

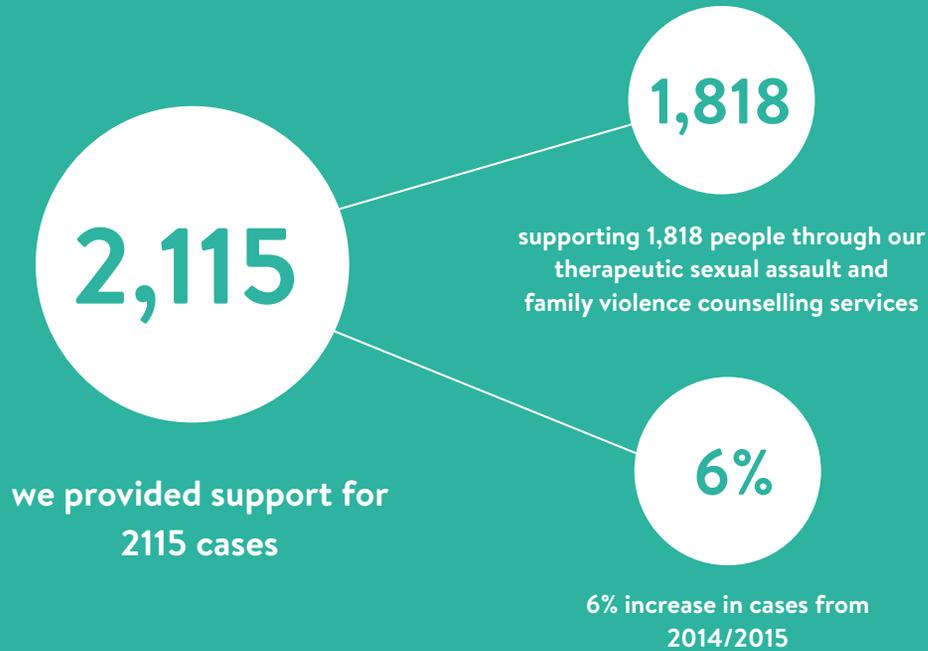
SHAPING THE  
*future*



BARWON CENTRE  
AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

# IN 2015 - 2016



37%

37% of cases related to past sexual assault that occurred more than 12 months ago

20%

20% of cases related to a recent sexual assault that occurred within the last 12 months

9%

9% of cases related to a recent disclosure of childhood sexual assault

8%

8% of cases related to the non-offending parent of a victim survivor of sexual assault

# REFERRALS

## SEXUAL ASSAULT MAIN REFERRALS:

421

SELF  
REFERRALS

303

COMMUNITY  
SERVICES

236

POLICE

135

FAMILY &  
FRIENDS

## FAMILY VIOLENCE MAIN REFERRALS:

261

COMMUNITY  
SERVICES

79

SELF  
REFERRALS

47

FAMILY &  
FRIENDS

## WE PROVIDED SUPPORT AT THE FOLLOWING OUTPOSTS:

Wathaurong Health Centre, Colac Area Health, Headspace Geelong and Drysdale, Barwon Health Corio, Deakin University Waterfront Campus, Minerva Community Services, Francis Hewitt Community Centre Hamilton, Grampians Community Health Stawell

## OUR VISION

To promote recovery and a community free from sexual assault and family violence committed to the principles of social justice and human rights.

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

To provide high quality services, sensitive and responsive to those who have experienced and been impacted by sexual assault and family violence and to work towards the prevention and elimination of sexual assault and family violence.

## PHILOSOPHY

- The perpetration of sexual assault and family violence is never acceptable. It is a violation of human rights and a crime against individuals and society.
- Sexual assault and family violence are whole of community concerns and it is the responsibility of the whole community to actively work towards prevention and elimination.
- It is the right of all victim/survivors to be supported in their recovery and to have their experiences of abuse heard and acknowledged.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Barwon CASA aims and objectives are to:

1. Support the integrity, autonomy, empowerment and dignity of victim/survivors.
2. Proactively work towards prevention by promoting community awareness, fostering community responsibility and challenging the underlying societal factors and structures that underpin sexual assault and family violence.
3. Provide a range of accountable services informed by best practice and research that recognise the complexity of issues surrounding sexual and family violence.
4. Deliver accessible services that recognise and respond to the diverse range of individuals and communities.
5. Provide expertise, consultation, training and development to professionals and organisations.

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# CHAIRPERSON & CEO REPORT

It is with great pleasure that we present the 2016 Barwon Centre Against Sexual Assault (Barwon CASA) Annual Report and take the opportunity to reflect on what has been an extremely exciting and important twelve months for our organisation.

This past year has brought significant change to the sector and to our organisation, all of which has presented opportunities but has also provided a confronting reminder of the extent of sexual assault and family violence in the Victorian community. In April 2016 the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence presented its Report and Recommendations which made 227 recommendations to transform the family violence system in Victoria. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse is ongoing and continues to unveil horrific stories of abuse and the need for redress and improved responses in the future. These Commissions, alongside other state and local activities, have placed greater demand on our services as we respond to increased requests for support and greater complexity of issues.

In 2016 Barwon CASA announced that it intended to merge with Minerva Community Services (Minerva). The decision to do so was not taken lightly by the Board and we would like to thank everyone within our organisation for their input during this critical time. The merger will allow our organisation to combine expertise, specialist knowledge and skills with Minerva to deliver a streamlined and evidence based service

model. This merger builds on our existing approaches to collaboration and partnership, including our ongoing membership to the Multidisciplinary Centre (MDC).

In November 2015 the Prevention of Violence Against Women Forum brought together leading industry experts and practitioners to share knowledge, experiences and learn from one another. We were warmed by the range of people who commented on not only the brilliance of the Barwon CASA team in bringing the day together but also the high esteem which the work and services of Barwon CASA are held by others in the sector.

Throughout this period of change and demand Barwon CASA has been expertly guided by members of the senior leadership team. We have had the opportunity to be at the forefront in reform debates and governmental discussions shaping the sector. Thank you to all members of our staff in the Barwon and Horsham regions who continue to deliver best practice services and approach every challenge as an opportunity.



*Dr Kate Fitz-Gibbon, Chairperson*

The Board has worked hard to ensure that the governance decision making is informed by the Vision, Purpose and Philosophy of Barwon CASA. We have been busy working to maximise strategic opportunities for the organisation. In December 2015 we held our annual strategic planning governance forum which proved critical in setting the priority areas of focus for the forthcoming year. We have continued to benefit from the diligent financial management practices led by our Treasurer, Ben Meeke, which has allowed us to make the most of opportunities presented and support the growth of our services.

We extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to the current and recently departed members of the Barwon CASA Board of Governance who have dedicated their time and good governance to the organisation during this critical period. Thank you Jenny McMahon, Ben Meeke, Peter Miller, Robyn Davis, Dr Sarah Leach, Pete Jacobson, and Kate Stowell for your ongoing commitment to Barwon CASA. In particular, we would like to acknowledge Jenny who was an invaluable support to Kate during her time as Chairperson.



*Helen Bolton, CEO*

The organisation is undoubtedly in safe hands at the organisational and governance level.

We both feel honoured to be Chairperson and CEO of Barwon CASA during this period of change and wish the organisation every success in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'kfitz-gibb'. The signature is stylized and cursive.

**Dr Kate Fitz-Gibbon** Chairperson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helen Bolton'. The signature is stylized and cursive.

**Helen Bolton** Chief Executive Officer

# OUR MULTIDISCIPLINARY CENTRE (MDC)

Shaping the future by offering seamless services to clients through the Multidisciplinary Centre

The MDC model is a highly specialised response whereby three partner agencies work together to respond to the needs of people impacted by sexual assault: Victoria Police - Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Teams (SOCIT), the Department of Health & Human Services Child Protection Sexual Abuse Investigation Teams and Centres Against Sexual Assault.

We have been a partner in the Barwon MDC for four years – one of six MDCs located throughout Victoria.

MDC partner organisations support adults and children from their first disclosure of sexual assault to criminal prosecution. MDCs seek to provide them with safety, support and access to justice within an integrated, seamless environment. In Barwon we also host a legal clinic, and community health nurses, through a partnership with Barwon Health, joined our MDC this year.

During 2015, our staff participated in interviews, focus groups, surveys and workshops to inform the state-wide evaluation of the MDC model.

The evaluation demonstrated that co-locating the three partner agencies vastly increases the depth and strength of collaboration amongst professionals. This in turn leads to quicker responses to clients and better integrated investigations of sexual offences. For example, our data shows a 33 percent increase in sexual offence reporting in the two years from opening of the MDC, compared with a 15 percent increase state-wide.

*“We had a job with a family – mum had two children and both kids had been offended against by her partner. She was in absolute distress and denial and it all transpired very quickly. We were able to have one of the counsellors from CASA talk to Mum, and the kids. At the same time I spoke to one of the team leaders at Child Protection and we just fast tracked everything.”*

*SOCIT Member, State-wide MDC Evaluation 2015*

The therapeutic environment offered at the MDC, particularly with the inclusion of CASA, contributes to the recovery and healing for victims, for example, through SOCIT and CASA working together to inform victims that the brief of evidence is insufficient for the case to proceed.



MDC clients are more engaged with the core agencies, and are more likely to ‘take up’ the referrals to core agencies which are frequently made in person.

*“One of the main positive aspects is that victims can access all the services they need in one place, in an environment where they feel more comfortable to deal with the issues, and with people, in plain clothes, who have been specially trained in the issues.”*

*SOCIT Member, State-wide MDC Evaluation 2015*

*“To see clients come in the door and make a police report when they weren’t going to, or for police coming in to see us to say their client would like counselling now, or for child protection to say we have talked to the family about getting some counselling and they would like to see someone. It’s a big change but it’s fantastic.”*

*CASA staff, State-wide MDC Evaluation 2015*

The MDC approach is also supporting the empowerment of victims to be more ‘in charge’ of the process. For example, joint work between Child Protection, SOCIT and CASAs is resulting in a higher uptake by victims of ‘options talks’ – the opportunity to speak informally to a SOCIT member about the option of making a formal report to police about the sexual offences and what that process entails.

It is also resulting in a reduction in the number of times a victim is interviewed, for example, where child victims are interviewed once rather than multiple times, on different occasions by different agencies.

At Barwon CASA we see evidence every day that the highly specialised and integrated multiagency response works. We hear from our clients how much it means for them to be able to see the professionals they need to in the one building and how this reduces their stress and anxiety.

## Looking to the future

We have deepened our understanding of the co-occurrence of family violence and sexual assault and our data shows over 60 percent of our clients experience sexual assault in the context of family violence. The MDC evaluation noted the considerable work occurring within MDCs in relation to family violence.

We will continue our discussions with Victoria Police about the potential for co-locating family violence police at the MDC. We believe this will enable family violence police to quickly mobilise an appropriate response for women and children linking them to skilled specialist support. We are clear that we do not envisage co-located police will work with the perpetrator at the MDC.

We envisage the MDC approach as a key component of the transformational change of the family violence system occurring over the coming years.

## Our MDC collaboration with Barwon Health

Ensuring that victims of sexual abuse get appropriate health care at the right time is an important part of effective health service delivery and trauma recovery.

Through an innovative partnership with Barwon Health, we have employed two Community Health Nurses who coordinate a range of health care services to people who have experienced sexual assault or women and children who have experienced family violence. Nurses assist with health advice and education on matters such as diabetes, healthy eating, contraceptive choices, sexual health, tobacco use, pregnancy, heart health, asthma and a range of other needs based on the client's own identified health issues.

They will also work with people who have experienced sexual assault or women and children who have experienced family violence in developing individual health plans, identifying gaps in health screening and accessing local and other health and community services.

The Community Health Nurse has been able to extend additional supports to women from a culturally diverse background whom, at the time of referral, required acute medical attention. An example of this was when the Nurse was able to support and advocate for a woman's needs throughout medical procedures, as well as being a key contact for MDC partners wanting to navigate the health service. This collaborative and well rounded care within the MDC has enabled clients to feel empowered about moving forward with their own health and wellbeing goals

It is very difficult to measure the true extent of violence against women as most incidences of sexual assault and family violence go unreported. However what we do know is that there is a huge health related impact for women and children who experience violence. There are often many barriers to accessing health services and the experience of family violence and sexual assault can make this more difficult.

By including the community health nurses in the MDC model, clients can receive support and assistance, and importantly assessment of complexity and risk to the most appropriate pathway. The model emphasises people taking an active role in their health and wellbeing and gives greater control about their choices and decisions.

The Community Health Nurses, together with a range of professionals in the MDC, provide a comprehensive trauma informed practice.

## Looking to the future MDC Community Nurses

From January 2016 Community Nurses at the MDC supported 26 women to:

- Improve access to health services
- Link clients to HARP (Geelong Hospital), NDIS, Bethany, Red Cross, Dental, Mental Health services, Diversitat and Gateways
- Participate in community groups and classes ie: cooking and craft classes
- Complete forms, such as NDIS forms, applications for support pensions, medical operation forms.
- Access appointments



**Back row L-R:** Kaia de Burgh, Barwon Health MDC Nurse; Helen Bolton, Barwon CASA CEO

**Front row L-R:** Kerrie Smith, Barwon Health East Area Manager; Lauren Langley, Barwon Health MDC Nurse

SHAPING THE FUTURE  
IS ABOUT PROMOTING RECOVERY  
FROM TRAUMA FOR PEOPLE WHO  
HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY SEXUAL  
ASSAULT AND FURTHERING OUR  
ADVOCACY WORK TO IMPROVE THE  
SERVICE SYSTEM

# THERAPEUTIC SERVICES: A BODY AND MIND APPROACH

Barwon CASA provides free and confidential, specialist counselling to adults, young people and children who have experienced sexual assault or women and children who have experienced family violence and to their non-offending family and friends.

We employ highly qualified and experienced counsellors to deliver services throughout the community.

In our work we encounter common themes in the narratives that emerge from gender based violence. Themes of fear and self doubt, loss and grief are interwoven with themes of extraordinary resilience, resourcefulness and heroic acts. These stories invite us to reflect on the meaning of change and what it takes for people to overcome the effects of violence and abuse and create new storylines for their lives.

In recent years we have extended our focus to include therapeutic responses to family violence in recognition that the co-occurrence of sexual assault and family violence is not uncommon. These services have historically occupied different domains despite sharing a philosophy that underpins the response services. The most compelling reason for us to offer therapeutic services that encompass family violence and sexual assault is that it makes sense for our clients to not have to compartmentalise their experiences.

A sense of safety is often eroded in families where violence occurs. More families are seeking to restore relationships after the person using violence is no longer in the home. Family therapy encourages the building of a shared story that speaks of the dynamics and tactics that created division and the strengths of the family that enabled survival and connection. Family counselling provides the opportunity for the resourcefulness of the family to be celebrated, forging re-connections and imagining new possibilities for family life that is not defined by violence and abuse.

We have a solid understanding of trauma and we strive to incorporate the research findings about how trauma is processed and what works for people recovering from trauma. Clearly counselling is not for everyone so we extend our services beyond counselling to offer a range of approaches that address the relationship between body and mind. We are discovering that modalities such as mindfulness, body awareness and yoga, have profoundly positive effects for people managing the effects of trauma.

During the year we offered group therapy demonstrating the commitment to integrate a 'body and mind' approach.

### **The Trauma Acceptance Commitment Therapy**

**(TACT) Group** Is designed to support greater understanding of trauma, increased emotional awareness and the use of practical tools to manage the challenges of emotional regulation in day to day living for women who have experienced sexual assault.

The feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive.

*“We celebrated us. The group was able to not be victims of sexual assault. We could be women, smart women, great women”.*

*TACT group participant*

*“My experience of the group was that it was very honouring, and respectful. Participating in the group brought comfort and a sense of empathy”*

*TACT group participant*

**The Connect Group** is designed to enable women to reconnect with their children who have experienced family violence or sexual assault. One of the most significant effects of family violence is the undermining of the mother and child bond. The group utilises psycho-education and creative activities to enable mothers to understand the effects of trauma for themselves and children, learn skills in self regulation and ‘tune in’ to their children’s emotional needs, and strengthen their relationships.

The theme of resilience is alive for people who have experienced family violence or sexual assault and who share their experience of moving from survival mode to recovery. Our range of therapeutic responses continues to be informed by our clients’ voices, a feminist understanding of violence and evidence based practice in which the experience of the client is central. In the current climate, the message that family violence and sexual assault is unacceptable is gaining traction within the community.

*“The whole group was committed to the agreed values and this gave us a sense of safety and we did not feel judged”*

*Connect Group participant*

### **Men’s Group**

In our society men have grown up being told to “man up”. This may leave many men who have experienced sexual abuse feeling that they are considered weak and somehow less than a ‘man’. Getting together in a men’s group quickly reduces the social isolation and normalises the struggles male survivors frequently experience.

Most participants have benefited enormously from the men’s groups run by Barwon CASA, but we are still learning about the role of group-work, and the need to build a holistic and well structured response specifically designed to meet the needs of men who have experienced sexual abuse.

**“IT TAKES ONE MOMENT TO CHANGE EVERYTHING  
AND IT TAKES SPECIAL MOMENTS TO HEAL A  
BROKEN SOUL! CASA CARES ENOUGH TO HEAL THE  
WELL WORN PATH OF A BROKEN SOUL.”**

**- BARWON CASA CLIENT**

# HOLLY'S STORY

My name is Holly\* and when I was a child I was sexually abused by my grandfather. At the time, I dealt with the abuse by blocking it out and pretending it wasn't happening. It wasn't until I was 13 years old that I began to reflect on everything I had experienced. This triggered so many thoughts and feelings, it was confronting and overwhelming, I didn't know what to do.

Throughout my teenage years, I suffered from depression, anxiety and an eating disorder. This affected many aspects of my life and was very hard to deal with. As time went on, things became worse and I saw no way out. I felt trapped and this was terrifying as being trapped was one of my biggest fears.

The driver for me to get help was when I reached a breaking point and thought "I've had enough of this!" I knew I needed help, but I didn't know where to get it from. During my first week of university, I was sitting in the health & wellbeing centre when I noticed a brochure for Barwon CASA. After reading it, I made an appointment with one of the Barwon CASA counsellors on campus.

Leading up to my first appointment I was extremely nervous and didn't know what to expect. I thought about cancelling my appointment several times, but I'm so glad I decided to go because it was one of the

best decisions I have ever made.

Barwon CASA understood my experience and not only addressed the symptoms I was having, but also the underlying problem. I have had the opportunity to express and process my memories, which has given me a huge sense of freedom. I have also been given some strategies to help effectively manage my symptoms and this has greatly improved the quality of my life.

During my counselling process I was referred to a 10 - week structured group program (Trauma Acceptance Commitment Therapy) for survivors of sexual assault. Throughout this program, I learnt how to live in the present moment and how to accept my internal experiences. I was also encouraged to identify my personal strengths and values, which was extremely empowering.

I no longer feel trapped in my past. Thanks to the support I received from Barwon CASA, I am now able to take control of my life and circumstances, and work through the effects of childhood sexual abuse. I have finally realized what I'm capable of overcoming and achieving, and this makes me excited for the future!

\*Pseudonym

### Our work with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

We continue to contribute to, and be informed by the work of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses into Child Sexual Abuse. During 2015-16, we have provided support to many people impacted by sexual abuse who have contacted our service following the awareness of the issues raised through the Commission’s public hearings.

We have also maintained our involvement with the Commission in systems and policy advocacy. In June 2016, Our CEO, Helen Bolton, attended a multi-disciplinary and specialist policing responses public round table. This was an opportunity for the Commission to hear from experts around Australia in considering the effectiveness of multidisciplinary and specialist policing responses, and their interactions with institutions, parents and the community when current allegations of child sexual abuse are made.

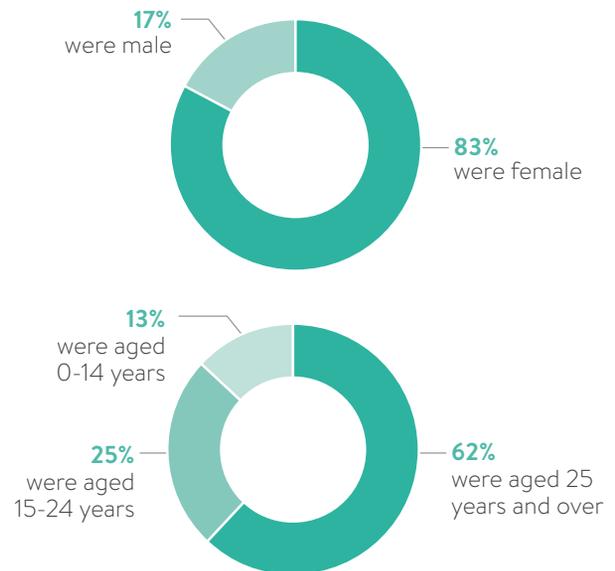
We are proud of our ongoing involvement with the Commission and remain hopeful of seeing significant changes to services, systems and especially for people impacted by the devastating effects of child sexual abuse within institutional settings.

### Our work in the Barwon region

During 2015-16, our sexual assault therapeutic counselling program in Barwon supported:

# 985

## PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY SEXUAL ASSAULT

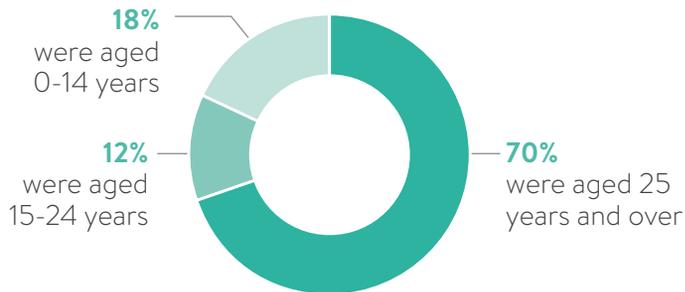


### Barwon Family Violence Counselling Services

During 2015-16, our family violence counselling program in Barwon supported:

# 467

WOMEN, CHILDREN  
AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE  
BEEN AFFECTED BY FAMILY VIOLENCE





SHAPING THE FUTURE IN  
THE WIMMERA REGION WITH  
INCREASING RESOURCES AND  
THROUGH COLLABORATIVE  
PARTNERSHIPS

# OUR WORK IN WIMMERA

Barwon CASA, Wimmera is dedicated to providing best practice outcomes for all clients, with an ever growing high demand for services across the Wimmera South West region which extends to the South Australian border.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence Report highlighted the added barriers for many people who live in rural and remote areas. We continue to undertake initiatives to assist and provide a service for people who live within the region. We have increased staffing levels to manage the increased demand for our services with an additional Counsellor Advocate for children and young people as well as providing outreach posts at Stawell, Hamilton and St. Arnaud.

We have provided Recognising & Responding to Sexual & Physical Abuse, and Sexual Development and Sexually Abusive Behaviours in Adolescents training for professionals. Barwon CASA has, with other services from across the region, supported and contributed to the funding of Women's Health Grampians workshop, "Sex Ed by Porn? Learn how we can do better", facilitated by Maree Crabbe. This educational workshop provided an opportunity to emphasise the importance of understanding gender based violence and to highlight awareness for gender equality and respectful relationships.

We are an active member and partner of Women's Health Grampians, Grampians Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE) Governance Group, Wimmera South West Region Area Integrated Family Partnership Executive Committee, Wimmera Child First & Integrated Family Service Alliance Operational Committee, Headspace Horsham Consortium, Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group, Taskforce 1000 Wimmera Action Group and Wimmera White Ribbon Committee, and regional and state wide initiatives, working collaboratively across the region towards the elimination of sexual assault and family violence.



**Wimmera Staff**

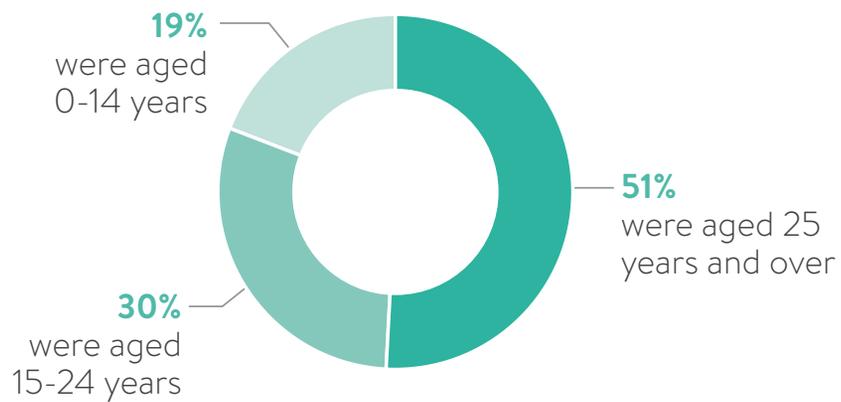
**Back row left to right:** Anthony Heywood, Jane Freak, Lydia Ward, Jo-Anne Bates

**Front row left to right:** Jodie Baldwin, Brianna Ellis, Absent: Sally Dickerson

During 2015-16, our sexual assault therapeutic counselling program in Wimmera supported:

# 285

## PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY SEXUAL ASSAULT



SHAPING THE FUTURE BY PROVIDING  
EVIDENCE-BASED TRAUMA  
INFORMED EARLY INTERVENTION  
RESPONSES

# SEXUALLY ABUSIVE BEHAVIOURS IN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Sexually abusive behaviours continue to be a significant problem amongst young people in our society and account for approximately 40 percent of all sexual assaults against children and young people.

Each year, referrals into our Problem Sexual Behaviours (PSB) and Sexually Abusive Treatment Service (SABTS) well exceed funded targets across our Barwon and Wimmera sites. Over the past year our combined SABTS programs provided support to 81 children and young people against a target of 37.

The SABTS program provides a vital early intervention response for children and young people who have engaged in problem sexual or sexually abusive behaviours. The program works to understand and address the often complex intertwining of historic, individual, and systemic issues that can lead to an ongoing pattern of inappropriate or abusive behaviours, ensuring that those children and young people go on to enjoy respectful and rewarding relationships.

Viewing pornography is becoming normalised among young males and is increasingly accepted as normal by many young females. Research shows that 12 percent of all websites on the internet are pornographic. Acts of physical aggression are portrayed in 88 percent of pornographic films, and 49 percent of scenes contain verbal aggression.

However, accessing and viewing pornography is not a causal factor for sexually abusive behaviours and most young people do not view it compulsively. It can

be a contributing factor when combined with other issues though, including early childhood trauma, family breakdown, family violence, poor social skills, poor emotional regulation, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, low cognitive functioning or Autism Spectrum Disorder.

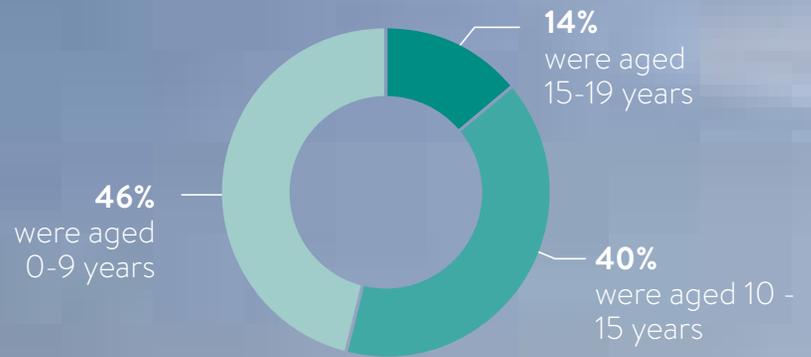
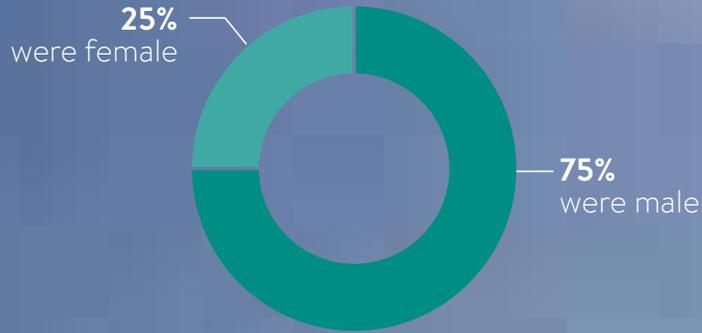
Efforts to prevent a young person's access to pornography are no longer effective in most cases, and the focus is shifting to reducing avenues to viewing pornography, rather than preventing access altogether. In recognition that pornography is likely to be accessed by young people one way or another, an increasing focus needs to be more sophisticated and targeted education about the impacts of viewing pornography, and about the reality that pornography is a staged and scripted fantasy product.

The pornography pandemic also highlights the need for an ever strengthening focus on identifying and building the strengths and healthy interests that reduce a vulnerable young person's reliance on pornography as a mechanism for escaping from or coping with difficult life challenges.

It is important to recognise that sexually abusive behaviours in adolescents are not a predictor of adult offending or of paedophilia.

In 2015-16 our SABTS Program in Barwon and Wimmera provided therapeutic support to:

# 81 CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE



MAIN REFERRALS TO OUR SABTS PROGRAM CAME FROM:



CHILD PROTECTION



FAMILY & FRIENDS



SCHOOLS

# WE FEEL POSITIVE FOR WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR OUR SON AND OUR FAMILY ALL THANKS TO OUR COUNSELLOR ADVOCATE

## ABBEY'S STORY

My name is Abbey\* and I am Isaac's\* mum. He recently successfully completed a Therapeutic Treatment Order (TTO) at Barwon CASA. Coming into this my partner and myself were both intimidated and mortified by what had happened leading up to this and were daunted by what the future and the TTO held. Having never dreamed of or expecting something like this to happen we did not know what to think or feel about it all.

The Counsellor Advocate was quick to form a bond with our son and an astounding rapport with our family. We always felt involved and up to date with his sessions and what that entailed. I truly believe that even though our son worked hard during his time at Barwon CASA, our Counsellor Advocate is to thank

for successfully completing his order. Her creative flare and techniques were a brilliant approach to an otherwise dark part of our lives. We were always treated with respect from all staff (which is much better than we were expecting) including the ladies at the front desk. Our Counsellor Advocate took into account our son's special needs and specially tailored each session around them. I cannot thank Barwon CASA enough for all the support and work over the last 18 months.

We feel positive for what the future holds for our son and our family all thanks to our Counsellor Advocate.

\*Pseudonym

SHAPING THE FUTURE WILL SEE THE  
CREATION OF HOLISTIC SPECIALIST  
RESPONSES TO FAMILY VIOLENCE  
AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

# RESPONDING TO THE VICTORIAN ROYAL COMMISSION INTO FAMILY VIOLENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

The focus on violence against women at the hands of a partner or ex partner has greatly increased across the nation in recent years.

The devastating effect of family violence impacts every aspect of our community including women and children, families, schools and workplaces. It also has significant and widespread social and economic impacts.

In response to this wide-spread impact, the Victorian government established a Royal Commission into Family Violence. During 2015 -16 we have continued to take an active role in informing the Commission's deliberations. Our written submission, lodged in May 2015, was one of more than one thousand written submissions received by the Commission from organisations and individuals.

In August 2015, our CEO Helen Bolton participated on an expert witness panel and outlined the critical importance of recognising the co-occurrence of family violence and sexual assault. Also highlighted were the benefits of the highly collaborative Barwon Multidisciplinary Centre (MDC) model and the improved outcomes for clients that result from the co-location of specialist counsellor advocates, police and child protection practitioners. Her statement also raised areas for improvement for consideration by the Commission. This included better responses for

people who have substance abuse and mental health issues likely to be associated with their experience of trauma, the expansion of legal services, intensive intervention for highly vulnerable families and the exploration of shared case management approaches across the family violence and sexual assault response.

The Royal Commission's Landmark Report and Recommendations, released in March 2016, sets out the directions for a revolution in the design, delivery and evaluation of the way in which service systems respond to, and work to prevent, family violence and sexual assault.

The magnitude of the changes proposed is immense. The Commission makes clear that there are serious limitations in the existing responses, and that 'we are not responding adequately to the scale and impact of the harm caused by family violence'.

To transform the way in which we respond, the Commission calls for ‘new ways of thinking and collaborating’. The Commission’s seven volume report calls for fundamental change and reform across the support and housing system, police, legal and justice responses, legislative change, and structural and governance changes. Barwon CASA is specifically noted in the Report in relation to the opportunities for shared case work models, protocols and potential co-location of sexual assault and family violence services, and the potential location of new Support and Safety Hubs in the MDC building.

Our CEO also sits on the Statewide Family Violence Steering Committee, tasked with the responsibility for overseeing the roll out of the reforms.

Over the coming year the plans and direction for our work across the organisation will be shaped by the recommendations of the Royal Commission. This includes our service delivery, our work in prevention – in particular our work with schools, and in expanding our training and community education program.

Immersing our service in these wide-scale reforms will result in many changes, many of which are likely to occur quite rapidly. We will need to be agile and nimble. We have a responsibility to make sure that a re-energised and transformed response to family violence and sexual assault maintains specialisation at its core.

### **Our collaboration with Minerva Community Services**

We have continued our collaborative alliance with Minerva Community Services who provide specialist family violence crisis and case management services to women and children in the Barwon area.

By coming together our new organisation will offer a raft of services that includes prevention of violence, crisis responses, court support, assistance with safe housing, advocacy, therapeutic counselling, and group work. Our collective experience, specialist knowledge and skills offered at the one site aims to streamline clients’ experience of navigating ‘the system’ and support resilience and recovery. This move is in line with the findings of the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence which recommends that consideration be given to the integration of sexual assault and family violence services.



*Combined staff of Barwon CASA and Minerva Community Services*



SHAPING THE FUTURE BY  
DEEPENING OUR COMMITMENT  
TO BUILD RESPECTFUL AND  
STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE  
ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY

# OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

In 2016, together with Minerva, we embarked on the process of developing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)

This process builds on the work of both organisations: developing strong relationships with the Aboriginal Community and Wathaurong Aboriginal Cooperative; and involving direct work supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

***A Reconciliation Action Plan enables us to have the opportunity to reflect on our work with local Aboriginal people and on how we can strengthen our level of cultural respect.***

The RAP examines our two organisations' policies and procedures, particularly regarding staff recruitment, cultural training and supplier diversity. A working group has been developed to provide direction for the project.

This will include a range of local Aboriginal stakeholders and organisations that partner with us, as well as community members with an interest in family violence and sexual assault.

Consultation will occur with Wathaurong staff and Aboriginal community members to receive feedback on strategies that the new organisation can implement over the next twelve months. This will be collated with feedback from Minerva and Barwon CASA staff into a Reconciliation Action Plan.

We would like to thank all organisations, staff and Aboriginal people who have supported this process to date and we look forward to progressing our RAP in the coming year.



SHAPING THE FUTURE BY  
MAINTAINING A FOCUS ON THE  
GENDERED NATURE OF FAMILY  
VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

# PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN

“Women are the victims of family violence because many men in our community don’t believe they are their equal.” - Daniel Andrews, Premier of Victoria.

This year has been an exciting year for the prevention of violence against women and children both within Barwon CASA and more broadly.

The launch of the much anticipated “Change the Story Framework” developed by Our Watch, VicHealth and ANROWS has been a highlight for those working within the prevention sector. This framework provides us with a strong evidence base and rationale within which to locate our prevention work. It also forms an invaluable resource for our work in helping the community to understand that violence against women is driven by gender inequality.

This year, as in previous years, much of our prevention work has focused within school settings. It was fantastic to see our commitment to this work validated within the Royal Commission into Family Violence findings which highlighted the importance of respectful relationships education for children and young people.

## Prevention in schools

During 2015-2016 we have continued our work with secondary schools through the expansion of the Sexual Assault Prevention Program in Secondary Schools (SAPPSS) model, forming partnerships with two new schools

The SAPPSS program has continued its strong presence in local secondary schools this year due to the funding from the R.E. Ross Trust to deliver the

program in two additional schools in 2016 - Matthew Flinders Girls Secondary College and Bellarine Secondary College.

SAPPSS is now embedded in the curricula of six Geelong secondary schools. This means that on a yearly basis in Geelong, approximately 400 Year 9 students receive this six week program which includes definitions and issues, consent and communication, impacts of sexual assault, respectful relationships and prevention, speaking up about sexual assault and being a bystander. The evaluations of the program consistently show that the students who complete the program demonstrate positive attitude changes and increased knowledge as a result of their participation.

The program was presented at our Prevention of Violence Against Women Forum held in November 2015 enabling teachers and leaders from schools across the region to meet and discuss the program and its success in the schools in which it is delivered.

In response to this renewed interest, we delivered a three day SAPPSS Train the Trainer program in February 2016. The training was attended by teachers from the new SAPPSS schools presenting the program in 2016, additional or new teachers from the schools that currently deliver SAPPSS, Barwon CASA and Minerva staff, and school nurses. As a result, there are now 34 newly trained SAPPSS presenters in 2016.

The strong commitment and interest from school principals is a feature of SAPPSS and participating schools are now extending their work in this area to planning and implementing whole of school programs in respectful relationships.

### Respectful Relationships in Primary Schools

After researching and discussing the potential of working within the primary school space for a number of years, this year we have embarked on the journey of developing a primary school prevention model.

This model will build on the success of our work within secondary schools with the development and delivery of a whole of school model based firmly within the related evidence base. We will be seeking interest from primary schools to partner with us to introduce a pilot program during 2017.

This work is particularly exciting within the context of the announcement of the Department of Education and Training's Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships initiative.

*Attendees and Barwon CASA staff attending SAPPSS teacher training*

### Our Partnership with Women with Disabilities Victoria

This year has also seen the continuation of our partnership with Women with Disabilities Victoria on the Gender and Disability Workforce Development Project. Much of the work in this area has been contributing to the redevelopment of the training modules to incorporate feedback from the evaluation and experiences of the trainers in delivering the modules. We will be further involved with the delivery of the redeveloped later this year.

We look forward to continuing to strengthen and develop our prevention work and partnerships in the coming year as we work together towards ending violence against women and their children.



## Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children Forum

In November 2015, we held our second Prevention Forum: Towards Gender Equity. Over 100 participants took the opportunity to learn about the latest evidence about the cause of violence against women – gender inequality.

Participants heard from keynote speakers about best practice principles and evidence-based frameworks designed to inform and guide effective prevention activities. They also participated in a range of workshops which showcased prevention activities taking place in the Barwon area and around Victoria in a range of settings including schools and workplaces.

Forum presenters were drawn from a range of organisations, expert advocates, researchers and practitioners including Vic Health, Women’s Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West, Women with Disabilities Victoria, No to Violence, University of Melbourne, Deakin University, Our Watch, YMCA, Reality and Risk, North Geelong Secondary College, Baby Makes Three and Barwon CASA. This ensured that the Forum program was valuable for experienced prevention practitioners as well as professionals new to the prevention area and keen to learn more about what works in improving gender equality.

There was much high level professional learning and networking for our partners and for Barwon CASA staff through the experience of organising and hosting this second successful Prevention Forum.

During 2015-16, our SAPPSS program engaged with:

**2** NEW SCHOOLS

**4** EXISTING SCHOOLS

**33** TEACHERS TRAINED IN RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

**48** SESSIONS DELIVERED TO YEAR 9 CLASSES



SHAPING THE FUTURE BY  
DELIVERING A ROBUST  
PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM  
TAILORED FOR PROFESSIONALS  
IN THE REGION



This year we continued to deliver our well attended professional training programs to 220 people ...

on topics that included: Trauma and the Brain, Child Sexual Behaviour - How to Assess and Understand; Relational Trauma, Working with Families in the Aftermath of Sexual Assault; Sexual Development and Sexually Abusive Behaviours in Adolescents, How to Assess and Understand; Vortex of Violence; The Porn

Factor: Making Violence Sexy (presented by Maree Crabbe); Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST). We plan to extend this program by building on our existing framework as well as introducing new training events.

**In 2015-16, our professional training program:**

**9** TRAINING SESSIONS  
DELIVERED

**220** PEOPLE  
ATTENDED

**“ALL FACILITATORS WERE TERRIFIC AND VERY INTERESTING. REALLY GREAT TRAINING – GOOD TO KNOW THAT WE CAN CONTACT CASA FOR ADVICE. WILL DEFINITELY UTILISE MORE.”**

**- PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PARTICIPANT**

# OUR BOARD



**DR KATE FITZ-GIBBON**

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Senior Lecturer in Criminology,  
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Solicitor, Ryan Carlisle Thomas  
Lawyers



**PETE JACOBSON**

Manager, Youth Services  
Barwon Child Youth & Family

*\*Resigned board members in the 2015-2016 period*



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CEO, Wyndham City Council



**DR NICOLE  
ASQUITH\***

Associate Professor of Policing &  
Criminal Justice, Western Sydney  
University, Co-Director of the  
Vulnerability, Resilience and Policing  
Research Consortium, and University  
Associate with the Tasmania Institute of  
Law Enforcement Studies



**ROBYN DAVIS\***

Director, Greater Geelong Legal

# SHAPING THE FUTURE WITH CARING EMPLOYEES WHO ARE INNOVATIVE AND PROACTIVE

## BOARD MEMBERS

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- *Clinical Supervisor*

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- *Strategic Operations  
& Business Development  
Manager*

John Blomfield  
- *Coordinator Men's &  
Adolescent Services*

Mary Cowell  
- *Finance & Administration  
Manager*

## COUNSELLOR ADVOCATES

### Barwon

Alison McWhinney

Ashleigh Warner

Caroline Hargreaves

Caroline Taylor

Colleen Weir

Diane Jones

Elise Watts

Elizabeth Stewart

Imogen O'Neill

Janine Sheridan

Jessica Welsh

Johanna Donkers

Kate Beesley\*

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Kristy O'Shannessy

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Lisa Nash\*

Lynda Dunne

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Narelle Warden

Teegan Kelley

Tina Rowley

Yuko Ishido

### Wimmera

Irina Bennewitz\*

Jane Freak

Jodie Baldwin

Lydia Ward

Margaret O'Loughlin\*

## AFTERHOURS COUNSELLOR ADVOCATES

Marilyn Nash  
- *Afterhours Coordinator*

Brooke Baxter

Carmel Thomas\*

Kristine Muraca

Kristine Waugh

Lara Lynch

Linette Harriott

Lisa Trevaskis

Natalie Sitka

Tracey Daniel

Wendy Hall-Burns

### Wimmera

Sally Dickerson

## ADMINISTRATION

Amanda Patrick  
- *Executive Assistant - CEO*

Belinda Anstee\*

Brenda Barrow

Dominique Van Den Ham

Julie Mandersloot

Kathleen Doole  
- *Training Coordinator*

Louise Tracey  
- *Communications Officer*

Maria O'Donnell

Marilyn Nash  
- *Quality Assurance Officer*

Michele Evans  
- *Payroll Officer*

### Wimmera

Jo-Anne Bates  
- *Office Manager*

Anthony Heyward

## PREVENTION

Jessica Boccia  
- *Prevention of Violence Against  
Women Project Officer*

Dr Pamela Bjork-Billings  
- *Prevention of Violence Against  
Women Project Officer*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF ASSOCIATED STAFF

Cheryl Card  
- *Victoria Police Reception,  
Barwon MDC*

JoyLee Kilpatrick\*

Kymm McNamara  
- *Project Officer*

# FINANCIAL REPORTS

## BARWON CENTRE AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT INC

### A.B.N. 93 316 567 100

#### STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016

	Notes	2016 \$	2015 \$
Revenue	2	2,841,516	2,537,383
Other revenue	2	361,608	213,164
Total revenue		3,203,124	2,750,547
Employee Benefits		(2,526,560)	(2,225,324)
Depreciation and Amortisation Expenses		(70,469)	(69,763)
Administration Expenses		(138,061)	(59,637)
Motor Vehicle Expenses		(32,936)	(33,807)
Other Expenses	3	(433,312)	(264,324)
		(3,201,338)	(2,652,855)
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) before income tax</b>		<b>1,786</b>	<b>97,692</b>
Income tax expense	1a	-	-
<b>Surplus after income tax expense for the year</b>		<b>1,786</b>	<b>97,692</b>
Other comprehensive income for the year		-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>1,786</b>	<b>97,692</b>

*The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.  
A complete set of financial reports is available upon request.*

**BARWON CENTRE AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT INC**  
**A.B.N. 93 316 567 100**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**  
**AS AT 30 JUNE 2016**

	Notes	2016 \$	2015 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	4	1,167,506	1,559,452
Trade and Other Receivables	5	147,379	48,142
Prepayments		48,072	31,578
Total Current Assets		<u>1,362,957</u>	<u>1,639,172</u>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Investments	7	597,398	-
Property, Plant and Equipment	6	424,444	455,906
Total Non-Current Assets		<u>1,021,842</u>	<u>455,906</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b><u>2,384,799</u></b>	<b><u>2,095,078</u></b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Trade and Other Payables	8	526,270	418,634
Credit Cards		8,227	11,095
Revenue in Advance		223,770	114,468
Short term provisions	9	266,661	204,182
Total Current Liabilities		<u>1,024,928</u>	<u>748,379</u>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>			
Provisions	9	111,130	99,744
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<b><u>111,130</u></b>	<b><u>99,744</u></b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b><u>1,136,058</u></b>	<b><u>848,123</u></b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b><u>1,248,741</u></b>	<b><u>1,246,955</u></b>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Reserves	10	280,700	280,700
Retained earnings		968,041	966,255
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<b><u>1,248,741</u></b>	<b><u>1,246,955</u></b>

# AUDITOR'S REPORT

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF BARWON CENTRE AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT INC

### Report on the Financial Report

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of Barwon Centre Against Sexual Assault Inc, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2016, the statement of comprehensive income, the statement of cash flows and the statement of changes in equity for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the statement by members of the committee.

### Committees' Responsibility for the Financial Report

The committee of Barwon Centre Against Sexual Assault Inc is responsible for the preparation of the financial report, and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission Act 2012 and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The committee's responsibility also includes such internal control as the committee has determined is necessary to enable the preparation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We have conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the association's preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view, in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

# AUDITOR'S REPORT

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

## **Audit Opinion**

In our opinion, the financial report gives a true and fair view of the financial position of Barwon Centre Against Sexual Assault Inc as at 30 June 2016, and its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission Act 2012.

## **Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution**

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the Barwon Centre Against Sexual Assault Inc to meet the requirements of the

Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and the Australian Charities and Not-For-Profits Commission Act 2012. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.



Stephen Wight  
Director

Dated this 22nd day of September 2016

Davidsons Assurance Services Pty Ltd  
101 West Fyans Street  
Geelong Victoria 3220



BARWON CASA WOULD LIKE TO  
EXTEND OUR GRATITUDE TO ALL THE  
PEOPLE WHO WALK THROUGH OUR  
DOORS AND TRUST US WITH THE  
HONOUR OF BEARING WITNESS TO  
YOUR HEALING JOURNEY

# THANK YOU!

Our services are primarily funded by the Department of Health and Human Services and we would also like to thank all our supporters and donors who have supported us throughout the year.

## Grants

RE Ross Trust  
City of Greater Geelong

## Donors

Coles, Geelong West  
Sage Micropay  
Anonymous Donors  
Community Members

## Other Key Supporters

Bay FM Bethany Giving Tree Appeal  
Bellarine and Surf Coast Echo  
Cafe Dolce, Geelong West  
City of Greater Geelong  
Coles, Geelong West  
Courthouse Cafe, Geelong  
Cozy Corner Cafe, Geelong West  
Ferguson Plarre, Geelong West  
Geelong Advertiser  
Geelong Football Club  
Geelong News  
General Store, Anglesea  
Ginger Monkey, Torquay  
IGA, Torquay  
La Campagnola Pizzeria, Geelong West  
Maureen Herron  
McHarry's Bus Services  
Pulse Radio Station  
Ruby Magazine

Share the Dignity  
The Barking Dog, Geelong West  
Three Little Figs, Geelong West  
Two Sugars, Geelong West  
Voice on Pako  
Warren & Hutch, Geelong West  
Women in Community Life Advisory Committee

## In producing this report Barwon CASA would like to thank

**Paul Kelly Creative** *Report Creative*  
**Print Design** *Report Production*

Barwon CASA acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government

We would also like to thank and acknowledge the many organisations that we partner with in providing services to the community



The background of the entire page is a complex, abstract geometric pattern. It consists of numerous irregular, overlapping shapes in various shades of teal and green, creating a mosaic-like effect. The lines between the shapes are thin and dark, providing a sense of depth and structure.

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