

2018-2019

THE YEAR OF WOMEN GROWING

TOGETHER



Bonnie Support Services



ANNUAL REPORT



OUR VALUES

Bonnie's operates within a feminist philosophy and an unshakeable belief that women and children have the right to be safe and self-determining. Our vision is for a world where women and children flourish and reach their full potential.

What We Do

Bonnie's provides support and/or accommodation to women and their children, who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or escaping domestic violence. Our goal is to enhance women's skills, knowledge and capacities with a range of services that allow women to make informed choices and enhance their opportunities.

Our Commitment

- ☉ We will support each person's right to be heard
- ☉ We will acknowledge the importance of our unique stories and experiences
- ☉ We will always offer a professional, high quality service where we all learn from each other and respect our differences
- ☉ We will be flexible and respectful of each person's cultural background, language and religious beliefs

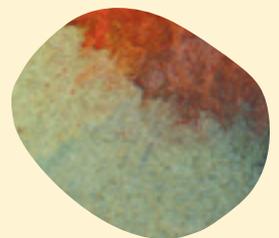
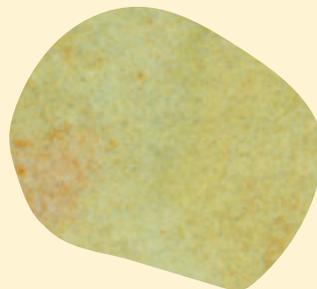
Our Values

- ☉ Advocate courageously
- ☉ Empower women and children
- ☉ Act with integrity
- ☉ Deliver quality services
- ☉ Promote collaboration
- ☉ Work respectfully

Acknowledgement of Country

Bonnie's acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we work – the Cabrogal clan of the Dharug nation, and we pay our respects to the elders, past, present and future.

This Annual Report may contain images of Aboriginal people who are deceased. This may be disturbing for some people.





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FROM OUR CHAIR



I am delighted to provide this report to you; annual report time is always a time for reflection and evaluation as we review the activities, highlights and challenges of another year. In terms of service delivery Bonnie's continues to grow; we continue to exceed service requirements in the provision of best practice responses to women and their children experiencing domestic violence or at risk of homelessness.

Bonnie's established reputation as a leading women's service is reflected in several achievements over the past year which I would like to mention. The official launch of the service's *Reconciliation Action Plan* signified an important milestone for Bonnie Support Services and our commitment as an organisation to an authentic, respectful and meaningful relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our community. Such an achievement was made possible through the hard work of Tracy and the staff team in collaboration with our community partners and Reconciliation Australia.

We have been approached by tertiary institutions to participate in research that contributes to building knowledge, expertise and skills in best practice responses to women, children and families experiencing domestic violence. The Stacy Project with Sydney University is one such project. Its aim is to develop worker's skills and better collaborative practices and interventions. More recently Bonnie's received an invitation from the Australian Catholic University to partner in research examining the impact on children in their experiences of spending time in a refuge. Both important projects that Bonnie's is able to contribute to.

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 realized – that violence against women is reduced and women and children live in peace, free from threats, abuse and intimidation. On behalf of the Board I wish to extend our thanks to Bunnings Villawood, Two Good Company in their regular meals donated fortnightly, Cabramatta High School, Help Astrid Pay It Forward – an inspirational young woman giving back to her community in a number of amazing donation projects, Share the Dignity and Habitat for Humanity to name just a few. Thank you for your support!

The staff team continues to participate in and lead various community-based activities and events that raise awareness and generate conversations concerning domestic violence, such as the Roundtable – Exploring the Intersection between Animal Abuse and Domestic Violence and the Kari Community Event. The Candlelight Vigil is one such event held in commemoration of the women killed in the context of domestic violence over the year that encourages us as a community to reflect on not only the seriousness and tragedy of domestic violence but also what steps are being taken to strengthen the response system and women and children's safety.

We've known for a long time that working together in collaboration and building a better response system is required to address the complex issue of domestic violence. In 1981 the report of the New South Wales Domestic Violence Taskforce, the first state-based inquiry in Australia stated:

“Domestic violence is a deep-seated national problem. Governments at all levels, the community and individuals will need to pull their weight if the extent of domestic violence is to be reduced and eventually eliminated.”¹

... a bold and strong statement that communicated the seriousness and the extent of the violence women experienced in their home.

Research also tells us that when women turn to formal services for support it occurs at a time of crisis, when all other attempts of managing the

violence and abuse is exhausted. While attention has turned to early intervention, as it should, there remains a need for and a responsibility to ensure services are accessible to women in times of crisis. Bonnie's *Domestic Violence Response Enhancement (DVRE) – Rapid Response Project* funded under the National Partnerships against Homelessness has continued to offer best practice after-hours crisis support to women and their children over the past year. The funding of this project was based on an assumption that services could, when the funding ended, sustain the service within their current budget. This is not possible, simply because like all aspects of the services Bonnie's offers, the demand exceeds the service's capacity that often sees our workers and resources stretched in the struggle to ensure women and children are safe.

At the time of writing over the past week media has reported the deaths of five women across the country with at least two of these being domestic violence related murders occurring in New South Wales. Media coverage of these deaths frequently results in more open conversations about domestic violence and

often more women reaching out for support in a time of crisis – it is critical then that services are there to meet that call and provide the support and safety these women and their children require.

I wish to thank my fellow Board members for their commitment and continued support in volunteering their time and expertise. This year we welcomed new Board member Karen Beetson. I also on behalf of the Board wish to commend the staff of Bonnie's 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

"At a recent function, I was reminded why I'm so proud to be associated with Bonnie's. I was talking with a woman who works with a refugee service and she was telling me how fabulous Bonnie's is and how the staff go above and beyond, and how they support the women. And she was telling me all this before I'd been introduced to her as Bonnie's Chair. It was just such a wonderful, wonderful thing to be able to sit there and listen, and be really as proud as punch of us. That's our staff she was talking about! We're there doing the important work. The teams work hard, the culture of the organisation is passionate but professional and look, there's a real authenticity there. They are who they say they are. It's a good, strong, best practice feminist service and in these times, that's really, really important."

1 MURRAY, S. & POWELL, A. 2011. *Domestic violence: Australian public policy*, North Melbourne, Vic., North Melbourne, Vic. : Australian Scholarly Publishing.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



Power through difference

Back in 1974, a group of very different women recognised the need for change. A handful of inner city feminists met up with a number of women from Green Valley and they put their heads together. They knew we needed a refuge in the west and a women's health centre too and it wasn't long before things really started to get moving. Soon, other women were gathering in support of that vision and standing beside women experiencing domestic violence in this area. Bonnie Women's Refuge was the result.

Today, that original vision of standing together continues. We are still a diverse group and we are still working toward safety for all women. Women's need for support and secure housing hasn't changed and this is still the work we do.

There are now twenty-five women working together at Bonnie's. We come from fourteen different cultural or ethnic backgrounds, speak thirteen languages between us and are of diverse ages and professional backgrounds. Our Board of Directors is similarly diverse. We are First Nations' people, migrants, refugees and Australian born and our aim is to be reflective of as many women in the community as we can.

Creating spaces for all women

1 In this past 2018-19 financial year we have launched our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) to give Bonnie's a particular focus on Aboriginal women and children. I am very proud of the work the Bonnie's team and the RAP Working Group (RWG) have done to develop and implement our plan. The work we do with Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander women and children is one of our key priorities and shows our deep desire for reconciliation.

2 We have continued to run the Hindi-Urdu Speaking Women's Health Information Group. This is a large and strong network of women who meet weekly to get support and information, reduce isolation, and eat, sing and dance together. What an amazing, colourful, group of women – supporting each other and always keen to participate and include others.

3 The Vietnamese Women's Group is a partnership with CORE and is now in its 6th year. It brings together another group of local women, initially for support around domestic violence, and more recently on whatever they feel they need. They set their own agenda and own their group!



4 International Women's Day is always cause for celebration and this year Australia's theme, **More Powerful Together**, resonated strongly with me. Together we can do anything and each day at Bonnie's I can see that this is the case. On IWD the women celebrated together and danced and laughed with the children.

5 When terrorism hit Christchurch a group of Muslim women, gathered with us to share lunch, talk about their hopes and their fears of discrimination. It was a heartfelt meeting of women demonstrating their concern for each other. Being together here at Bonnie's they were reminded that they are always welcome and supported.

6 And then there is the Creative Space – a mixed bag of women, creating friendships alongside their arts and crafts and sharing this meditative healing space. The common thread is that they are a group of women who have experienced trauma.

These are just a few examples of how we create space for ALL WOMEN who need our support around domestic and family violence and housing. We are a space for ALL WOMEN to feel heard and understood and be supported to heal. I am very proud of the work that is done here. I'd like to thank the staff for their enormous commitment and for all they contribute at Bonnie's. Thanks also to the Board for their guidance and knowledge, to our partners for their support and to the women and children who share their stories and lives with us.

And finally, this year you'll see that we've made some changes to the style of our Annual Report. It's brimming with the stories of our work and they are told in many voices. Thanks to everyone who has shared with us to bring it to you. We're proud of it. It shows the vitality, the courage and the joy that we see every day at Bonnie's. We hope you enjoy reading it too.

Tracy Phillips
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

“Creating a space for women has many dimensions – it begins with that first contact with the organisation, the welcome and the response they receive. Listening to their story, showing a genuine regard, building trust...”

Below right: The first women's refuge in Australia, Elsie, was set up in Glebe in 1974. Photo: Courtesy Drusilla Modjeska. National Library of Australia.





WHAT BONNIE'S DOES



Ways to grow and
heal **#together**



PROGRAMS

Bonnie's Creative Space

Bonnie's Creative Space has been running for four years now. It's very nourishing, very gentle, very easy. We created it in partnership with Rosebank as a creative and therapeutic drop in space for women to connect with themselves and each other. We have women who are in crisis, women in outreach, women who are transitional and even women who have left the service a year or two ago who want to remain connected to us.

We encourage the women to tell us what they'd like to do. And encourage them to make the group their own. At the moment, it's all about hand-sewing. Everyone loves the sewing: it allows them to slow down, turn their head off and be in their bodies. They can forget about everything. They relax, they can actually relax. And support each other.

The women are extremely creative. Often they might create an image of a flower or a shape or use a colour

and they'll say, 'Oh, my grandmother taught me this,' or 'My mother used to do it this way,' or 'This is the kind of flower I used to have in my backyard at home.' It's therapeutic and culturally enriching.

We have a lot of Arabic speaking women and it's so good just to see them communicating easily with each other, rather than through an interpreter. Just this week, one of the women who has almost no English, connected with the lady beside her and expressed her feelings to her, out loud, in her own language. The rest of the group couldn't understand the words but we understood the essence of what she was saying. We all felt her emotion and vulnerability: and the courage it took to speak up. When her neighbour translated, she listened and nodded and connected in a new way.

It's a beautiful group to be a part of.

Alison, Intake worker





Kidz Space

Led by Marryanne

Kidz Space at Bonnie's is a place where kids can come to share and learn about themselves in a safe place. It's for kids aged 7-11 who have witnessed domestic violence but haven't had a chance to speak about it. Kidz Space gives them the chance to do this, diving in and reflecting on what's going on internally.

We meet once every week for five weeks and do a lot of crafts, games, icebreakers and theatre games. It's a great way to tackle things in a non-invasive style. Kids often don't have the emotional maturity to discuss their emotions – that's why we focus on creative activities.

In the first session we have together, we explore a domestic violence scenario to see where the kids are at. Often they will say, "Oh yeah, my dad did that". This gives us little insights into their lives, emotional landscapes and how we can best help them.

For some of the kids, it's the first time they've actually felt like they've been accepted in a group, and that they're not the only ones to have had the experiences they've had. We had one child who was feeling quite

ashamed about his situation and said, "Oh my dad is in prison...". And then another child in the group softly shared, "Oh yeah, my dad is too." It was a powerful moment.

We've only ever had positive feedback. We've had mums tell us how their child is communicating much more; asking questions and sharing stories. Some mums have realised that they haven't been helping their kids process their experiences. They've been trying to protect their children by not talking about the trauma but their children have wanted to speak about it. Often children will keep things inside because they don't want to hurt their mum or make her cry. When they actually get the opportunity to open up in Kidz Space, they'll then go home and want to talk about it.

Mum's eyes are opened.

We had this one girl who would talk about all the boys she had crushes on. It was so important for her when one of them returned some attention. The superhero she had created had the power



Spaces to thrive #together



"I personally really love the superheroes and monsters activity that we do. We ask the kids to think of something that scares them, and to draw that fear as a monster. Then we ask them what super power could they use to defeat the monster? And they draw it as a superhero. Often they'll start to use violence as the superpower but we tell them that violence is not a superpower. And then they'll think of other things and start being creative. When you get boys who use the power of love to defeat the fear monster, they have an 'aha moment'. It's a great thing to witness."

Marryanne, Child & Youth Worker.

of love, which was really telling. She was craving to be loved.

We also talk about the subtleties of feelings. Like fear for example. There's all levels of fear: there's anxiety, there's worry, there's terror. They're all at different levels on the fear spectrum. If we think the kids are going to understand, we'll go a little bit deeper.



We're also learning along the way – what works and what doesn't because every group is slightly different. Sometimes we say "Oh wow, we did that really well this week. Let's do that next time."

The program is just getting better and better.

Written from a conversation with Marryanne

After School Club and School Holiday Program

Led by Ranjani and Marryanne

"I like seeing kids being in a place where the focus isn't on the trauma they've been through. It's really nice to give them that experience of just going on an excursion and doing something special. It's also a great chance to show them that there are fun things out there and that the world isn't all bad."

Ranjani, Coordinator of After School Club and School Holiday Program

What's different about our After School Club and School Holiday Program?

It's definitely not your average 'child-minding service', that's for sure. It's a space for our mums and their kids to learn new ways to connect with each other and create positive memories together. It's a safe, supported environment and as it's all organised by Bonnie's, it's easy to just turn up and enjoy. It gives us an opportunity to model different ways to handle situations with both the kids and the mum present.

The kids who use our program have often had especially difficult histories. This can include violence at home, moving frequently, emotional and psychological trauma and very unsettled lives. When kids first arrive to Bonnie's they often show the impact of those histories. They might often be timid, unresponsive or have very erratic behaviours. Often their situations have left very little room for fun, relaxed times with their mum. In these programs, they get to play together.

There's subtle changes that we see take place. When kids come to these programs, they can enjoy the sort of everyday experiences that many kids, from more settled backgrounds, might take for granted. After a term with us, they may be able to do activities on their own whereas when they started, they needed constant help and reassurance.



In our School Holiday program, we get the chance to take the kids out and about and do things that mum would find hard to afford herself.

“The last school holidays we went ice skating. At the time, one young boy was having a lot of difficulties with school and low self-confidence. While he was ice skating, he fell over and walked off the rink embarrassed and disappointed. He sat out for a while but then 5 mins later, he got back onto the ice and skated for the rest of the session. For someone with low self-confidence, it was a big achievement. When he reappeared on the ice we all celebrated and a little smile formed on his face.”

In After School Club we run activities relating to art, science and sometimes gardening. One of the kid's favourite activities is making masks and doing papier mache craft. The mums also get involved as we encourage them to make their own. Often they end up giving what they made to their kids, which the kids really like. Some kids also bring their homework to get some help and support from us. Many mums speak English as a second language and are not able to fully support their children with their homework.

The best feedback that we've had is the number of families who keep on coming back!

One mum recently reached out and said “Thank you very much from the bottom of my heart for today. It is the first time I have seen Abdul* happy for a long time”.

*Name changed for confidentiality.

Written from a conversation with Ranjani

Vietnamese Women's Group

More than six years ago, the Vietnamese Women's group started out as a domestic violence support group to newly arrived Vietnamese women. Before long, the group grew into more of an informal space, shaped by the women themselves. They started deciding the topics that we'd talk about during the sessions.

These days, it's just a given that the women run their own show. We have guest speakers that come and share information on the chosen topics. Sometimes it's about parenting, sometimes it's how to deal with Centrelink, or maybe housing queries or health problems – the sky is the limit.

The group is a monthly informal get-together – a space for Vietnamese women to feel supported and connect. We've had women who have felt very isolated at home who have really enjoyed the chance to meet others and learn from each other. Everyone comes from very similar backgrounds: having experienced domestic violence and being a newly arrived migrant. Often the women are unfamiliar with how things work in Australia and the cultural norms, so it's really helpful for them. We can tackle all of their questions and concerns, in a safe and familiar environment.

More about Vietnamese Women's Group

The group runs in partnership between Bonnie's and CORE Community Services, who also have a program that supports women experiencing domestic violence. It's aimed at newly arrived migrant women who are in the areas between Liverpool and Fairfield. The group has been running for longer than 6 years and was initiated by CORE. Most of the participants in the group are either from Bonnie's or CORE but sometimes we get referrals from other services. There's normally around 6-12 women who attend and we provide childcare during the session.

Written from a conversation with Vi

Hindi and Urdu Women's Group

Led by Nancely

Before working at Bonnie's, Nancely worked for another service where she ran a women's health group for Hindi and Urdu Women. When she left this organisation, she was contacted by a woman from the group who needed some assistance. This got Nancely thinking, "If this woman is in need what about the other 10-15 women who were part of the group?"

Nancely decided to get in touch with Tracy and explained the situation. "Leave it with me" said Tracy. Magically, she managed to find funding to start the group again. On the first day back, 25 women turned up. Half of them were from the old group.

And new women keep on coming. Every Friday after finishing the session, Nancely adds new women to her participant list. It's quite obvious that the group is fulfilling a need. Language and lack of cultural support is a huge barrier for these women. For many, going along on Fridays is the only time that they socialise outside the home.

It's primarily a health group so they focus on a health topic every week and have guest speakers that come along too. "This is your group" Nancely says to the women. In January, they sit down and do the planning for the year, deciding what topics to focus on each week. Sometimes after talking for a while,

"I tell the women, 'It's not my group, it's your group.'"

Nancely

the topics just appear on their own. Other times the women have stories and learnings to share and Nancely invites them to be the guest speaker.

Women come from all over: Pakistan, India, Fiji, Singapore, Africa. Anywhere where they speak Hindi and/or Urdu. It's a very multicultural mix.

When the group initially started, one of the elderly women came along and said, "This is heaven". The women are so grateful to be able to attend. They've told us it's something to look forward to every Friday.

The group is very flexible and adaptable to the needs of the women. Anyone can stay as long as they want. If a woman starts studying or working or has visitors, then she can take a break and come back when she's free again.

Lots of the women become so confident and strong after their journey and they start speaking about it to others. Once they've overcome their trauma, they become mentors for other women. "They look out for others and if they see a woman in need, they give out my number for them to contact me."

The women love to attend community events. They

feel that they belong and they just want to take part. They're part of a network of supportive women who understand each other. Some of them have formed some strong connections and feel more comfortable being part of the group than at home.

Written from a conversation with Nancely



PARTNERSHIPS WITH UNIVERSITIES

Over the past 12 months we have enjoyed working with Wollongong University, the Australian Catholic University, Sydney University and the University of Western Sydney. We partner with universities in many ways; from accepting students as interns, to developing projects together, to looking for opportunities together that work for both of us. We've seen great outcomes including attracting wonderful new staff from our intern program.

Jennifer came to us on placement from Wollongong Uni in May and is now a valued member of our team.

Intern Program – Meet Jennifer



We asked her what it was like to do a placement with us.

How did your placement with Bonnie's come about?

I'm studying a Master of Social Work at the University of

Wollongong (UOW) and it was time to do my first professional placement. I've always wanted to work with women, especially when it comes to safety, health and wellbeing. UOW matched my preferences with Bonnie's and I was interviewed by An. She told me Bonnie's was a feminist organisation, which uses a strengths-based framework to help women and children find safe accommodation. Her description of the Bonnie's vision agreed with my personal values about how women should be respected and treated, so I decided Bonnie's was a great place for me to gain professional learning.

What was it like being a student on placement at Bonnie's?

I learned a lot while on placement. I cycled through all the different teams and had the choice to spend more time in the team I liked, which was the

Domestic Violence Response Enhancement team. I was able to see how social workers practise social work values in their day to day work. I was also able to see how workers had to juggle ethical dilemmas when it comes to clients, acting in the best interests of the clients while maintaining their professional obligations. I received much more frontline training and experience than I expected.

Any standout moments?

I had a lot of 'first' moments, like my first intake, my first referral, my first court date. However, I think the stand out moment for me was when I saw how the women looked so much more rested after spending a couple of nights in the refuge.

It sounds like a lot to take on as a student.

It can be, however you have very firm boundaries of what you can and can't do as a student. You are there to learn and observe and there's no pressure to fulfill a role. If you're not feeling up for doing something, you don't have to.

And your favourite part of your placement?

The creative group that Alison and Ruth run is a definite favourite for me. It's safe and distant enough from the trauma but offers therapeutic benefits and a nurturing place to be in. There's a lot of skills in holding the space – managing group dynamics, knowing when to step back, when to intervene and being creative all mixed together.

Written from a conversation with Jen who is now a staff member of Bonnie's.

"You're very impressionable as a student. We try to give ours a really good learning experience and a place that's welcoming. I think that's really important. It's what people remember from their first experience at work."

Tracy Phillips, Executive Officer

Getting things done #together

Home Free finds new homes

Australian Catholic University

One of the most challenging things about publishing any book is finding affordable ways to maintain a distribution network. It's all about finding ways to get the book into places where it can make the most difference.

This year, we partnered with the Australian Catholic University to continue our dissemination of our book, *Home Free*, to organisations. *Home Free* is a collection of stories from women who have found safety from domestic violence. Not everyone, or every organisation, recognises how relevant a book like this might be for them. Understanding requires new conversations, sometimes with gatekeepers, of critical places.

Liz Reedy* lectures in community practice in the Department of Allied Health and Social Work at the Strathfield campus of the university. As part of her course, she invited her third year students to introduce and champion *Home Free* to a range of different organisations and communities.

First up: the students visited Bonnie's to learn about domestic violence and the value of Home Free as a resource. They had to learn how to have a conversation about domestic violence and why this resource would be so valuable to get into the hands of more women and organisations. Once empowered with knowledge, the students made a list of local organisations to contact and off they went. They visited medical practices, libraries, inter-agencies and places they knew about through their own connections and tried cold calling too.

They found it a little bit daunting at first but also incredibly rewarding. Liz reported that it was amazing

"For many, it was the first time that they had to start a conversation about community responsibility for domestic violence... not through text books but in the field. It was a big thing for them."

Liz Reedy



"I really loved the stories in Home Free. Finally, we were learning about real life domestic violence situations, in an engaging way. It was nerve racking

to go out there and present the book to different organisations but once I did the first one, and got such a great response, I felt confident to continue. Knowing that the book is such a great resource really helped spur me on."

Priscilla, ACU student and now an intern with Bonnies

to see the passion emerge as they hit their stride. The stories from the book and the visit to Bonnie's inspired them tremendously.

The students' efforts resulted in many organisations ordering boxes of the book and sharing the stories through their own networks. Students also had to learn that some organisations were just not interested and this opened their eyes to the extent of denial that can surround this conversation.

Another bonus for us? One of Liz's students chose Bonnie's for her placement.

It was a win-win all round.

*Liz conceived *Home Free*. It is a collection of stories that show women's strengths in reclaiming safety from violence. As a previous community practitioner, Liz gathered people, organisations and funds to make the book happen. Check out our website to find out more about the book.

Written from a conversation with Liz

PROUD TO REPORT

On the road to Reconciliation – The Story of our RAP

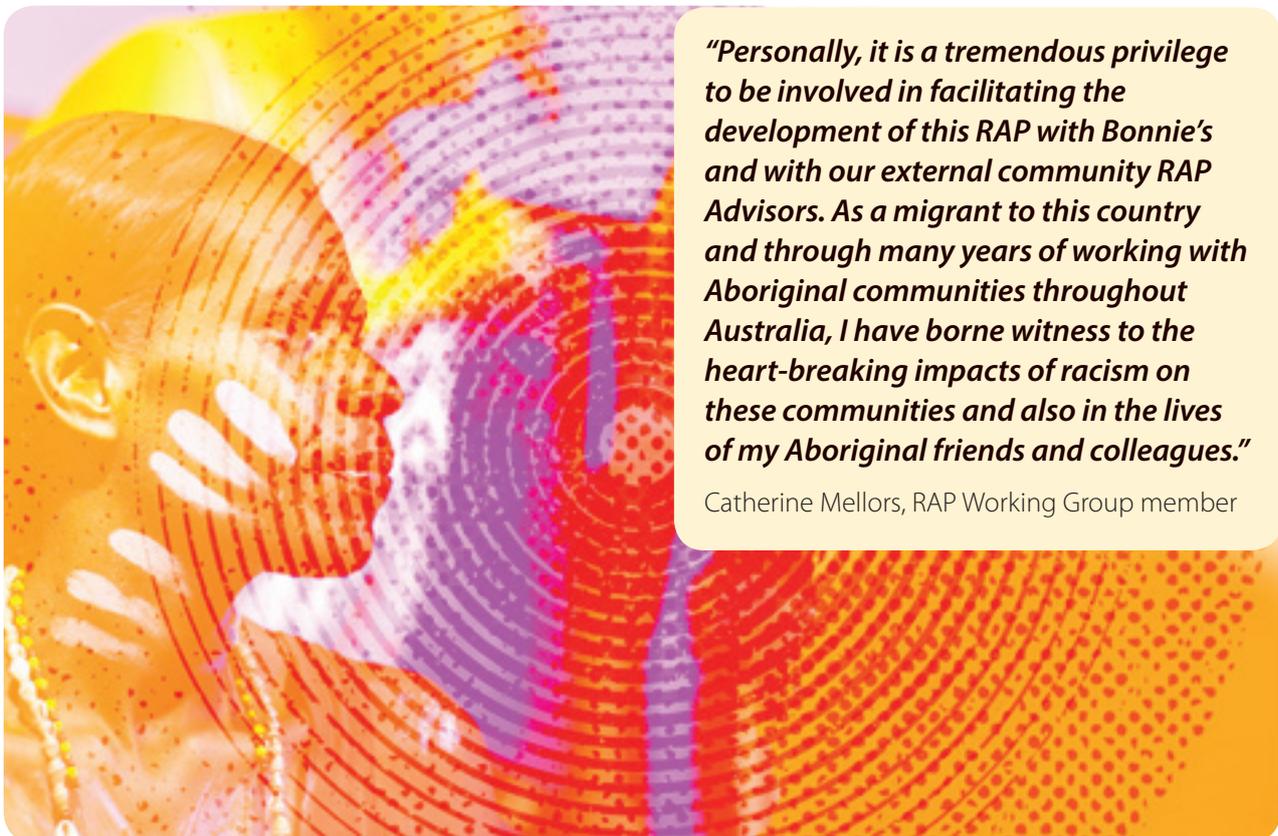
More than two years ago, all of us at Bonnie's, including our staff and Board, committed to actively join the journey to reconciliation with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters. In April, we launched what that commitment would mean and look like: our very own Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

Our RAP reflects a promise from all of us and marks the formalisation of our service's commitment. It is a business plan of large and small activities aimed at strengthening relationships, opportunities and respect for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the next two years.

We are immensely proud to have had the guidance of community leaders, Norma Burrows from Liverpool Council, and Delphine Leslie from South West Sydney Local Health District. They have worked with us over the past couple of years to guide the process.



We are formally accountable to our RAP Working Group, including our external RAP Advisors and to Reconciliation Australia for fulfilling our commitments. And in publishing the RAP on our website, as a living timeline, we are also accountable to YOU. To find out more see our RAP timeline, updated regularly with our new achievements.



“Personally, it is a tremendous privilege to be involved in facilitating the development of this RAP with Bonnie's and with our external community RAP Advisors. As a migrant to this country and through many years of working with Aboriginal communities throughout Australia, I have borne witness to the heart-breaking impacts of racism on these communities and also in the lives of my Aboriginal friends and colleagues.”

Catherine Mellors, RAP Working Group member

Tracy writes about the launch

We felt it was important to celebrate the RAP with our friends and community to emphasise how special it is to us. It represents a lot of thinking, cultural awareness training and commitment. We also wanted to make a pledge to everyone on the day to show that we are serious about taking action. We all know that when it comes to reconciliation, many, many good plans get lost and forgotten. Not our RAP. We wanted to hold the launch so people could bear witness to our intentions and on April 11th, that's exactly what we did.

It was a beautiful day as we gathered in our colourful downstairs area. We had a great turnout. Our guests included Chris Hayes, the Federal Member for Fowler, Guy Zangari, Local

Member for Fairfield and the Shadow Minister for Police, Paul Lynch, the Local Member for Liverpool and many wonderful members of our Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. In keeping with Bonnie's usual style, it was a very relaxed event with official guests not sitting down the front as usual... but amongst us. All rubbing shoulders, sitting and mingling together – already an expression of what we are working towards.



Evaluation of our DVRE program

“It’s so comforting to know that I can refer a woman to DVRE when she is in a crisis. I know that they’re going to get a thorough initial assessment and support no matter what day of the week it is.”

Margaret, Family worker.

Back in 2016 Bonnie’s partnered with Vinnies to deliver a program to provide crisis support to women over the weekend, when so many services are closed. Weekends have been identified as “high risk” and during both day and night there can be a high demand for services that are trying to get support for women and children experiencing domestic violence. A prompt and supportive response can keep women and children safe.

What’s Our Impact?

Bonnie’s and Vinnie’s commissioned an evaluation of the DVRE program together in September 2018. The funding body was consulted during the process but it was not the instigator of the evaluation. Why did we initiate? We wanted to know how effective the DVRE program is: and how it is working for women.

Margot from Social Research Policy & Planning (SRPP) is the external evaluator who is leading the process.

“We used a collaborative evaluation process. Both Bonnie’s and Vinnie’s were involved in designing the methodology and the questions. We did a lot of collaborative workshops with staff from both organisations, to get clarity about what they both really wanted to learn about the program. We used focus groups and interviews, using innovative techniques such as a mobile phone sms-based survey of clients, running over a three month period. We were really surprised by the amount of women who responded to this new surveying method and who sustained engagement with us over the three month period.

DVRE program is tailored to each individual woman. There’s no common client pathway and everyone has a different story. We used a ripple effect mapping technique where we followed staff and mapped how they worked with individuals. It highlighted how tailored the DVRE program truly is. It was also really good for staff to see that what they’re doing is actually really complex and nuanced.

Clients described the program as ‘someone having your back’, especially while being in a distressing, confusing and difficult situation. Through DVRE they’ve got a caseworker who’s making stuff happen for them. The DVRE staff are really hands on and happy to dive in and do whatever it takes.

In the sms survey we asked for feedback about the program and the participants’ levels of satisfaction. We received a 100% satisfaction from all respondents. We also collected data comparing the DVRE program to other services they were receiving assistance from

Domestic violence doesn't stop on the weekend.

And neither do we.

Help us to help them sooner – remember to refer

DVLine 1800 65 64 63 Link2home 1800 152 152

DV crisis support is again available for women and children when they need it most

Friday 5:00pm to Monday 9:00am

We cover Fairfield, Liverpool, Campbelltown, Camden and Wollondilly and Wingecarribee LGAs.

Rapid Response Team

Vinnies Bonnie Support Services

such as the Police, Housing, FACS. They were not nearly as satisfied with those other services.

I was quite shocked when I spoke to a staff member at another agency who said, 'I know all about that service but I don't work on the weekend. It's up to general duties to do weekend work in my organisation. They have a brochure that they hand out to women.'

We have found that this program needs to be placed in organisations that have a solid understanding and history of working with women escaping violence. These women need immediate support from people who are very familiar with the complexities of domestic violence and who can offer skilled support. Women are shocked and confused in this time of crisis. They want to feel that they're getting the best information and support possible. This is very much the case with Bonnie's. They are a very experienced and knowledgeable service specialising in domestic violence. When a woman rings Bonnie's, she is getting the best service that she can possibly get."

What some respondents said:

The staff are great – very committed and not jaded. We work very closely with DVRE staff and are very confident women will get support they need. The staff are flexible and responsive and the service is streamlined. (Stakeholder)

I was in tatters. I didn't know where to start... They said, "We'll help you with everything. This has just happened. We're experienced. We can help you with every aspect of what you've gone through, and where to go from now." (Recent client)

"I think it's a fantastic program. We interviewed stakeholders as part of our research, such as referring agencies, e.g. housing, FACS, temporary accommodation. One woman from FACS said, "I wish we had a DVRE program for every client that we work with."

Margot, SRPP

The STACy? Project

"It was really good to take part in this project with many external professionals and witness how workers' practice changed, for the benefit of women and children, as a result of applying the model."

Project Worker

This year, Bonnie's was invited to participate in a project with the University of Sydney. It was called *Safe & Together Addressing ComplexitY* (STACy). The project brought together professionals from many different sectors: child protection, health, drug and alcohol, domestic violence and others.

In a nutshell, the STACy model is about encouraging a fuller, more nuanced and more compassionate understanding of what the mum has been through as a victim of domestic violence. Ideally, this new understanding results in better services and practices, to keep mum and children together.

The Safe & Together principles are:

1. To keep the child safe and together with the non-offending parent
2. To partner with the non-offending parent (as the default position)
3. To intervene with the perpetrator to reduce risk of harm to the child

The aim of the project was to research how workers, as part of their casework, assess and manage the intersections of mental health, alcohol and other drugs; and how the STACy model can help maintain the focus on the domestic/family violence experienced by the women and children and the impact of this abuse on them. This involves getting a really detailed description of what the perpetrator has been doing to the mum and children – and using that rich picture to work out his patterns of coercive control and abuse.

It's about giving mums more credit in how they are managing and keeping their families together.

What are the ways in which he abuses them? How has he been trying to maintain coercive control over her and the children? These details bring a much fuller understanding of the situation.

The model can be used in many ways. If you are writing an advocacy letter, for example, being explicit with the details of what went on will help the reader see the bigger picture. In the example below, the details are vivid and there is no hiding behind the usual muted language.

E.g. He regularly calls her a 'fing c***' and hides the car keys from her so she can't take the kids to school but despite this repeated abuse, and the high levels of terror and anxiety created by his violence, she still manages to get her children to school every day.***

The mum's acts of resistance in the face of the explicitly described abuse are highlighted and the reader feels more empathy and understanding for the woman.

During the project, we explored how to use the model in our practice and learnt that the starting point should always be to detail the abuse that has taken place -

- ☉ What has he done to her?
- ☉ What has he done to the children?
- ☉ What are all the things that the mum has tried to do, despite the perpetrator's abuse, to promote the safety and wellbeing of her children?
- ☉ What's been the impact of his abuse on his partner and children?

And then we fill out the broader context. What are the other factors impacting on the woman? Homelessness? Alcohol abuse? Mental health issues?

Team Workshops

Part of this project was to lead some workshops for Bonnie's staff to get everyone familiar with the STACy model. Staff have been so enthusiastic to learn about it and apply the model in their work. Just one example is how we realised that we can incorporate these learnings in our practice and documentation. We are seeing many changes in how we advocate for the women. How wonderful it is to witness the model being put into practice.

We'd like to thank Catherine Mellors for her contribution and passion on this project.

Project Details:

The project involved 3 days of training followed by monthly Community of Practice meetings, over six months. Bonnie's Project Worker attended the three day workshop and Community of Practice meetings and then delivered training on the model to Bonnie's staff. Some staff from Bonnie's also went to the Community of Practice meetings and further NSW consultations organised by Dr Susan Heward-Belle, a Senior Lecturer at the University of Sydney.

Components of the Stacy Model

1. Perpetrator's pattern of coercive control.
2. Actions taken by the perpetrator.
3. Full spectrum of the non-offending parent's efforts to promote the safety and well being of the child.
4. Adverse impact of the perpetrator's behaviours on the child.
5. Role of substance abuse, mental health, culture and other socio-economic factors.

TRAININGS & SERVICE PRESENTATIONS



Bonnie's is often invited to share our know-how about domestic violence, what we offer as a service and provide support and information. Here are some snippets of different places and ways we made our mark this year.

Out and about

At many events where we have a stall, people often tell us about someone they know (or themselves) who is suffering from domestic violence. We help by offering support, information and most importantly, a lending ear. It's a chance for them to chat to a professional who can guide them to the appropriate services and information and also offer understanding and practical options for help. It's quite possibly the first time that they've spoken to someone like this. Having a stall is a great opportunity to get the word out there.

We were invited to have a stall at the Liverpool Women's Health Centre Open Day. It was such a big day with many people attending from all over Liverpool and surrounding suburbs. We were situated right at the entrance of the Health Centre building where everyone had to walk past to get to the workshops and presentations. We were able to get the word out about our Home Free book and gave out many copies. That's a great feeling.

Visiting organisations

Sometimes, we get invited by organisations to provide domestic violence and homelessness information to their staff, volunteers and/or students. This year one of these invitations was from the Autism Advisory and Support Service. It was a great opportunity for our services to exchange information

about our areas of speciality and to learn from each other.

Sharing expertise

We also hosted a number of pre-teaching students from the University of Western Sydney for a visit to Bonnie's. We shared information about domestic/family violence and homelessness and answered their questions about the work that we do. Being able to contribute to the teaching profession in this way and knowing that the information we provided has the potential to ripple out to many young people and their families, was definitely worthwhile for us and life changing for these students. One student sent us the following message after the workshop:

Written from a conversation with Catherine

"Thank you again for taking the time with us.

I really respect what you do for the community and the visit helped me gain insights into children and families who had domestic violence.

I will remember this experience for the rest of my life and teach children who suffer from domestic violence with a deeper understanding."

Areum Han

Learning #together



BIG MOMENTS

National Reconciliation Week

The theme for Reconciliation Week this year was 'Grounded in truth, walk together with courage'. As Dr Lyndon Ormond-Parker says, 'Walking together means learning from each other'.

"We are all connected through the land that we walk on but non-Aboriginal people have a lot to learn about the land, the history, the stories and the truth of what occurred. It is time for all of us to have the courage to open our ears, hearts and minds."

Ranjani, Child & Youth Worker



Excerpt from the blog:

A few weeks ago, the team at Bonnie's were asked if they would like to organise something for National Reconciliation Week. I had an idea of asking an Aboriginal elder from our local area to take us on a walk and teach us about the local flora and fauna.

It was wonderful when we found out that the manager of our partner organisation, Liverpool Women's Health Centre, is of Aboriginal descent and was also once a National Parks & Wildlife Service Ranger for a period of 10 years, educating people about places of natural, cultural and historic significance.

Marryanne, Child and Youth Worker



One of our favourite things is joining our community in celebration and action.

We came together with other women at some wonderful events this year including International Women's Day, Candlelight Vigil and NAIDOC.

Showing up #together



FROM OUR BLOG



From receiving to giving

<http://www.bonnie.org.au/from-receiving-to-giving/>

We have many volunteers helping at Bonnie's behind the scenes.

Some of them clean and help fix things, others hand out food and spend time with the women and children. The other day I met a woman who was volunteering with us who not so long ago, had received support from Bonnie's.

Every Friday she comes in early to prepare the boxes to distribute the donated food. She then

takes care of everything while OZ Harvest arrives and delivers the food. She will tick off the clients who have picked up their boxes, help them choose meat or milk in the fridge and food such as bread or snacks from the spare food area. After everyone has picked up their boxes, she will clean the space before she leaves...

As a previous client at Bonnie's, she was very keen to put up her hand when she first heard that volunteers were needed. She initially came to us to be assisted and supported. She became strong enough to leave a toxic relationship and began to live an independent life of her own. She has been through a lot including complicated issues with immigration. Now she is coming back – not to receive assistance but to offer back the kindness and support that she has received.

By Shunan Xie

A love story

<http://www.bonnie.org.au/a-love-story/>

When I heard Tim Winton comment on one of his best reads of the year, a novel about domestic violence, he expressed how kindness can be transformative. It made think about kindness and what it means to be kind.

While thinking about this, I happened upon a documentary, **'The Last Chance Hotel'**. It was about twin sisters, Rose and Yvette, who had managed The Gatwick Hotel in the

Melbourne suburb of St Kilda, for 50 years! Their parents had initially purchased The Gatwick and it had historically been rooms for 'gentlemen', visiting Melbourne from the country. When the sisters took it on, it accommodated 80 residents who were homeless, marginalized, had drug and alcohol problems, mental health issues and were isolated. The Gatwick was referred to by outsiders as "hotel of horrors" and "hope for the hopeless". To my surprise, some of the residents had been there for thirty years. Many of the residents or "guests" were there because they had exhausted other services. Many saw Rose and Yvette as 'family'.



By Margy

The difference a phone call can make

<http://www.bonnie.org.au/the-difference-a-phone-call-can-make/>

Every type of support was lined up thanks to a complete team effort; Environmental Officer, Program Manager, Family Workers, Tenancy Officers, Community Workers. Everyone jumped on board and quickly and efficiently assisted. *We all worked towards the one goal – to keep this family safe.* Everything was in place ... now it was just up to her...

In the witness box she remained calm, focused and consistent. She rose to the occasion. She gave her evidence in a controlled manner and looked to Bonnie's staff member for support when she needed it. And all this, while in the presence of her husband – the assailant. *She was now the one in control.* The Judge commended her on her testimony. He deliberated and came back to say that they would be sentencing the assailant next week.

By Susan



The little things

<http://www.bonnie.org.au/the-little-things/>

It was the first time that I'd met Rosie. She and her family were living in one of our transitional homes. When I arrived to pick her up, Rosie said goodbye to her mum



and hopped into the car, excited to sit in the front seat. She started chatting about her grandmother (who was at the house at the time) and things that she liked about school. Rosie loves sports and maths. She told me about her old house, living in another state and that she was happy to be where she was, although she was yet to make any good friends at her new school. Rosie spoke in a way which was beyond her 8 years and this saddened and amazed me.

Upon arriving at Bonnie's, Rosie noticed the Aboriginal flag next to the front door and announced that she too, was Aboriginal. This made for a nice reminder about why we have it displayed: the sense of pride and connection Rosie felt when she saw the flag made her feel welcome and accepted at Bonnie's.

By Alison M.

A gift from the heart

<http://www.bonnie.org.au/a-gift-from-the-heart/>

I received a phone call one day from a young woman offering to donate a room full of baby items. The woman explained that the items were all brand new and that she needed to drop them off today.

They had decided to donate everything they had acquired for the baby. The dream this couple had shared was now slowly being replaced with another.

I began to take notice of all the items that I was carrying and could feel that each one, had been lovingly chosen with tenderness and hope...

By Alison D.



Stepping into another worker's shoes

<http://www.bonnie.org.au/stepping-into-another-workers-shoes/>

I recently had the opportunity to accompany Bianca, one of our tenancy workers, to the Tenancy Tribunal. A client had accumulated substantial rental arrears and was refusing to engage with Bonnie's.

The client appeared very anxious as she realised that she could face eviction. It was very difficult for me to see her so overwhelmed; I couldn't help but feel concerned. In mediation, Bianca was able to state valid reasons for eviction yet also expressed kindness and flexibility towards her. I felt stressed and anxious during this process, finding it hard to be in the middle of this conflicted situation. I could see that Bianca was willing to negotiate with the client for her and her family's best outcome but she also remained firm when necessary. This was quite a skill as at times the client became defensive.

Observing Bianca, I witnessed her kindness and compassion in how she treated the client. It's what allowed the client to trust and to work with Bianca, to achieve a fair and reasonable outcome for all. I was relieved.

By Alison D.



The shark cage

<http://www.bonnie.org.au/the-shark-cage/>

I welcomed another woman to Bonnie's last week who, like so many before her, asked me questions that I found hard to answer.

They went like this: how did I end up here? What did I do to deserve this? Why does this keep happening to me? Where did it all go wrong?

This woman spoke about the previous year as if it was a prior life. She spoke with so much happiness and pride of this past life; She was employed in her dream job in a bank after completing a double degree at university and she was finally able to afford the rent of her dream home after years of saving up, moving to an affluent Sydney suburb. Prior to this, the woman spoke about the difficulties growing up, and how hard life had been with an abusive mother and non-existent father. The pride in her voice, very quickly changed to sadness, when she whispered how all that changed when she met her abusive ex-partner and father of her child.

This then led me to a thought, a hope. *If she was able to do it once, she can do it again.* This woman along with so many others, is able to take control and do something to change this pattern of abuse in her life.

This is where the *shark cage* concept comes in handy, developed by Ursula Benstead.

By Ciara



BONNIE'S CELEBRATES OUR AWARD WINNING WOMEN

Heike's Award

The Kate Nicholas Community Service Award, "acknowledges a woman who lives and/or works in the Liverpool area who is a true feminist, a woman of honour, a woman who is resilient, passionate and fearless, a strong advocate for those around her and those in need and a straight shooter who tells it like it is".

As she is in the role of Bonnie's Finance Officer, Heike is also a much loved member of the Liverpool Women's Health Centre team. She is the ultimate quiet achiever, renowned for getting the job done with little or no fuss. Well known throughout the sector for her trusted and respected financial management, Heike is a committed feminist, with a strong determination to make a difference in the world.

Heike tells the story...

This award was a total surprise. I'd been invited to the International Women's Day celebration at the Liverpool Women's Resource Centre and during the proceedings, they started talking about the person who'd be receiving the award. As they went through the list of things the person had done, it started to sound familiar. I thought, 'Could that be me?'

It's a very honouring and thrilling surprise to be nominated for an award that's associated with Kate Nicholas. For me, that's almost like there couldn't be any higher honour than getting an award that's associated with this fierce strong Aboriginal woman. It's very humbling too.

I had the privilege of meeting her when she was working on quite a number of management committees in Southwest Sydney. It's quite made my year and fuels my ongoing commitment and obligation to do whatever it takes to achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal women and children.



From left: Heike, Tracy and Nancely.

Kate would have encountered a lot of racism in her life, something that I've never had to deal with, but we still have a lot of things in common: how we work and the concern that we have for women and children.

Let's face it, in our community sector, we all put in a lot of extra hours above and beyond. This award has given me that extra boost to just continue on my path.

Nancely's Award

We are so proud of Nancely, our Community Worker who was the recipient of a 2019 Fiji Women in Business; Leadership & Community Services Award.

The Women in Business Awards honour Fiji's outstanding women and Nancely was recognised for her work as a community leader, leading the Hindi and Urdu Women's Group as well as fundraising for the Cancer Foundation. Nancely considered it a great honour to be recognised by her community in this way. The award ceremony was held on International Women's Day and was celebrated with the Fiji Indian Community.

Showing off #together



PARTNERSHIPS

Bonnie's Accommodation Services

Bonnie's is a Community Housing provider. This means we offer help with many different types of accommodation: crisis, transitional and private rentals.

Families who live in one of our transitional houses have 12 months of affordable accommodation where they can 'catch their breath', live safely and independently, and grow their capacity to move towards a private rental. We have 20 houses in our portfolio and access to another 10 or so through other providers.

These properties are a god-send for women who are re-building their lives after the trauma of DV or impending homelessness. During their stay, they continue to receive outreach support from Bonnie's. Our Tenancy workers Dragana and Bianca support the families in setting up their new home, sustaining their tenancy and planning for the future. When their tenancy is coming to an end, they'll help with the search for houses, dealings with real estate agents, applications for the Start Safely program and all the practicalities – removalists, furniture and transitioning for the kids.

"It's big work we do but at the end of every day, I can say that today I did something for that family. They're not stressing out now. They're not panicking. They can use this year in one of our houses to get stronger, maybe study, maybe find work, and I hope, find their way out of their trauma."

Dragana, Tenancy worker

Care and maintenance of the houses is very expensive of course. We are very grateful for the support of Habitat for Humanity whose volunteers help us provide the sort of attractive and comfortable houses every one of us deserves.

Meet our Volunteer Maintenance Partners

Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity is an international organisation that builds strength, stability and self-reliance through shelter. Over the past 4 years, their NSW team has helped us immensely with the maintenance of all of our houses. They organise teams of volunteers to come in for a day or two to give our houses a new lick of paint and some much needed small repairs and TLC.

We spoke with Dean Hart, the Partnerships Manager at Habitat's NSW operations:

Bonnie's was one of the first organisations that we partnered with to provide volunteers to community organisations involved with providing housing. We source these volunteers from our



corporate partners. This partnership was the first of its kind for us. It formed the basis for our new corporate volunteer model and since then, we've been supporting other community based organisations and housing services. Most of the big corporates provide at least one paid day per year to go and volunteer.

Our volunteers go to work, in between tenancies, when the houses are vacant. We'll clean and paint the whole inside of the house and sometimes we do various other repairs. We have partnerships with suppliers such as Dulux who provide all of the paint. It will generally take us 2-3 days to complete a house with 8-10 volunteers each day. The volunteers can see tangible results from the work they do.

On the volunteer days we normally invite someone from Bonnie's to come along and give a short talk to the volunteers. They explain what Bonnie's does and how what the volunteers are doing contributes to supporting women and children. Typically this turns into a vivid conversation with the volunteers. They learn about domestic and family violence and accommodation services as well as homelessness. It's very meaningful for the volunteers.

I've got a tremendous respect for the work that Bonnie's does and the way that they do it. On top of providing support and accommodation to women and children, they lobby and work on policy change, trying to make changes at other levels. And the feedback from the volunteers is really positive. Many corporates tell us that the projects their staff work on really resonate. A number of our partners have added more volunteer days with us – a telling sign that they value the experience.

"It's a great opportunity to engage corporates who are keen to help but it's also a big help for Bonnie's, allowing them to focus more of their resources on supporting women and children."

Dean Hart



www.habitat.org.au/nsw



Partnerships

In the best partnerships, both parties bring something valuable to the other. Our partners provide us with skills and resources that greatly assist our work. There's huge satisfaction in making a difference in something that we all see as so important. Working side by side, we know we are doing things that could not be achieved alone.

Without our partners we would find it very hard to provide the kind of service that we are proud to offer. They are the cream on the cake!

Our wonderful partners include:

- ☉ **Liverpool Women's Health Centre – We have an office**
- ☉ **Liverpool Women's Resource Centre**
- ☉ **Counsellor – Jo Gravina**
- ☉ **Centrelink – Ponthip**
- ☉ **Salvation Army – Tracie – Financial Capability Worker**
- ☉ **Habitat for Humanity**
- ☉ **Hume Housing**
- ☉ **Oz Harvest**
- ☉ **Newleaf**
- ☉ **Rosebank**

Liverpool Women's Health Centre

We've worked together for a long time. We have an outreach service based at the Health Centre that allows us to meet women safely, off site. And reach more women, further afield. The Women's Health Centre is a perfect location for drop-ins. Many women are there for a variety of reasons: to see a doctor, to have counselling, to attend a group. So it's easy for



**LIVERPOOL
WOMEN'S
HEALTH CENTRE**

them to do something in the moment: drop in, ask a few questions casually and anonymously. It's a way for women to learn more, earlier. We now have an office at the centre and are there three times a week.

Liverpool Women's Resource Centre



Liverpool Women's Resource Centre have been with us almost from the start. They are a longstanding partner with a very similar philosophy, based on feminist principles. We work together through referring

to each other's programs and supporting each other's activities. The Centre does great work. It provides support, group programs, projects, drop-in counselling and telephone support to a wide range of women throughout the 2168 postcode area. LWRC along with the Liverpool Women's Health Centre and Bonnie's jointly sponsors the Kate Nicholas Liverpool Women's Services Award. This award is presented each year on International Women's Day. Additionally, we sponsor the Women's Services Award for the Annual Mil-Pra Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG) exhibition at the Casula Powerhouse, celebrating the significance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.

We'd like to thank them for their generous donation this year in support of our annual Candlelight Vigil.

Oz Harvest

Oz Harvest is a treasured partner to Bonnie's. Every week they deliver boxes of beautiful food for us to distribute to the women in our Bonnie's community. Oz Harvest delivery day is one of our favourite times of the week. Every Friday after lunch, it's happily busy downstairs at Bonnie's as women gather around with their cups of tea and their food boxes. It's a real chance to socialise together – with lots of chatter and laughter. Most of our women are unemployed so receiving good quality food every week is such a help. Thank you OH!





Centrelink

Every month, we have a visit from Phonethip. Phonethip is a Community Engagement Officer at Centrelink and works with the women to see how she can help. Not only can she assist with Centrelink enquiries, she may refer them to another agency for things like material aid, housing assistance, medical support or employment services. She's able to help them thanks to all of the wonderful community connections she has. This has been a fantastic addition to our services.

She is also available by phone or email whenever we need DHS assistance.



"I've been doing this work for over 12 years. I support the case workers to support the women and children in their work. Bonnie's is so valuable and the team is so proactive. There's not many organisations that focus just on women and their children."

Phonethip, Centrelink Community Engagement Officer

Rosebank

It seems fitting that one of Australia's oldest women's refuges (that's us) should team up with one of Australia's oldest child sexual assault support services to offer the Kidz Space program. Child Youth Worker Marryanne from Bonnie's and counsellor Nicole from Rosebank work in partnership to deliver the group. (Read more about Kidz Space on page 11.)



Salvation Army

Abuse in the form of financial control is very common. When a woman flees domestic violence, money problems can quickly follow. Tracie from the Salvation Army brings her financial counselling to the women at Bonnie's and it's such a valuable service we can now offer.



"I choose to do a lot of outreach work because I know that it's really beneficial – the women feel more comfortable when I come to them. It's a safe and familiar environment. For women dealing with debt, I can help with other options to solve their debt issues."

"We can also take the opportunity to look at planning for financial goals and future options. I had one particular client who ended up studying community welfare and now wants to become a financial counsellor herself. She witnessed what we were able to offer and decided that she wanted to help others in this way too."

Tracie Konc, Financial Counsellor



DONATIONS & GRANTS

Donations

Bonnie's benefits enormously from the generosity of people and organisations who donate money, goods and other services to our clients.

Thanks to everyone for your support: both those who have donated money and goods and those who have given their time.

Donations come to us in all shapes and sizes but they always show the thoughtfulness of the giver. A donation is more than just money or chocolate or hand knitted beanies... it's a sign of support, shared values and appreciation for the women on this journey. And the work we are doing.

21st birthday surprise

Sarah decided that she would give up presents on her 21st birthday and ask her family and friends to donate to Bonnie's instead. In fact, her name isn't Sarah as she didn't want recognition for her act of kindness.

Bonnie's fairy godmother

Jodie from Bunnings is known to Bonnie's as our fairy godmother. She magically appears every so often bearing gifts. Sometimes it's a kid's cubby house, other times it's plants for the community garden or ... One day, she even handmade 'happiness kits' for the women for mother's day.



Chocolate is a sign of love

A retired couple had won a giant Easter egg in a raffle but instead of eating it, they donated it to Bonnie's. They had heard of Bonnie's due to a friend having been to the service. Their daughter also visited Bonnie's and donated her children's excess Easter eggs to kids and mothers at Bonnie's. A few weeks later she also donated leftover Mother's Day gifts from her children's school after their mother's day stall.

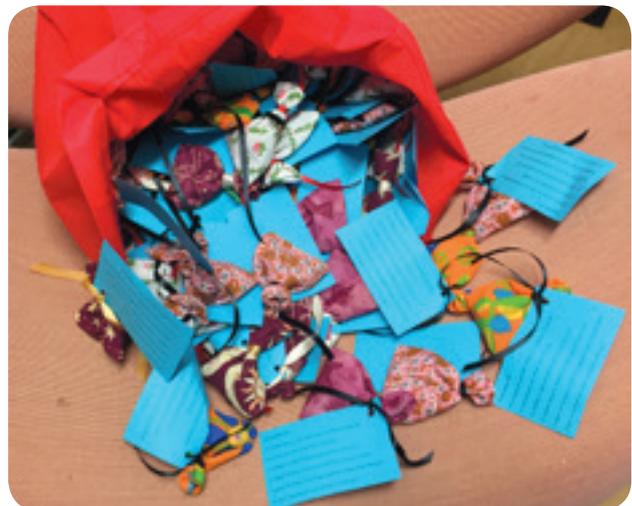
More than just a beanie

Carmel from Clancy Catholic College, made beanies, scarves and blankets especially for the women and children at Bonnie's. She left little notes with the items to inspire the person who received them. We had After School Club that afternoon and the kids were all running around with their beanies on their heads and scarves tied around their necks. It made for a colourful and heart-warming sight.

Grants

Thanks to these generous supporters in our community.

- Stronger Communities
- Community Building Partnership
- MFS Investment Management
- Commonwealth Bank for Kidz Space
- Women's Legal Services for Bonnie's Legal Outreach Service



Giving #together



•
Happiness Kit
An eraser so you can make your mistakes disappear
A coin so you can never say I'm broke
A marble in case someone says you've lost yours
A rubber band to stretch yourself beyond your limits
A piece of string to tie things together when they fall apart
A kiss to remind you that someone loves you



DONATIONS LIST 2018-2019

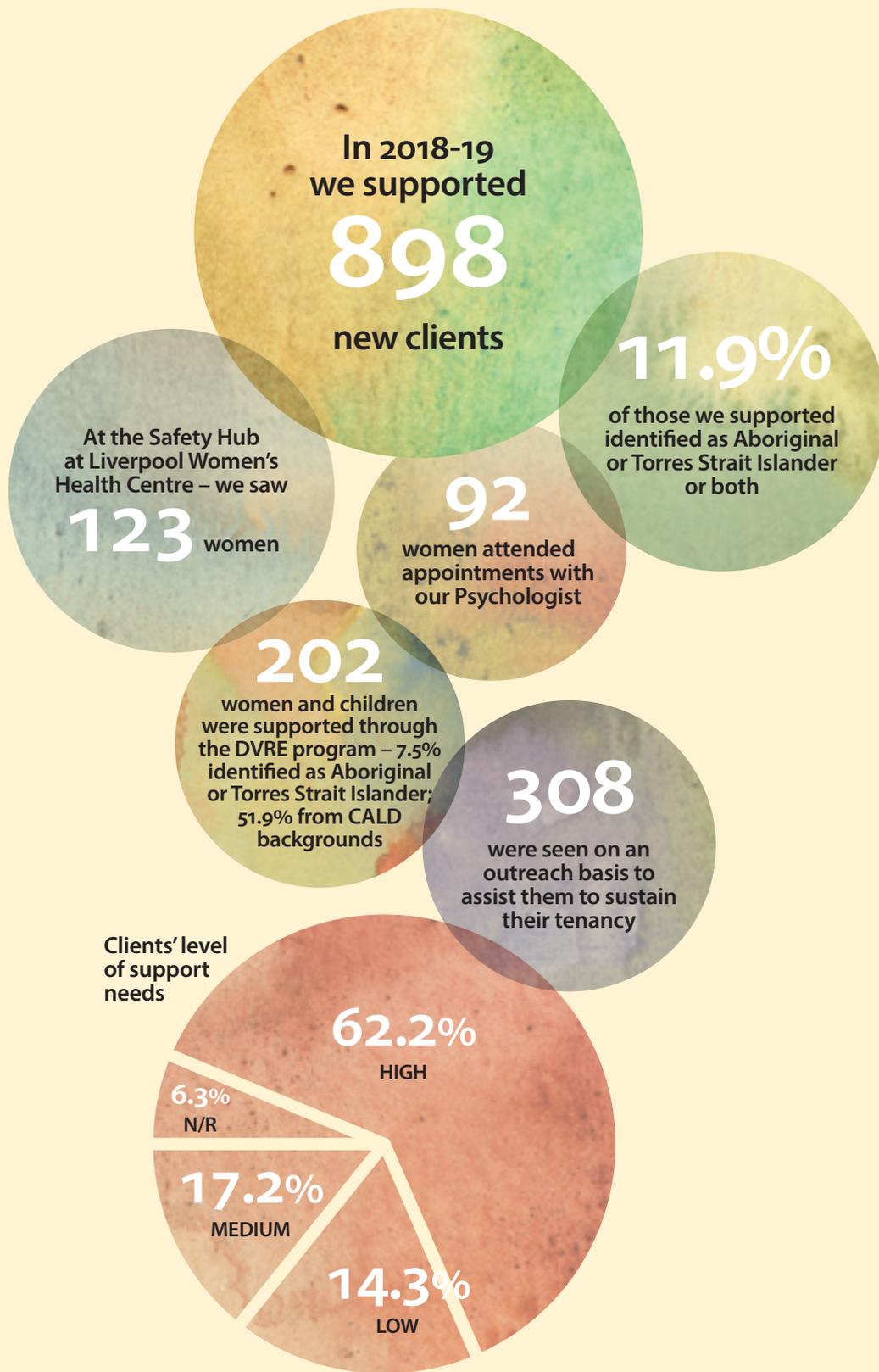


Aleksandra Peric
Alison Arndt
Amelia Scott
Anglicare Liverpool
Anita Dawes
Anna Ralston
Anne Coombs
Astrid Graham
Beauty Spot Salon
Belinda Davino
Bunnings Smithfield
Bunnings Villawood
Cabramatta High School
Carole Best
Catherine Mellors
Clancy Catholic College
Claudia Hardie
Commonwealth Bank staff Canley Heights
Commonwealth Bank
Commonwealth Bank staff Guildford
David & Jess Nguyen
Donna Pullen
Dorothy
Dorothy Froude
Erin Wroblewicz
Estate of the Late Christiane Mellors
Exodus Foundation
Fairfield Council
Fairfield FACS Office
Fairfield Police
Fairfield West Salvation Army
Fernwood Wetherill Park

Frances Atkins
Givit
GOODGIVS
Greg Cooper
Gregory Dumbrell
Help Astrid Pay it Forward
Inner Wheel
Isidora Trovato
Jackie Giovannucci Gil
Jane Stratton
Janet Fisher
John the Baptist Primary School
John Waterson
Julie Smith
Kim Nguyen
Ladies of Variety
Legal Aid DV unit Bankstown
Lin Yang
Little Care packs & Christmas Hampers
Liz McNicholas
Liza Lim
Lloyd Stroud
m.a.d woman foundation
Mandy Van
Margaret Collins
Maria Pascalis
Mary Hardy
Milana Gravorac
Miriam Hynes
Monica Cowper
Mr Chris Bowen
Mrs Fisher
Mrs Fran Climpson

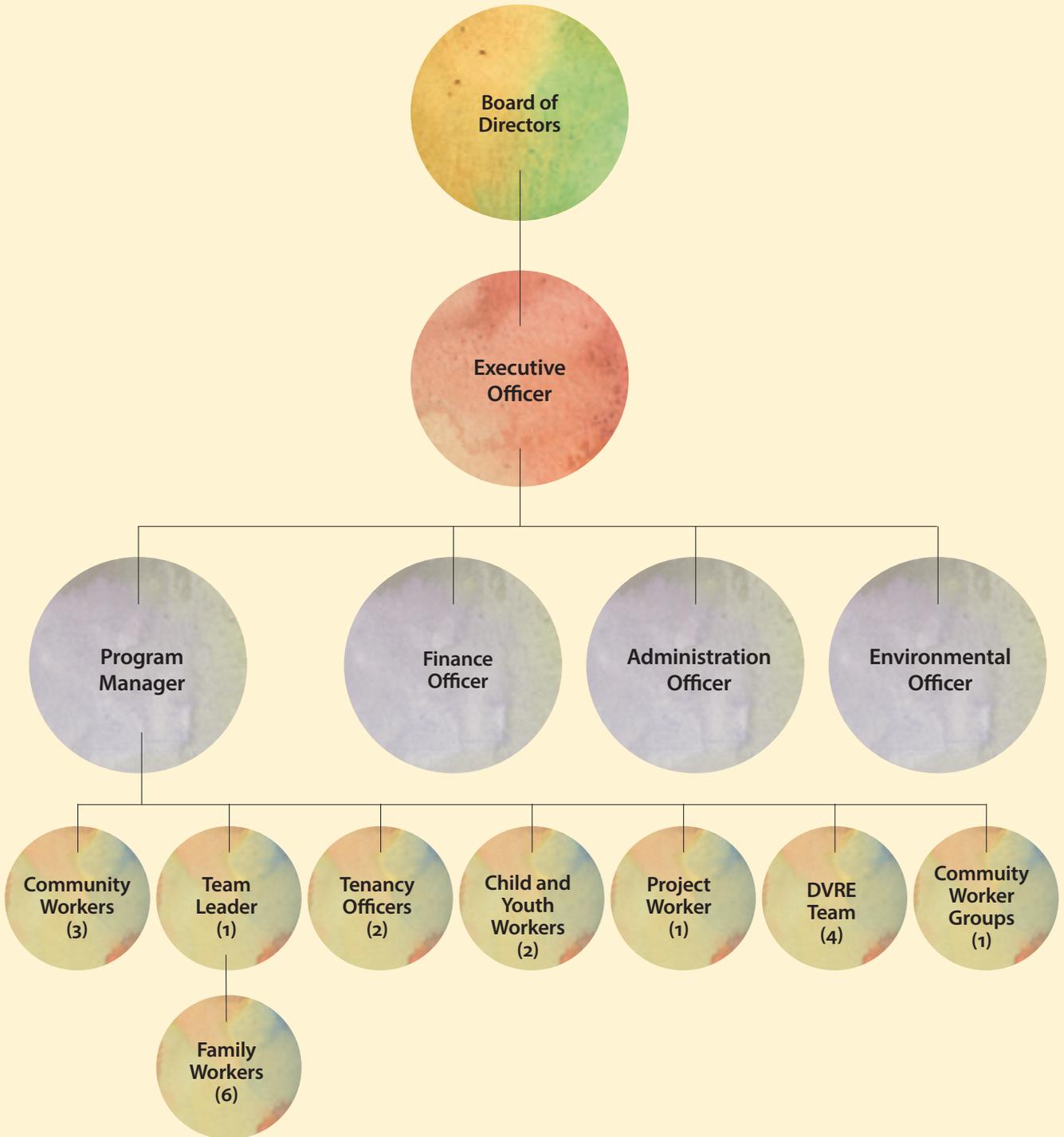
Mrs Monica Cowper
Noelia
NSW Health Education Centre Against Violence
Office of Environment & Heritage
Olivia Chammas
Open Door & Linda Stone
Parex International
Phonethip
Rebecca Ferrington
Robyn Metcalfe
Roger Rodrigues
Sam
Share the Dignity
Sharon Stephenson
Sophia Kenenounis
St Vinnies
Stephanie O'Brien
Sue Rowlands
Susan Varga
Tahlia Rinkin-Boddington & Jodie Rinkin
Tamara Walchshofer
Tasman Pde ELC
Taylor Owynns
Two Good Co
Venessa Brenan
Voulla Tomaszewski
Wattle Grove Lions Club
We all Care
Wise Employment

A STATISTICAL SNAPSHOT





ORGANISATIONAL CHART



OUR BOARD



Betty Green – *Chairperson* – Betty is a committed feminist advocate and her work in the women's community services spans three decades. Violence against women, particularly domestic violence, has been her focus.



Dusanka Mrdjenovic – *Vice Chairperson* – Dusanka has a passionate interest in human rights and social equity brought about by life experience of civil war, which included homelessness and displacement.



Tam Ho – *Secretary* – Tam has a wide range of experience in the not-for-profit and tertiary education sectors, working in the areas of program management, fundraising and marketing and communications.



Frances Atkins – *Treasurer* – Frances has significant experience in banking and finance, including experience advising senior management, boards and committees on a range of corporate and strategic matters.



Amelia Scott – Amelia Scott is Bonnie's longest serving Board member. Amelia has a wealth of experience in health and in particular women and children's health.



Karen Beetson – Karen is a Mandandanji woman from south west Queensland. Karen has worked for over 30 years in Aboriginal Community Development beginning her career in Aboriginal Employment and Education and has worked for NSW Juvenile Justice.



FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Bonnie Support Services Ltd

ABN 24 003 100 445

	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
Income					
Government grants	2,304,565	2,036,393	1,937,403	1,825,547	1,580,759
Donations and corporate support	40,531	53,642	18,000	5,945	24,501
Rental income	227,370	210,092	254,900	226,663	109,705
Interest	29,259	27,806	29,263	19,956	15,109
Other	20,500	4,438	27,089	11,925	159,903
Total Income	2,622,225	2,332,371	2,266,655	2,090,036	1,889,977
Expenses					
Salaries and on costs	1,919,793	1,797,872	1,791,288	1,264,582	838,147
Client brokerage	151,269	94,780	150,393	269,534	75,086
Operating expenses	508,135	446,710	653,820	491,616	668,862
Total Expenses	2,579,197	2,339,362	2,595,501	2,025,732	1,582,095
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	43,028	(6,991)	(328,846)	64,304	307,882

The Company recorded an operating surplus of \$43,028 for the year ended 30 June 2019 compared to an operating deficit of (\$6,991) in 2018. The surplus is due to interest earned on reserves and project funds. The previous year included a prior year surplus deduction of \$39,809 by Family & Community Services NSW, when adjusted for this item, there is no notable change.

Bonnie Support Services measures its performance through annual accountability reports for each individual funding contract. The company also uses a range of other performance measures to ensure its strategic goals as stated in the Strategic Plan 2016 -2019 are achieved.

The company monitors its performance against budget and rolling forecasts. The budget is approved by the Board of Directors prior the commencement of the financial year. Financial results are presented to the Board who use this information for the purpose of tracking progress, determining if agreed objectives are met and to inform future planning.

A complete copy of Bonnie's Financial Report 2019 including our audited financial statements, accompanying notes and Auditor's Report can be downloaded from our website www.bonnie.org.au or the ACNC register.

WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER!





Bonnie's
02 9729 0939

24/7 Domestic Violence Line
1800 65 64 63

*Translating and
Interpreting Service*
13 14 50

*Link2home
for accommodation*
1800 152 152



Bonnie
Support Services



by women and with women