

2016
ANNUAL
REPORT



WHAT WE DO

Minerva Community Services is a specialist family violence agency providing a range of programs and services to women and children who have experienced, or are experiencing, family violence in the Geelong and Barwon Region.

Operating within a feminist framework, Minerva focuses on social justice, gender equality, and human rights, and views family violence as predominantly gendered violence.

We are committed to ensuring the safety and physical, emotional and psychological well-being of women and children. We proactively advocate for greater choice, access, equity and safety for all women and children who seek assistance from our service. Ultimately, our hope for the women we work with is that they are able to make their own choices about their safety and well-being which enable them and their children to thrive.

Minerva provides support to women and children through safety planning and risk assessment, outreach support, court support, secure accommodation, temporary crisis housing, advocacy, and information and referral. We also provide secondary consultation. Minerva also undertakes community engagement, education and training.

VISION

We believe in a society in which women and children can live free from violence.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

Human rights
Justice
Opportunities
Well-being

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CHAIRPERSON REPORT

It has been a very challenging twelve months for the team members and Board of Minerva Community Services

An increase in service demand across Victoria has also seen Minerva experiencing high levels of demand for our specialist services this year. As in previous years, our amazing “all-woman” team has responded to the growing number of women and children in the area who are experiencing family violence, as well as meeting the demands of an ever-changing workplace. The team at Minerva is to be applauded for their devotion to their work under the enthusiastic guidance of Claire Yeatman, Operations Manager and Helen Bolton, Chief Executive Officer.

During the year, the Board said goodbye to long-standing member Jennifer Farey who has provided us with considerable support during her many years on the Board. We were also sad to see Robyn Davis depart our Board to take up a role on the Board for Barwon Health. Robyn has been missed for her no-nonsense, thoughtful approach to decision making. We wish both Jennifer and Robyn all the best and thank them for their commitment. It was our pleasure to welcome Sheridan Salmon

and Andrew Edgar to the Board of Minerva Community Services; both new members have thrown themselves into the requirements of being an effective Board member and we appreciate their efforts thus far.

It is appropriate at this point to discuss the main business of the Board this year, and that has been our intention to merge Minerva Community Services with Barwon Centre Against Sexual Assault. Merger negotiations have kept the Board very busy and have been absolutely worthwhile. It will be beneficial to the women and children of the Barwon region to have these two specialist services come together and offer a coordinated service response.



Renee Fiolet, Chairperson

A unified approach to service delivery from services that offer crisis response, case management and therapeutic counselling will improve outcomes for women and children as they will have a single entry point to support, are more likely to experience comprehensive care, and are less likely to have to consistently repeat their story, and potentially face re-traumatisation. We are excited about what this will mean for the community, and thank everyone who has been so supportive about the proposed merge which will take place during the 2016 - 2017 financial year. As that is the case, this report is also the last to be provided by a Chairperson for Minerva Community Services.

Minerva has serviced the Barwon region for approximately thirty years and has been known under various names such as Morgana Women's Group, Barwon Domestic Violence Outreach Service and Zena Women Services. Feminist principles have always guided the work of Minerva, which operated as a collective for almost two decades. Providing much needed specialist

support for tens of thousands of women and children since it was established, Minerva has been an essential service for the region.

Fortunately, its biggest asset - the team - will continue their work to address the issue of violence against women and children.

So I finish my report by thanking all of the Board members who have contributed to Minerva over the years, but also to by taking my hat off to the wonderful and staunch team of staff!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Renee Fiolet'.

Renee Fiolet

Chairperson, Minerva Community Services

OUR YEAR IN SUMMARY

REFERRALS

In 2015 - 2016 we received referrals to provide support for:

2,847

women experiencing family violence

1,711

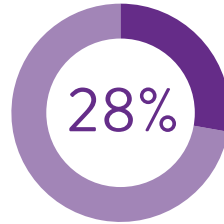
children experiencing family violence

160

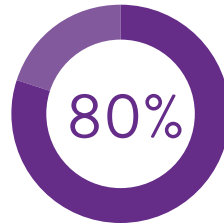
women in Colac

An average of

237 REFERRALS
PER MONTH

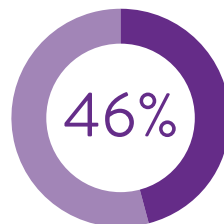


increase in referrals
from 2014 - 2015

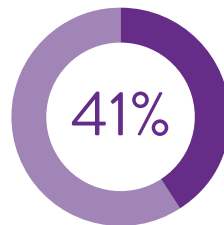


of referrals come via police

SUPPORT PROVIDED



of women supported
received brief intervention
which includes: contact via
telephone and text message



of women received short
intervention which includes:
support and information,
risk assessment and safety
planning, referral to
appropriate services

135

women received intensive case management which includes a 12 week program assisting women to make informed choices, undertaking risk assessment, enhancing the safety of their accommodation or establishing safe accommodation, minimising disruption for children by linking them into their communities and schools, providing information, advocacy and referral.

COURT SUPPORT

We have provided support at Geelong Magistrates' Court to:

483

 women seeking Family Violence Intervention Orders

An average of

40

 WOMEN PER MONTH

We provided support to:

60

 women who identified as having a culturally and linguistically diverse background

54

 women who identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Supporting women and children at high risk of experiencing family violence

WE REFERRED

24

 women and children to the Barwon Risk Assessment and Management Panel

OUR SPECIALIST FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICES

The 2015 - 2016 financial year has seen a significant rise in family violence incidents in the Barwon Region, and across Victoria

MINERVA HAS ASSISTED AND SUPPORTED 2,847 WOMEN AND 1,711 ACCOMPANYING CHILDREN

When police attend an incident of family violence, they complete an L17 form. L17 forms in relation to women are sent to Minerva for follow up support. 80 per cent of women and children are referred to Minerva via the L17 process. We experienced a 28 per cent increase on the 2014 - 2015 data. We have also received 160 L17 referrals for Colac. The severity in the incidents has been extreme in many cases. We have also worked with more women experiencing physical assaults than previously.

The Intake Team is the first point of contact for all information coming into the service. They prioritise referrals in relation to the level of risk and identified needs of women and children, undertaking risk assessments and developing safety plans. They provide a critical pathway for women and their children affected by family violence including information and support to access safe accommodation options, referral for legal advice, financial entitlements, counselling information, and other services where required.

The Intake Team can link women to our court support worker who is able to provide support to women attending the Geelong Magistrates' Court for Family Violence Intervention Order matters. This year our court support worker has supported over 480 women – around 40 women per month.

Aboriginal Outreach

One of our workers is a Wathaurong elder - traditional owner of the land in our region. She attends the Wathaurong Outreach Centre twice a week. We support Aboriginal women and children experiencing family violence with a culturally sensitive lens. This worker currently supports approximately 10 women and children at any one time. She is linked in with her community which enables us to provide more appropriate support for the women accessing our service.

Supporting women and children to access safe accommodation

Accommodation for women escaping family violence has continued to be a priority issue over the past year. Crisis accommodation in our region remains in short supply as does longer term housing options for women and children.

Our work with women and children in the refuge highlights a number of broader systemic issues including the lack of exit pathways, the complex needs of women and children accessing the refuge, and the communal living nature of the refuge.

OUR PROJECTS

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Family Violence Engagement Project

The Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Family Violence Engagement Project is a three-year initiative to develop and implement a culturally-sensitive, integrated family violence service model for CALD communities.

The focus of the project is on addressing family violence in the Karen and Karenni communities - ethnic minorities from Myanmar. The project seeks to empower the Karen and Karenni communities to address family violence within their own communities, and improve the cultural sensitivity of mainstream family violence services.

The project is in its third year of implementation and has included a research component and the development of a train the trainer capacity building program. Seven leaders from the Karen and the Karenni communities have committed to participate in the training.

Minerva received additional funding from Give Where You Live to implement another component of the project – a capacity-building program for service providers. This program aims to increase

service providers' awareness of the practices, beliefs, and life experiences unique to Karen and Karenni people with a view to improving the service providers' approach to supporting these clients.

The Young Migrant Women Leadership Training Project

Funded by the Victorian Women's Benevolent Trust and Grosvenor Foundation, this project delivered a training to 22 young migrant women aged 16-22. The project was conducted in partnership with The City of Greater Geelong (COGG) and the North Geelong Secondary College.

Geelong Community Foundation Grant

This year, we received a \$20,000 grant from Geelong Community Foundation to purchase a new vehicle. This has enabled us to reach out to more vulnerable women and children living in rural areas and relieved the financial burden we were experiencing with repairs to our car fleet. We thank Geelong Community Foundation for their generous support.

Women entering our communal refuge are frequently staying for six months or longer as there are few exit pathways for them in the Barwon region.

An example is a client from an Iranian background who, due to her visa status and lack of income, spent almost 12 months living in the refuge. This highlights the need to address the broader systemic gaps especially around the refuge and being available to women applying for Protection Visas with no income.

The communal model of refuge living is not ideal. It can be a very challenging environment for women and children. They can find it difficult to live in a setting with other families who are also escaping family violence and where they share amenities including kitchen, toilets, bathroom, lounge and garden area.

Our work at the refuge also includes working with children. Our children's worker designed and implemented a new assessment tool for work with women and children to assess children's experience

of violence and bio-psycho-social needs. She provides support to individual children as well as group work for mothers around the impact of family violence on children. During the year, she also delivered group work sessions with children in the refuge using creative play such as painting and other crafts to discuss various subjects around themes including safety and recovery. Women residing at the refuge continue to have access to remote witness facilities at Geelong Magistrates' Court so that they can safely appear in court for Intervention Order matters.

We are excited about the implementation of the recommendations of the Victorian Royal Commission Into Family Violence, particularly those relating to the development of a dispersed model for refuges. This will see the establishment of independent living arrangements for women and children who require high security accommodation to remain safe which we believe is a much needed and welcome change to the family violence support systems.

The other housing options managed by us include two crisis housing properties and nomination rights on two transitional houses for women and children. These properties are frequently fully occupied. Availability of safe and affordable private rental accommodation continues to be an issue for women who seek assistance from Minerva. However, we have had some success in supporting women to access private rental and to maintain their tenancies, with support from the private rental access program.

Family Violence Flexible Support Packages

The availability of Family Violence Flexible Support Package funding has enabled us to work with women to identify and access a range of supports to assist them to meet their goals. This new funding allows workers to identify creative and more holistic options for women and children. For example, a flexible support package was used to provide home based child care to one client's child while the child's mother was hospitalised for a significant period. Without these funds the child would have been placed in emergency foster care in the absence of any informal social support.

Secondary consultation

Our family violence case managers have continued to provide secondary consultations for various professionals in the Barwon region including health, education and community sector professionals, private psychologists, and police who are seeking information and advice about the clients that they are working with.

Barwon Adolescent Family Violence Program

The aim of the Barwon Adolescent Family Violence Program is to deliver an integrated 'youth focussed, family centred' service model that provides intensive case management support and group work programs to support both parents and the young person using violence. A key principle of the program is that, whilst parents/carers are not responsible for their child's violence, they play a pivotal role in supporting the young person to change their behaviour.

Blossom Group

Minerva has delivered the Blossom Group for a number of years. The overall aim of the group is to support women to begin to recover from the impact of family violence, with a focus on education and empowerment. In Term One, 2016 eight women participated in the Blossom Women's Support Group. A range of topics are covered in the group sessions including understanding gender equality, impacts of family violence, healthy relationships and resources. Barwon Community Legal Service has continued to participate in the Blossom Group, providing a legal information session. The feedback from the group was that the connectedness between the women participating, the opportunity to share experiences, and information from the sessions has been very beneficial to them.

Working in partnerships to keep a focus on women at high risk of further and ongoing violence

We continue to develop partnerships to better attend to the needs of women and children at high risk of further violence. Minerva is a partner in the Risk Assessment Management Panel (RAMP) network. This panel seeks to support women at high risk to access appropriate services through multi agency integration and commitment. During 2015/16, we referred 24 women and their children to RAMP.

We also participate in the high risk strategy partnership known as the Multi Agency Information Sharing Meeting (MAISM). This regular meeting is held with the Geelong Police Family Violence Unit.

THE MINERVA BOARD





Clockwise from left: Renee Fiolet, Chairperson; Lisa Armstrong-Rowe; Helen Long; Andrew Edgar; Sheridan Salmon; Greg Smith, Treasurer
Photographer: Mary Thompson

FINANCIAL REPORTS
MINERVA COMMUNITY SERVICES INCORPORATED

**STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE
INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2016**

	Note	2016	2015
		\$	\$
Service Fees		-	2,893
Grants Received	2	1,309,507	1,038,641
Other Income		409,032	164,116
Overheads		(361,130)	(250,013)
Employee Costs		(1,150,575)	(1,010,037)
Depreciation		(23,206)	(27,062)
Other Expenses		(105,202)	(4,277)
Surplus / (Deficit) before income tax		78,426	(85,739)
Income tax expense		-	-
Surplus / (Deficit) after income tax from ordinary activities		78,426	(85,739)
Other comprehensive income for the year			
Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss:		-	-
Items that will be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss when specific conditions are met:		-	-
Total other comprehensive income for the year		-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year		78,426	(85,739)

The accompanying notes form part of this financial report.

MINERVA COMMUNITY SERVICES INCORPORATED

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30TH JUNE 2016

	Note	2016	2015
		\$	\$
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	3	711,212	472,921
Receivables	4	44,906	3,218
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		756,118	476,139
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property Plant and Equipment	5	90,252	93,579
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		90,252	93,579
TOTAL ASSETS		846,370	569,718
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Payables	6	162,473	46,197
Provisions	7	65,664	59,643
Income in Advance		71,200	-
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		299,337	105,840
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Provisions	7	26,651	21,922
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		26,651	21,922
TOTAL LIABILITIES		325,988	127,762
NET ASSETS		520,382	441,956
MEMBERS' FUNDS			
Retained Surplus		520,382	441,956
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS		520,382	441,956

The accompanying notes form part of this financial report.

AUDITORS REPORT

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF MINERVA COMMUNITY SERVICES INC

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of Minerva Community Services Inc, which comprises the committee's report, the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2016, the statement of profit and loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the certification by members of the committee on the annual statements giving a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the association.

Committee's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The committee of Minerva Community Services Inc is responsible for the preparation of the financial report, and has determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Victorian Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The committee's responsibility also includes such internal control as the committee determines 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 judgment, 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.

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

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Minerva Community Services Inc as at 30 June 2016 and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, and the Victorian Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.

Material Uncertainty Regarding Continuation as a Going Concern

Without qualifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1(i) in the financial report which indicates that the entity is expected to be wound up during the 2016-17 financial year. This indicates that there is material uncertainty which may cast significant doubt about the entity's ability to continue as a going concern.

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 to assist Minerva Community Services Inc to meet the requirements of Victorian Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.



LBW Chartered Accountants



Sripathy Sarma

Principal

Dated this 8th day of November

2016

THANKS TO SUPPORTERS

Our sincere thanks to all those who have assisted and supported us during 2015 - 2016

Barwon Centre Against Sexual Assault
Barwon Child Youth and Family
Barwon Community Legal Service
Barwon Health
Bethany Community Support
Business and Professional Women Geelong
Centrelink
Centacare
City of Greater Geelong
Colac Area Health
Corio Community Health Service
Council to Homelessness Persons
Court Fund
Dawn Wade Foundation
Department of Health and Human Services
Deakin University
Department of Justice and Regulation
Diversitat
Domestic Violence Resource Centre
Domestic Violence Victoria
Embrace Awareness
Geelong Advertiser
Geelong Community Foundation
Geelong Mum's
Geelong Rotary Club

Give Where You Live
Gordon TAFE
Grill'd Waurn Ponds
Homestart
Impact
In-touch Multicultural Centre against Family Violence
LBW Chartered Accountants
McKillop Family Services
Pathways
Probus Club of Geelong
Quality Improvement Council
Queens Park Golf Club
Rosewall Neighbourhood House
Safe Steps
Salvation Army
Second Bite
Shell Australia
Soroptimist International Geelong
St Josephs College
Telstra
Travellers Aid
Victoria Legal Aid
Victoria Police
Victorian Council of Social Services
Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-Operative
Women's Legal Service Victoria
Zonta International



St Joseph's College

Claire Yeatman, Operations Manager with Sgt Kevin Godfrey, Victoria Police, Head of Family Violence Unit, Geelong and St Joseph's College students who went on to raise \$3,500 through a social media campaign, an art event and a 20 km walk.

This is very exciting the boys have worked very hard with their teacher Leah Irving.



2015 Minerva High Tea

The 2015 Minerva High Tea raised approximately \$5,000 in 2015. We thank all of our supporters who attended and helped to make it such a special event.

Minerva acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government, Give Where You Live and Geelong Community Foundation.



The background of the entire page is a complex, abstract geometric pattern. It consists of numerous irregular, overlapping shapes in various shades of purple, ranging from light lavender to deep, dark indigo. The shapes are interconnected by thin, dark purple lines, creating a mosaic-like effect. The overall appearance is organic and textured, resembling a crystalline or cellular structure.

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