was based was this one. Most of the workers and current residents used aliases, since there was one woman in particular at the time, whose whereabouts had to be kept utterly secret. She has since been found by her husband, despite her own best efforts, and ours, to protect her. We are therefore presenting the article here, since it seems to be of interest in an evaluative sense: the author was a complete stranger and not averse to the common practice of journalists to highlight 'scandal' factors. We were most gratified by what she found and how she wrote it.]

A bunch of crazy sheilas...inciting escaped housewives to ditch their brutal husbands, domestic slavery and the whole suburban shemozzle. That's the conventional wisdom about Women's Refuges. Hence the now topical question of whether taxpayers' dollars should be spent on maintaining these all-female havens from the world of men.

It took a couple of hundred angry women armed with kids and slogans staging the most unseemly demonstration Parliament House, Canberra has yet seen, to arouse real interest in what goes on inside Women's Refuges - who runs them and who for.

We've been told what life is really like for some unfortunate women - violent, gut-wrenching dramas which lead some 35,000 women and twice as many children to seek shelter at Refuges throughout the country each year.

Meanwhile, the feminists who run many of these establishments often appear in the most negative light: there was widespread television coverage of burly female demonstrators wrestling with police outside Parliament House while one Government Minister referred to the feminists who joined (sic) an Anzac Day March this year as 'marxist-lesbians'.

As a result the women who run feminist refuges - as opposed to those administered by churches - are paranoid, both about the public impression they are making, and the treatment they have received from a conservative, male-dominated federal government.

In legislation at the end of the last parliamentary session the responsibility for funding the 100 odd Women's Refuges in Australia was passed to the states. And many of the States, it is clear, are not eager to continue paying for the maintenance of what they see as hotbeds of anti-government sentiment, and feminist extremism.

There certainly is bitterness within the more 'progressive' Feminist Refuges at the male dominated establishment.

"Most men have the potential to commit acts of mental or physical cruelty upon women", says Sally, who with nine other women,

runs a Refuge in a predominantly middle class area. She is 38, has two marriages behind her and three children to support.

"There is an enormous fear of women who run Refuges", Sally continues. "Our directness, commitment and compassion to women in trouble is our power. We are not prepared to accept the bullshit - the shame and guilt - or domestic violence."

Some may call that feminist propoganda. But the fact remains that some 76 women with 105 children stayed at the Refuge where Sally works in the first three months of this year.

No drugs, no alcohol and no men are the house rules. Apart from these restrictions the Refuge has the atmosphere of a very large family home and activity, as in other homes, revolves around the dining room and the television. The place has 22 (actually 20) beds but has slept up to 55 people at a time.

Sally and her co-workers are all well-educated, intelligent, many living conventional lives away from the Refuge. They are well aware that the feminist 'image' leaves much to be desired.

"No one likes being called a dyke - whether they are or not", says Joanna, who lived at the Refuge after leaving her husband a couple of years ago and is now a worker there. "Of course women involved in Refuges are defensive. We play a part in the community and are working for change. We become defensive and angry when what we are doing is trivialised," she says.

Joanna, who is 30 and has two sons, describes it this way: "My ex-husband was a tyrant. During our marriage he assumed the power and I let him because I hated arguing with him. We lived in a small coastal town and I was a frustrated housewife. I left him four times during our marriage but each time went back. Eventually we went to a bigger town and had a house in the suburbs. It was like a ghost town and I went off my rocker..."

As events turned out, Joanna then made contact with welfare organisations which told her she should leave her husband and put her in contact with the Refuge. Now Joanna celebrates every April 27 - the date she entered the Refuge. "I'm convinced I would have died or gone mad if I hadn't entered the Refuge. Being from England, I had no other family or contacts in Australia at all".

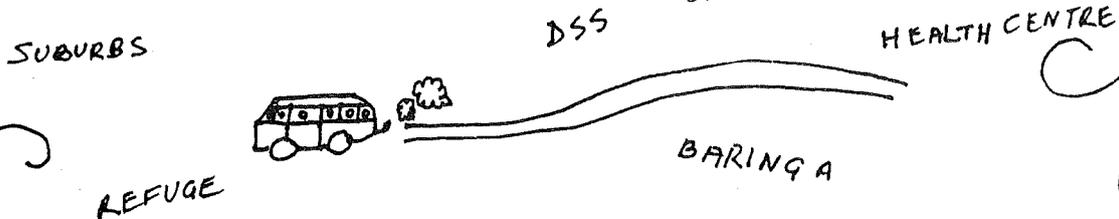
She spent six weeks in the Refuge, came in contact with feminism for the first time and spoke to women about shared problems. "I had only ever spoken to other men's wives before. The women I met at the Refuge were more aware. They could tell when they or

others had fallen into patterns of destructive behaviour," she says.

Joanna moved into a Housing Commission 'hovel'. "It was an awful little house and I hated being on my own. I came back to the Refuge regularly to do volunteer work. I called it volunteer work but I really needed to be there."

Joanna eventually got a paid job and does the book keeping for the Refuge when she is not pursuing a course in Women's Studies, looking after her kids and seeing her lover. Like the other women at the Refuge, Joanna's duties centre around counselling new 'refugees' and caring for their children. And, like the others, she is not a trained counsellor.

This is not a fact the workers wanted emphasised because, as they explained, the funding body which disseminates funds to them finds the idea a bit disconcerting,



Even more unconventional is that their organisation has no supreme administrator. "I spent an hour on the phone to someone from the Commission trying to explain he could not talk to the person in charge because there wasn't one," a worker recalls with amusement.

Workers are employed three days a week for a two year term, with three months in between as a safeguard against burn-out. The stated aim of the Refuge is to provide help and advice to women with nowhere else to go - minus the red tape and bureaucracy usually associated with welfare organisations.

The women agreed there was considerable paranoia about welfare in the community, and in the case of women hiding from men, the record keeping procedures of conventional welfare agencies was dangerous. "So many leaks occur through Social Security to husbands wanting to know where their wives have gone," explained one staff member. At the Refuge the second name of a woman seeking shelter is usually not known to the staff although some records are kept of the numbers and circumstances of women using the Refuge.

Police occasionally bring in very young girls who might otherwise be put into homes and women hiding from their husbands because of the confidentiality factor.

Women who can afford it are charged \$15 a week for bed and food, children under three, \$3 a week, and children over 5 cost \$5 a week. Housework and cooking are shared.

The presence of men is considered to upset the equilibrium of the place and a decision is made by workers whether to permit men inside there for special reasons - such as if they are tradesmen or police. Sally tells the story of three women who hid a man wanted by police in their room for two weeks. "One of the women was the man's girlfriend and the other women were too frightened (of him) to tell the workers of the male presence. We could tell there was something wrong by the atmosphere in the house. Eventually he was found and these three women will never be allowed back here," Sally says. But generally, the Refuge policy is never to turn any women away.

Occasionally irate husbands harass the Refuge and sometimes the police are involved to protect the safety of the women inside. Joanna recalls one occasion when a husband, enraged at the desertion of his wife with their children, had spent a day ringing the Refuge every ten minutes to talk to his wife, who refused to speak with him, tying up the phone lines.

"then he said on the phone that, if he could not see his kids, he would come round with a gun and shoot up the bloody lot of us. We called the police and said there was a man coming to the house with a gun. They said to call them when the men arrived. Eventually this husband did come, but without a gun, and tried to force his way in. We called the police who came round and got rid of him - but they were a bit put out when he did not have his gun."

Nevertheless, the workers agree that the police do attend every call for help from the Refuge - whether or not firearms are involved. Police often call at the house seeking information about the whereabouts of women and children who have left their homes. But since workers often do not know the second names of women concerned, they can often honestly say that they do not know.

Maria, who had been staying at the Refuge for a week with her six children aged between 11 and three months, says she changed her name four times and her car nearly as often to avoid being traced by her husband.

"I hate to think what he would do if he found me. My husband came from Europe 12 years ago and he has never been able to adjust to life here in Australia". Maria claims her husband would beat her with a chair, a broom, anything for the slightest misdemeanour. "Like if the dinner wasn't cooked or I spoke out of turn he would slap my face," she says. "He used to ask my opinion but never took my advice. He bashed me hours before I gave birth to my first two children. I left him a couple of times and stayed with friends but he came round and told a bullshit story about how much he loved me and the children so I went back."

Maria's head is scarred from the hidings her husband gave her. But she explained that, in the ethnic community to which she belonged, men were always boss and it was not unusual for wives to be beaten.



Maria finally left her husband when she was seven months pregnant. "I just got sick of the way I was being treated. I put the kids in a car with two changes of clothes each and blankets and drove away." Maria has travelled through two states in the past five months and is staying at the Refuge whilst awaiting emergency accommodation from the Housing Commission.

Maria and her children, are according to the workers at the Refuge, amazingly well adjusted considering their experiences. "Those kids just love going to school", comments Marjanne, who is one of a number of workers who lives a conventional married life style

in the suburbs.

Does Marjanne consider herself lucky to have a comparatively happy homelife with her husband of 15 years and their two school age children? "No, I don't think I'm lucky to be treated decently by my family," she replied. "Every person has a right to be treated as a human being".

Marjanne points out that the problem with so many women coming to the Refuge is lack of self respect. "They've been told they're lousy mothers, wives, cooks...We try to give them back a bit of self esteem."

Pat, a quietly spoken woman of 55 who, like Marjanne has a relatively 'normal' life as mother and wife outside the Refuge, expresses grave concern at the low quality of life, 'spiritual and emotional', for many women.

"They come to the Refuge in fear and subservient to their families - they have become non-people. Women subject to physical or mental cruelty at the hands of their men are sometimes so distraught they can't even talk about their problems when they arrive. They just sit. If the women do want to talk about it the kids are usually around. It is not a bad thing for them to hear their mother explain problems or to see her cry. Often I cry too."

The busiest times for the Refuge are during public holidays, when families are together at home and arguments between housebound husbands and wives often break out. Women usually flee their homes, according to the experiences of workers, when the domestic situation escalates in some way - when a husband hits a child for the first time, for instance, or when a beating is more severe than previous ones.

Are beatings sometimes the result of a man being purposely aggravated by a woman; can she be aware of what sheer frustration is driving him to do? No, says Sally, who believes the fault for

physical violence lies in the patriarchal set-up, whereby women are told to get married, have children, and live happily ever after in the suburbs....

Sally helped set up the Refuge in 1975 and is writing a book about child sexual abuse. Some of her research was done at the Refuge, where, she says, she has seen children who have been raped by their own fathers.

Obi, at 26, works mainly with children at the Refuge and she confirms Sally's observation. "Sometimes the kids are so withdrawn and disturbed they can't play," Obi observes. "At the Refuge we attempt to give the kids love, and build up trust relationships with them. On sexual abuse - if you sit down with women you will find that about half of them have been sexually molested by relatives as children." Obi has no children herself. Her ex-husband is in gaol, convicted of rape.

Though the majority of women in need of refuge are hiding or just taking a breather from their husbands, it is also used by girls running away from their families.

Debbie and Doris are sisters hiding from a mother they say is dependent on prescribed medications. Debbie is 15 and Doris at 20 is six months pregnant. They stayed at a hostel mainly for alcoholic men and that, they agree, was 'hell.' The sisters have been at the Refuge for two weeks and plan to find jobs to support themselves. Debbie won't return to school. She says her mother committed her to institutions because she was uncontrollable - though at the Refuge she appeared quiet, helpful and keen on babies.

Doris blames her mother for putting her boyfriend in to the police for spending up on someone else's bankcard. She says she was addicted to soft drugs and had two babies taken from her for adoption in the past. "I'll keep this one, but," Doris vows.

She and her sister were living with their mother before they 'escaped' and hope they won't see her again. Their main gripe was that dependence on drugs like Valium made their mother unbearable to live with.

Susan is Indonesian and up until a few months ago lived with her husband and two daughters in her father's house. Her face is scarred with evidence of her father's cruelty. He dominated her family life and beat her for opposing his ideas. She talks falteringly about how she was bullied by her father and his traditions, says she had hoped to escape through marriage to a man brought from Indonesia for the purpose. But they continued to live under her father's roof and the beatings got worse.

"My father made me miscarry my first baby by shaking me up and down real hard when I was six months pregnant. He would tie me to a chair or in front of a heater. Then I ran away to a hostel where he found me. He told the people at the hostel that he loved me and did not want to punish me and they thought my story was weird. So they made me go back home."

Susan eventually went to the Women's Refuge, leaving her children and husband in doing so, and stayed there for five weeks. Now she is despondent that she may never be allowed to have her children back. But she refuses to return to her husband while he continues to live with her father. Susan knows she is young enough to have a more happy future and shares a house with a boyfriend who cleans and cooks for her. She is genuinely thrilled that he takes her out every Friday and Saturday night.

The future for older women who use the Refuge is usually more bleak. Pat says a real problem is getting some women to leave at all. "Many women come here and make friends with each other and the workers, some have never in their lives had female friends. They are really happy... they feel stronger, more secure and protected. So they become fearful of the prospect of leaving and the feeling of being cut off. Older single women often have nowhere to go. I know that a very small number of women travel around the country for a year at a time staying at different places. Pat says there are even a couple of women who left the Refuge to live in nearby public toilets.

But it's not just the residents who cling to the Refuge. Most of the workers interviewed admitted that they needed to be there because, as Pat puts it, that involvement "extended her life."

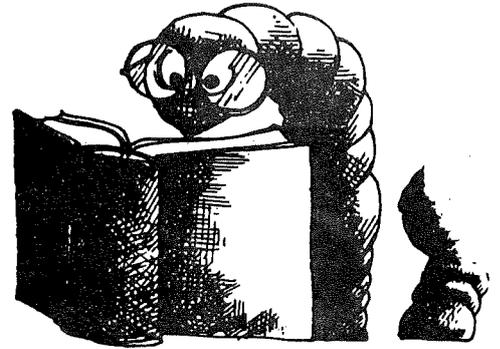
Many plan to work on setting up other institutions for women who are afraid, harassed or plain lonely when their two year terms in jobs at this Refuge expire. And it is significant that, when they discuss the necessity and viability of new "women's places", government money is not even mentioned.

- written by Laura Veltman,
journalist with The Australian



ANNUAL STATISTICS

1 JULY 1980 - 30 JUNE 1981



Total numbers resident:

Women 238
Children 356 (143 under 5)

Total bed occupancy: 6,831

Average number of residents per night:

1st quarter:	20.3	6.5 women and 12.3 children
2nd quarter:	20.9	8.1 women and 10.5 children
3rd quarter:	13.5	6.1 women and 7.6 children
4th quarter:	20.5	6.7 women and 13.7 children

Total average: 18.8

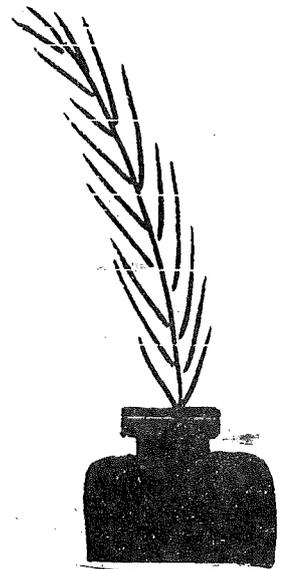
Greatest number for year - 15 women and 28 children, May 15, 1981.
Least number for year - 2 women and nil children, 4th June, 1981.

Reasons for seeking refuge:

Intolerable domestic situation	112
Violence to self	91
Violence to children	38
Mental cruelty	88
Partner's alcohol problem	21
Financial problems	22
Other family problems	24
Harrassment from partner	31
Evicted	23
Homeless - nowhere to go	33
Wanted time to think	41
Sexual harrassment to self	24
Sexual harrassment to child(ren)	12
Fleeing parent's home	19
Desertion or rejection by partner	13
Escape from non/family situation	17
Unknown	20

Duration of problem bringing women to Refuge:

First occurrence	50
Developed over last few months	32
Continued for over a year	113
No answer/ not applicable	44



Length of stay at Refuge:

1 night only	24%
less than week	30%
1 to 2 weeks	15%
2 to 3 weeks	11%
3 to 4 weeks	7%
4 to 6 weeks	5%
6 to 8 weeks	1%
over 8 weeks	3%

Number of children accompanying women to the Refuge:

No children	35%
1 child	21%
2 children	21%
3 children	15%
4 children	3%
5+children	3%

New Arrivals:

1st Quarter:	47 women and 81 children
2nd Quarter:	46 women and 72 children
3rd quarter:	70 women and 97 children
4th Quarter:	48 women and 51 children

Destination on leaving Refuge:

Returned home	30%
Returned home - partner moved out	10%
Govt/ emergency housing	17%
Private accommodation	3%
Staying with friends	3%
Staying with relatives	2%
Hostel	2%
Other Refuge	2.5%
Hospital	1%
Interstate	5.5%
The Cottage	1%
Homeless	2%
Caravan Park	.5%
Live-in Housekeeping	.5%
Unknown	11%

Occupation of women on entry to Refuge:

Professional and managerial	3.5%
White collar	4%
Skilled	5%
Semi-skilled	7%
Unskilled	9%
Home duties	45.5%
Student	3.5%
Unknown	22.5%



Referred to Refuge by:

Friend / Relative	21.8%
Welfare / Social worker	13.4%
Previously Resident	7.6%
Other Refuge	7.1%
Media	6.7%
Telephone Book	5.9%
Police	5.5%
Lifeline	3.4%
Rape crisis Centre	2.2%
Doctor / Health Centre	2.2%
Women's Shopfront	1.7%
Legal Aid /solicitor	1.7%
Refuge Workers	1.3%
Ex-Residents	0.8%
Hospital	0.8%
Taxi Drivers	0.8%
St. Vincent De Paul	0.8%
Salvation Army	0.8%
Dept. of Social Security	0.4%
Unknown	15.1%

Occupation of men women were living with:

Professional and Managerial	4.3%
White Collar	6.7%
Skilled	10.6%
Semi-Skilled	9.2%
Unskilled	5.9%
Armed Forces	1.7%
Farmer	0.4%
Invalid	0.4%
Not Applicable	27.3%
Unknown	21.4%

WE WON'T BE SILENCED



LIASION



The Canberra Women's Refuge uses the following agencies in the process of assisting residents in having their needs met within the community.

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES:

1. Department of the Capital Territory:
 - Health Commission
 - Housing Branch
 - Welfare Branch
 - Quamby Children's Shelter
 - Narrabundah Health Centre-
 - Doctors
 - Mental Health
 - Dentist
 - Community nurses
 - Psychologist
 - Emergency Service
 - C.V.C.
 - Intellectually handicapped
 - Mental Health Branch
 - Family Planning
 - Occasional Child Care
 - Child Health Clinic
 - Child and Family Guidance
 - Health Service Hostels
 - VD Information Service
 - Woden Valley Hospital
 - Ward 12B
 - Drug & Alcohol Unit
 - Casualty
 - Child Abuse Unit
 - Dental Clinic
 - Obstetrics
 - Psychiatric Ward
 - Surgical Ward
 - Calvary Hospital
2. Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs:
 - Migrant Education
 - Migrant Welfare
 - Telephone Interpreter Service
3. Department of Home Affairs:
 - Women's Shopfront
 - Office of Women's Affairs
4. Department of Social Security:
 - Pensions and Benefits
 - Commonwealth Employment Service
 - Pensioners' Social Worker

5. ACT SCHOOLS AUTHORITY:

- Causeway Pre-School
- Narrabundah Primary School
- Telopea Park High School
- Narrabundah College
- School Without Walls
- St Benedict's School

6. ACT POLICE:

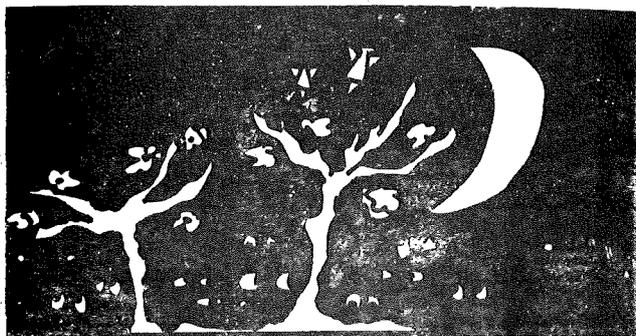
- Emergency
- Juvenile Aid
- General/Protective

7. Legal Aid:

- Family Court and Counselling
- General Advice

8. Independent Agencies:

- Smith Family
- Salvation Army
- St Vincent de Paul
- Marymead
- Koomari
- Dr Barnardo's
- Canberra Youth Refuge
- Rape Crisis Centre
- Abortion Counselling Service
- Women's Centre
- Red Cross
- ACT COSS
- Louisa: Queanbeyan Women's Refuge
- Jobless Action
- Community Centres
 - Belconnen
 - Woden
 - Tuggeranong
 - Northside
- Homemakers



CANBERRA WOMEN'S REFUGE INCORPORATED

Statement of RECEIPTS and EXPENDITURE for the Year Ended 30 June 1981

1980	\$	\$	\$
Balance as at 1 July 1980			
Bank of N.S.W. - Cheque Account			1555.56
Wales Savings Investment Account			<u>1725.53</u>
<u>2236</u>			<u>3281.09</u>
<u>Add RECEIPTS</u>			
60000 Capital Territory Health Commission		62189.48	
10793 Office of Child Care: Recurrent Grant	10014.00		
9846 Family Support Service	8433.00		
3075 Vacation Care	4397.00		
2000 Special Assistance	<u>1949.00</u>	24793.00	
3000 Department of Capital Territory-Welfare Grant		1930.00	
1042 Donations & Raffle		5119.62	
284 Interest: Investment Account		158.68	
65 Cheque Account		113.89	
42 Subscriptions		-	
<u>90147</u>		<u>94304.67</u>	
<u>Less EXPENDITURE</u>			
- Audit Fees	200.00		
67381 Salaries		70233.11	
3445 Food	5410.78		
Less resident's reimbursement	<u>2850.16</u>	2560.62	
1149 Cleaning & Other Domestic		508.87	
4108 Travel & Transport		4281.31	
1745 Fuel Light & Power		1802.52	
Telephone & Postage	2206.37		
2465 Less reimbursements	<u>261.80</u>	1944.57	
664 Printing & Stationery		1162.60	
572 Repairs & Maintenance		401.60	
628 Industrial Services		525.10	
410 Insurance		526.66	
191 Literature, printing		-	
119 Advertising		-	
619 Special Assistance		-	
896 Rent & Rates		1268.35	
3566 Capital Expenditure		4268.84	
823 Miscellaneous		541.10	
270 Child Care consumables		411.16	
50 Donation		-	
<u>89102</u>		<u>90636.41</u>	
<u>1045</u> Excess of Income over Expenditure			<u>3668.26</u>
<u>\$3281</u> Balance as at 30 June 1981			<u>\$6949.35</u>

AUDITOR'S REPORT

I have examined the books and records of Canberra Women's Refuge Incorporated and have received all the information and explanations required. In my opinion the Statement of Receipts and Expenditure and the accompanying Source and Application of Funds for the year ended 30 June 1981 present fairly the financial position of the Collective as at that date.

R.L. MULDER A.A.S.A.
Registered Company Auditor

R.L. Mulder
3/9/81

CANBERRA WOMEN'S REFUGE INCORPORATEDBank Reconciliation as at 30 June 1981

	\$	\$
Balance as per Bank Statement 30/6/81	6022.95	
Add deposits not credited	<u>1256.00</u>	
	7278.95	
Less unrepresented cheques	<u>2213.81</u>	
Balance as at 30 June 1981	<u>\$5065.14</u>	5065.14

Wales Savings Investment Account

Balance as at 1 July 1980	1725.53	
Add interest earned	<u>158.68</u>	
Balance as at 30 June 1981	<u>\$1884.21</u>	1884.21
Total Accumulated Funds		<u>\$6949.35</u>

Represented by:

Balance of Grants and Donations (Notes)

Capital Territory Health Commission	1438.40
Office of Child Care:	
Family Support Service	15.33
Childcare Recurrent Grant	86.95
Vacation Care Programme	(9.60)
Special Needs Grant	4.33
Department of Capital Territory Welfare Grant	(1.35)
Donations & Fund Raising	<u>5415.29</u>
	<u>\$6949.35</u>



S. H. Hilder
3/9/81

CANBERRA WOMEN'S REFUGE INCORPORATED

SOURCE and APPLICATION of Funds

CAPITAL TERRITORY HEALTH COMMISSION

	\$	\$
Balance as at 1 July 1980		44.69
Add Grant		<u>62189.48</u>
		62234.17
Less Expenditure:		
Salaries	48445.43	
Food	5370.78	
Less Resident's reimbursement	<u>2850.16</u>	2520.62
Cleaning & Domestic Hardware		495.17
Industrial Services		525.10
Electricity		1664.25
Telephone	2048.37	
Less Red telephone	<u>261.80</u>	1786.57
Postage		173.84
Printing & Stationery		649.90
Repairs & Maintenance		321.17
Insurance		526.66
Capital expenditure		369.14
Travel & Transport		3118.92
Miscellaneous		<u>199.00</u>
		60795.77
Balance as at 30 June 1981		<u>\$1438.40</u>

OFFICE OF CHILD CAREFamily Support Service

Balance as at 1 July 1980 (deficit)		(96.59)
Add Grant		<u>8433.00</u>
		8336.41
Less Expenditure:		
Salaries	7037.39	
Travel Allowance	901.19	
Telephone	158.00	
Postage	69.50	
Printing & Stationery	<u>155.00</u>	8321.08
Balance as at 30 June 1981		\$ <u>15.33</u>

Child Care Recurrent Grant

Balance as at 1 July 1980 (deficit)		(80.56)
Add Grant		<u>10014.00</u>
		9933.44
Less Expenditure:		
Salaries		<u>9846.49</u>
Balance as at 30 June 1981		\$ <u>86.95</u>



Pat Mulder
3/9/81

CANBERRA WOMEN'S REFUGE INCORPORATED
SOURCE and APPLICATION of Funds - continued

	\$	\$
<u>Vacation Care Programme</u>		
Balance as at 1 July 1980		NIL
Add Grant		4397.00
Less Expenditure:		
Salaries	4128.80	
Childcare Consumerables	171.20	
Transport	<u>106.00</u>	<u>4406.60</u>
Balance as at 30 June 1981 (deficit)		\$ <u>(9.60)</u>
<u>Special Needs Grant</u>		
Balance as at 1 July 1980		15.37
Add Grant		<u>1949.00</u> 1964.37
Less Expenditure:		
Salaries	680.00	
Transport	36.60	
Capital Expenditure	1003.48	
Childcare consumerables	<u>239.96</u>	<u>1960.04</u>
Balance as at 30 June 1981		\$ <u>4.33</u>

DEPARTMENT OF THE CAPITAL TERRITORY - WELFARE GRANT

Balance as at 1 July 1980 (deficit)		(576.93)
Add: Amount transferred from Donations Grant		576.93 <u>1930.00</u> 1930.00
Less Expenditure:		
Capital expenditure	1799.22	
Travel & Transport	38.00	
Repairs & Maintenance	80.43	
Hardware	<u>13.70</u>	<u>1931.35</u>
Balance as at 30 June 1981 (deficit)		\$ <u>(1.35)</u>



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5/9/81



CANBERRA WOMEN'S REFUGE INCORPORATED
SOURCE and APPLICATION of Funds - continued

DONATIONS AND FUND RAISING

	\$	\$
Balance as at 1 July 1980		3975.11
And Receipts		5192.19
		<u>9167.30</u>
Less Amount transferred to D.C.T. Welfare Grant		576.93
		<u>8590.37</u>
 Gross Expenditure:		
Audit	200.00	
Salaries	95.00	
Food	40.00	
Rent	1268.35	
Subscriptions	31.20	
Capital Expenditure	1097.00	
Printing & Stationery	114.36	
Miscellaneous	83.65	
Transport	80.00	
Electricity	138.27	
Bank Charges	27.25	
		<u>3175.08</u>
Balance as at 30 June 1981		<u>\$5415.29</u>

Note: Accounts for payment July 1981

	\$
Office Chairs	204
Washing Machine	379
Conference - Tasmania	414
	<u>\$ 997</u>

Other major needs of the Refuge that have been budgeted from the balance in the Donations account include:

Refridgerator	600
Children's annex	1500
Furniture	450
	<u>\$2550</u>



M. Mulder
3/9/81

THANKYOU

Uniting Church
 Beauchamp House
 Legal Aid
 Staff, Narrabundah Health Centre
 Office of Women's Affairs
 The Canberra Times
 2XX
 2CA
 2CC
 CTC 7
 ABC 3
 Ipswich Motors
 Peter Carey
 Rose Mulder, Auditor
 Louisa, Q'yan Women's Refuge
 Ros Kelly
 Robyn Walmsley
 Susan Ryan
 Jobless Action
 Buttercup Bakeries
 Henk's Cakeshops, Kingston
 Tillman's Butchery, Fyshwick
 H.J. Bell, milk vendor
 Narrabundah Primary School
 Causeway Pre-School
 Manuka Occasional Care
 Lions Club, Phillip
 Lions Club, Kambah
 Canberra Apex
 Canberra Rotary
 Frank Young
 Mrs Black
 Coralie Clark
 Mr Macpherson

THANKYOU

New Zealand High
 Commission
 Soroptomist International
 of Canberra
 Bruce Hall, ANU
 St Vincent de Paul
 The Smith Family
 The Salvation Army
 Toy Warehouse, Fyshwick
 Children's Book Council

Many thanks for all the
 community and business
 support during the
 Christmas period. 

\$ \$ \$ \$
 A special thanks to all
 those individuals who
 donated sums of money
 over the financial year.

The late Senator John
 Knight is remembered with
 great affection for his
 support and involvement
 with this Refuge.

