

2015

It's been a *BIG* year

2016

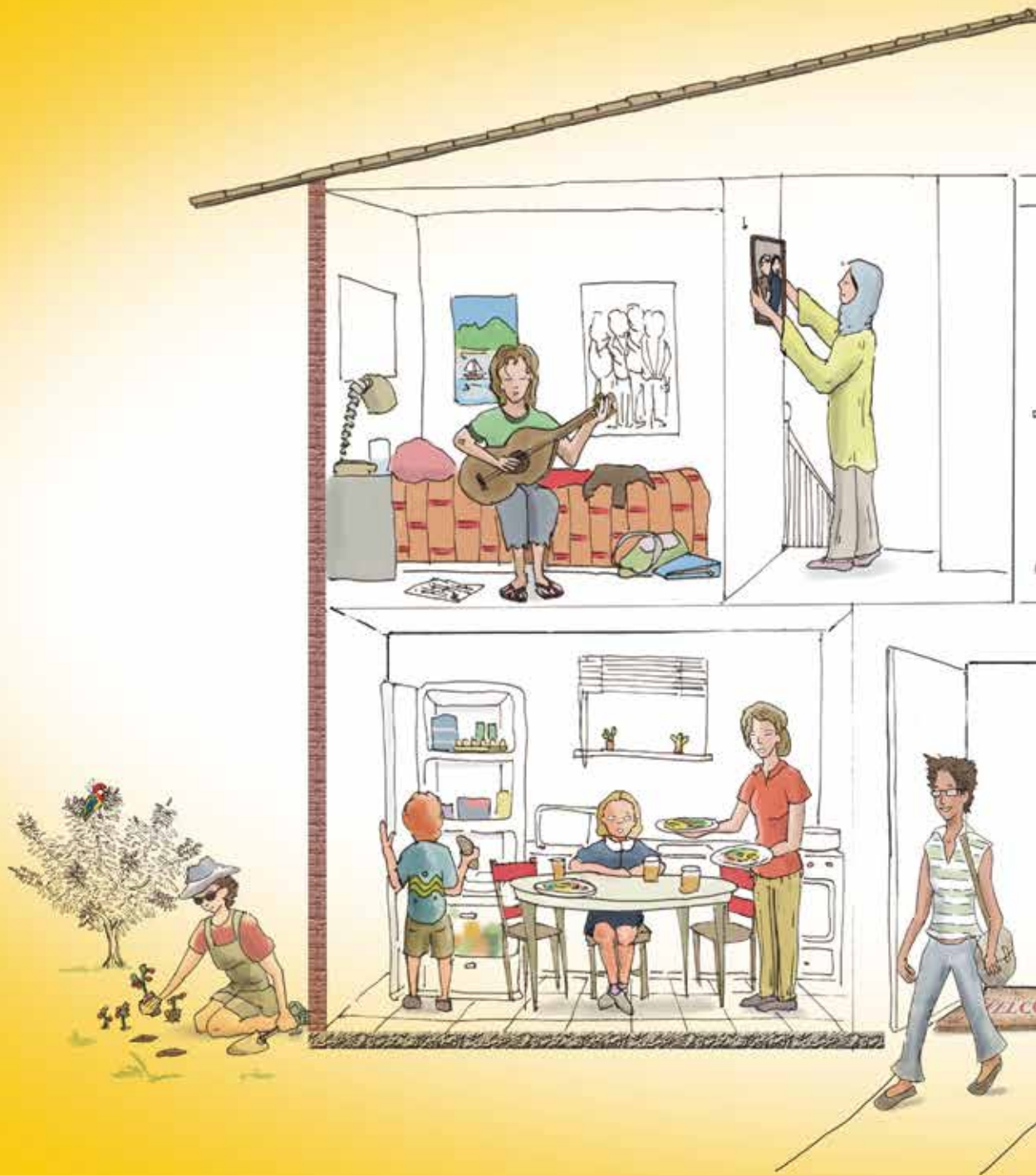
serving *MORE* women
in *MORE* ways
in *MORE* places
with *MORE* partners
and every day, *MORE* supporters



Bonnie
Support Services

by women and *with* women

.....
Annual Report 2015-16
.....



OUR MISSION Supporting women with children who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence and/or are homeless or at risk of homelessness.



Bonnie Support Services Ltd works to enhance women's skills, knowledge and capacities with information, referrals, case management, supported housing and independent living. Our goal is to enable women to make informed choices and enhance their opportunities to participate in social, economic and cultural life and activities in the community. Bonnie's also supports women to develop supportive and trusting relationships, self-management skills and accountability thus enhancing confidence and living skills.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Bonnie's operates within a feminist philosophy with an unshakeable belief that women and children have the right to be safe and access services which enable them to be autonomous, independent and self-determining.

The Bonnie's commitment is based on the principles of social justice, equity and provides:

- > An environment which values each person's right to be heard
- > An environment which acknowledges the importance of their stories
- > A professional quality service that facilitates reciprocal learning, respects differences, recognises and supports each person's knowledge, experience and the right to self determination
- > Information and referral, clinical assessment, case planning and management, group work and advocacy to enable women and their children to access their rights and entitlements
- > Services in a manner that is flexible and respectful of each person's cultural background, language and religious beliefs





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Chair's Report

I am delighted to provide this report on the progress and achievements of Bonnie Support Services Ltd. This year has been one of consolidation with the implementation of the new model of service refined and completed. Under the leadership of Executive Officer Tracy Phillips and with recruitment completed we have a dynamic, energetic and effective staff team who collectively continue to deliver a best practice response to women and children experiencing domestic violence and homelessness.

Bonnie's has continued to grow this year and the Board was pleased to work with Family and Community Services to negotiate and develop the *Rapid Response Project* funded under the National Partnerships Against Homelessness. This project

covering the south-west Sydney region has Bonnie Support Services focusing on the Liverpool-Fairfield region while St Vincent's covers the Campbelltown-Wollondilly region and will provide crisis support to women placed in hotels over the weekend period. The project presents Bonnie with the opportunity to develop a new partnership with St Vincent's which has already produced shared policy and procedures and plans for inter-team forums to share practice and experiences.

The Board was particularly pleased to work with

consultant Sue Cripps in developing the BSSL Strategic Plan. The process was particularly enjoyable as Sue engaged staff and all Board members in co-designing a sound Strategic Plan that places Bonnie Support Services well for the future.

On behalf of the Board I would like to express our sincere thanks to those who have made donations to Bonnie's to assist us in meeting the needs of the women and children that we work with.

To those individuals, workplaces, businesses and organisations we say 'thank you'. It is extremely encouraging to our staff to know that our community supports the work we do in not only meeting the immediate needs of the women and children that we work with but our passionate desire for social change to be realised – that violence against women is reduced and women and children live in peace, free from threats, abuse and intimidation.

I take this opportunity to thank my fellow Board members for their commitment and continued support in volunteering their time and expertise. I also, on behalf of the Board, wish to commend the staff of Bonnie for their dedication and commitment in providing a compassionate and best practice response to our clients and to our Executive Officer Tracy Phillips for her passion and leadership in taking the service forward.

Finally, I wish to thank Family and Community Services for their continued support. We look forward to the year ahead as we continue to build a strong, dynamic and leading women's service in south-western Sydney.



Betty Green
CHAIR

It is extremely encouraging to our staff to know that our community supports the work we do in not only meeting the immediate needs of the women and children that we work with but our passionate desire for social change to be realised...

Executive Officer's Report

I am very pleased to present the 2015-16 Executive Officer's report for Bonnie Support Services. This year at Bonnie's our unshakeable belief that women and children have the right to be safe and access services continues to motivate us. While many challenges remain, we have made great strides and have ambitious plans for the years ahead.

Our statistics show that Bonnie's has supported a record number of women and children compared to the previous years. During the 2015-16 financial year Bonnie's has assisted one thousand four hundred and thirty-eight (1,438) women and children to plan for safety, this includes assessing complex and changing risks for the women we make contact with. Bonnie's advocates for and with victims/survivors and supports them to navigate complex systems; we are all trained in the dynamics of violence and the impacts of trauma; and we use principles of empowerment and client-centred approaches to support women and their children to recover from the impacts of violence, trauma and homelessness. The increase in the number of women coming through our doors shows how accessible the service has become, as well as the growing recognition that violence is not acceptable. I am very pleased to report that Bonnie's this year has supported twice as many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children than the previous year.

However the level of unmet need for specialist support services like Bonnie's is even larger than that indicated by waiting times and turn-away data which is no longer measured. Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) has found that in 2012 there were at least 81,900 women who wanted to escape their current violent partner but never have. Even more disturbing is the finding that one in every 12 women indicated that they had escaped their abusive partner but later returned, in whole or in part because they had nowhere else to go.

This year Bonnie's has focused on delivering a professional and quality service for women with great improvements in our housing provision and securing many great housing outcomes for

women. I am very pleased to say that Bonnie's has been able to upgrade and improve the quality of housing thanks to the help and support of local businesses too.

As we all know Domestic Violence and Homelessness is not a Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm issue. Refuges prior to the 'reforms' provided weekend services. I am very pleased to say that this year myself and Bonnie's Chairperson, Betty Green, have held extensive negotiations with the NSW government on a new type of weekend rapid response service to replace the old traditional model no longer available. I am pleased to say this is a new service offering for the 2016-17 year and I look forward to implementing this new program.

Rapid Response Team



With so many changes in our industry I have paid particular attention in the 2015-16 year to forming new partnerships and enhancing many of our old ones. This has been a key area of work, which has paid off for the women we serve in two key areas; improved service provision and increased funding for creative initiatives.

I am extremely grateful for the enhanced agility of our service to provide creative high-impact initiatives that make a difference to women's lives. These initiatives generally cannot be provided from government funding. Rather they are provided through the generosity of donors; corporate and private. We've attracted support from many individuals and businesses. These new relationships are so encouraging and inspiring, and

I am extremely grateful for the enhanced agility of our service to provide creative high-impact initiatives that make a difference to women's lives.

make a big difference in the work we do. Just one example is a generous donation from Mt Pritchard and District Community Club Ltd (Mounties) to refurbish one of our spaces and the staff at Bonnie's voted unanimously to create a teenage hang out. It's tough for teenagers to be in the refuge away from their friends and even their usual school location. Imagine the relief for teenagers and their mothers, and the other women in the refuge, that a well-designed and funky teenage space is available so the teens can take their 'space' at a much-needed time. Donors are becoming an essential part of keeping Bonnie's sustainable and dynamic which is one of our key goals.

Bonnie's is very pleased to have commenced a local, small-scale (given the size of the problem) service delivery coordinated response to make more counselling available to women who have suffered trauma.

At Bonnie's we are always thinking about ways to keep women safe and get them the help they need. We want to be accessible to all women, so we've enhanced our relationship and partnered with the Liverpool Women's Health Centre (LWHC) to create our new *Safety Hub*. It's a drop-in centre, close to shops and services right in the middle of Liverpool, inside the LWHC, where any woman can safely access expert domestic violence support and see a Bonnie's worker face-to-face.

The challenges for DV and homelessness are great going forward. Integrated resourcing and funding across all jurisdictions is crucial in order to effect long-term change, especially on the long-term impacts of trauma. Women and children's family and domestic violence counselling services are a critical part of an integrated response to family and domestic violence. Bonnie's is very pleased to have commenced a local, small-scale (given the size of the problem) service delivery coordinated response to make more counselling available to women who have suffered trauma. This year Bonnie's commenced an integrated partnership across three suitably qualified

organisations (with women-only service settings and philosophies) to provide essential counselling, psychological services and group therapy through Liverpool Women's Health Centre, Rosebank and Cara House – Centre for Resilience and Recovery for women dealing with the impact of trauma.

Bonnie's is committed to supporting innovative approaches particularly for the diverse communities here in South Western Sydney. This year Bonnie's is supporting the creative initiative of Jane Stratton; 'Lost in Books' which is a multilingual social enterprise bookstore café that subtly hosts a variety of community services to help women who are at risk of violence, exclusion and poverty.

All of our work aligns to our four strategic imperatives of delivering professional quality services with a positive impact for women, ensuring our services are culturally appropriate to ATSI women and children, keeping the staff engaged and motivated and ensuring that the organisation is sustainable and dynamic.

In the last year Bonnie's has substantially increased its works on social marketing campaigns. We use our blog to share some of the best and brightest ideas from Australia and internationally on domestic violence and homelessness. You'll find on our website links to videos, articles, innovative practice, thought provoking ideas and stories of courage and survival from women themselves. We also share some of our own news, our supporters' and





Lunch with Stephen and Trent from UPS who made a generous donation on behalf of UPS staff.

the services we provide. Domestic violence and homelessness are of course, huge issues for our community, and right now these serious topics are in the spotlight in a way that we haven't seen before. Our newsletter is adding to that discussion. Our blogs are written or suggested by all our staff and a range of guest bloggers too. It's a way for us to keep the focus not just on the issues but on creative solutions too.

Bonnie's has led, and will continue into the next year, to lead a consortium of health, women's, community and research organisations to produce the *Journeys to Safety* stories (working title only). The publication aims to deepen the community understanding of how woman can escape domestic violence, and maintain independent, safe lives. This is an innovative and exciting publication to be made available in GP waiting rooms, which can inspire women that it is possible and well worth the journey.

In conclusion the success of Bonnie's approach demonstrates that it is not simply a matter of

expanding generalist services to absorb demand for domestic and family violence. People who have had domestic and sexual violence inflicted upon them have specific needs that specialist services and women only service settings like Bonnie's are best placed to address.

In 2016-17 financial year I will lead Bonnie's to maintain the excellent service standards it has reached and I will do whatever I can to get better recognition and protection of the work of Bonnie's and other specialist services from any further funding changes.

I thank my Board, all Bonnie's fantastic staff, my peers, the NSW government and all those businesses and individuals who support the work of Bonnie's and contribute to improving the lives of women and children.

Tracy Phillips
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Program Manager's Report

It has been another big year at Bonnie's with continuing growth, and I am glad to report we are proud of the number of families we were able to assist on a daily basis.

The growing demands for support means we have to find strategies to respond to those who approached us for assistance but at the same time offer a holistic and meaningful working relationship to our existing clients. The credit goes to our staff at Bonnie's for their flexibility, dedication to respond to this expanding need and their tireless efforts to offer high standard support.

We are lucky here at Bonnie's because whether it is Group Work, Parent Support, Case Management, School Holiday Activities, Living Skills Support or Tenancy Support, our staff wants to assist our clients to work towards a safe and secure future for themselves and their children. This was achieved due to our team's commitment to our shared vision of "A safe world where women and children flourish and reach their full potential."

When a family finds private rental, saves enough money to move out, finds employment or is ready to study again, these achievements warm our hearts, and we again can look toward the future to find more of these moments.

out, finds employment or is ready to study again, these achievements warm our hearts, and we again can look toward the future to find more of these moments.

We have had a fair share of challenges this year, but one of our prominent challenges still is turning away clients who are not on permanent visas and do not have an income. Our Community Team works tirelessly to seek alternative accommodation and support for these clients, but this can prove challenging at times.

Even though there are challenges, we have some favourite moments that sustain us in our everyday work. When a family finds private rental, saves enough money to move

Throughout 2015-16, our Community Workers, Child and Youth Workers, Family Workers, Tenancy Workers and Admin Team gave unswerving commitment to never lose sight of the bigger picture of delivering quality services to our clients, and to advocate for the rights of women and their children to remain safe and for their choices to be respected.

At Bonnie's, we acknowledge and are grateful for the support from our neighbouring agencies, and we are appreciative for these ongoing relationships. This allows us to continue the important work into the next financial year.

As we head toward the future at Bonnie's, we will continue to focus on working with our existing clients and looking forward to assisting new families with unchanging passion and dedication.

An Le
PROGRAM MANAGER



Some of our activities and services

At Bonnie's we provide a range of services and supports for women and children with a view to meeting them at the stage they are at. To do this we undertake work across the spectrum – from prevention and early intervention to responding to the crisis that is domestic violence or homelessness.

We run group and educational programs for women and also for children, we encourage self-care, provide opportunities for women to share their experiences and their stories; engage in community activities with other services, celebrate important events, target particular community groups.

A big part of our standard business is to provide crisis and then transitional accommodation to women and their children who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and outreach services to those women who are not accommodated by us but need support in their particular circumstances. We have a big emphasis on safety. To enhance all of this we engage in many activities including the Mil-Pra Awards, Sorry Day and Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training with the wonderful Flic Ryan. We participated in the Western Sydney Homeless Connect. Bonnie's is involved in many activities during the 16 days of Action – a key time on the calendar for those working in domestic violence. Staff participate in many interagencies, forums and committees and below we highlight just some of the ways we work in and with the community and the women and children we have the pleasure of supporting.

Journeys to Safety

During the 2015-16 year Bonnie Support Services became the lead partner for a project that will deepen the understanding of how women can escape domestic violence and maintain independent, safe lives. A positive strength based story approach to help everyone see why it's so important to be able to live free from violence.

Journeys to Safety is a book of stories and images featuring 6-8 in-depth accounts from women, told in their own words. Our focus is on the women and their solutions – not the violence they have suffered.

It has been funded by a consortium of health, women's, community and research organisations that are passionate about improving the safety of women. University of Western Sydney will study the common themes and publish findings from the stories.

Journeys to Safety is currently being written, photographed and researched by a creative partnership team who have been amazing to work with. I would like to especially give thanks to the two main drivers for the project; Only Human Communication (Moya and her amazing team) and Liz Reedy who have kept the ball rolling on this fantastic project, still in press!

5000 copies of the book will be published in 2017 and distributed free of charge. An ongoing publisher will be sought after the initial release.

Nite Under the Stars

In August 2015, two Bonnie's staff and colleagues volunteered to be part of 'Nite Under the Stars'. This idea to sleep out for a night and raise funds and awareness around homelessness was put together by a group of local services. They sold raffle tickets, got sponsorship and spent the night of August 7 in the freezing cold on the top roof of the Fairfield car park grounds.

Annoying friends and family to give up their hard earned cash was challenging but staff were pleasantly surprised by how generous people can be. It was the 'sleeping out' that everyone was dreading most. As one staff member said: "I am not a 'camper' and fully rely on my creature comforts. Despite being from Ireland I am very much accustomed to the luxuries of a warm house and cosy bed."



Each service set up their information stands alongside volunteers who provided much needed warm soup and coffee stalls. The party atmosphere was infectious with children laughing on bouncy castles; face painting, photo booths and entertainment provided by fire throwers and dancers. An information area displayed services users' stories and experiences of being homeless or victims of domestic/family violence. The auction was led by a woman from Fairfield Housing NSW whose humour captivated the whole audience.

But when the lights went out at 12pm and the cold air kicked in, the laughter began to fade. People scattered and set up their camps. You could see eyes darting and people rushing to secure a place close to the warmth of the shopping centre doors. Lying on a hard, freezing cold ground, the reality of what they had signed up for took hold. Time seemed to go by so slowly and it was agreed not to look at watches because it just made the night drag longer. It was wishful thinking to even consider a few minutes of sleep in those conditions and when the sun finally began to rise, you could see how eager everyone was to get 'home'. (And grateful they had one!)

There was a great turn out with 131 people who attended the event and 59 people who slept out.

Kerry's Pamper Days

Kerry says Bonnie's is her volunteer work. She brings massage tables, make-up kit, skin care and calls it a 'mobile, pop-up day club'.

A lot of the women Bonnie's works with have never had a pampering session before. They might never have had a facial or a massage. They sit down with Kerry first who explains really carefully what she is going to do. The big thing is that they feel safe. They can start off a little apprehensive, maybe a little tense, but they relax right into it. Some of them are snoring away quite happily towards the end. It's a lovely sight.

Kerry believes there's a healing power in touch, gentle touch, particularly for women who've been through what they've been through. Sometimes

their bodies and faces have been used as a warring ground, so for someone to touch them gently is to feel safe and comfortable. The message that the pampering sends to women is: 'you are worthy and you are important'. Sometimes you can actually see the stress disappearing.

Kerry had 35 years at the Department of Education and Training as a teacher and then a principal. Having a stressful job, she did lots of training in natural therapies so that she would stay well herself, and now she is helping other women stay well too. When she was a principal, they had refuges in the area and families from domestic violence situations, so she understood a bit about what was happening for these women.

She's still a busy person – a part-time lecturer at UWS and running a Nutrimerics business but she wanted to volunteer. Kerry told us 'Well, this is a way I can bring everything I learnt together and give back to the women who have been through so much.' It's a wonderful experience.

Aboriginal Mural Project

The office at Bonnie's is being brightened with the installation of the Aboriginal mural which is being created by a group of Bonnie's clients and staff with artist Danielle Sullivan – DJMate. We negotiated



with Danielle to conduct workshops where clients and staff create their own pieces of Aboriginal art. Danielle will select parts of these works and mix them together to create a fabulous mural which will have a little bit of everyone embodied within the design. We are excitedly waiting for the finished artwork which is to become a permanent fixture in the office. This workshop was a great cross cultural experience for all the participants.



Biggest Morning Tea

A delicious morning tea was held on 27th May 2016 to raise funds for the Cancer Council. Clients and staff utilised their baking skills and created some tasty treats that everyone enjoyed

over a cuppa, chat and laughter. This is a great annual event to bring us together and has become a permanent spot on Bonnie's calendar. Thanks to Bianca for co-ordinating this important event.

DIY Workshops

Kylie Watson, The Home Handywoman, conducted DIY workshops which educated women about how to fix things for themselves.

The workshops were hands on, with the women initially going for a wander around Bonnie house to find the electricity (mains power), water and gas meters. The women were shown the function of these meters, how to isolate them, to check if there is a problem and that they cannot hurt them.

The women were shown how to fix a leaking tap by learning to pull a tap apart, the parts of the tap and where the washer is. They had a go at pulling a tap apart and putting it back together.

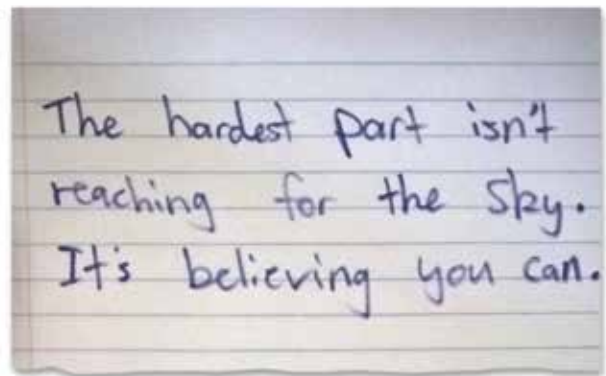
Hand held drills were shown to the women with Kylie going through the parts and how they operate. Most of the women had never held a drill and were terribly afraid of them. By the end of the workshop they were all drilling holes and taking photos. It was really exciting for them to feel confident about what that they can do themselves, without having to rely on a tradesperson or a partner.

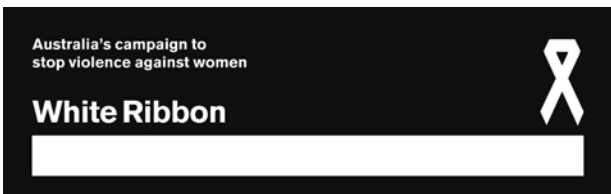
They are given pointers about equipment and what type of questions to ask a tradesperson when they need work done. Toolkits are available for the women to borrow from Bonnie's.

These workshops were sponsored by the Liverpool Women's Resource Centre. Thanks to Nikki Tighe.

School Holiday Program

Bonnie's recognises the challenges that can arise for mothers during the school holidays, particularly for women and children living in crisis accommodation and without a lot of resources. The Child and Youth







Team works hard to create an enjoyable space and find the right activities that will act as a bridge between mothers and children at this time so that everyone enjoys their break. Movies, Monkey Mania, outings to Calmsley Hill Farm, bowling, craft days – making pencil cases, snow domes and murals and welcome books for children who are new residents, have all added to the fun in this past year.

White Ribbon Day

White Ribbon Day is an event for men and boys wanting to change the status quo in relation to violence against women.

Their vision is: ***A nation that respects women, in which every woman lives in safety, free from all forms of men's abuse.***

Although it is essentially a men's event, Bonnie's, along with many other women's and mainstream services, takes a major role in supporting this day. 2015's awareness raising started with a huge turnout of people – men, women and children; workers, survivors, school children and other community members – marching through Cabramatta in a great show of strength. The day was extremely hot and the visual was impressive, as were the formal proceedings, co-ordinated by Cabramatta Police afterwards. A great day!

Bonnie's also took part in a forum for workers, a panel discussion with the Khmer community, and community activities in Miller to highlight and protest against violence against women in Australia and to provide men with the opportunity to take the oath.

IWD Event

This year's International Women's Day event was again a joint celebration shared with our sister services, Liverpool Women's Resource Centre and Liverpool Women's Health Centre at the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre where we were able to view *Suffragette*, the wonderful film based on the early British feminists who paved the way for women to get the vote. The 2016 IWD theme was "Pledge for Parity" and the inspiring film was very apt.

The film was followed by a great panel discussion reflecting on the theme; chaired by Margaret Hickie.

Appropriately we also used the day to announce the Kate Nickolas Community Service Award which will be given to a woman nominated for her contribution to the community. The inaugural award will be given on International Women's Day, 2017, in recognition of our friend and colleague, Kate, who made a great contribution to women and women's services in south western Sydney.

Hindi and Urdu Speaking Women's Health Group

A new community-care initiative from Bonnie's: a weekly women's health group for Hindi and Urdu speakers is run by Nancelly out of Liverpool Women's Health Centre. The group is mainly for women of Indian descent but any women who speak Hindi or Urdu language are welcome. These women are a big part of the Liverpool demographic but are often very isolated. Some of them are elderly as well, and they mainly depend on their carers or their grown up children. For some of them, their outing outside their home is one day a week, coming to the group.

We had seen the need for a group for women to socialise, and for community resources, health information and raising awareness to take place and when a similar group in Liverpool folded some years ago, the gap was really noticed by the community.

The women are able to support each other, make connections and share information. Some women come from domestic violence situations. It can take

a bit of time for them to break the ice, and feel that they belong and they won't be judged. The thing is these group women, especially the elderly ones, they know if a new face comes they will never ask questions. Instead they will try to support. They understand. They wait until the new woman wants to talk. There is a big welcome for them.

The women sing together, share a meal and share friendship as a way of connecting.

Safety Hub – Outreach at Liverpool Women's Health Centre

For the past year we have piloted a project in Liverpool to provide Bonnie's services from a different site. The response has been great and has told us how important it is for women to have a variety of entry points into Bonnie's.

We want to be accessible to all women, so we've negotiated a partnership with the Liverpool Women's Health Centre (LWHC) to create our new Safety Hub. It's a drop-in centre inside the LWHC, where any woman can safely access expert domestic violence support and see a Bonnie's worker face-to-face.

This will be followed up in the coming year with the allocation of a Project Worker to promote and develop our services in the Liverpool LGA as well as having a specialist worker located there to provide a much needed soft access point for women in Liverpool.

Vietnamese Domestic Violence Group

Bonnie's partners with Fairfield Migrant Resource Centre (FMRC) at CORE to run a monthly domestic violence support group for Vietnamese women. This group is well established and provides information, support and education to women. During the school holidays children participate and have fun with their mothers also. In the coming year the group will also be followed up by an outreach service provided by a Vietnamese speaking staff member from Bonnie's who can provide one-to-one services.

Money Minded

This popular group provides financial guidance and advice around budgeting and general money management. Women often face the challenge of income not quite matching the demands on outgoing finances and this series of workshops helps to provide skills and strategies for being able to manage the budget. For women who have had to deal with homelessness and who are now getting some stability back into their lives so they can enter the housing market, this group provides valuable assistance.

Morning Tea with Amelia

Morning tea with Amelia is a monthly activity attended by women who have parenting questions or issues they would like to discuss in an informal setting. Amelia is a very experienced Child and Family Health Nurse with great knowledge and she joins the group for tea and cakes, while providing everyone with the opportunity to talk about their concerns. They discuss everything and anything about their children – from health, behavioural issues, schooling, tantrums, hygiene and dietary needs and concerns. It is a very positive and enjoyable experience and all the women learn from each other's questions. So there is lots of learning, even if the women feel a bit shy... someone else is likely to have the same question and ask it.

Student Placements

Thanks to our two students who came to Bonnie's on placement this year and made a great contribution to the service:

Leah Hoskin – Certificate IV in Community Service, Meadowbank College of TAFE

Dee Povey – Masters in Counselling, Monash University

We wish you all the best in your future ventures.

Feature story – Tree of Life

The Bonnie's Tree of Life Scrapbooking Group was based on a Narrative Therapy Tree of Life concept that has been used with communities and individuals impacted by trauma. It has been found to be useful in enabling participants to identify how their tree of life has grown and survived the storms of life. At Bonnie's it was developed as a therapeutic creative arts project, focusing on photography and scrapbooking, providing an opportunity for women to create something precious about their lives with their children, celebrating moments of tenderness and connection, as well as noticing strengths, wisdom and creativity.

Bonnie's paid for a photographer to meet the women and capture special moments of intimacy and connection between them and their children. This set the tone and framework of creating something precious and valued. Some women reported having lost precious photos during traumatic moves or never having had the opportunity to have someone capture special moments. Each woman was given copies of her prints to include in her scrapbook and also able to choose 3 prints to be enlarged for picture frames. One woman reported that the pictures of her and her children were now framed on her wall and were the most valued possessions in her house.

Part of the process was about gathering precious fragments which could be reflected on during the safety of the group, and then 'held' after the life of the group in the scrapbook. One woman asked for family members overseas to send her pictures of herself as a little girl. These pictures became a significant part of her scrapbook, and she said that she felt incredibly proud as she looked at herself as a young girl and reflected on her life's journey and how her tree of life had been able to adapt and survive despite significant adversity.

What was most notable about the group was the sense of safety and acceptance that women said that they experienced when participating. Each week women said that they did not want the session to end as it represented time to relax and spend time on caring for themselves. For some women

it provided a distraction from distress, for others a time to connect with themselves at a deeper level and find some internal peace. All reported having enjoyed the interactions with other women. One of the women in the group was

mentally very unwell during the life of the group but committed to come every week and was able to share her distress and find support. Another woman was supporting her son who had been a victim of violence, through a court case. She initially focused her scrapbook on photos of places where she felt safe, but after the court case she brought pictures of her sons into the group, perhaps recognising that it was safe to share and include them in her scrapbook. All the women were gentle and respectful of each other, and despite the sometimes deep feelings of grief, were able to laugh and encourage one another.

The group ended with the participants having created something that they felt proud of and were able to share and celebrate. Over lunch we had a final opportunity to sit together, as we reflected on what had been created with each other and the women also shared with their family workers.

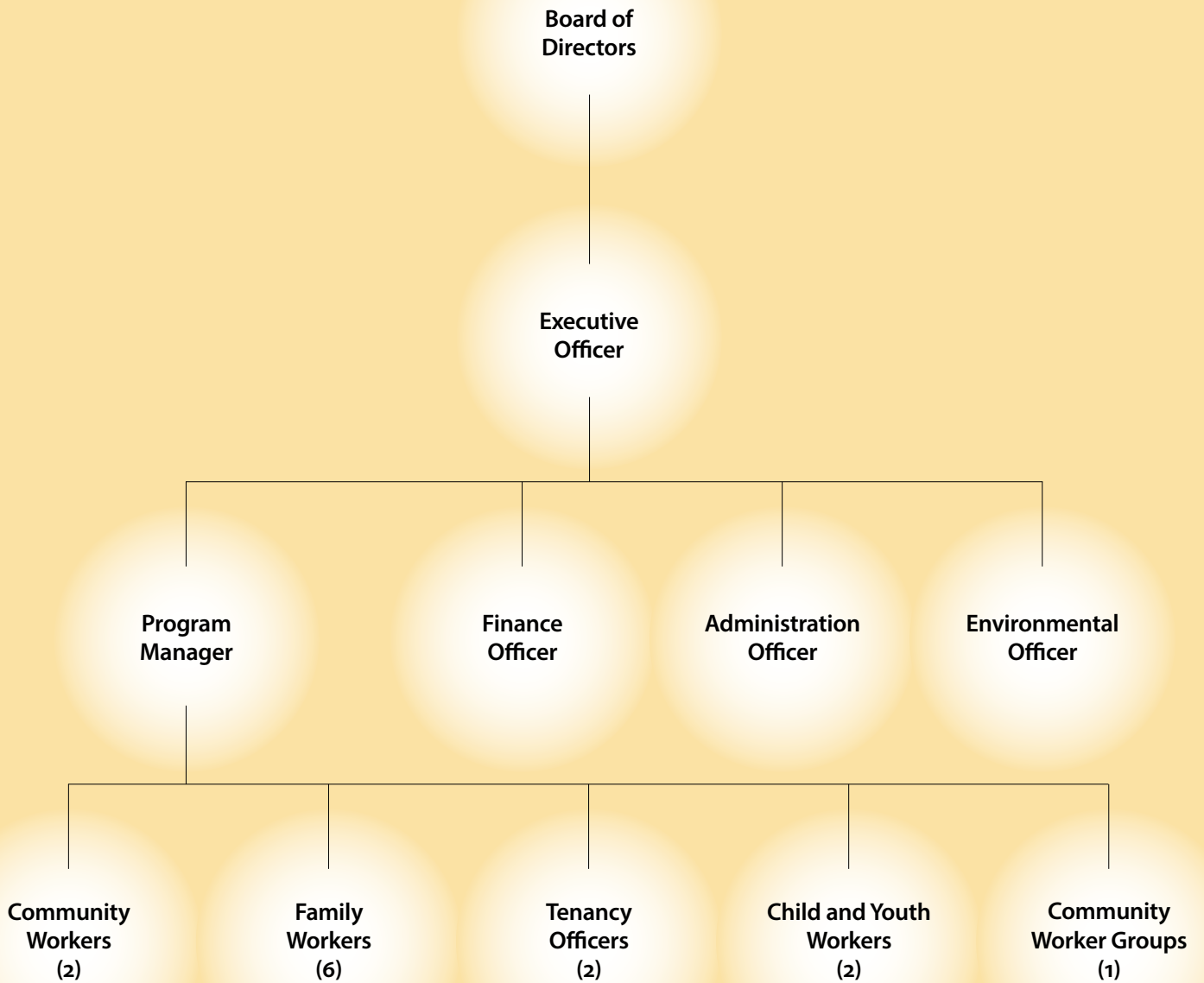
A group poster was created with small icons of tenderness captured of each woman with her children. The words at the bottom of the poster reflecting our experience of the group...

SAFETY
STRENGTH
CONNECTION
DELIGHT
HOLDING



Organisational Chart

Bonnie Support Services Ltd



Our Board



Betty Green – *Chairperson* – A feminist advocate, with a long history working in women's community services; She is currently a PhD candidate undertaking research on domestic violence death reviews in Australia.



Jemima Brewer – *Treasurer* – Jemima has been a practising lawyer for over 22 years with 8 years in Victims' Compensation.



Maree Mullins – *Secretary* – Maree has extensive experience in senior roles in the community sector and is currently CEO of Sunnyhaven Disability Services.



Amelia Scott – Amelia is employed by South West Sydney Local Health District and is our longest serving Board member with a lengthy background working in women and children's health with qualifications in nursing and midwifery.



Frances Atkins – Frances has extensive experience in banking and finance and is a vice president at J.P. Morgan's Corporate and Investment Bank.



Danielle Winzenried – Danielle was formerly a practising lawyer and is now working as an International development practitioner with Refugee Rights and Women's Access to Justice interests and working in social outreach with St John of God.

Donations



1 anonymous donor	Diana Shuker	Joshua Cayho	Paul Schaap
Adrian Hempel	Dianne Beeston – Cross Fit Never Quit	Kerry Newdick	PRD Panania
Alison Poulton – Human Services Liverpool	Dimitra Rigas	Kiera Brown	Premier Brands
Andrew Dunn	Dorothy	Le Erlan Lie	Ranil De Silva
Ashwin Shekhar	Fairfield Business Education Partnership	Leos Club	Renee Forshaw
Bass Hill High School	Fairfield Housing NSW	Lesley Laing	Robyn Metcalfe
Bernadette	Franc Carter	Li Jiang	Rosemary Leonard
Binyamin Lawal	Gillian Howell	Lime People	Salon Secrets Beauty Salon
Brian Bailison – PAYCE Management	Graham Cross	Lions Club of Cabramatta Cabra-Vale	Salvation Army
Bunnings Villawood	Gregory Drumbell	Liverpool Women’s Resource Centre	Sharon Tierney – Share the Dignity
Café Smart	Grill’d Pty Ltd Stockland Wetherill Park	Mai Nguyen	St George Montessori Long Day Care Centre
Carmela Ferraro	Guildford Leagues Men’s Bowling Club	Manar Asfour Awad	Stephen Thomas
Carmen Serrano	Guildford Rugby League Club	Marcelle Catania	Streetsmart Australia
Carole Best	Hannah Carter	Matthew Lothian	Sydney Opera House
Centre Management Fairfield Forum	Hasara Senanayake	Mehmet Akyuz	Sylvia Khoury Elkor
Chris Mendes	Heike Obermayr	Michael Robinson	Tania and Ana Galaz
Church of God Strathfield	Hot Springs	Monica and Alejandro Valdes	The Sister Code
Colin Lacherids	Helen Callaghan	Natalie Higuera	University of Sydney
Community Kids Before and After School Care	Janaire Reese	Natalie Italiano	Universal Parcel Service (UPS)
Curves Wetherill Park	Janelle Ryan	Nick Elsey	Variety Club
David Sag	Joan Gennery	Omran Omran Pty Ltd	Vesna Arbanas
David Small	Jodie Littlewood	Paloma and Nelson Melgar	Victim Services – Staff fundraising event
Deanna El Khoury	John Samaha	Paola Andrea	
	Josh Howes	Parex Davco	

Thanks to you all and to anyone not included on this list who generously donated cash, furniture and other goods, in-kind support or your time. It is greatly appreciated by all of us at Bonnie’s – staff and clients. It is your generosity that gives us the warm glow.



Some stats about our work



Clients we saw
in 2015-16

1,438

139

of these people identified
as Aboriginal or
Torres Strait Islander

335

people were assisted to
sustain their tenancy

Client country of birth

(01.07.2015 to 30.06.2016)

Afghanistan	10	Korea	7
Argentina	6	Lebanon	12
Australia	584	Morocco	3
Azerbaijan	2	New Zealand	17
Bangladesh	3	Nigeria	2
Bolivia	4	Pakistan	6
Bosnia	5	Peru	8
Cambodia	4	Philippines	16
Canada	2	Samoa	3
Chile	3	Scotland	2
China	13	Serbia	4
Cook Islands	2	Sierra Leone	7
Croatia	1	Somalia	4
Egypt	2	South Sudan	2
England	3	Southern & East Africa	3
Fiji	45	Sudan	7
France	6	Syria	2
Germany	4	Thailand	13
Hong Kong	2	Tonga	2
India	4	Turkey	5
Indonesia	6	USA	1
Iran	9	Vietnam	28
Iraq	37	Not known	368

The main reason women and children needed our services was because they were experiencing domestic or family violence. The second most common reasons for seeking assistance were facing a "housing crisis".

The majority of women were in the 26-35 year age bracket, followed closely by those aged 36 – 45 years.

Our referrals came from many different sources, with almost 1/3 coming from a Special Homelessness Agency/outreach worker.

Women came from many cultural and ethnic backgrounds, but it is evident that the "soft access" points as provided via the Vietnamese Group and the Hindi/Urdu speaking group increase women's access to Bonnie's.

