



WOMEN INC.

Annual Report

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Beryl Women Inc.
Specialist domestic and family violence accommodation service.

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Supported by



Design by



beryl works on
ngunnawal land

We wish to acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as the traditional custodians of the land we work on.

We pay our respects to the Elders both past, present and future for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal Australia. We remember that the land we work on, was and always will be traditional Aboriginal land.



Plaque presented at the opening of the Canberra Women's Refuge.



Mission

As a feminist organisation, we recognise that violence against women and children is prevalent and that injustices—such as sexism, racism, socioeconomic inequality, homophobia, and discrimination against disadvantaged groups—contribute to family crises. To redress this, Beryl Women Inc. provides a professional, accountable, trauma-informed specialist domestic violence service, which is based in principles of feminism, social justice and reconciliation, and recognises and fosters cultural diversity. Beryl has an ongoing commitment to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children, and women and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Organisational Aim

Beryl Women Inc. aims to contribute to the enhanced safety of the families who stay at Beryl, to their improved health outcomes and to provide opportunities to increase their skills and confidence to manage future crisis.

Goals of Strategic Plan

July 2013 – June 2016

To be a sustainable organisation that provides high quality domestic violence-specific services to women and children through:

- developing partnerships and collaborating with other community services and government agencies in order to be part of a holistic response to women and children escaping domestic violence
- strongly identifying and profiling in the ACT community as a feminist organisation offering high quality services
- strongly identifying and profiling in the ACT community as a service that is welcoming of, accessible to, and appropriately supportive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children, and women and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD), and
- encouraging a learning culture and being innovative in response to support women and children escaping domestic violence.



On average, at least one woman a week is killed by a partner or former partner in Australia.



Edna Ryan and Beryl Henderson on the steps of Glebe Town Hall, 15 December 1984.

Originally named the Canberra Women's Refuge, Beryl was established in a house in Watson in March 1975 with a grant of \$4,000 from the Department of the Capital Territory. It was staffed by volunteers, who ran a 24 hour roster, seven days a week. In 1976 the service moved to a duplex in Kingston and sometime later additional funding was received to employ a skeleton staff.

In 1976 the service changed its name to Beryl Women's Refuge, after Beryl Henderson. Beryl started the original trust fund for the refuge, which, outside of the \$4,000 grant received from the government, was the sole means of supporting the cost of running the service. In 2005 the service changed its name to Beryl Women Inc.

Beryl Henderson was an active member of the ACT Women's Liberation Movement and the co-founder of the Abortion Law Reform Association in Canberra. She also worked for Family Planning and the Humanist Society. Beryl taught languages in an Israeli kibbutz from 1960 to 1964 before coming to Australia. She returned to Israel in the late 1970s, where she died in 1990, a month shy of her 94th birthday. She continues to be celebrated for her dedication and commitment to equality. Beryl Women Inc. is proud to carry Beryl Henderson's name as a reminder of our wonderful 'big sisters', those who came before us and made possible the services we have today.



One in three Australian women has experienced physical violence, since the age of 15.

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Report from the chair

Since Beryl Women Inc. was established in 1975, every year has been one of growth and change. This year has been no exception. Our annual report highlights all of the initiatives we've undertaken this year. It also includes numbers and statistics that will attempt to sum up our work. But the truth is the impact of Beryl's work goes far beyond numbers. We are proving year after year that it is possible to create significant change in the lives of women and children escaping domestic violence.

We do this by approaching our work with a feminist analysis. We ensure all Beryl clients are treated with respect, dignity and equity. We recognise that structural inequalities in society greatly disadvantage women and children, which results in power differentials and gender-based violence in interpersonal relationships. Put simply, the safety of women and girls is related to gender equality.

The commitment of our staff, volunteers, Committee and our regular supporters and donors inspires me that we are making some headway. Domestic violence is no longer considered a 'private' issue. Tackling domestic violence is everyone's responsibility and together we can play our part in making our communities, homes and families safer.

But much more needs to be done. Australia's first women's refuge—Elsie Refuge for Women and Children—was established in 1974 in Sydney. Yet in 2014

it closed its doors and was taken over by St Vincent de Paul Society. While St Vincent's still provides a service for women and children, it reminds us that it is no easy task to continue running an independent service. Beryl Women Inc. is now Australia's longest running specialist domestic violence refuge. For 41 years, we have independently supported women and children fleeing domestic violence.

Today the need to support our local women's shelters is as great as ever. Domestic violence rates continue to grow at alarming rates. Currently, one in three women will experience violence in her lifetime. Women and children escaping domestic violence face many challenges, including emerging forms of violence such as technology-facilitated abuse. Beryl aims to combat this and break the cycle of violence. We won't rest until this is achieved. We must work together and encourage members of our community to provide support to women's services where they can.

I would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to all of you who have supported Beryl along the way, making it possible for us to provide a much needed service for women and children fleeing domestic violence.

A huge thank you also to the amazing team at Beryl: to our workers 'on the ground' and our Committee members, all of whom work hard to achieve our vision.

And finally, to our fantastic supporters: we could not do any of this without you. Thank you for making it possible and contributing to our work. I look forward to working with all of you over the next year to strengthen the services we provide to women and children in the ACT.

Dana Esperanza
Chair, Beryl Women Inc.

Staff and Governance Committee

It is my pleasure to write to you as Manager of the longest serving refuge for women with children escaping domestic violence in Australia, this year being our 41st year of operation.

Unfortunately, domestic violence continues to occur across Australia at alarming rates. On average, one woman per week dies at the hands of their partner or ex-partner.

Beryl Women Inc. is open to all women from the local community as well as women from other states and territories. The service is particularly focused on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children in crisis as well as women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. These cultural groups made up the majority of clients over the past 12 months. This diversity is also reflected within our staffing structure. The sharing of cultural knowledge is encouraged in the service. It enriches client and staff relationships, providing a vital connection with women and their children.

The work of Beryl is based on a feminist analysis of power and informed by the unique lived experiences of women and children. It recognises the underlying political, social, structural and economic disadvantages faced by women and children escaping domestic violence.

Beryl Women's Inc. has specialist skills and expertise in responding to domestic violence. Support staff are required to work within systemic barriers, navigating systems that often re-victimise clients. As a result, staff have been creative and innovative in finding solutions and better outcomes for clients.

Beryl will continue to use its specialist expertise to provide support, advocacy, case management and safe housing to women and their children who have been impacted by domestic violence.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the staff team of Beryl. Although the service has been extremely busy throughout the year, no task has been too big to take on. It has been a challenging year, but we still managed to work successfully with clients with complex issues and maintained self-care and balance throughout. I thank you for your continued dedication. It is appreciated.

Robyn Martin
Manager, Beryl Women Inc.



Painting 'Ocean Dreaming' by Maurice Shipp.



Myth: Domestic and family violence happens only to poor, uneducated women and women from certain cultures.

Truth: People of any class, culture, religion, sexual orientation, marital status and age can be victims or perpetrators of domestic violence. Because women with money usually have more access to resources, poorer women tend to use community agencies, and are therefore more visible.



Report from the Manager

This year was a productive and extremely busy one for Beryl Women Inc.

Over the past 12 months, I met with many of our stakeholders, clients and ACT government Ministers across Canberra. These meetings have made it clear to me that Beryl Women Inc. is valued widely within the community and that the work undertaken by the organisation provides women and children leaving domestic violence with options they would not ordinarily have.

Beryl is a small, Canberra-based organisation with six staff members. However, our reputation as a strong feminist service—a specialist domestic violence service providing accommodation and support to women with children within a trauma-informed framework—is well known and respected within Canberra and the surrounding communities.

Family Law Court and compliance to orders

Attending Family Law Court and dealing with compliance to orders has been an ongoing issue for women, further heightened by it being a complex and involved process. For women who have experienced domestic violence there are additional dynamics and pressures for women to navigate. This is especially

true for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who face a language barrier in understanding what the orders mean. Our role is to assist and support women through this process. This often involves providing assistance with writing affidavits for women escaping domestic violence, ensuring they understand all the court documents and what they need to do to comply with those orders. We seek to empower, not disempower, our clients through this process. It is time intensive and complex, but necessary to aid in their safety.

Reconciliation Week events

Reconciliation Week has occurred during this reporting period, with Committee members, staff and clients participating in a number of events including the Sorry Day Bridge Walk.

We invited Aunty Janet Phillips, a Ngunnawal elder, to come in and do a cleansing of the shared properties, as clients expressed feeling negative energy and a heaviness within the refuge. After the cleansing, a number of clients spent time talking with Aunty Janet, leaning more about Aboriginal customs and culture. We thank Aunty Janet for being so generous with her time, and for the care she showed for our clients.

ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body

In October 2015, I attended a forum held by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, with CEOs and Managers of community service organisations working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the ACT. The purpose of the forum was to build relationships with other leaders in the community, strengthen collaboration and work together on strategies to improve services and circumstances for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

To support their important work, I have continued to work collaboratively with other services and build our relationship with the Elected Body. I met with the Chairperson, Di Collins, to discuss a number of issues in relation to domestic violence within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. As an outcome, we now have some agreements in place on how we will work together to address these issues through my role with the Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DVPC).

Robyn Martin

Manager, Beryl Women Inc.



Acknowledgments

We would like to specifically acknowledge the support of our funding body, the Community Services Directorate, and the Social Housing and Homelessness Services staff of the Community Services Directorate.

We would also like to acknowledge the Domestic Violence Crisis Service, Canberra Rape Crisis Centre, Toora Women Inc., First Point Central Intake Service, Women's Services, ACT Legal Aid, Women's Legal Centre, Street Law, Centrelink Social Workers and Community Contact Officer, the Office for Women, Northside Community Services, Relationships Australia and the many other services that directly or indirectly supported Beryl Women Inc. this financial year.

We hope to continue to work in cooperation with you all in the coming year.



One in five Australian
women has experienced
sexual violence.



Opening to make doors
that formerly did

beryl
WOMEN INC.
1975-2015

Service management

Strategic Planning

Beryl Women Inc. held its annual Strategic Planning day in October 2015. We undertook a SWOT analysis of the organisation, which informed the development of our Strategic Plan.

The SWOT analysis identified changes for consideration by the Committee before developing the next strategic plan. This included realignment of organisational goals, and setting out key actions for the Committee to focus on over the next 12 months to ensure the sustainability of the service.

Other issues discussed at the Strategic Planning day included:

- securing additional funding
- refinement of Beryl's mission statement and the aims of the organisation
- partnerships
- awareness raising and advocacy
- fundraising
- capacity raising of the organisation
- professional development for staff
- upskilling the Management Committee.



Myth: Some people deserve to be abused—they are responsible for the violence or they provoke it.

Truth: No one deserves to be abused. The only person responsible for the abuse is the abuser. Abusers tend to blame the victim for their behaviour, and friends and family often hear only their perspective.

Staff planning

In early March 2016, the staff team of Beryl came together for a period of two days to discuss key strategic issues and practical elements of the work of Beryl Women Inc. This session occurred against the backdrop of some significant challenges for the organisation—notably, the need to respond to a 30% decrease in core funding that had occurred over the three years prior. This resulted in a significant reduction in staff and a need to realign the priorities of remaining staff. This is an ongoing issue that still requires embedding in operational practice.

Over the last period, significant shifts in the broader women's and homelessness sector have impacted the organisation. The staff team discussed the importance of flexible service delivery that meets the changing needs of women; keeping abreast of emerging good practice; and the specific role that Beryl plays in supporting women affected by domestic violence.

This session confirmed the staff team view that Beryl has a distinctive and important role to play in both service provision and advocacy on the issue of domestic violence. Recent experience has provided the opportunity for staff to reflect on key issues for Beryl; where Beryl's expertise is best placed; and the significant role that Beryl can play in supporting the community.

The session enabled staff to reflect on their experience, and how it matched with the evidence base regarding domestic and family violence. This confirmed that there is a specific role to play in providing tailored services for women and children who have experienced domestic violence as a result of intimate partner relationships. There was clarity that this type of violence is:

- a significant risk (that is, this form of violence puts women and children at greatest risk of death or injury)
- an area that has experienced a reduction in the specialisation of service (with many homelessness services framing its work around family violence)
- an area in which Beryl has specific expertise.



The women at Beryl were fantastic with making me welcome in a safe house, great help with all the help we needed to get back to our home, made me feel I was stronger to be at home, gave me the courage to get away from my ex and to get the help for me and my boys, their help and understanding is so grateful now and still ongoing

Domestic Violence Christmas Crisis Program

Beryl continued its participation in the Domestic Violence Christmas Crisis Program this year, commencing on 16 December 2015 and ceasing on 4 February 2016.

The program supported 15 adults (including male victims) and 17 children. Beryl supported two families during this period, by providing the following:

- court support, including applying for Domestic Violence Orders
- access to Centrelink crisis payments
- clothing from donated items to Beryl
- food and food vouchers
- safety planning, including safety around technology
- toys for the children
- new mobile phone
- transport to appointments



Women are five times more likely than men to require medical attention or hospitalisation as a result of intimate partner violence, and five times more likely to report fearing for their lives.

Donations

Beryl Women Inc. has continued to build strong relationships in the community and is very grateful to all the individuals and businesses that supported the service this year.

We continue to receive regular financial donations through the Hands Across Canberra portal, with these donations directly supporting women and children accessing the service.

We have recently developed a partnership with www.allbids.com.au for goods, as well as storage space to house donations of furniture. All bids is also in the process of sourcing delivery solutions for Beryl, this being a major barrier for women who need to arrange items to be picked up and taken to their new property.

We would like to formally acknowledge and express our deep appreciation to all the people who have donated money, furniture or other household items. Our clients have benefited greatly from the generosity of our community.

Grants

This year we were successful in applying for a number of grants. These grants complement existing funding that the service receives from the Community Services Directorate and include:

- Hands Across Canberra
- ACT Women's Grants
- Snow Foundation
- Commonwealth Bank.

Training

We are committed to the ongoing training and development of our workforce, with a focus on training that supports the provision of high quality services for our clients. In keeping with this commitment, staff have undertaken the following training to enhance and build on their current skills:

- PTSD
- Getting your Board on Board
- Facebook technology safety training
- technology safety training
- Hands Across Canberra—Capacity Building Workshop
- first aid
- relief workers
- ACT Community Sector Multi Enterprise Agreement Workshop
- Children leaving the country—Airport Watch
- parenting session with Legal Aid.

Two staff members also attended SNAICC National Voice for Our Children organisation training Responding to trauma—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This training has increased staff members awareness in responding to trauma, and the information has been passed onto all staff at Beryl.



Collaborative Working Relationships in the Community

Beryl has been involved in a number of consultations within the ACT community. These ensure that the service is up to date with changes within the sector and importantly continues to maintain strong positive working relationships with government and community services on issues related to domestic and family violence, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children, and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Staff attended the official launch of the Canberra CALD Women's Forum as well as attended a number of forums and meetings that followed the forum in the establishment of a Board.

Other consultations, meetings and sector development meetings that the service has participated in during the year include:

- ACT Consultation—National Framework to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children
- Social Housing and Homelessness Services on Coming Home Program and Alliance
- ACT Human Rights Commission—'We Don't Shoot Our Wounded' report
- Women's Services
- Women's Centre for Health Matters—25th Birthday
- Domestic and Family Violence Policy Manual launch—Community Services Directorate
- Respectful Relationships—Canberra Men's Centre, CANFACS and Domestic Violence Crisis Service
- Women's Centre for Health Matters AGM
- CANFACS
- Better Services Workshops and service visit on domestic violence maps (capturing preferred experience of women and children who are or have experienced domestic violence)
- Specialist Homelessness Sector Co-design workshops
- Governance Group—Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children
- Office for Women—Gap Analysis
- Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DVPC) — Death Review
- Woden Community Services
- ACT Domestic Violence Data Project
- Whole of Government Service Funding template

- Belconnen Community Services—Gateway tender
- Community Sector Industry Plan
- Joint Pathways
- DV Christmas program wrap up meeting
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body
- Specialist Homelessness Forum
- ACTCOSS Budget Forum
- ACT Violence Prevention Awards
- Snow Foundation
- UN Women Luncheon—International Women’s Day event
- ACT Women’s Awards
- KPMG Workshop—Evaluation of 2nd ANROWS Action Plan under the National Plan
- Family/Sexual Violence Memorial Meeting
- Domestic Violence Prevention Council
- Women’s Legal Centre
- Official visitor for Homelessness
- Minister Berry—Domestic/family and sexual violence memorial
- Committee membership interviews
- Services and Support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT
- Minister Berry
- Legal Aid
- WDOP
- Woden Community Services—development of an MOU for clients in their area
- Gateway Services and IHSG
- DVCS Candle Light Ceremony

Nguru Program at the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre (CRCC)

The Manager of Beryl Women Inc., Robyn Martin, participated in an interview for the Nguru Program at the CRCC. Robyn also contributed to the CRCC Alliance (formerly known as the Reference Group), in her role as Chairperson. Its purpose is to ensure cultural knowledge is used in CRCC practices with clients and stakeholders and inclusivity and respect underpins the relationship with CRCC.

Beryl was also involved in a 16 Days of Activism Campaign with the YWCA, who hosted a ‘stop work’ action from midday, where there was a call on women to stop work, stop consuming, and to gather at Parliament House to collectively call on the government to take action to end violence against women.

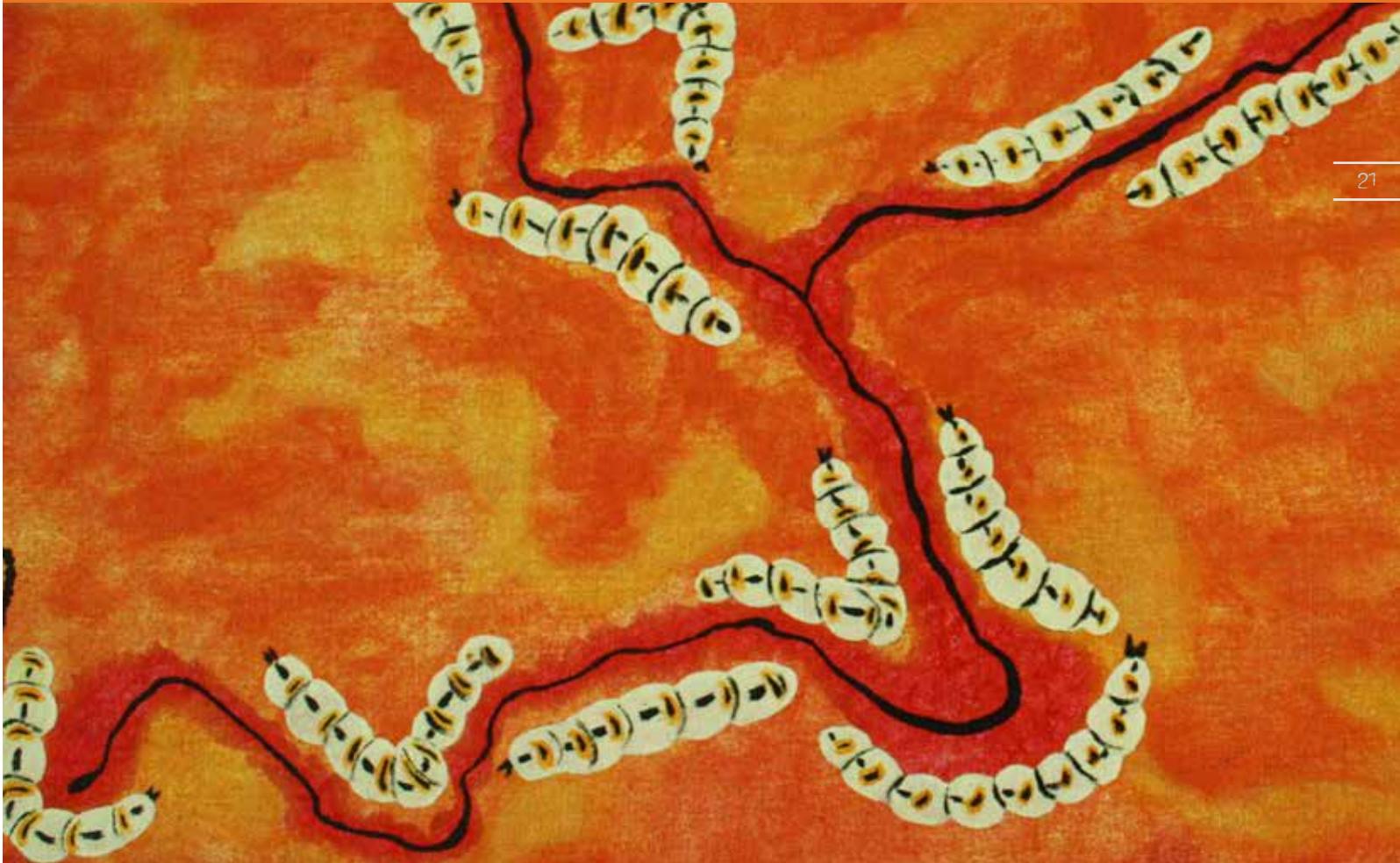
Launches attended by staff

- Community Services Directorate’s Domestic and Family Violence Policy Manual
- ANROWS evaluation of existing interagency partnerships, collaboration co coordination and/or integrated interventions and service responses to violence against women.
- Amnesty International report on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children Imprisonment
- 2nd Implementation Plan Act Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children



Discussions at group were amazing on different ways to deal with things and they sure opened my eyes and mind to how domestic violence/mental abuse goes hand in hand and explained what the victim feels and goes through. I just thought I may be nuts while with my ex, but definitely has strengthened me to deal and not go through it again.

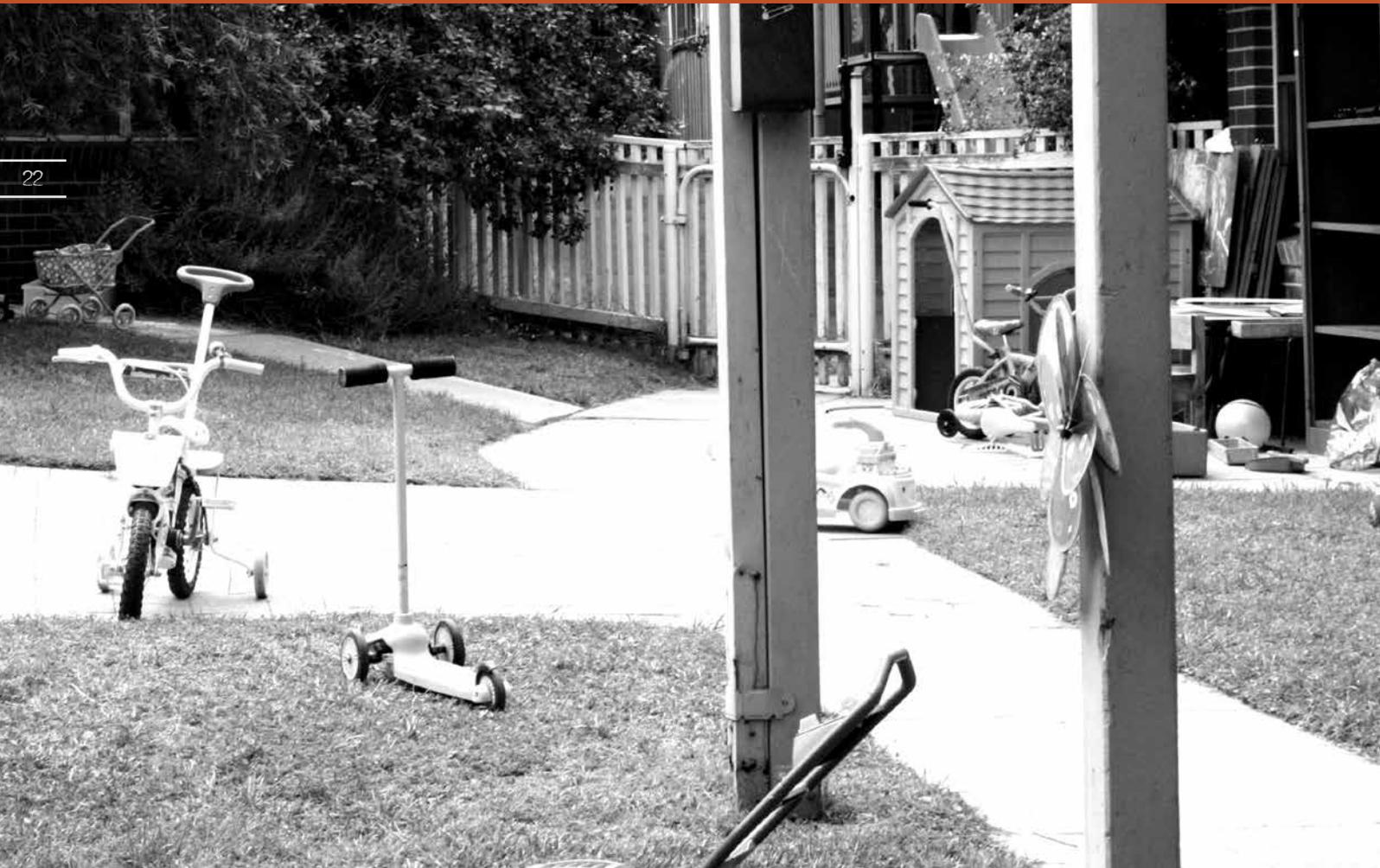
– Resident





I believe that the entire organisation is extremely helpful in all aspects and requirements. My son and I always felt safe and found all of the workers in the entire organisation to be friendly and approachable. Linda has been outstanding with the help and support, she has shown us and for that we are so thankful, she has always been there for us as always but all of the staff as a whole have gone above and beyond in whatever help we have required. We are so thankful for all the help and encouragement we have received (through) this entire time!

– Resident



Service visits

- Coordinator-General Domestic Violence in the ACT
- Woden Community Services
- Doris Women's Refuge
- Legal Aid
- WDOP
- Social Housing and Homelessness Services
- Woden Community Services
- Doris Women's Refuge
- Gateway Services and IHSG
- Woden Community Services—Onelink
- Streetlaw
- Belconnen Community Services—Onelink tender process

Staff wellbeing

Discussion at the recent staff planning session focused on staff wellbeing. All staff recognise the importance of self-care, in particular given the number of complex client cases Beryl staff have worked through over the past 12 months.

A number of strategies have put into place since that session, including monthly reflective practice (peer supervision) prior to staff meetings. This has had a positive effect on staff, as well as increasing staff skills and creating a space for debriefing within a team setting. We have also been accessing external supervision on a quarterly basis.

Sector training provided by Beryl staff during the year

- Guest speaker— DV Centrelink
- Indigenous Leadership Forum—domestic violence awareness
- Guest Speaker—Reclaim the Night
- ABS – Australia wide DV awareness raising via video linkup
- Indian Women's Network—DV awareness raising
- Australian Young Labor Conference on DV awareness
- Relief workers
- First aid
- MEA Workshop
- Children leaving the country—Airport Watch
- Parenting session with Legal Aid
- Responding to trauma—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Media and raising Community Awareness

Beryl Women Inc. has been involved in a number of awareness raising activities in the media, including:

- Interview with 2XX
- ABC - Triple 666
- Queanbeyan Age
- Several articles in the Canberra Times
- HerCanberra article
- Guest Speaker – Relationships Australia AGM

Research participation

Beryl has participated in several research projects over the past financial year.

We participated in a research project to identify good practice and innovative approaches with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experiencing family and domestic violence in remote and regional Australia. The research is funded by Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS).

This research was a partnership project with town-based Alice Springs Women's Shelter, tri-state Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council, Family and Domestic Violence Service, and the Domestic Violence Crisis Service (DVCS) in the ACT.

The overall aim of the project was to improve the evidence base and resources for key areas of concern to specialist women's services, namely advocacy, safety planning and outreach. It incorporated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's perspectives (as service users, community members and staff) in responding to family and domestic violence in remote and regional Australia.



One in four Australian women has experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner.

Beryl research project

As part of the preparation for the staff planning and continuing conversations with the Governing body of Beryl Women Inc. we commissioned a consultant to undertake a research project looking at domestic violence versus family violence. The language has changed completely in recent years, and domestic violence has become almost invisible. This raised questions about where Beryl sits, as we have been funded as a domestic violence service for women and children.

The research looked at the following:

1. What does it mean to be a domestic violence service rather than a family violence service? What does this mean in relation to how we target our services; how we engage with clients; what impacts may this have on particular groups of women in the community (i.e. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women with disability)?
2. Where does our service sit on the homelessness service continuum given this is where we derive the bulk of our funding support? What does this mean given we see crisis housing support as only one of the services we provide?
3. How do we translate our feminist philosophy into the service model? What does this mean in the context of gender fluidly (in relation to services for same-sex couples, transgender clients, and so on)?
4. How does our commitment to trauma informed practice impact outside our direct client support work (i.e. tenancy management, property management, and so on)? Are there ways in which we can address some of the inherent tensions we face due to the different roles we have to play?
5. How do we ensure that we deliver the very best service to the clients that are most vulnerable or difficult to reach/connect with given the resource constraints we face?



'Hear me Out' research project—Women's Centre for Health Matters

Beryl Women Inc. assisted in a research project undertaken by the Women's Centre for Health Matters (WCHM) titled *'Hear me Out' Women's experience of seeking help for domestic violence in the ACT: A qualitative research report*. The final report was released in April 2016.

ACT Domestic Violence Service System (Gap Analysis)

Beryl Women Inc. also participated in the Gap Analysis research undertaken by the ACT Government.

Review of Domestic Violence and Family Violence Death in the ACT

The manager of Beryl participated in the Review of Domestic Violence and Family Violence Death in the ACT as a member of the ACT Government's Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DPVC).

Client services



Beryl Women Inc. has supported many clients escaping domestic violence. In one instance, Beryl Women Inc. assisted a client to apply for a Domestic Violence Order (DVO) and security upgrades for her to return to her Housing ACT property. The following security upgrades were completed and the client felt safe to return home with her two children:

- lock on manhole
- window locks throughout property
- sensor lights - front and back
- check all security doors are working and fitted and lockable.

Safety Planning was also conducted with the client prior to her leaving the refuge.

Clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Culturally and linguistically diverse women accessing the service over the past six months have presented with a range of complex issues ranging from residency, interpreting services and Centrelink payments. Eligibility for basic income and visa restrictions prevent women and their children from independence and in turn they become highly dependent on the service.

Networking within the community sector and outsourcing support to other organisations is integral to our case management approach. Immediate support needs for such clients include income, transport, immigration, language (interpreters), housing, cultural and emotional support for grieving and traumatised women and children. The cultural barriers include perception of women, the refuge, accommodation, parenting, religion, language and Australian lifestyle. The first few weeks require intensive support with Centrelink, immigration and housing.

Domestic violence orders are in place for approximately half of Beryl Women Inc. culturally and linguistically diverse women clients. The cultural elements around

pursuing DVOs has been challenging for some of these clients. Most of the women have no family support or social networks and it is common for a range of support needs to arise from this isolation. Their immigration status prevents consistent income or in some cases any income. Beryl financially provides for the client while they are residing at the refuge, but this is limited to one woman at any given time, due to the costs associated with such intensive support. A proportion of these women come from interstate.

Specialist support for culturally and linguistically diverse families includes the following:

- Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) English classes
- support to clients in relation to interstate DVOs
- court support with applying for DVOs
- court support with matters in the Family Law Courts
- advocacy and support with the Australian Tax Office regarding acquiring a Tax File Number
- parenting teenagers
- school liaison and enrolments
- support and advocacy in relation to change of name
- linked mother to The Junction on health and wellbeing
- linked in with Vision Australia regarding vision issues as a result of domestic violence
- Migrant Youth Centre
- Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) regarding electricity account
- Smith Family regarding tutoring support
- Migrant and Resource Settlement Services of the ACT Inc.

- MASH school holiday program
- St Johns ambulance
- emotional and financial support
- victim Support

Beryl Women Inc.'s family safety pack aims to reduce violence against women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds by providing information about the laws in Australia and women's right to be safe for people coming to Australia on a partner visa. It also aims to strengthen support for women coming to Australia on a partner visa by providing information on the family violence visa provisions and available support. The pack includes four factsheets (translated into 22 languages):

- domestic and family violence
- sexual assault
- forced and early marriage
- family violence and partner visas.

The pack also includes a storyboard with pictures and minimal text which has been used with clients with low English language literacy.



One in four Australian women has experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner.

Women's group

Beryl continues to create a therapeutic environment that encourages a sense of community and connectedness for women and children. We do this in a number of ways including various service functions and a women's group held weekly during the school term.

Other service providers are invited to attend the women's groups as a means of connecting women with these services. As well as meeting their case management needs, this ensures women can make linkages and connections with other services while they are Beryl clients. When women leave Beryl they have the confidence to continue contact with these services—helping to break down some of the barriers for them with our support.

Women's groups included:

- basic first aid
- legal aid
- individual client meetings with Legal Aid
- soothing boxes – women creating boxes filled with items to provide physical comfort which allows psychological healing
- bazaar
- Care Financial – surviving debt and financial counselling
- parenting and domestic violence
- Streetlaw
- Legal Aid Community Legal Educator
- parenting after domestic violence
- ACT Young Women of the Year—workshop on resilience.



Of women who experience violence,
more than half have children in their care.

We also provide fortnightly workshops on domestic violence. Topics covered are as follows:

- cycle of violence
- brainwashing
- normal reactions to trauma and severe stress
- Biderman's chart of coercion

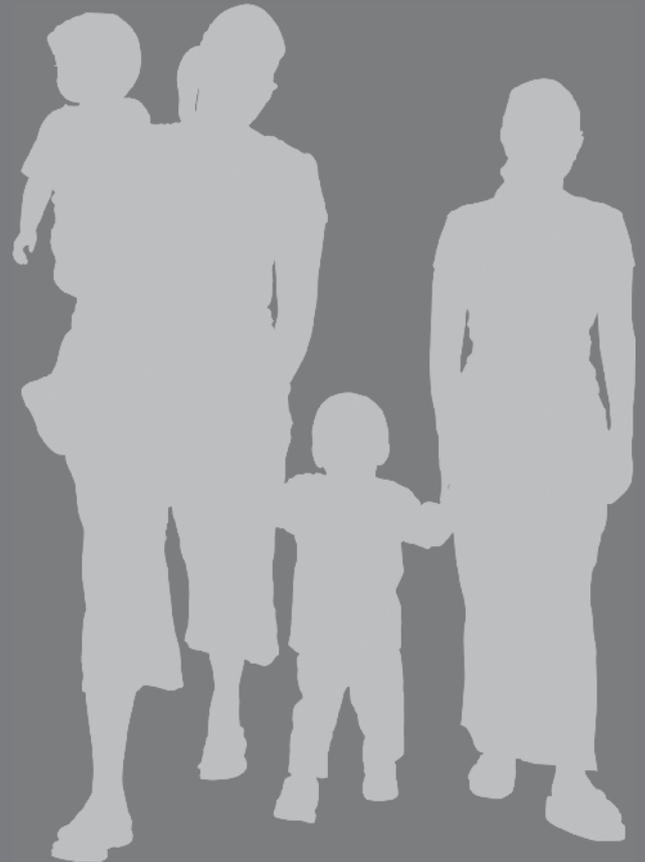
Clients also participated in a movie and discussion event held by Beryl to raise awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. Many of the clients were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and had little or no awareness of Australia's history in relation to its First People.

Feedback from women in relation to these workshops has been very positive, with women gaining a greater understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence, particularly the information on brainwashing and 'crazy making' that women often feel during on in the lead up to experiencing domestic violence. Exploring these issues helps women to gain clarity that they are not crazy, and this is part of the cycle of control.

A number of bazaars have also been held over the past 12 months, where all donated items (for example, curtains, kitchenware, general household items and clothing) were placed out in the common area of the refuge. All accommodated and outreach clients were invited to take items that would assist them to set up a new home. The bazaars are festive events with lots of food, music, laughter and connections made between clients. Feedback from clients has always been very positive, with clients appreciative of the items donated to them.



This group session was really helpful, I was given a lot of information and knowing I'm not alone on this road to discover(ing) a better life. I have lots of things like self-reflecting and dealing with a lot of denial, so this session was eye-opening, thank you.' – Resident



Child/Youth Support Program

Beryl Women Inc. is committed to working with children and young people and supporting them to find a lifestyle free from violence. Beryl aims to formally acknowledge and address the issue of violence experienced and/or witnessed by children and young people in their homes. Children and young people accessing the service are seen as individuals with their own complex issues with, as well as apart from, their parents.

Funding \$60,000—Child Support Program

The one-off grant of \$60,000 received from Social Housing and Homelessness Services during 2015–16 has allowed the service to provide a more a comprehensive Child Support Program.

Our Child Support Program provides varied and individualised approaches, taking into consideration client needs, family supports and available service staffing and resources.



The additional funding has also ensured that gaps in support for children are reduced and areas for development such as community collaboration, education and relationship building within the sector are able to continue.

The Child Support Program has worked collaboratively with families and support workers in providing trauma informed case management to children and young people residing in the refuge as well as families receiving support from an outreach capacity.

Given that the funding was a one-off grant, the lack of ongoing funding for this program within Beryl will have an impact on services provided to children if we are unable to source ongoing funding for the program.

Beryl employs one Child Support Worker within its existing budget. Given the tight resources, there will be limitations on the level of support provided to children within the service. Children make up the largest percentage of clients within the service.

Since the funding has stopped, we have started a process of reviewing the children's program, which currently includes three groups per week. It is unclear what the program will look like over the next six months.

The Child Support Program works individually with children, in groups and also with mothers. It aims to assist mothers to develop, where necessary, the skills and resources to create long-term solutions for their child's/children's safety, health and wellbeing.

Building relationships and developing linkages with relevant agencies that can support the work with children is seen as a priority for the program.

During each school term, the service runs women's groups with a toddlers group running at the same time. Beryl's group model aims to provide an environment that fosters young children's development through provision of, and participation in, a variety of

developmentally appropriate play experiences and activities. The group provides opportunities for children who would not normally access a playgroup to increase their skills and confidence, and to develop valuable social and support networks.

Support to school aged children and adolescents in the service is tailored to the individual needs and unique preferences of the children. The program aims to develop self-confidence, self-esteem and life skills in this stage of their growth. A lot of the time is spent talking about life. These conversations provide the perfect opportunity to consider how to deal with the challenging experiences that young people have encountered.

Child Support Workers regularly advocate and attend meetings at a number of Primary Schools to discuss children's learning needs and the impact of trauma.

Child Support Workers have observed a number of children have a lot of worries (including grief and loss) and are very conscious of the difficulties their family has and still faces.

Some children experience anxiety and low self-esteem, find it difficult to concentrate and keep up with school work, and have shown the need for further emotional support. Our Child Support Workers have advocated with the schools for additional tutoring and the school psychologist to see children at the beginning or shortly after commencing at the schools to provide assessment and support.

Referrals have been made to the following services:

- child counsellor
- sourcing support for costs, through Snow Foundation
- victim support.

The service has advocated on behalf of women and children with the following services;

- ANU on studies and extension of time to complete work and with the Inclusion and Welfare branch
- Legal Aid on access and Airport Watch list
- Centrelink on income and child support exemptions
- Medicare
- Immigration on residency
- Marymead on supervised access
- CYPD
- Women Health Service
- Housing ACT
- Gungahlin Child and Family Centre on Giggle and Grow
- Snow Foundation for financial assistance for clients
- MACH nurse
- Transition to Recovery program
- Civic Mental Health
- Return To Work Grants
- Social Workers at Hospital
- Doris Women's Refuge
- DVCS
- FirstPoint
- Child and Youth Family Services Gateway
- St Vincent de Paul
- ACAT on electricity bills
- ANU on legal support
- CIT
- MARRS
- Victim Support
- Advocacy with Housing ACT—allocation teams on disability requirements
- ADACUS
- DUO disability support
- Access of children
- Family Law courts and access orders
- Emergency Child care
- Airport Watch list.

Child Support Workers have also supported clients with medical appointments and hospital visits due to trauma and/or anxiety as a result of being in those facilities due to past experiences in another country.



When asked 'did you see any changes (both positive and negative) in your children whilst staying at Beryl?'

... positive—they were uplifted after Ange came and even opened up to her. I had told her on a phone call before she came over, that they may not but if they do open up then would she mind listening. My children felt so much better afterwards and they it was great for information as well they just went from strength to strength after that.

– Resident



Service demographics

All women and children accessing the service experienced varying levels of trauma. Beryl Women Inc. understands that trauma is debilitating, has serious consequences and affects the way in which women think, act and feel. We also know that trauma has an impact on how women parent and how children behave. This presents many complex challenges for women and children, and for staff supporting these families.

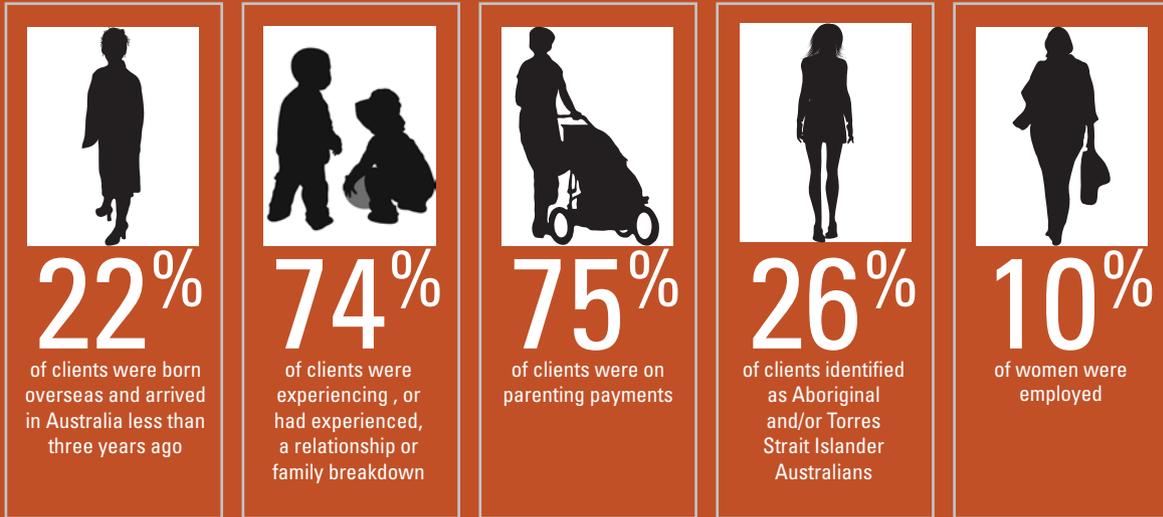
This financial year, the service supported 40 women with 83 children—a total of 123 clients were provided with crisis accommodation and transitional support as a result of escaping domestic violence. Of the 40 women and 83 children, 28 women and 51 children were accommodated in crisis and transitional accommodation. Nineteen women accessing the service came to the ACT from interstate, seeking safety and security.

We have provided outreach support to 12 women and 37 children. Outreach support is provided to women who are in crisis as a result of domestic violence, but who have not received accommodation in this financial year. Many were clients of the service from the previous year.

Eighteen women were referred to other services as they did not meet the criteria to access Beryl's services.



Women are at least
three times more likely
than men to experience
violence from an
intimate partner.



interesting facts

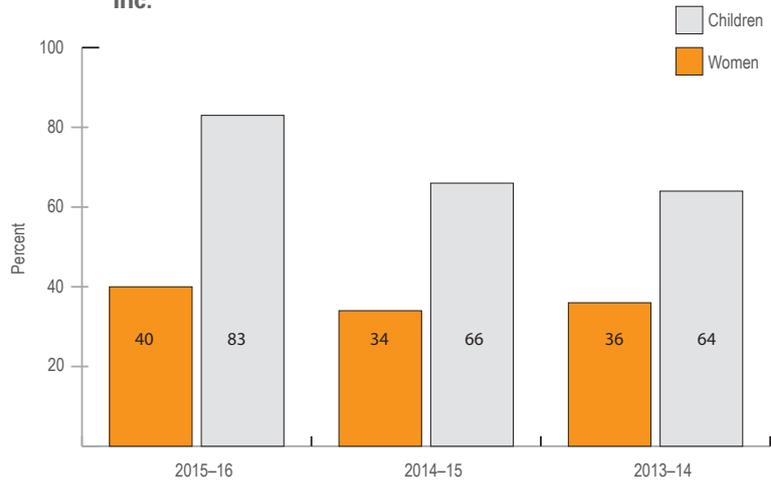
All clients accessing the service stated that domestic violence was the main reason they were seeking support. However, a number of other reasons compounded their experience of domestic violence:

- 75% of clients were on parenting payments
- 74% of clients were experiencing , or had experienced, a relationship or family breakdown
- 34% of clients reported mental health issues—a combination of theirs and the perpetrator of violence
- 26% of clients identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Australians
- 23.5% of clients stated that they had a lack of family and or community support
- 22% of clients were born overseas and arrived in Australia less than three years ago
- 22% of clients stated they were experiencing a housing crisis
- 13.8% of clients stated they were experiencing financial difficulties
- 10% of women were employed
- 7.5 women were on no income
- 7.5% of women were on Newstart payments
- 2.5% of women was receiving Disability payments
- 0.25% (10 women) required interpreting services whilst accessing the service.

Breakdown of women and children

With 40 women with 83 accompanying children as our total number of service users this past year, children still make up the largest percentage of clients accessing the service.

Figure 1. The number of women and children accessing Beryl Women Inc.

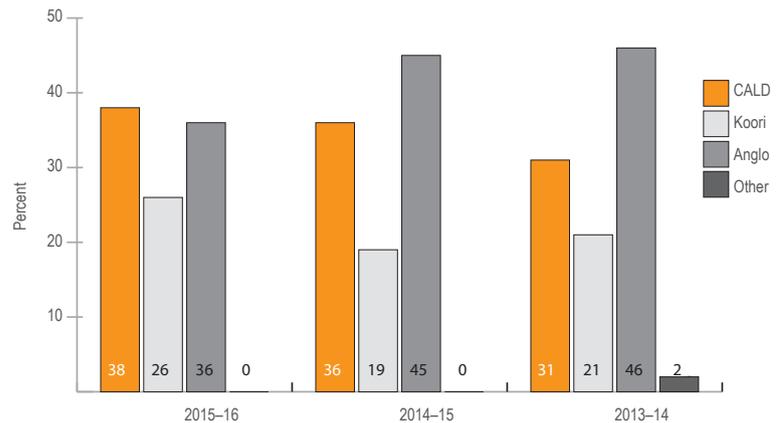


Cultural breakdown

Over this financial year, there has been an increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds accessing the service.

- 38% client from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- 36% Anglo clients
- 26% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients

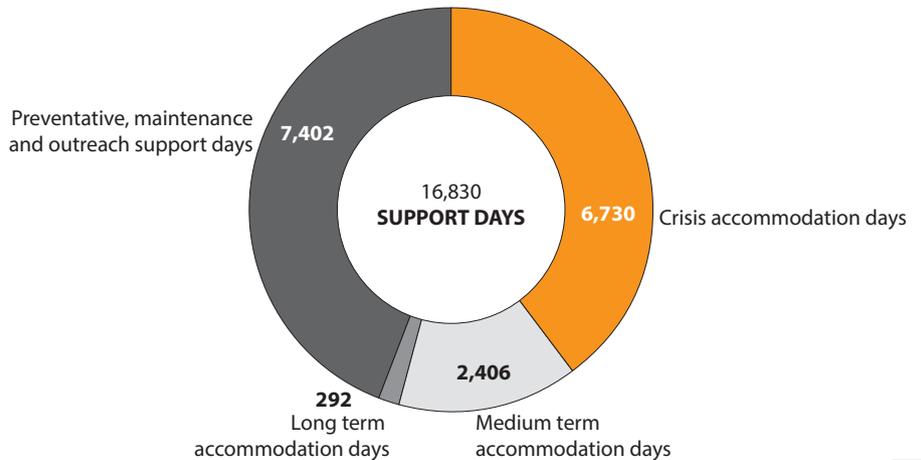
Figure 2. Cultural breakdown of clients accessing support



Support days

Beryl provided 16,830 days of support. This is an increase of 1,592 from the last year, which also includes preventive maintenance and outreach support. Preventive maintenance and outreach support is provided to women who recently exited the service as well as women in the community.

Figure 3. The number of support days provided to each client.



Myth: If the victim didn't like it, she would leave.

Truth: There are many reasons why a woman may not leave, including fear for herself or her children. Often women face significant practical barriers to separating from their partners, including a lack of money and housing options. Due to the effects of the abuse, many women lack confidence in their own abilities and accurate information about their options. Not leaving does not mean that the situation is okay or that the victim wants to be abused. The most dangerous time for a woman who is being abused is when she tries to leave.



ACT Community Services for Women statement of Apology and Reconciliation

To all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, your families and communities.

We, non-Indigenous people of this land, apologise for the human suffering and injustice that you have experienced as a result of colonisation and generations of discrimination and marginalisation that has resulted from that.

We recognise ourselves as the beneficiaries of this colonisation process and we share with you our feelings of shame and horror at the actions and atrocities that were perpetrated against your people.

We acknowledge that the removal of children devastated individuals, families and entire communities and that the intention of those policies was to assimilate Indigenous children. We recognise this as a policy of genocide.

We collectively feel a sense of outrage, and feel a particular sense of responsibility around these racist policies as their implementation required the active involvement of community welfare organisations. We unreservedly apologise to the individuals, families and communities for these acts of injustice.

We acknowledge your human right to self-determination.

We commit to working in solidarity with you in ways that you choose and determine.

We work with many people who are affected by disadvantage, prejudice, poverty, violence, marginalisation, trauma and social circumstances out of their control. We understand the long-term damage to communities when these issues are unaddressed.

We recognise your leadership, we honour your visions and we join with you in your hopes for your future and for our futures together.





I found my case worker Linda was just from heaven for me, she taught me a lot – how to live, how to think and how to respond. All what I know was how to react. Linda (persevered) with me in a time I thought she is going to say I had enough of you, but no, she was always there for me and all the workers were wonderful with me when Linda was not here and they did amazing job with me. I am very grateful to Beryl, thank you very much for being a family for me.

– Resident



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