

Australia's longest running women's refuge



**beryl**  
**women inc.**

Annual Report  
2 0 1 8 — 1 9

The logo for Beryl Women Inc. features a stylized sun with rays above a female symbol (a vertical line with a crossbar and a circle). Below this is a wavy orange line representing a horizon. The word "beryl" is written in a white, lowercase, serif font on a dark orange background, and "women inc." is in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font below it. The text "Annual Report" and "2 0 1 8 — 1 9" is positioned at the bottom of the logo block.

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

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9am–5pm Monday to Friday

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Supported 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

Beryl Women Inc. is committed to providing high quality support and safe accommodation to women and children escaping domestic/family violence. The organisation recognises that violence against women and children is prevalent in our society and that injustices such as sexism, racism, economic inequality and homophobia contribute to families living in crisis. To redress this, Beryl Women Inc. will provide a professional and accountable service that is based in social justice, recognising and fostering cultural diversity.

## 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.

## Strategic Plan goals 2016–19

- To be a sustainable organisation that provides high quality domestic violence-specific services to women and children through developing partnerships and collaborate with other community services and government agencies in order to be part of an holistic response to women and children escaping domestic violence
- Strongly identifying as, and holding a profile in the ACT community as a feminist organisation offering high quality services
- Strongly identifying as, and holding a profile 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)
- Being an organisation that encourages a learning culture and is innovative in its response to support women and children escaping domestic violence.



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 \$4000 from the Department of the Capital Territory. Volunteers, who ran a 24-hour roster, seven days a week, staffed the first refuge. In 1976 the service moved to a duplex in Kingston and sometime later funding was received for employment of 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 \$4000 grant received from the government, was the sole means of supporting the cost of running the service. In 2005 the service changed its name again 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 on an Israeli kibbutz from 1960 to 1964 before coming to Australia. She returned to Israel in the late 1970s and died there in her 94th year. She will always be celebrated for her dedication and commitment to the cause of equality. Beryl Women Inc. is proud to carry Beryl Henderson's name as a daily reminder that those wonderful 'big sisters' who came before us made possible the services we have today.



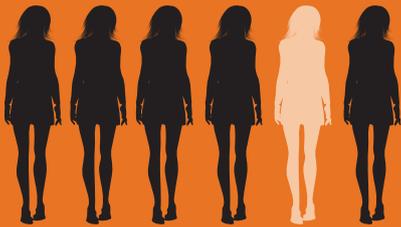


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**1 in 6 women**  
have experienced physical  
or sexual violence  
by a current or previous  
partner since the age of 15

(Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia:  
continuing the national story 2019 – AIHW)

# Report from the Chairperson

As Australia's longest running refuge, Beryl Women Inc is often associated with the accommodation the organisation provides to women and children escaping domestic and family violence. However, as a specialised domestic violence service, the support we provide is so much more than just shelter. Our dedicated casework, programs and outreach activity are all vital in empowering women and children to live free of violence and abuse and are key to the holistic support provided through our service. This really came into focus during our Strategic Planning Day in March 2019, where the board and staff team came together to develop our new strategic plan for 2020-2022. Our discussions on the day also highlighted the important role we play in creating broader social change through education and advocacy, providing an important voice to affect the social and systemic changes needed to improve the lives of women and children.

The 2018-19 financial year has had a strong focus on ensuring Beryl remains accountable, well governed and evidence based so we can continue to deliver our high-quality services. We were grateful to have confirmation from the ACT Government that our service funding agreement would be extended, providing certainty for the next two years and continuing our valued partnership. Other key actions have included transitioning board documentation onto a new IT platform, rotating auditors and making the decision to transition to Xero cloud-based accounting. I would like to extend a heartfelt thank

you to Mirtha, Beryl's long-time bookkeeper, for her assistance in the transition to new bookkeeping arrangements and to acknowledge her outstanding contribution to the organisation over many decades.

Since its establishment in 1975, Beryl Women Inc has been a proudly feminist organisation. Originally operating as a collective, the organisation's 44-year history has fostered a tradition of lively discussion and debate on a range of issues including the nature of feminism and its relationships with other social movements. One of the things that I have most appreciated in my role as Chair has been the opportunity to explore ideas around what feminism should look like in action and unpacking what the word 'feminist' means to different women. With its strong organisational commitment to working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse women and children, Beryl has an important role to play in leading these discussions in our community. In September 2018, we hosted our first NAIDOC: Continuing the Conversation public event on the theme *Because of Her, We Can!* The panel discussion received fantastic feedback and we are delighted that this will now become an annual event.

The other major development worth highlighting in my report is the significant board recruitment process that we ran in the past year. We were fortunate to have an excellent response rate and the opportunity to meet with a significant number of

impressive Canberra women. We are delighted to have welcomed our new members, who bring valued skills, enthusiasm and fresh perspectives that will help us write the next chapter of the Beryl story.

The year ahead is another one full of both challenges and opportunities as we build on what has been achieved. I would like to pay tribute to Robyn and the wonderful staff team for their dedication and commitment to their important work—they are highly skilled women making a difference every day. I would also like to thank our generous donors and supporters in the community, who believe in what we do and invest in our work. Unfortunately, the statistics show that the scourge of domestic violence continues to be one of Australia's most pressing issues, meaning that Beryl Women Inc remains as vital in 2019 as it was when it first opened. We remain determined to change this reality.

**Barbara Klompenhouwer**

Chair – Beryl Women Inc.



Indigenous adults are 32 times as likely to be hospitalised  
for family violence as non-Indigenous adults.

Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story 2019 – AIHW



# Report from the Manager

## Staff and Governance Board

Domestic and family violence is one of the leading causes of homelessness, (AIHW – Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story 2019) and does not discriminate. The home is supposed to be our safe place, unfortunately for a lot of women and children across the country, it's a battlefield. It costs the Australian Government billions of dollars each year. We know that it is the leading cause of injury to women; we also know that one woman is murdered weekly. (AIHW Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story)

Sadly, Beryl Women Inc. has not experienced a decrease in the number of referrals, admissions and clients seeking outreach support from our services. In fact, we have noticed, since the updates to the Family Violence Act, more women are aware of the broader definitions of violence, and are seeking our support for more than only physical assault.

This year, I celebrated working at Beryl for 19 years. During this time, I have seen many changes within the organisation. When I started working at Beryl, we were a collective. I am very comfortable in this style of management and continue to practice this whenever possible, as it is a form of management that builds on skills and supports ongoing staff

development. I believe it builds trust and loyalty with your team, which is evident when we look at the number of years that staff continue working at the service—myself being here for 19 years, another staff member being associated with the organisation for approximately 20 years in various roles and another employed for 12 years.

19 years ago, the service had a staff team of nine. Four of those positions were filled by Aboriginal women and another four filled by women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds, a true reflection of Beryl's commitment to diversity and reconciliation. Over the past 19 years, we have received several funding cuts resulting in staff positions being made redundant in order to remain viable. These cuts have also forced the service to change the way in which we work with women and children.

Beryl employs six permanent staff that work across several sites, with our office on-site with our shared client accommodation. The team is diverse, bringing a range of skills, qualifications and experience to the organisation. This ensures different perspectives and a dynamic work environment, culminating in a commitment to service delivery, supporting our clients and striving to provide the best services within our resources.

We have experienced some challenges over the past 12 months in relation to staffing, with our long-term Administration Officer Jen Dunkley stepping down after being with the service for seven years. We undertook several recruitment processes in order to fill this position. We also advertised to fill a vacant identified Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Specialist Domestic Violence Support worker and created a new position, Women's and Children's Specialist Domestic Violence Worker, as a result of additional funding received from the 2018/19 ACT budget. This position will be a cross-over of working with both women and children clients within a trauma aware/informed framework.

The service has a strong identity and profile in the ACT community as a service that is welcoming, accessible to and appropriately supportive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children and women and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. It's the very thing that has kept me working here for as long as I have, it's been a real privilege, the women and children that have accessed the service during that time have shown such strength, resilience and courage.

All of our programs continue to grow, with an increase in the number of clients receiving outreach support. This includes women who have not been accommodated within the service but are requiring support in relation to their experiences of domestic and family violence.

I would like to thank the Beryl Women Inc. Board Members, staff, clients, stakeholders and community leaders for their support over the past year.

### **Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DVPC) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reference Group**

As a member of the Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DVPC), my position on the Council is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community representative - one member representing the whole of the ACT community. This is not possible, as I can't speak on behalf of the whole ACT Aboriginal community, so I secured the support of the DVPC to create an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Working Group. Terms of Reference have been established and a draft working plan has also been developed, which includes having the following reports acknowledged by the ACT Government:

- The *We Don't Shoot Our Wounded* Report
- The Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Community Forum Domestic and Family Violence Report *Change Our Future - Share What You Know*

The purpose of the Working Group is to provide opportunities for working with communities to develop and implement responses aimed at addressing domestic and family violence that is driven by the community and encompasses the principles of self-determination. This will include having solution focused outcomes driven by the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities.

The Working Group is directly accountable to the DVPC. Its main role will be to support the DVPC through the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Community Representative and provide coordinated views and advice to the Council about opportunities and approaches specific to the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities.



**Intimate partner violence is the greatest health risk factor (greater than smoking, alcohol and obesity) for women in their reproductive years.**

2011 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Burden of Disease Study (Ayre et al. 2016; Webster, 2016)

The Coordinator General for Family Safety has met with the Reference Group to discuss the draft for the Joint Ministerial statement in response the *We Don't Shoot Our Wounded report and Change our Future - Share What You Know* report from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Forum on Domestic and Family Violence.

The first step is the Ministerial Statement that Ministers Berry and Stephen-Smith will deliver in the Assembly. This is an important first step because it is an opportunity for the Government to acknowledge and apologise for its failure to respond and establish a new commitment. This Statement would commit to developing a more detailed action plan to respond to the recommendations.

The Coordinator General for Family Safety has also committed resources to support the Reference Group in progressing the Recommendations from both reports.

### Our Booris Our Way review

We are 18 months through a two-year review of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system, with a focus on trying to prevent them coming into care, improving their experiences if they are in care and increasing the pathways to restoration. Since the interim report in August 2018, we have completed our public consultations process and have continued to meet with families to listen about their experiences with or within the child protection system. The Review opened the Public Submissions process on 2 October 2018. This process was open for three months and several submissions were received from various community organisations as well as individual members of the community.

A number of recommendations have been made around the ability for kinship carers to be able to access support and for children to be placed quickly with kin and to speed up the kinship carer process. We also held a kinship carer forum with community, with Beryl providing childcare for children attending the forum.

The Steering Committee has begun to structure the Final Report, due to the Minister in December 2019. The Review has been extended from September 2019 to December 2019, so the Reviewers can collect some comparative data. This will help to understand if our recommendations are supporting change.

A third set of recommendations are currently being developed by the Steering Committee. They will cover more issues identified in Priority Areas with a focus on practice issues.

All Steering Committee recommendations are publicly available from <https://www.strongfamilies.act.gov.au/our-booris,-our-way>



Between March 2013 and June 2016, the Australian Federal Police received **116 case referrals for forced marriage involving young females**

(Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: Continuing the national story 2019 – AIHW)



Extract from  
**ACTCOSS**  
WINTER EDITION  
newsletter

Winter edition on Cultural Competency:  
Working together with Aboriginal &/or Torres Strait  
Islander Peoples and Communities.  
Full newsletter: <https://www.actcoss.org.au/sites/default/files/public/publications/actcoss-journal-issue-88.pdf>

**B**eryl has long supported reconciliation although we have never had a Reconciliation Action Plan, we believe our practices across all areas of the service demonstrate that in practical ways. The service works through a cultural lens as we believe that if it meets the needs of Aboriginal women/staff it will meet the needs of everyone within the service regardless of whether it relates to staff or clients.

This reconciliation is embedded in our practice on a daily basis in relation to staff, service provision and within the community sector.

Mentoring and coaching Aboriginal staff is a priority within the organisation, when recruiting for vacant positions, particularly identified positions, it's not always possible to recruit a woman who has all the requirements for the position and that's OK as we will make the decision to employ with the knowledge that "we are going to put the time in" to training, mentoring and coaching women over a longer period of time to ensure that she has the skills needed to do the job required.

Our Board of Directors also reflects the make-up of staff and clients and are very supportive and active in ensuring that cultural diversity filters from the top down to all levels of the organisation.

The service has a clear understanding of commitments and obligations around Sorry Business, this can be in relation to family or Community obligations and flexibility around leave requests is practiced, as we know our community/family members are dying at least 17 years younger than non-Indigenous people, having flexible leave arrangements in place allows Aboriginal staff to attend Sorry Business when required with the knowledge their jobs are safe.

The service has developed an environment of learning and passing on knowledge, this has not been a planned process but has evolved over time, the service respects diversity/differences and commonalities within all cultures, its empowering to share cultural information with other staff and clients.

**Robin Martin**



### Because of her we can – Continuing the conversation

In September 2018, we held our first NAIDOC community event based on the theme “Because of Her, We Can – Continuing the Conversation. The event commenced with a snippet of Stan Grant’s “Australian Dream” speech, followed by a panel discussion facilitated by Louise Taylor, who had recently been named the ACT’s first Aboriginal judicial officer and the newest Magistrate in the ACT Magistrates Court. It was a great honour to have her participate in our event along with other prominent Aboriginal women who are making great strides in Canberra including Shelly Cable from Price Waterhouse Cooper; Katrina Fanning of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and Beryl Women Inc. Manager Robyn Martin.

The event was aimed at recognising and celebrating the achievements of Aboriginal women, as well as

- increasing awareness and educating the broader ACT community of human rights issues faced by Aboriginal women
- raising the profile of Beryl Women Inc.
- delivering a forum that engages with the community to openly discuss and potentially co-design initiatives that will contribute to upholding Aboriginal women’s human rights.

The event was an intimate gathering of invited guests only and facilitated a two-way conversation between the panel members and members of the audience. The event was a great success and as a result it was decided to host a Continuing the Conversation forum each year after NAIDOC Week.

### Robyn Martin

Manager – Beryl Women Inc.



I suffered a breakdown recently and was unable to get out of my depression. Thanks to one of the staff members at Beryl, I was given the tools to help myself understand my sorrow. Beryl has been my rock since I arrived here in 2014, I cannot put into words how much Beryl has helped me improve my self -worth.

Anonymous client

# Service management

## Property management

Beryl manages seven properties across Canberra that accommodate nine families at any given time. Two of these properties accommodate two families at a site that also houses our office accommodation. The other five properties also accommodate boys over the age of 12 up to 18 years old.

Our properties are old and require maintenance on a regular basis, mostly based on normal wear and tear and given the numbers of families that have been accommodated in them over the years. We are reporting maintenance on a weekly basis, and due to the nature of the service staff are on site when tradesmen are attending. Property management is therefore time consuming and takes staff away from doing direct client support, an issue that will be looked at further in the following year in terms of financial capacity to fill a part time position to take on the majority of property management within the service.

## Training

Training is valued at Beryl, and all staff are required to identify relevant training throughout the year. A training plan is developed that also takes into account the overall training needs of all staff and funding availability, ensuring staff are provided with opportunities to attend training as well as other professional development activities. Training attended in 2018/19 included:

- Forced Marriage Forum: ACT Legal Aid
- Migration Matters: ACT Legal Aid
- David Hunter Memorial lecture: Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander in Out of home care: ANTaR ACT
- Children and trauma training: Justice Connect
- Trauma training: Centre for Community Welfare
- Legal Aid Family Reports and Conferences: ACT Legal Aid
- Privacy Law training: Justice Connect



On average one woman a week  
is killed by her intimate partner

ANROWS



I feel my needs  
were met and listened to

Anonymous client

- Volunteers and the Law: Justice Connect
- Resilience Workshop: The Hope Project
- An Introduction to Diversity Mentoring (Indigenous) Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Leadership Centre
- Child Centred Approaches to Family Violence Conference: Centre for Community Welfare
- The Heart & Practice of Child Centred Play Therapy: Play Therapy Australia
- Tuning into Kids: Melbourne University Centre for Community Welfare
- Tuning into Teens: Melbourne University Centre for Community Welfare
- Trauma Informed Practice: Understanding the Implications of Family Violence for Children: Australian Childhood Foundation
- Specialist Homelessness Collection: ACT Government
- Australian Services Union Forum
- Therapeutic and Forensic Interviewing of Children: Family Law Pathways Network
- Living Mindfully: Quest for Life Foundation
- Accessing Board Performance webinar: Institute of Community Directors

### Collaborative working relationships in the community

Beryl continues to work collaboratively with community stakeholders to increase access to specialist services that are appropriate for women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence. We do this by participating in local forums, committees, Ministerial councils and steering groups to increase awareness of clients' needs and issues and to raise and discuss barriers/gaps on a broader level within the sector. These include:

- Our Booris Our Way Steering Committee: ACT Government
- Joint Pathways: ACT Community Sector and ACT Government
- 4th National Action Plan x 2 workshops: ACT Government
- Review of Xmas Crisis Accommodation Program: ACT Government
- Domestic Violence Prevention Council Community Member (DVPC)
- Focus Group: Community Services Industry
- Consultation: Inquiry into Workplace Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: Indigenous Women in the Workforce
- Service Delivery Round-table: Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Elected Body
- DV Xmas Program planning meeting: ACT Government
- Reclaim the Night event: Canberra Rape Crisis Centre
- Women's Prevention against violence awards: ACT Government
- NAIDOC Week: Flag Raising at Legislative Assembly: ACT Government
- Meeting with the Honourable Linda Burney: Labor MP
- Wipi Yani U Thangani Women's Voices Securing our Rights Securing our Future: June Oscar AO Social Justice Commissioner

- Jasiri launch
- Common Risk Assessment consultation
- ACT Women's award: ACT Government
- Multi-Disciplinary Panel (Housing ACT) member
- Case conferences re Restoration Plans for children returning home (CYPS)
- IWD Breakfast at Northside Community Services
- Domestic Violence Prevention Council Review
- Consultation: Department of Social Services Infrastructure Review of DV funding
- National Day of Remembrance: Domestic Violence Crisis Service
- Funding new Programs: Justice and Community Safety Briefing
- Tender process: Justice and Community Safety
- Housing Support for People Leaving Detention Round-table: Justice and Community Safety
- Prison Review: Women's Centre Health Matters
- Parenting Our Way: Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Organisation
- Submission: Inquiry into Domestic & Family Violence
- She Leads In-Conversation with Magistrate Louse Taylor: YWCA
- Victims Charter consultation: Justice and Community Safety



Happy to have accommodation where  
myself and my daughter can feel safe  
and not have to move around every day

Anonymous client

#### Service visits to Beryl Women Inc.

- Louise Guilding: Executive Group Manager: Housing ACT
- Onelink Service: ACT Government
- Coordinator General Family Safety Hub: ACT Government
- Legal Aid DV Officer: Legal Aid
- Barbara Causon Our Booris Our Way: Chairperson of Review
- Official visitor for Homelessness
- CARE Financial Counselling Services



The total annual cost of violence against women and their children in Australia was estimated to be \$22 billion in 2015-16.

(2015-16 Specialist homelessness services collection (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2017))

### Media and advocacy

- Panel member at the Attorney General's Department event for the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children
- A talk for staff and students at Macgregor Primary School
- A presentation for staff at the Department of Treasury
- Two separate presentations to members of the Zonta Club of Canberra (evening & Breakfast)
- A presentation to members of the Canberra evening branch of the Country Women's Association
- Lions Club presentation.

### Grants

Beryl Women Inc. would like to acknowledge and thank the providers of the grants listed below. Without this financial support, Beryl Women Inc. would not have been able to provide the wrap around service to our clients that the funding supported. All grants have had a positive impact on clients and for this, thank you.

- Commonwealth Bank: Community Grants Funding
- Commonwealth Bank Canberra City
- Snow Foundation: individual grants to women.

## Client services

### Case management practices

Beryl works with women using a feminist approach which is woman centred. It ensures that women and their needs and wants are at the centre of the service, recognising the uniqueness of every individual within her social situation. For this reason, a feminist approach is highly compatible with an empowerment model, which is generally advocated as the most appropriate orientation for counselling practice with women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence.

Beryl staff have developed skills and expertise in responding to domestic violence and continue to focus service delivery in providing support, advocacy, case management and safe housing to women and their children who have been impacted by domestic violence.



Beryl was absolutely amazing and effective in regards to helping my child get into the high school.

Anonymous client

The work of support staff at Beryl focuses on advocating on behalf of clients to have their support needs met, particularly when being confronted by systemic barriers, as well as supporting more of the practical needs of women and children. We also focus on the women's and children's experiences of domestic and family violence and spend many hours discussing the complexities of their experiences, in the hope of "planting seeds" and raising awareness. Our groups cover the types of domestic and family violence as well as the cycle of violence to the effects of domestic violence and family violence.

We have had several clients who came to Beryl with pre-existing complex medical/health issues such as heart disease and diabetes, which have been life threatening. Two of these women were Aboriginal and as we know Aboriginal people's life expectancy is 17 years less than the life expectancy of non-Aboriginal women.

One of these women had complex mental health issues due to her trauma of living with domestic violence for over 20 years. She also had an addiction to prescription drugs, which made living in shared accommodation challenging for both women and staff.

In another case, another woman came to Beryl and within a week of entering the service had a major medical episode which required her to be hospitalised. She had major surgery that night and was transported to another hospital to acquire ongoing specialist

treatment which resulted in a six-week hospital stay to receive intravenous antibiotics.

This meant case management was outside our usual scope, and we provided her with outreach support, washed her clothes, took in activities for her to do and filled in her housing paperwork. The woman has made a full recovery and is now managing her health holistically, her health did improve while residing with Beryl and has continued to improve due to genuine life changes due to her near-death experience.

Clients have had difficulties managing their conditions, as their focus has been on the impacts of domestic violence they experienced. Staff have focused on providing support around managing medical appointments, and care for children when mum has been hospitalised for short stays.

We have also had clients who have limited living skills, including parenting their children. These issues have taken up the majority of staff hours and has included the whole team at times to deal with issues around hoarding and squalor, which has had an impact on wear and tear of the properties. Staff have supported these clients in a physical capacity in doing the work with the client and with conversations happening at the same time around positive parenting, setting boundaries with children, giving women strategies to help them deal with children's behaviours, and assisting with developing routines that will assist in creating healthier routines.



Everything was really good – sometimes the  
no man rule really hard, but I understand.

Anonymous client

Support provided to women has been varied over the past 12 months and include:

- Child development assessments: Child At Risk Health Unit and Early childhood Early Intervention Service
- Legal issues: Family court issues
- Case conferencing with Child Youth Protection Services
- Victims Support Services Counselling
- Canberra Rape Crisis Centre
- Domestic Violence Crisis Service
- Emergency Childcare
- Public housing applications, including applications for priority housing
- Safety planning
- Engagement with local schools
- Child clients accessing Bella Inksh Art therapy
- Quest for Life: Five day PTSD program
- Magistrates Court: DVO support
- Centrelink regarding income
- Victims of Crime
- Health issues including dental support
- Immigration issues
- English classes
- My Coaching My Future Women's Coaching program
- Office for Women's Return to Work grants
- Maternal And Child Health support
- Outward Bound Australia



Two babies were born during this reporting period. The majority of clients have had ongoing contact with CYPS, with three children restored to mother's care.

### Systemic barriers/gaps

Clients are presenting with more complex issues, especially those where immigration processes are underway. The complexity of issues has been challenging for the staff team, and the level of resourcing to the service makes it difficult to provide the more intensive support required.

### Women's Group

Women's groups allow an opportunity to work with clients as a group in areas that may not form part of their core case management. Women's groups have included:

- Women's Centre for Health Matters
- My Coaching My Future
- Harmony Day lunch and discussion on Harmony Day
- Care Inc.
- Return to Work Grants: Office of Women
- Women's Health
- Mother's Day morning tea
- Self esteem
- Self -work
- Cycle of violence
- Chart of coercion
- Why did you stay?
- Parenting after DV



I have learnt that anyone can go through DV, that it's not my fault, things happen and no one should do nasty things. DV is one toxic cord, it keeps looping to the good times but it's easy to be brainwashed as they start to sweet talk you till you give in"

Feedback from client attending Women's Group

### Support to children

Shortly after entering the service, our Child Support Workers do assessments with mothers on the needs of their children and their experiences in relation to domestic and family violence. These assessments cover health needs, as well as developmental needs. After this process is completed, they then speak to the child to undertake a further assessment based on the child's experience which in many cases is different to what Mum believes has happened or what the child is feeling about themselves and why they had to leave home. This then forms the basis of an individual support plan provided to the child/ren.

The child and youth program provided support in a number of key areas such as individual case management and case planning for kids and youth, parenting support, educational support and advocacy, and therapeutic interventions such as our new ART Therapy program.

### Individualised support

This support enables children and young people to feel welcome, safe and supported at a time they are experiencing high levels of distress, mental health difficulties and grief and loss. This support is significant to trauma informed practice and enables strong relationship building, friendships, increased self-esteem and improvements in education and relationships.

### Parenting

Parenting in the early years is seriously impacted by domestic violence and Beryl ensures that younger children are seen and heard and their relationships with their caregivers are supported for their recovery and healing. Parents are offered ongoing parenting support, group work and links to community providers to increase their skills and access information to improve their understanding of children's needs and addressing the impacts of trauma on their children.



1 in 4 women have experienced emotional abuse by a current or previous partner since the age of 15

(Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia:

Continuing the national story 2019 – AIHW)

### Perspective

Child Workers play an important role in identifying the needs of children from a trauma perspective. Workers undertake ongoing training in trauma specific support and ensure cultural competency by undertaking training with specialist organisations such as SNAICC (Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care). This enables workers from a non-Aboriginal background to practice reflectively and sensitively when supporting Aboriginal families that experience trans-generational trauma due to past family history, racism and disadvantage and contact with the Child Protection system.

### Educational support

Domestic violence and homelessness impacts children and young people in their capacity to learn and education supports assist children and young people to re-engage in education and learning once safety and stability are addressed. Beryl assisted with school safety planning, transport support to and from school when needed, advocacy with teachers about young people's needs, attending school meetings and case conferences and sourcing educational supplies, school uniforms and camp fees.

## Art Therapy

We were able to provide child clients access for the last six months of the financial year to continue attending an art therapy program. The program provides an opportunity for children and youth to express their experiences in an emotionally safe and sensitive way. It is facilitated by Beryl child workers and led by a specialist Art Therapy practitioner. The program is based on the principles of trauma informed practice and is another way that children can engage with the service in a therapeutic and healing relationship.

Feedback from Mum whose child attended:

*"My child attended The fortnightly art Therapy classes with Beryl, it was The most helpful at The Time as it helped child deal with a death in The family and she was able To vent and get Through her sorrow Through art. She also made some very good friends in The process."*



The staff and workers at Beryl  
are very kind and caring

Feedback from the kids at Beryl.



## Wombarra Kids Camp October 2018

### Therapeutic Children's Camp

#### DAY 1

We were in a position to take several children to Wombarra to participate in a therapeutic children's camp. Beryl's child support team and several children aged from six to twelve years set off for a four-day adventure to Wombarra. Wombarra means Black Duck in the traditional language and is a totem for the traditional owners of the land the Dharawal people.

We left in the 12-seater bus from Hertz with our Beryl trailer packed full. This would be our makeshift home base for the following four-day period. The children were showing anticipation, nervousness and excitability in setting out far away from their homes, mothers and siblings. All the children were familiar with one another as they had all been participants in the Art Therapy Group and school holiday group over the past few months.

After a few "side of the road" stop breaks to adjust our tarp and a few loud honks from trucks passing by and waving to the kids and staff, we eventually arrived at Shellharbour Beach for a stroll in the water and a needed stretch, jump around and lunch break. About two hours later, we set off all keen to get to camp with a stop to get our dinner for camp and a Flashmob dance off in the Shellharbour Woolies carpark. "Stylin".

We finally arrived at our destination after some winding coastal vistas along the coast road through Coledale and up a very steep road and past the smallest train stop, Wombarra Station.

We met our host and Therapist/Horse Whisperer "Sam", the owner of Heal Psychology, at the gate and her horse offsider and outdoor adventure expert, Rebecca who both helped us with the setup of tents and unpacking of the camp gear so we could eat and sleep comfortably for the night. We also had the help of Billy our fire chief to

set the camp fire for the night who one boy particularly connected with.

After some chicken and salad dinner and phone calls home to mums we all settled in for our first sleep at Camp. We had two tents with a staff member in each tent and younger children in one tent and older children in the other so that the younger children could have some early nights and the older children could feel free to share conversation and connect.

During the night a few children needed extra emotional support in settling as some felt some big feelings, sadness and anxieties came up relating to their family and concerns they were struggling with. Some private time talking and sitting at the camp fire with staff helped kids to process these feelings and thoughts.

For some children it was an emotionally difficult adjustment to be without the usual comforts that create a sense of control and security in their lives such as IT gadgets, TV and home comforts. Reactions such as anxiety, boredom, hostility, confusion regarding camping and having to be responsible for belongings and be active in helping around camp was challenging for some to process.

Around the morning camp fire over breakfast of bacon egg rolls and muffins, discussion was had about the day ahead and input from the children was encouraged so they had a sense of power and responsibility for time management and planning. Self-care tasks were encouraged for independence and group tasks were created to build group connection, stability and cooperation.

## Wombarra Kids Camp October 2018

### Therapeutic Children's Camp

#### DAY 2

The focus for Day 2 was to experience therapeutic work with the horses which the children were keen to do. An initial Group activity of creating an obstacle course for the horses was provided so Sam could assess the group dynamics and get to know children's character, strengths and weaknesses. Throughout the rest of the day children would have an individual session with the horses and Sam, while games and activities such as a beach visit were provided at Camp. Lunch consisted of beachside sausage sizzle and a lot of water and waves play. All of the children really enjoyed being able to breathe out and be active together in the outdoors as they got to know each other better and build trust with one another.

After a relaxing afternoon back at Camp playing games, dinner was a group activity with the boys encouraged to pitch in. We discovered some natural chefs that had not had an opportunity to show their skills at home but were interested to participate and learn some burger skills. The kids enjoyed their home-made cheese burgers, and games of charades after dinner which had everyone connecting, with the younger children very talented at guessing the movie or game. The children were starting to build confidence in being away from families with many of the children not feeling a need to call mums and starting to feel safe to rely on staff and each other for moral support. All the children were keen to stay up late and chat and laugh together. The younger children were starting to come out of their shells but still apprehensive and needing more emotional support from staff at bedtime than the older children.



## Wombarra Kids Camp October 2018

### Therapeutic Children's Camp

#### DAY 3

The group rose at 6am to the sound of magpies, kookaburras and wildlife. A blanket of cockatoos was wandering around our site with an early predawn visit from a Stag to the camp. This was our final full day at Camp and staff were also getting a sense of the behaviour challenges that each child experienced. Being in a very open environment with an unknown routine, rules and limits were a challenge for some and some children were struggling with their social skills and regulation in the unfamiliar setting. Dynamics between boys and anger management was a strong theme during camp with regular discussions around respect, expectations, limit setting and kindness needed. The boys were provided additional support as a group after a specific incident between 2 boys became physical.

A discussion about violence and bullying was had with the 3 boys and a worker away from the group in the bush setting. After being fully heard individually and space for calming and self-regulation, all boys agreed to discuss further. Empathy was developed with the group through their sharing of stories of violence and bullying they had each identifying that they are not defined by violent men but that they are free to choose what type of man they want to be by learning self-control and management of their anger was strongly expressed and focused upon in the discussion. Discussion about repair of relationships with yourself and others was also encouraged that we are all learning and making mistakes, which is part of learning to be better people.

The concern for the impact on the group was high. It was important that the other group members sensed a repair and reconnection after the incident to ensure a sense of safety for them also. The outcome was



positive with all boys relating on new ground with a sense of self responsibility for managing their anger (with the support of staff) for the duration of camp.

During breakfast over camp fire pancakes with bananas and strawberries, a group goal was set to have 100 please and thank you's by lunchtime rewarded with ice cream after dinner. This soon shifted the dynamic of the group and the kids all began to recognize the power in making positive behaviour choices. The goal was achieved! and pizza and ice-cream were enjoyed by all for our last evening at Camp.

The weather was quite hot and the final Day for individual sessions with the horses was had. A beach visit for the afternoon helped cool everyone off and the afternoon was spent at camp playing music, dancing and playing with Buddy the Dog who the kids named Neville. Neville stayed for day 3 and 4 nights as he got free sausages and never-ending ball games. Sam and his owner commented that he had never done this before with any other group.

## Wombarra Kids Camp October 2018

### Therapeutic Children's Camp

#### DAY 4



We awoke early again with the kids and staff a mixture of sad to leave such a lovely place and excited to get to Jamberoo. The morning was very hot and camp pack up after breakfast was slow and challenging for all with discussion about positive and negative thinking as some kids were convinced that we would not make it to Jamberoo at all while others pitched in and stayed positive.

A final Horse Group, naming of horses and collaborative activity was had early before leaving to provide completion to the therapeutic process which brought up some challenges for one child. After group it was noted the group were working together well as a team.

After a goodbye to all the animals and kind people we were off for some water adventure fun in Jamberoo, where many children supported each other to face fears and achieved personal physical challenges such as facing the wave pool and trying some big slides together as a team. Everyone wished they could stay all day! A great positive ending to our day 4 Camp.

A strong focus of the Camp was the opportunity for the children to have individual and group sessions with the horses and therapist. Two Group Sessions and two individual sessions were planned with all the children participating in both group and individual sessions.

The time with the horses assisted the children with managing stress, practising listening and feeling skills, identifying and managing their emotions (as you need to be very calm around horses) and allowed them the space to build confidence, and independence and self-reliance.

After a short consult with staff about the children's needs, they were picked up by Sam and taken down to the horses. At the end of their session Sam would return them to the camp group and have a short handover about the session with staff.

All the children were very positive about their experience with the horses and their time with Sam and they shared about some of the more personal issues they were dealing with.

### Cultural Learnings and Sharing

While on Camp ongoing discussion was had to educate the children on the Aboriginal lands we were staying on and visiting. Discussion about different cultures and beliefs was had as many of our children all come from a culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Travelling away from home encouraged the children to share stories of their own travels in their lives and the journeys they had been on.

### Outcomes

All seven children participated in activities and therapeutic intervention for the duration of the camp. Some children had taken on new milestones with many firsts, their first trip away from home, first camping, first pancakes, first trip to the ocean, first water park visit and slide visit.

The children all showed changes in their time away, for example in the second group activity the group worked together much better with positive communication, an understanding of others limits and strengths and were a stronger group by the end of camp.

We saw noticeable improvements in self-confidence and expression and ability to use strategies to calm and self-regulate. By the end of camp some children had created a personal toolkit with new tools that they could use when needing to self soothe, calm, regulate and manage their feelings.

### School Holiday Program

Beryl Women Inc. aims to provide supervised and educational school holiday activities that promote social inclusion and healthy lifestyle choices to all school age children and young people residing in Beryl accommodation and supported in an outreach capacity.

In the event that Beryl Women Inc. is unable to provide school holiday activities due to limited numbers or staff leave, the service will endeavour to provide support to families with links to services and programs in the community.

As well as providing a complete supervised program, families were provided with vouchers to attend the following activities:

- All children had access to free Swimming lessons
- Movies
- Zoo visits
- Questacon
- Tidbinbilla – Family Day
- Bush walk – Mt Ainslie



My daughter attended the kids camp with Beryl, she had an absolute wonderful time and after 4 days, she came back filled with more self confidence and energy than before she went. It was a huge learning curve for her as she was away from home for 4 days and was able to find her independence.

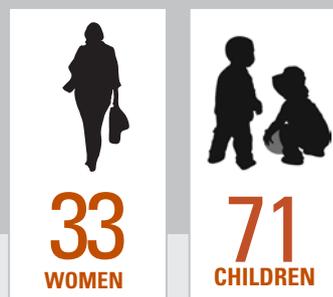
Feedback from a Mum whose child attended the camp

In 2017-18, 22% (26,500) clients seeking specialist homelessness services as a result of family or domestic violence were aged between 0-9

Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia: continuing the national story 2019 – AIHW

The number of women and children accessing Beryl in 2018/19

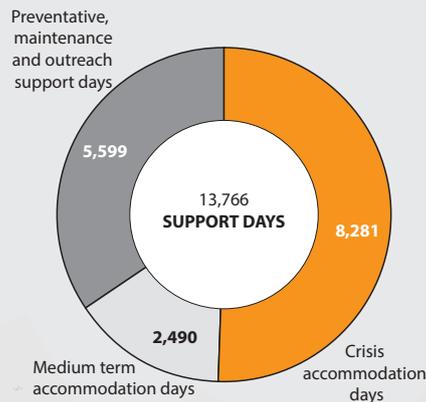
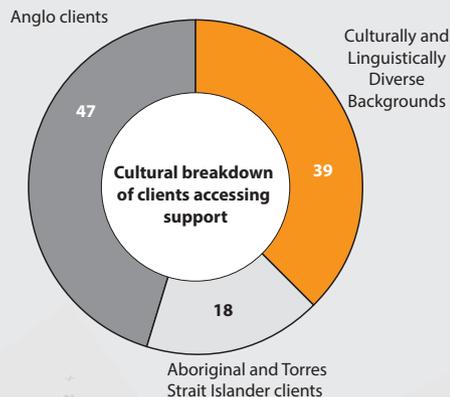
# Service demographics



During this financial year, Beryl Women Inc. supported 104 clients, but we had 107 support periods, three women without children had two support periods during this financial year. 107 supports periods is made up of 33 families and 71 children. This is a slight decrease in the number of clients accessing the service. Clients are staying for longer periods, with the average length of stay at 142 days. Four families stayed for over 300 days, the average length of supports periods being 257.1 days.

Beryl is funded as a crisis specialist domestic and family violence accommodation service, with crisis being three months of support. However, due to the lack of exit points for women and children, there is nowhere for them to go and we will not ask women to leave where it creates risks of further homelessness and gives women very few options apart from returning home to an unsafe environment placing themselves and their children at risk.

- 12 of 33 families were not accommodated in the service and were receiving outreach support
- 17 (16%) clients were born overseas and of these 17 clients, Seven (41%) had been in Australia for less than three years
- 37 (36%) clients were five years and under
- 20 (60%) women were aged between 25 and 35 years old
- 17 (47%) women had four or more accompanying children
- 28 (78%) women had accompanying children;
- Eight (22%) women had no accompanying children in their care.



# Donations and supporters

Beryl works with many individuals and organisations in the community to ensure we can effectively support women and children escaping domestic and family violence. Our partners provide financial donations and essential items for our families including nappies, sanitary items and household furnishings.

Ongoing workplace giving partners include:

- US Embassy
- Robson Environmental
- Hands Across Canberra
- Snow Foundation
- Myer Community Fund
- Share the Dignity
- Nappy Collective
- All Bids
- Eternity Church
- Canberra Quilters Inc.
- Country Women's Association Canberra – Varies branches
- House of Reps
- ACT Treasury
- Canberra Harriets
- Prime Minister and Cabinet
- ACT Blood Authority
- Good2Give
- AGD Women's Network
- Simply Giving Xmas Appeal
- McKellar Cottage Childcare
- Commonwealth Bank
- Fruit Tingles Women's Dance
- Lush cosmetics
- Rotary Burley Griffin



# Report from the Treasurer

In the past year, Beryl Women Inc. has begun a refresh of its financial strategy and management, which continues in 2019–20. Sound financial policies and procedures, combined with sustainable funding arrangements, are essential for Beryl to continue to provide high-quality support and safe accommodation to women and their children escaping domestic and family violence.

In 2018–19, we appointed new people and organisations to key financial management and strategy roles. Recognising that new perspectives can help organisations to strengthen their financial and risk management, we have rotated auditors by appointing Vincents Chartered Accountants. Mirtha Abello, Beryl's long-standing bookkeeper, worked with us throughout the financial year and supported a transition to a new locally based bookkeeper Amanda Knight for the 2019–20 Financial Year. Mirtha provided much-appreciated guidance and support to Beryl over the past 20 years, and on behalf of the board I would like to thank her for her dedicated service. Our Treasurer, Mariam Hafiz, has also finished with the organisation following the 2018–19 financial year. Mariam made a valuable contribution to Beryl, bringing a strong focus on identifying efficiencies.

Another key development in 2018–19 was receiving funding confirmation from the ACT Government for the next two years. We are grateful for our partnership with

the Community Services Directorate and look forward to continuing to work together. We will also work hard to further diversify Beryl's funding sources, enabling us to support more women and children and to broaden our resource base.

In 2019–20, I look forward to working with everyone in the Beryl team to strengthen the financial stewardship of the organisation. We will continue to manage our risks proactively and comply with all applicable laws and standards.

I am honoured to play a part enabling Beryl to provide a professional and accountable domestic violence service and create a society that is free of violence against women and children. I look forward to building on the momentum we have generated and creating an even stronger financial platform for Beryl to continue this essential work.

**Penny Jones**  
Treasurer – Beryl Women Inc.

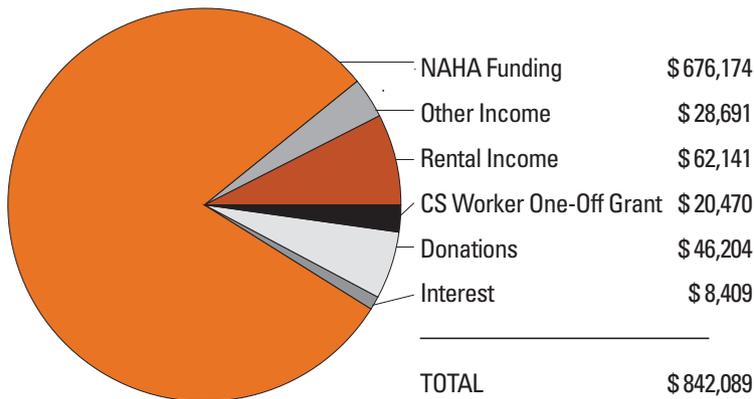
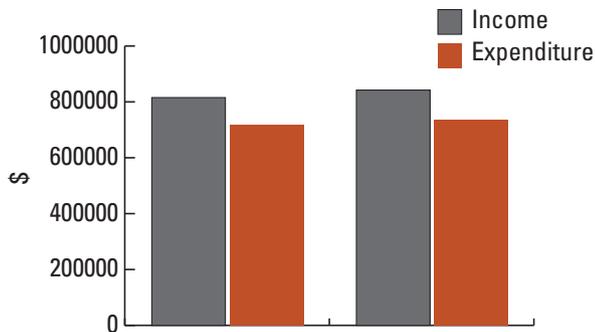


I commend Beryl for its dedication and commitment to improving the wellbeing of vulnerable women with accompanying children, escaping domestic and family violence. Beryl continues to provide high quality service delivery, extensive community representation, advocacy and proactive community education on domestic and family violence.

The case studies provided is evidence of Beryl's strong collaborative relationships with other services, and highlights how trauma is experienced differently throughout a person's various life stages. The complex multi-faceted challenges of mental illness and addiction is extremely challenging. I recognise the expertise from Beryl's team in implementing strategies to manage these situations and supporting each Service User's safety and wellbeing whilst showing compassion and understanding.

Snapshot of Feedback from Social Housing & Homelessness Services – ACT Government Community Services

### 2018-19 Revenue



# Acknowledgments and thank you

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.

Other partners we would like to acknowledge are Domestic Violence Crisis Service, Canberra Rape Crisis Centre, First Point Central Intake Service, Women's Services, Women's Centre for Health Matters, ACT Legal Aid, Women's Legal Centre, Street Law, Centrelink Social Workers and Community Contact Officer, Office for Women, Northside Community Services, Relationships Australia and the many other services that directly or indirectly supported Beryl Women Inc. during the past financial year. We hope to continue to work in collaboration with you all in the coming year.

We would also like to thank the many members of the community who reach out to provide items, donations or other support; there are several individual members of the community who donate through Workplace Giving and who regularly donate via Hands Across Canberra.

We thank them and celebrate their spirit of community, support and generosity.



I felt very welcome and there was toys provided.

Anonymous client



There is growing evidence  
that women with disabilities  
are more likely to  
experience violence

Our Watch

# ACT Community Services for Women statement of Apology and reconciliation

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

**W**e, 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.





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Beryl women Inc. is a specialist domestic and family violence service that provides crisis accommodation.