



Bonnie Support Services

by women and with women

Annual Report 2020-21





Always together even if apart

*Celebrating our ability to stay connected,
creative and adapt to the changes and
challenges of the year that was.*

Cover illustration: Tennyson Nobel

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Acknowledgement of Country

Bonnie Support Services acknowledges the Cabrogal clan of the Darug Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our organisation is situated. We extend our acknowledgement to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners of this nation which we call home. We pay our deepest respects to Ancestors and Elders, past, present and emerging. Bonnie's is committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders' holistic, cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas.

Vietnamese

Dịch vụ hỗ trợ của Bonnie công nhận tộc Cabrogal của Quốc gia Darug là những Người giám hộ truyền thống của vùng đất mà tổ chức của chúng tôi đặt trụ sở. Chúng tôi mở rộng sự công nhận của chúng tôi đối với tất cả các dân tộc Thổ dân và Cư dân trên eo biển Torres Strait với tư cách là Chủ sở hữu truyền thống của quốc gia mà chúng tôi gọi là quê hương này. Chúng tôi bày tỏ lòng kính trọng sâu sắc nhất tới Tổ tiên và các bậc cao niên, trong quá khứ, hiện tại và mới nổi. Bonnie's cam kết tôn vinh những người Thổ dân Úc và Cư dân trên đảo Torres Strait có mối quan hệ toàn diện, văn hóa và tinh thần với đất liền, vùng nước và vùng biển..

Hindi

बोनी सपोर्ट सर्विसेज दारुग राष्ट्र के कैब्रोगल कबीले को उस भूमि के पारंपरिक संरक्षक के रूप में स्वीकार करती है जिस पर हमारा संगठन स्थित है। हम सभी आदिवासी और टोरेस स्ट्रेट आइलैंडर लोगों को इस देश के पारंपरिक मालिकों के रूप में अपनी स्वीकृति देते हैं, जिसे हम घर कहते हैं। हम पूर्वजों और बड़ों, अतीत, वर्तमान और उभरते हुए लोगों के प्रति अपना गहरा सम्मान देते हैं। बोनीज ऑस्ट्रेलियाई आदिवासी और टोरेस स्ट्रेट आइलैंडर्स को भूमि, जल और समुद्र के समग्र, सांस्कृतिक और आध्यात्मिक संबंधों का सम्मान करने के लिए प्रतिबद्ध है।

Arabic

تقر خدمات دعم Bonnie أن عشيرة Cabrogal في Darug Nation هي الأمانة التقليدية للأرض التي تقع عليها منظمنا. نقدم اعترافنا لجميع السكان الأصليين وسكان جزر مضيق توريس بصفقتهم المالكين التقليديين لهذه الأمة التي نسميها الوطن. نقدر أعمق الاحترام للأجداد والشيوخ، في الماضي والحاضر والناسئ. نلتزم Bonnie's بتكريم العلاقات الشاملة والثقافية والروحية للسكان الأصليين الأستراليين وسكان جزر مضيق توريس مع الأرض والمياه والبحار.

Serbian

Бонни Суппорт Сервицес признаје Цаброгал клан Дарушке нације као традиционалне чуваре земље на којој се налази наша организација. Изражавамо признање свим Абориџинима и оточанима у Торесовом пролазу као традиционалним власницима ове нације коју називамо домом. Одајемо најдубље поштовање прецима и старешинама, прошлим, садашњим и новим. Бонније'с се залаже за поштовање холистичких, културних и духовних односа Аустралије Абориџина и острва Торрес Страит са копном, водама и морима.

Chinese

Bonnie Support Services 承认 Darug 民族的 Cabrogal 氏族是我们组织所在土地的传统监护人。我们向所有原住民和托雷斯海峡岛民表示感谢，他们是我们称之为家的国家的传统所有者。我们向过去、现在和新兴的祖先和长老致以最深切的敬意。Bonnie's 致力于表彰澳大利亚原住民和托雷斯海峡岛民与陆地、水域和海洋的整体、文化和精神关系。

Spanish

Bonnie Support Services reconoce al clan Cabrogal de la Nación Darug como los Custodios Tradicionales de la tierra en la que se encuentra nuestra organización. Extendemos nuestro reconocimiento a todos los pueblos aborígenes e isleños del Estrecho de Torres como propietarios tradicionales de esta nación a la que llamamos hogar. Presentamos nuestro más profundo respeto a los Ancestros y Ancianos, pasados, presentes y emergentes. Bonnie's se compromete a honrar las relaciones holísticas, culturales y espirituales de los aborígenes australianos y los isleños del Estrecho de Torres con la tierra, las aguas y los mares.



This painting was created by one of our First Nations Family Workers, Peta Link. It was a gift to Bonnie's and currently hangs at the entrance of one of our refuges, as a way to create positivity and warmth for everyone entering for the first time. The woman on the left represents all the workers at Bonnie's as agents of positive change, and the dancing women celebrate their strength, power and resilience together.

Executive Officer's Report



What a year it has been. I said this as my opening statement in last year's Annual Report and I can't find any other words that perfectly sum it up as that. 2020 was about the

fires, the novelty of pandemics and lockdowns and here we are now, in 2021, 'living with COVID' – what a year, and yet throughout it all we have remained open.

We achieved our targets and have made the service even more accessible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children.

I am proud to say that all our COVID safe planning and extra preparation paid off. All the policies and protocols meant that as an essential service if women needed us, we found a way to be there. For a service in Southwestern Sydney this meant some uncharted waters, where everyone pulled together and worked in ways we haven't before. But we did it and I am so proud of all

the staff, clients, partners and stakeholders who have worked tirelessly to 'keep our doors open' (metaphorically speaking) and provide a one-stop-shop experience for our clients.

The hard lockdown was hard. It was imperative that during that period we made sure our message to all women was clear: **"The rules of lockdown do not apply to you if you are feeling unsafe."** The lockdowns saw a rise in cases of reported domestic violence and when women needed to escape, we wanted them to know they would not be penalised for leaving their local government area when unsafe.

It was great to see how resilient our team was in creatively changing the way we work and communicate with one another and our clients. While no group work could take place once lockdown commenced, we have been able to reach into people's lives and homes with contactless home delivery of resource packs. I really noticed the power of social media during this time, as Zoom and other

social media like our Facebook and Instagram (follow us!) made us able to stay in touch at a time when high levels of communication are required.

It never ceases to amaze me how generous the community is to our service. We are a visible and well-respected service so perhaps it's no surprise that even with all the hardships of 2021 donations continue to flow in. Often our old clients donate because they wish to give back after everything Bonnie's has done for them and because they understand what that next woman might be experiencing. One young woman cooked frozen meals and another went out and purchased toasters, kettles and kitchenware just for Bonnie's. These generous community efforts are valued and it helps Bonnie's to go above and beyond what funding can do, while also adding a personal touch.

We have also had funding top ups from the Department of Communities and Justice, in recognition of the additional stresses placed on services at this time. We were successful in receiving grants through Multicultural NSW, Women NSW, Stronger Communities and Clubs NSW and non-Government supporters such as MFS Investment Management and Sydney Community Foundation.

I'm proud to announce that even during the big changes of 2021, we've been able to stay focused and on track with our Reconciliation Action Plan. We achieved our targets and have made the service even more accessible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children. Exciting news is that we have signed up for our next RAP as well!

**THE RULES OF
LOCKDOWN DO
NOT APPLY TO YOU
IF YOU ARE
FEELING UNSAFE.**

As 2020 came to a close Bonnie Support Services hosted a virtual Candlelight Vigil on Wednesday 16 December 2020. The Candlelight Vigil is an annual activity organised by Bonnie's and coincides with the 2020 *International 16 Days of Activism campaign to challenge violence against women and girls*. One of the most powerful and moving parts of the vigil is the roll call of women's lives lost. To December 2020 our country had already seen **50 WOMEN** and **27 CHILDREN'S** lives lost due to violence. This year 2021 the numbers at time of print are **35 women** (figures from Destroy the Joint) and **16 children** (figures from Impact).

More needs to be done for women and children to ensure more housing and support options when they are leaving a dangerous relationship – as this is one of the most vulnerable times. The importance of continued and increased funding for our services will never go away until these numbers are reduced. With the changing public health environment it looks likely that Bonnie's will join up with other services for a "live" vigil in December 2021.

So from me, a very real and huge thank you to everyone who has been here for Bonnie's this year. To all the staff, thank you for all the intense COVID stepping up and keeping things rolling along at a very difficult time. The women and children needed you and you were there. It is not usual for an 'event' to take place that impacts everyone – and I want to acknowledge the hard work of the staff to keep things going at a time when they were experiencing their own struggles and stresses. Likewise to the Board of Directors for their continued and constant support. Thanks also to the women who come to Bonnie's for entrusting us with your stories at a vulnerable time in your life. No doubt we will all be glad when 2021 is behind us, but it has been an opportune reminder of the good and the resilience in all of us.

Tracy Phillips
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Leaving a dangerous relationship is one of the most vulnerable times...



Bonnie's meets Anthony Albanese and Chris Hayes.

From our Chair, Betty Green



Welcome everyone.

The impact and management of COVID-19 has continued to be central to all aspects of service delivery, planning and governance throughout

the reporting period. The Board understands the particular challenges for staff in providing safe, high quality services and support to women and children experiencing domestic violence. The commitment and professionalism of staff has made significant contributions to the organisation in adapting to different ways of working that at times may not always be easy but are necessary in keeping everyone safe. The planning day with Board, Management and team leaders led by Sue Cripps in the development of our five-year strategic plan showcased not only the teamwork and passion of staff but importantly how organisational values and ethos are not simply words in a document but are active, embedded and present in staff work practices with clients and partners alike.

On behalf of the Board I would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to our donors and supporters over the years. In particular we are thankful for the continued support of Sydney Community Foundation and the Be Kind Sydney fund raising project, PIMCO and MFS. This support

helped us fund Aunty Bonnie's and provide additional support for families during lockdown.. We also thank Habitat for Humanity for their continued support.

The barriers for women on visas who experience intimate partner violence is a complex issue that women's services have advocated for over a long period of time. Bonnie's was pleased to have received funding from Multicultural NSW to provide support services to women on visas that ensured Bonnie's could provide the essentials, such as food, housing and medication to a vulnerable group who have limited resources.

I also wish to thank the Department of Communities and Justice 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.

Finally, I wish 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 Bonnie's staff 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.

Betty Green
CHAIR



Program Manager's Report



My name is An and I work alongside the women who walk alongside you.

When we tell people we are supporting women and children who are experiencing domestic

violence, people say, "I couldn't do that work, it must be hard" or "You must be a very strong person to be able to do that." But the truth is, it's the women we're supporting who are the strong ones. Women like you.

The women who support you if you come to Bonnie's are just everyday women – not any braver or more courageous than you. We have the usual fears, worries, heartaches and aspirations. We don't talk about 'us' but when we're sitting there with you while you tell your story, you should know that we understand your pain in some ways. And some of your pains we feel more than others.

When you tell us your fears, hopes, and plans for the future, they are usually around safety for you and your children. We want the same hopes for you too, and we try our best to make that happen. I want you to know that your stories stay with us and teach us – even when you've continued on your way...

We keep them to tell other women who come to Bonnie's and to show what the women before them have done and what can be achieved. We keep them to celebrate women's endurance, resilience and kindness even though horrid things have happened to you. We keep them to remind ourselves that we are needed to keep reaching out our hands to guide you when you ask us to. We keep it to tell children in the refuges that their mummy will keep them safe like the many other women who've come to Bonnie's always have. 45 years of Mums trying to keep their kids safe.

But never think it is just us walking beside you, willing you on. There are many unseen faces quietly supporting you in the background and we are so

grateful for them. These people walk alongside us so we can walk alongside you.

They are the people who keep Bonnie's running efficiently, day in and day out. They're the people who give donations to help another family out, the people who support us by offering encouragement. They are our friends from other agencies who allow us to make 'warm referrals' because they know that women need a cohesive system response to escape. They are the people who believe in our work and support us in fighting for the right for women and children to be safe.

In 2020-2021, we have supported more and more women and children but increasingly many are still living at home in an unsafe household. In some cases, lockdown has made their existing safety plan irrelevant. Is this you?

If it is, you should know we are still here.

We have been completing safety planning in car parks and whispering through phone calls. When they make it here to us, we breathe a sigh of relief together. We say, 'At least now you are safe.'

We are still here for you.

An Le
PROGRAM MANAGER

I want you to know that your stories stay with us and teach us – even when you've continued on your way...

We keep them to tell other women who come to Bonnie's and to show what the women before them have done and what can be achieved.

WE ARE BONNIE'S

What we do

Bonnie's provides support and/or accommodation for women and their children who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or escaping domestic violence. We work to enhance women's skills, knowledge and capacities, with a range of services that allow women to make informed choices and enhance their opportunities. Bonnie's 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 and an unshakeable belief that women and children have the right to be safe and feel free. All women deserve access to services which enable them to be autonomous, independent and self-determining.

Our vision is for a world where women and children flourish and reach their full potential.

Our commitment

Our commitment to safety is based on principles of social justice, equity and provides:

- ⦿ An environment which values each person's right to be heard.
- ⦿ An environment that acknowledges the importance of every woman and every child's story.
- ⦿ A professional quality service that facilitates reciprocal learning, respects differences, recognises and supports each person's knowledge, experience and right to self-determination.
- ⦿ A deep respect and understanding for each person's cultural background, language and religious beliefs.

Who we are

Staff at Bonnie's collectively have a total of 44 qualifications among 26 women ranging from Certificates to Master's Degrees. Most of the staff at Bonnie's are also either mothers themselves, or aunts to beautiful nieces and nephews to whom they help impart all their wisdom. This diversity in experience and skill makes Bonnie's a place with a wealth of knowledge in this sector. It keeps getting better and better as a few staff members are studying for even more qualifications.

WE ARE MUMS AND
STEPMUMS...

DAUGHTERS...

AUNTIES AND NIECES
AND GODPARENTS...

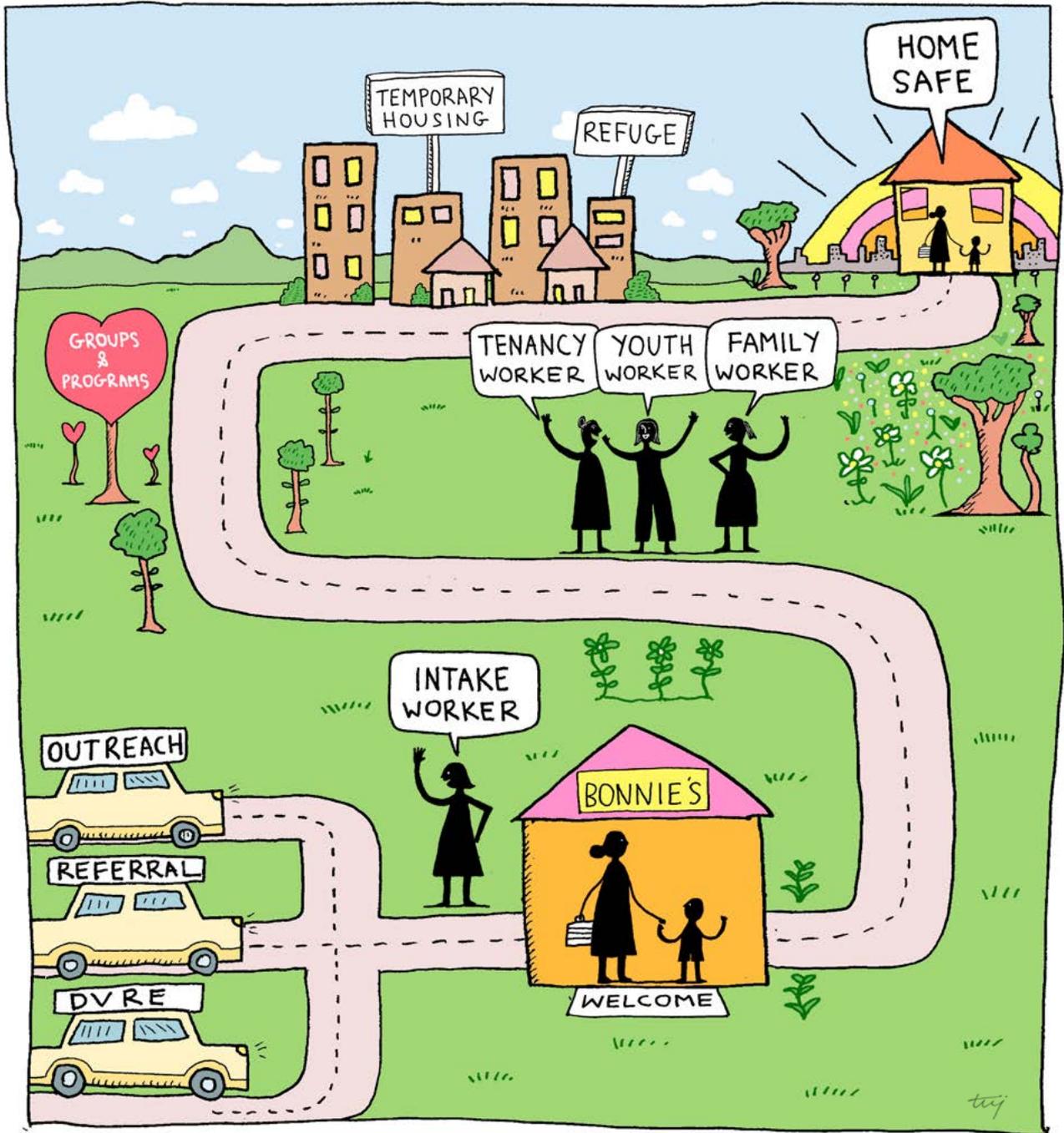
WE ARE WOMEN,
WE ARE YOU,
AND WE ARE HERE.

WE ARE BONNIES!

WE ARE YOU, AND WE ARE HERE!

We are Bonnie's!

The Bonnie's Road to Safety



WE ARE BONNIE'S

We're your first port of call

Story from Sue, Community Worker

Community Workers are the first port of call for all women seeking help. Our job means gathering information to work out what a woman needs and what other services or accommodation can be provided. We then organise a Family Worker to help her settle in.



How has COVID affected your job?

Before COVID, I didn't realise how important facial expressions and reading someone's body language

was. During the intake, not being able to talk face to face has been very hard. About 20% of our clients don't speak English which can make the intake process really challenging at times. As most of our clients can't come into the refuge, this is all done over the phone with us on one line, a translator on another and our clients on the other.

It can sometimes be difficult to discuss some issues in certain cultures where there is no word or concept for the questions we ask such as in the DVSAT (Domestic Violence Safety Assessment Tool)

there is a question regarding suicide and in some cultures there isn't the right word to express that. Skilled interpreters can make a big difference.

What's your favourite part of your job?

For me, the best part of the job is talking to and helping women get to safety. There is no better feeling than securing a safe place for women and their children.

It's also great to be able to show clients that there is always help available. This can be life changing for some, especially Visa clients who have had their precarious situation used to control them.

Written with Sue



Community Workers Sue and Alison.



Staff holding donated books from Dymocks.

WE ARE BONNIE'S

Kids R Us

Story from Ebbe and Mel, Family Workers

Outreach worker Ebbe sat down with her friend, and Family Worker at Bonnie's Mel, to discuss what it's been like working during this crazy last year. Here are some snippets of their conversation.

EBBE: Tell us what is it that you actually do?

MEL: Well, Ebbe – I'm a Family Worker! Which means I work directly with women who have been welcomed into Bonnie's by the Community Workers. I become their case manager, and look after everything they need while they are in the service. I usually work alongside the Tenancy team to find secure housing and the Child and Youth Workers too.

EBBE: Did you have to change the way you work because of the lockdown?

MEL: Definitely, it's been really tough. Moving to mainly phone calls rather than visits. I think it's particularly hard when you have a client in distress and you can't comfort them, you can only talk them through it. There's something so important about physically being with someone – handing them a tissue, giving them a hug.

A lot of clients have been struggling with basics during lockdown too, I've been spending a lot of time sourcing food hampers and extra things clients need for themselves and their kids. There never seems to be enough money to go around and this has just gotten worse during lockdown.

EBBE: Is there a client this year that you are still thinking about that you worked with in the last year?

MEL: I have one client who recently returned to her husband. I'm still in touch with her and I worry about her. However I feel that during our time working together she has learned many new skills which help her be more independent which will keep her safer than she was before. And now she knows that there is support out there for her so if she needs to leave again, she knows we're here.

EBBE: I know the lockdown was hard and hectic, but was there something special that came out of it?

MEL: I saw one advantage for a particular client who has debilitating anxiety. Attending court via video link in the comfort of our office has definitely been easier for her (and me!) than attending court in person and having to see perp* face to face. It makes me wonder if online court is a better approach even in "normal times".

EBBE: What is the best part about your job?

MEL: The little moments you have when you know you've made an impact: A kid's face lights up when you drop off a craft activity. Relief from mum when you finally get her Centrelink payments sorted. A thank you after a hard day at court. And the women we work with. They all want to give back. I have so many clients donating furniture and baby stuff they no longer need. I have 2 clients who are now studying to be domestic violence case workers / counsellors as they want to give back to the sector that has supported them which is just so amazing.

EBBE: Thank you so much for your beautiful contribution Mel! What a year we've had. We've had to adapt to do what is best for us as workers, as well as what is best for the client. The mode of delivery of service has been different, but at the end of the day the outcomes make us realise what we are capable of in difficult times.



Ebbe



Mel

There's no blueprint

Story from Adelle, a Child and Youth Worker



The best way to support kids, is by supporting Mum too.

One of the greatest privileges of being a Child and Youth Worker (CYW) is connecting with Mum and gaining her trust. Mum often asks for parenting advice. Some Mums with teenagers will ask about internet safety because their kids are on social media too much, or ask for additional tutoring support,

or maybe just what to do for teething toddlers. We often tell mum, 'there's no blueprint to parenting', everyone does it in their own way. It's up to Child and Youth Workers to hold Mum's hand with whatever she needs.

It's important that families are in charge of shaping how we support them and are confident to speak up. Our job is to create spaces where children feel safe enough to share what's going on for them and what help they need.



WE ARE BONNIE'S

We never give up

Story from Dragana, Tenancy Officer

Being a Tenancy Officer means there's always something to do. We joke sometimes that we actually have 5 different jobs in one, because some days we are social workers, and others we are real estate agents, house inspectors, architectural designers and project managers. It's a job with many different responsibilities, but when it all comes together – it's pretty fantastic.

This year was big. We settled two hundred families into secure housing and finished the renovations on some of our 20 properties. Funding for the reno's came from *Habitat for Humanity*: kitchens



were fixed up and installed, bathrooms re-done. One of my favourite things is watching a family walk into a newly renovated property. They are always surprised at how lovely and new everything is, "A brand new kitchen, for us?"

We received a lot of referrals for accommodation, and having the support of other local housing organisations made all the difference.



They are always surprised at how lovely and new everything is, "A brand new kitchen, for us?"

**THANK YOU
HABITAT FOR
HUMANITY**

An Aboriginal family was referred to us after arriving in Sydney from regional NSW. When I first met this family I was stuck at what to do. This was a family of seven and Mum was heavily pregnant at the time. Private rentals with 5 or 6 bedrooms cost around \$600 a week, and Mum just couldn't afford that. At the time she was staying with friends but because there were so many of them it was hard. The longer they waited, the more difficult everything else got.

The kids were having trouble at school and she had miscarried her baby. I worked non-stop with this family in trying to get them something. It was tough but I knew she relied on me. I didn't give up.

Then one day Aboriginal Housing Office called us and said they'd found a long-term rental for this family. Long-term rentals are so hard to find, but with the help of the Aboriginal Housing Office we could all make this happen. I recently spoke to Mum and she told me that her eldest had just gotten a job, and that she loves her place. I was so happy she wanted to share her good news with me. These stories are what keep me motivated and appreciate the work we do.

DVRE: Precious help on weekends

(Domestic Violence Rapid Response)

The most dangerous time for a woman is when she first leaves – we have to respond quickly and all precautions need to be in place.

That's why our Rapid Response team is not for the fainthearted. We operate at a dynamic pace and don't stop until the mum and her kids are safe. It's like a well oiled machine and each of us plays a crucial part. When Mayssa left on Maternity Leave this year, Zahra stepped in and didn't miss a beat.

We operate from Friday afternoon to Monday morning which are often the most intense times for women to experience domestic violence. It's also a time when many other services are closed. This is one of the things that makes DVRE so precious.

If a family is in danger, it shouldn't matter what day it is.

Leaving a volatile situation is a traumatic time for her – she's often terrified, suffering from injuries and PTSD. She may not have the strength or confidence to make vital decisions...

We work with the woman to immediately leave her current situation safely and find temporary accommodation. We may have worked with her in early intervention before this – getting a safety plan in place, providing a safe phone, arranging to meet in a safe place. The response for every woman is different and we're very creative!

The trust between the woman and the team needs to be established quickly. Sometimes she can have a distrust of authority through a previous negative experience and this needs to be respected and sensitively worked with. We want to work collaboratively with her so that she glimpses what it can feel like to have control of her life again.

She might need to move quickly out of the area and retrieve her furniture and belongings. The police are often involved. The children don't understand what's going on. Often she'll be completely overwhelmed and require intense emotional support. We need to be flexible and appreciate each woman's different needs.

COVID brought extra challenges. There's been an increase in complex clients entering our program and there are more women presenting with mental health and trauma. These women's needs are often too much for a lot of services which is a problem as there are limited vacancies at specialised services. There are also less crisis accommodation options as most services are operating at half capacity. Applying for private rentals can also present challenges especially if the woman has a bad rental history.

Our team needs to be as special as it is. Working tightly together, fast, hands on and creative. We try our best to soften the intensity of the change the woman and her children are experiencing – from emotional support to dismantling a trampoline to putting beds together at the last minute!



The DVRE team doing what they do best.

Natasha

It's not always a straight line to how people find us. It's often we get mothers, grandparents or concerned friends calling us to enquire about our women's refuge and the services we offer. Most of the time it's a difficult conversation, as I can hear the pain on the other end of the phone. One Mum rang me up, and asked about how she could help her daughter. I told her what we do, and how we can help. I could hear her saying, 'Yes, yes, okay', we ended the conversation and I wished her well.



Fast forward 6 months later: her daughter was on the line asking for immediate assistance.

In just three weeks, her daughter accessed temporary accommodation, had her name scrubbed off the old lease that she shared with her partner, and had her Start Safely package approved! She looked and found another apartment, signed a new lease and was able to relocate with all her furniture! It was amazing to see her safe in her new home.



Wattle Grove Lions Club visit and donations.

SPOTLIGHT

Help for more women on visas

One major positive that came out of this otherwise intense year was that through funding, we can support more women on Visas. This is something Bonnie's has been working towards for a long time.

It's hard to comprehend the uniquely vulnerable position many migrant women are in. Often they have arrived in Australia on the types of visas that are linked to their partners and make them totally dependent on them. This means that when they need to escape DV with their children, their visa status doesn't change and they are unsupported in a way that most Australians couldn't imagine.

These women aren't eligible to seek work and earn money or to receive Centrelink. They have no safety net and don't always have the language skills to be their own advocates. They live in a constant fear of deportation and in most cases, their situations in their home countries are just as unsafe. These strict visa regulations made it extremely difficult for Bonnie's to help the many women we meet who need us – until this year that is!

We received extra funding from Multicultural NSW and now we can provide more women with food vouchers, medical support, cash to get by and money to pay their rent. This has made a big difference in how we work, and we can help so many more women because of it.



What a stable home can do

Just this year, the best thing for me has been seeing the improvement in one of my visa client's kids. The family had been moving between refuges for 18 months and in that time, the eldest daughter who's seven, had been to 6 different primary schools! When I met her, she absolutely dreaded going to school.

We helped the family into secure accommodation and when I saw the little girl recently, she told me she's so sad that it's school holidays because she doesn't have any school work and she loves school so much! She went from level 3 reading to level 7 in about 6 months.

It is so amazing to see how having a stable home can improve kids' lives. All three kids had pretty bad behavioural issues and they are like different kids now. All so polite and helpful, it's been an amazing transformation. I don't know what their situation would have been like without the extra support we received this year and were able to put into action with her.

– Mel, Family Worker

Reaching out

Our new outreach worker, Ebbe, writes about her experience of working in our new outreach program.

Bonnie's witnessed a surge in the number of women seeking outreach support during this year, especially during the lockdowns. Doing outreach work means working with women who are not living in our refuges – some might live in temporary accommodation or still be living with their violent partners. When the lockdown struck, it became even more difficult for women to leave. So when we received extra funding it was such a relief and we could finally help these women on a full-time basis.

This was my first year at Bonnie's and to say it has been tough but very rewarding would sum it up perfectly. I started as a Family Worker and moved into the new Outreach Worker role shortly after. I'm proud to say that from January to May we supported 38 women and their children to escape safely from DV and establish independence. We worked one on one with these clients over 10 sessions and I can say the most rewarding aspects of this job were witnessing the resilience of these women. This story about one of the women we have worked with might give you a glimpse of what our outreach program can offer.

Jenny

Jenny is a young Mum who was born in Cambodia and moved to Australia to be with her husband and their son. Throughout their relationship she suffered physical, verbal, and psychological abuse from her husband. Her son also suffered physical abuse at the hands of his father. She was not allowed to work, and was forced to care for her husband's elderly parents. She would be monitored wherever she went. The violence escalated during the pandemic and she decided to leave, at which point we stepped in.

She was not aware of what supports were available to help her with her situation. She was also fearful of involving police as she did not think she would be believed and assumed she would get in trouble

and be deported back to Cambodia. Throughout her time with us we were able to support Jenny and her son in these ways (and more!)

- ☉ Safety Planning
- ☉ Food vouchers
- ☉ Support with police and application for an ADVO
- ☉ Referral and application to Legal Aid to assist with separation from her husband
- ☉ Advocacy with Centrelink so she could receive higher benefits
- ☉ Support in reporting a breach in an ADVO
- ☉ Counselling through Victim Services for her emotional wellbeing
- ☉ As she wanted to be in touch with other Cambodians we referred her to her local community centre where she was able to meet other women like her
- ☉ Start Safely application and approval

Ultimately, they are now safe and independent. Jenny is doing well with her English classes and studies, and hopes to be a certified nail technician. We have many stories like this to be proud of here at Bonnie's.

Written by Ebbe.



PROGRAMS

Aunty Bonnie's



"As a Gooreng Gooreng / Kabi Kabi woman and a Bonnie's worker, I work to empower other women. Their stories are no longer survival stories, these are empowering stories. No victims here, just women, strong women."

PETA LINK

The Aunty Bonnie's project is a women's healing space led by First Nations women, Peta and Daniella. They hold this therapeutic space to reduce isolation and develop meaningful connections. And for the women to share their stories and knowledge about Australian life and cultural practices.

Maori woman Adelle sat down with Peta and asked her some questions about the program.

What was your thinking behind Aunty Bonnie's space?

The idea came from wanting to create a space for women to have alternative ways of healing. In my culture, creating art like painting, claywork and traditional weaving is another way of connecting to each other. During these sessions, there's a lot of yarnning and talking – and that's not nothing. Yarning is healing.

Who are the women involved in Aunty Bonnie's?

I'm a proud Gooreng Gooreng and Kabi Kabi woman and I co-facilitate these sessions with Gumbaynggirr and Wiradjuri woman Daniella. The participants are women of all cultural backgrounds who have been in Bonnie's service. We also invite other First Nations' artists to share their practice and skills. We recently had a Wiradjuri artist Bianca come in and share her story and teach us weaving. During this process one of the women in the group of Tongan background shared her traditional form of weaving. Because Bonnie's is culturally and linguistically very diverse, it's been an amazing experience learning about other women's cultures. *Sharing each other's culture is very empowering for women and is a new way for us to connect to each other more deeply.*

I saw some of the beautiful clay sculptures around, could you tell me a little bit about that Aunty Bonnie's day?

Sure! During that session we talked about the history of clay; how this connects us to ourselves by connecting to earth.

It was fun to get our hands dirty. One of the ladies asked if she could take some clay home and do some activities with her eldest granddaughter that she's close to, and she told me they went and made bowls together.



How did Aunty Bonnie's change during lockdown?

COVID-19 has definitely been our biggest hurdle since Aunty Bonnie's started. Not being able to come together in person was really hard, but I decided to really try and provide all the women with things that would make them feel nice and loved. I created self-care packages with toiletries, things to make art, a diary and an affirmation booklet. One Mum put the affirmations on the fridge and said, "when I'm having a tough day, it's a simple reminder that I'm okay and that I'm going to get past this." A little bit of kindness goes a long way, it can make people feel alive and feel acknowledged.

I wanted to share a bit of that during this hard time and remind Aunty Bonnie's women that we're still here for you.



You made this group possible.

PROGRAMS

The After School Fun Club



'After School Fun Club' is one of our new programs that Child and Youth Worker Adelle created at the beginning of the year. This program is designed for after school hours with kids aged 5-12, and there's always space for Mum to come along.

Adelle tells us more about it...

There's always room for Mum too!

One of the most rewarding parts of this program is seeing families have fun together. By inviting Mum to these sessions, the families get together and do activities that will bring everyone joy. It's always a pleasure being able to talk to the mothers who come in. It allows us to gain their trust while we

work. This space is very different from the one-on-one work I do – I get to put my fun hat on, and have conversations with the families in a different but meaningful way. One activity we did was make a 'Fun Card about Mum' for Mother's Day. The kids loved it and seeing Mum's face when she received the cards was priceless.

New Friendships

Some personal highlights for me have been noticing the friendships that have blossomed among the kids and mothers. There were two children who I realised by the second meeting had added each other on their gaming applications and continued their friendship outside of the group. So many kids struggle to maintain friendships when their home lives have had so much change. Having stable places to play is so important for children's people skills and development.

COVID Cupcakes

Like most of our programs, during lockdown we had to get creative. Instead of having everyone at Bonnie's we sent out cupcake decorating kits directly to the doorsteps of the women we work with. We have so many beautiful reactions. I still remember one girl's happiness when we arrived with the boxes. This girl has 3 other siblings, and she could not believe that there was a box for her, all her siblings and her Mum too! She was jumping up and down with happiness. It's easy to forget how special it is to receive something that is all yours.

Another Mum wrote: "These were amazing, and the kids loved them. Once we'd decorated the cupcakes the kids pretended we were in a bakery!"



PROGRAMS

Hindi Urdu Women's Health Group

The Hindi Urdu Women's health group has been proudly running for up to 14 years now. In our partnership with Liverpool Women's Health Centre, this group has been able to run every Friday for Indian women aged 50+. In this group we host activities and guest speakers who come to talk about all things health related – just this year we had a dietician, a naturopath, yoga instructors, someone from Centrelink and more.

This group is run by Bonnie's Community Worker Nancely who told us a little bit about how special this group is.



Nancely

This group is the highlight of many women's week. A lot of elderly Indian women live alone or with their adult children that

are very busy, and therefore experience loneliness and isolation. There's one member of the group who is 90 years old, and while she lives with her grown up son and his wife, she doesn't have much of a relationship with them. She cooks and cleans for

herself and eats by herself. She's been in the group since it began, so for her this group is where she can experience things she doesn't get at home. She can socialise, share her culture, speak her language and share food with others – and simply connect. This is a similar case for many of the other women that come to this group and are always filled with so much joy and happiness to be together.

COVID

"When can we come back?" is the most common question I get these days. This period has been very difficult for everyone. Because these women are already isolated, the lockdowns only made it worse. There was also a lot of panic in the women, as the news would change so frequently and English is not their first language so it was difficult to understand. So during this time I made regular calls with all of the members in the group (which is about 20) and made sure everyone was safe. I was able to go shopping with some of them, and visit the fruit and veggies shops which were always so nice just to hang out and drive together. Simply being together was amazing.



PROGRAMS

The Creative Space



The Flags are Flying: Stories from the Creative Space



Ruth

When the first lockdown lifted, Alison and I and the women in the creative space couldn't wait to see each other again. I couldn't even imagine how hard the

lockdown must have been for some of our mums – living in a little unit with no outside space and 3 kids to keep happy. At our first gathering back at Bonnie's, it was immediately apparent that the thing they had valued and missed the most, was their connection with each other.

We decided that for our first project back, we would make prayer flags that could hang up in Mimosa, one of Bonnie's refuges. We thought that after so much time apart, it would be nice to do a project all together.

The idea was to create something that celebrated the resilience and creativity experienced during lockdown, and then give it to the refuge as a way of inspiring hope, support and good wishes for the women experiencing crisis. All the materials we used for the prayer flags were sentimental, cut from special, old clothes or from donated pieces of fabric that could be used to upcycle. Old fabric and clothing can hold deep meaning for people and we thought it would be a beautiful way for it to live on. For example, one woman used her children's old clothes for the flags and other mums wrote inspiring messages on theirs.

A woman in the group from Nepal said they had prayer flags all over her home country, and two other Arabic women excitedly explained that they also had similar ones back home, too. Everyone got to connect their values and personal hopes in this shared way, while also bringing a bit of their culture and history along too. All this was reflected in each of the flags – all so beautiful but unique in their own way. Once they were finished, I took them home and sewed them all together. What a beautiful sight.



Alison

One of the nicest memories from the Creative Space this year was our celebratory end of year lunch at the Casula PowerHouse Museum.

Everyone was so excited to meet up with each other, all dressed up! And out at a cafe too. As we were sitting down to eat, I saw Ruth reaching into her bag and like a magician pulling silk scarves out of a top hat, out came the stream of beautiful prayer flags. All stitched together!

I grabbed one side and Ruth grabbed the other and we held it up for all our women to see. Soon enough, they drew the attention of all the patrons of the restaurant too. They started coming up to us saying, "Wow! Did you all make this?" and "That's so beautiful, how amazing." I looked around the table and saw how proud everyone was – it was a really touching moment of recognition.

The lockdown last year taught us so much. We realised that during the restrictions of COVID, connecting with each other is at the heart of the Creative Space. At other times, when the group is running normally, connection is important but it's the creativity, presence and the calming effect on the women's bodies that stands out. It's so beneficial to reduce anxiety, stress and symptoms of PTSD – the women take this positive energy with them and it ripples down to the children and the atmosphere at home.

Alison is Bonnie's Community Worker and Group Facilitator. Ruth is Co-Group Facilitator from Rosebank.



PROGRAMS

The Kids' Space

Creativity in the time of COVID

Usually the Kids' Space happens over 5 weeks at Bonnie's, but because of lockdown we sent out some sensory boxes instead. It's a box full of mindfulness exercises to encourage creativity, fun and a sense of groundedness. A lot of the kids we

work with have experienced trauma, so it's important that our activities are both gentle and tactile. We sent around these boxes to the home of the families we work with.

One Mum recently said: "My kids think it's Christmas every week and you're Santa!"

"My kids think it's Christmas every week and you're Santa!"

What was in a sensory box?

It changed every week but was always a box full of activities and sensory items, like an interesting rock and some nice smelling things. One week we had cookie dough and in another there was slime. Slime is always the hands down winner every time! We give the kids a recipe and sometimes it works, sometimes it really doesn't, but at the end of the day it doesn't really matter. It's about the process and concentrating on something. It's been a great help to Mum too, because now that the kids are at home all day, they need to be occupied.

This last year has been really challenging, going in and out and back into lockdown has been very disruptive for everyone. But everytime the 5 weeks are up, kids are always wanting more, Mums are wanting more, and we're wanting more! And it gives us the motivation to keep on going.



A moment that has stuck with you this last year?

One in-person Kids Space we did in between lockdowns comes to mind. In the group there was this one kid who I could tell was really struggling. Every session, like clockwork, he would put his head face down onto the table and fall asleep. I couldn't engage him at all, and I told his Mum, "You don't have to come, you know – this class is totally optional" and she just replied, "No no, he always tells me he wants to come." So it seemed he did, because they arrived on time every week. Trauma works in different ways, and it seemed putting his head on the table was his coping mechanism for being around so many people. Another way of looking at it, would be that he felt safe enough in our space to sit and fall asleep, every week. While it can be challenging, the moments in this space are so invaluable and can be so rewarding. I'm really looking forward to going back.

Written from a conversation with Marryanne.

GRANTS AND DONATIONS

Thank you!

As tough as 2020-2021 has been, the generosity we've felt from our community has left us feeling very lucky. Donations are the key to keeping our wheels on, and our morale high. Your support has powered us on.



Sandra, our Admin Officer, organises all the donations and she wrote a blog on what it feels like to be on the receiving end of your generosity.

"During my time here at Bonnie's, I've always been amazed at people's generosity. We get all kinds of donations, from chocolate, to food (new and left-over), to handmade knitted clothes or hand me downs to... the list goes on. Just last week a man donated a hamper he had won in a raffle, on another occasion a couple donated a giant Easter

egg they had won, this year even some children have donated their excess Easter eggs!

Often our old clients donate because they wish to give back after everything Bonnie's has done for them. One young woman cooked frozen meals and another went out and purchased toasters, kettles and kitchen ware just for Bonnie's. We got a diverse range of gifts this year but I think the most unique one was a haircut.

A Dad came in to donate some of his kid's toys and baby goods, and said he was a barber and would love to donate some of his skills as a hairdresser. One family who was staying in our refuge took up this offer and the 3 kids sat in the chair and got their hair done! Once he'd finished, he told me how much he enjoyed hanging out with the family. I could feel his appreciation and emotions."



GRANTS AND DONATIONS

Women supporting women

Support The Girls

Support The Girls is a not-for-profit organisation run by women for women. One of their projects is collecting beautiful new bras to donate along with a session of free professional fittings. Support The Girls came into Bonnie's this year and gave us a lift, in more ways than one!

Alison shared a story of her client Terry* and her first ever fitted bra.

"I was so excited when I heard that Support The Girls were coming. When my daughter was about 16, she had big breasts and we went and got her fitted. It was such a life changing experience for her. So I was determined to get some of the women I worked with excited about bras, with one client in particular in mind.

My client Terry is about 50 years old. 'I've never worn a bra in my life!' she said to me when I asked her to come along. 'Why would I start now?'

She wasn't having a bar of it but I kept nudging. I knew she liked saving money and scoring bargains, so I tried another angle.



'Ah come on, it's free!' I told her. 'And you don't have to get a bra, you can just get a crop top: that's very different.'

We went back and forth a bit.

'Oh okay, book me in!' she said.

I popped by after the fitting, and asked her how it went. She held up a pink frilly bra and beamed. 'No crop top for me! I'm going to wear this bra everyday!'

She thanked me for making her go, and I felt so proud that I was a part of this empowering experience for her. I learnt it's never too late to have a 'first-time' experience that can leave you feeling happy and comfortable in your skin."



Aplenty

Michaela is one of Bonnie's new friends, and founder of Aplenty, a small catering business. Her passion for good produce, good vibes and caring for other people gave her the idea to create DIY pasta making kits for everyone in lockdown. With every pasta kit sold she donated \$5 to Bonnie's. And she donated some of her pasta kits and a private zoom cooking class for some of the women we work with.

During lockdown, I realised Bonnie's was exactly the right organisation to donate to. I know that the more intense COVID-19 gets, the more intense it becomes at home. I can't even imagine being in that position, so I wanted to do something. Most people buying these kits are generally pretty safe in their homes and can afford beautiful meals, so I thought they'd like the opportunity to give back too! The one-on-one cooking class with the clients went great! There were a lot of zoom thumbs up. :)

Michaela from Aplenty

GRANTS AND DONATIONS

Sydney Community Foundation and Be Kind Sydney

Sydney Community Foundation and Be Kind Sydney work with a number of services in south-western Sydney. This year we have been the lucky beneficiaries of grants that have supported First Nations' women – they have co-funded our Auntie Bonnie's program and provided us with extra funds to support clients affected by COVID and lockdown. Another group of generous women supporting women to improve their lives!

MFS Investment Management

We are so grateful for the MFS staff and charity committee's support of Bonnie's for many years now. This generous group has supported many Bonnie's programs – particularly those aimed at the support and inclusion of Aboriginal women. This includes our Health Relationships Program, Auntie Bonnie's, funding for our mural project and additional funding to support families through COVID. This is just to name a few. We have also had the pleasure of joining them for International Women's Day. Thank you MFS for your amazing generosity.

Street Smart Australia



Street Smart is a grassroots organisation that has supported Bonnie's with small grants for school holiday programs, team building exercises for staff in recognition of the stresses of COVID and beautiful Sheridan linen packages for the women.

These are just some of the programs they have helped us with and we are grateful to Street Smart and their donors.

Dymocks Children's Charities



We were the lucky recipients of a children's library from Dymocks. What a wonderful gift and the staff had so much fun choosing the books for the children who are staying with us. Thanks Dymocks for this wonderful gift.

DV and Paws

Maddie from our DVRE team noticed that the thought of being separated from beloved pets is a distressing obstacle for some women in escaping DV. She looked for a grant that would bridge this gap in the system and now we have a 12 months grant from DV and Paws. Pets can now attend emergency boarding for up to 3 months. Foster homes are also found and the new foster parents send updates and pics to the mum. Anyone who loves their pets will understand how comforting this would be. So far seven women and their women's-best-friends have been looked after through the program.



OUR HIGHLIGHTS THIS YEAR

Wow, what a year!

Easter



This year's Easter fell on that special sweet spot period where we weren't in lockdown, and everyone could be at the office. Since we couldn't do our Christmas celebrations at the refuge, we decided we were going to make Easter as best as we could. What

did that look like? Well, we had a visit from the Easter Bunny! Our admin Officer Sandra was Ms Bunny, and hopped around all day long. The kids loved it and we ate Easter eggs galore.

International Women's Day March



We celebrated International Women's Day by taking it to the streets! The team were all masked up, with banners and signs in our hands as we marched alongside thousands of others for gender equality. The theme this year was #choosetochallenge which

came after Brittany Higgins spoke out about her experience of sexual assault in Parliament. It was a reminder that there is still a lot of work to be done in achieving gender equality at all levels. It was an emotional day but seeing everyone out there together screaming "What do we want... Gender Equality... When do we want it? Now!" was powerful.



Cultural Awareness Training

This year we participated in a Cultural Awareness Training during National Reconciliation week on National Sorry Day run by Yattungka Gordon and Sonya Pearce. It was a great opportunity for our whole team to get together and increase our understanding of First Nations People and the continual impact of colonisation. It encouraged us to deeply reflect on the way we work with Aboriginal women and children in our community. This learning is ongoing and continuous for us all – and it's something we're really passionate about.

This training felt incredibly unique, Yattungka and Sonya fostered a safe space where everyone was able to share stories, express opinions freely and learn from each other. Throughout the two days I felt sadness, anger, happiness, and laughter. I left those two days filled with hope and a sense of strength – strength of what could be achieved if we were to spend more time listening. Listening to the community, listening to each other's stories and working together. The training was a really important and invaluable way to acknowledge the importance of Sorry Day and Reconciliation and I am looking forward to continuing my journey to listen more, learn more and do better.

Ciara, Team Leader at Bonnie's.

Christmas in the car park



Normally, we have a gathering for Christmas at the refuge and we invite all our clients and kids to come and celebrate with us. We have party food and run fun activities for the kids. People are very generous during this time, and we get a lot of

donations so by the end of the day there's lots of gifts for the kids. This year Mum got a brand new handbag too!

Before the big day, we decided to deliver the presents to our clients' doorsteps ourselves. We all dressed up as Santa's little elves and reindeers and had tinsel attached to everything. We even dressed up the car! It was happy chaos for us all.

The Zoo!

Part of the school holiday program this year, we took some families to the zoo. There were about 18 of us, including families we work with, Natasha from DVRE and Child and Youth Workers, Marryanne and Adelle. These excursions are such a great way to connect with Mum and the kids.

"It's great doing excursions like this because you get to connect with everyone in a different way. Families see other parts of your personality – the fun side gets to come out! I felt really lucky to have been there. A lot of the Mums might not otherwise be able to afford a trip like that, and seeing their faces filled with joy and excitement was so special."

Adelle



The Candlelight Vigil

Every year we do a Candlelight Vigil for all the women who have been lost to domestic violence, it is always a very emotional and powerful experience. This year we couldn't invite others into the space, but the team all reflected on how powerful it was to be in a ritual together. In these times of turmoil and change, having this tradition and ritual felt extra valuable and important.

This story was written by Peta Link.

***Don't think of her as gone away
her journey's just begun,
life holds so many facets
this earth is only one.
Just think of her as resting
from the sorrows and the tears
in a place of warmth and comfort
where there are no days and years.
Think how she must be wishing
that we could know today
how nothing but our sadness
can really pass away.
And think of her as living
in the hearts of those she touched...
for nothing loved is ever lost
and she was loved so much.***

Shout Out to Marcela for keeping Bonnie's COVID-19 safe and sparkling clean!

Marcela is our Environmental Officer and we wanted to give her a special mention this year because we have no idea how we could have done it without her! She has been pivotal in keeping us safe at Bonnie's. Using her precision and meticulous eye for detail, she has been so helpful in keeping the refuges and our offices clean and in keeping with all the new COVID-19 control policies.



Infectious Control Training



Marcela

This year Heike, Adelle, Marcela and myself all attended the Comply with Infection Prevention and Control training, and we all learnt a lot! Safe to say, we all know that washing your hands is VERY important. We also learnt about respiratory hygiene, and had a fun day

of role-playing scenarios like cleaning up 'blood-spill' tomato sauce in the kitchen. It was a great day, and Marcela was the star team player. We've learnt the correct procedures for living with COVID-19, and cleaning is definitely a skill we'll be implementing for a long time. And we couldn't do it without Marcela!

Written by Admin Officer, Sandra

Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)



We are extremely proud to have completed our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) this year!

Over the past two years our partnerships and networks with First Nations people and services has grown and we have been able to improve access for First Nations women needing our services.

Importantly, we have made great connections with educators and other supporters who have worked with Bonnie's to improve our understanding of the history that has created inequality and injustice so that we can work together for true Reconciliation.

I am especially grateful to Del Leslie and Norma Burrows for working beside us at Bonnie's as we worked through our RAP. I look forward to our second Innovate RAP which we will commence during the next 12 months.



Social Media – Hello World!

At the beginning of the year we decided it was time to meet women and our community in a new way. We created a digital strategy and content plan for social media and in order to build our capacity to support women and their children. Our first step was joining Instagram which has been an extremely fun ride. By expanding our networks we have been able to further Bonnie's reputation as a leading voice and vibrant feminist organisation.

And what a success it's been!

Our digital strategy and social media efforts doubled our reach and engagement which means, we reached almost 31.5K people across Australia with our content in just 6 months. By doing this, we positioned Bonnie's as a leading voice in the sector, engendering pride and acknowledgement by staff of the amazing work they do and also let women everywhere know that we are always here for them.

We've generated a beautiful community through both our online platforms of Facebook and Instagram and continue to grow. Here are a few snippets of the beautiful feedback, posts and comments we've received.

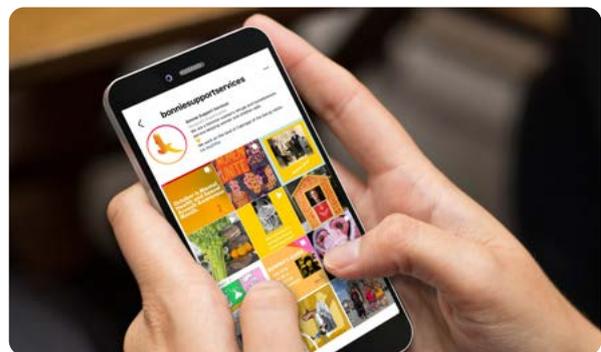
Amazing work during tough times,
thank you x ❤️

Well done team Bonnie's 🙌👍

It's powerful hearing our voices speak out... having others listen is definitely the cream on the 🍰😌

So glad your voices were heard 🙌❤️

For the first 6 months we had music all the time, just because we finally could. This is such a beautiful reminder 🙏



From the Blog

Adelle's Blog

<https://www.bonnie.org.au/they-all-call-me-miss/>

One of the most fun parts of the job is running programs for kids during the school holidays, and most recently starting up the 'After School Fun Club'. When I first started at Bonnie's we were mid pandemic and face to face programs had to be put on hold. My biggest fear at the time was how to make a COVID-19 safe group but I soon understood that, even with all the restrictions, this group was so successful and so much fun. It feels so special to walk alongside them and see them grow...



Mayssa Blog

<https://www.bonnie.org.au/leaving-is-never-easy/>



As a caseworker working with women experiencing Domestic Violence, I've learnt that there is no one perfect road to safety. Sometimes it is direct and other times it's a learning experience with various stops along the way. Recently I

was working with a particular client and the experience genuinely broke my heart. This woman had her 2 kids with her and when she came to us she was blacking out because of how hard he had hit her. She was receiving lots of threats from him. She was afraid to leave the area and was very scared. Her situation, like many others, was very complex. She was a bright woman. She was educated and had been a teacher in her home country. She knew what she wanted in life, but her husband had stripped her of her independence and personhood. Everything about her was stripped. She never drove a car and she wasn't allowed to leave the area that they lived in. There was a lot of pressure too – he knew her family in her home country and constantly threatened them, and her, if she left...

Mel's Blog

<https://www.bonnie.org.au/watch-out-here-we-come/>

Starting a new job is daunting any time, but I wasn't sure what to expect coming into an all-female team for the very first time. I've never worked for a female run organisation and I was excited to join a team of progressive and inspiring women.

As a newbie here at Bonnie's, one of the first things I noticed was how incredibly strong women are – both my incredible colleagues and our clients. I have watched women support each other, take care of each other, offer advice, friendship and a shoulder to lean on.

In a time of trauma and very high stress, you could assume a woman might shut down, be completely self-serving and only think of herself... and yet I haven't seen this at all. I've seen women lift each other up, care for each other's children and work together to make the best of a challenging situation.

It's exciting to see real feminism in action!



Ciara Blog

<https://www.bonnie.org.au/bring-on-2021-were-ready/>

International Women's Day (IDW) was never on my radar until I started at Bonnie's. In my previous profession, as a teacher, we didn't really celebrate or particularly talk about it. I regret that now, and see how important the celebration of this day can be for sparking conversation and learning. In the lead up to this year's IWD, the Bonnie's team and I have been sharing articles, stories and ideas about what it means to be a woman in the 21st century.

“What are you most proud of?”

Some staff reflections

“

I am proud that again this year we have increased the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women accessing the service.

– TRACY



“

Overall, this year has been a time of reflection and evaluation that has left me admiring Bonnie’s holistic approach and the creative things the team came up with to keep connected and useful to some of our most isolated clients. We have found new ways of working and most importantly have been able to spread the message that we are still here and still operating.

– CIARA

“

I was also amazed by the resilience of Bonnie’s clients – they are power women! They have been teachers and mums. They have worked with whatever has stood in their way and have been there for their kids. Some women have 5 children and they are on their own with homeschooling with no notice or skills.

– ADELLE

“

I am grateful for the kindness of everyone. It is a highly stressful time but kindness prevails always”.

– AN

“

That I was able to help. I was able to be there for someone and give them my priority, like I would prioritise my children. Because every human life matters and every person is important. I love my job and I love being there for them.

– NANCELY

“

I am most proud of the team itself; everyone has continued to show up with warmth and kindness in the face of a pretty tough year in an already difficult line of work. So yeah definitely most proud of the team and I feel so privileged to work with everybody here.

– MADDY

A Statistical Snapshot

Total number of clients we supported in 2020-21

961

COVID-19 Domestic and Family Violence Outreach Program commenced January 2021

38

women and children

Domestic Violence Response Enhancement Program (DVRE)

152

women and children

Liverpool Women's Health Centre Safety Hub

177

women

208

children

Visa Clients

24

women

28

children

15.1%

of our clients identified as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both

Country of birth

60.3%

Australia

5.9%

not known

33.8%

overseas

Our Board

This year we welcomed two new board members: Wendy Morgan and Kiri-Ana Libbesson who sit along our longstanding and admirable existing board members.



Wendy Morgan

Wendy is an Aboriginal Woman from the Dyiringanj People of Wallaga Lake that forms part of the Yuin Nation. Wendy is an activist and Aboriginal rights

advocate who has worked with government, NGO's and local land councils for more than 30 years.



Karen Beetson

Karen is a Mandandanji woman from south west Queensland. Karen has worked for over 30 years in Aboriginal Community Development



Kiri-Ana Libbesson

Secretary

Kiri is a lawyer working in the not-for-profit and social enterprise spaces. She has a wide range of experiences working all over the world,

but always alongside purpose-led and grassroots organisations.



Frances Atkins

Treasurer

Frances has significant experience in banking and finance as is the co-founder/director of Giveable a platform that

helps businesses track their impact of social and sustainable purchases.



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. She migrated to

Australia with her family some 14 years ago. These experiences expanded her horizons. Her life and work experience have contributed to Dusanka being very compassionate about general human rights and social equity.

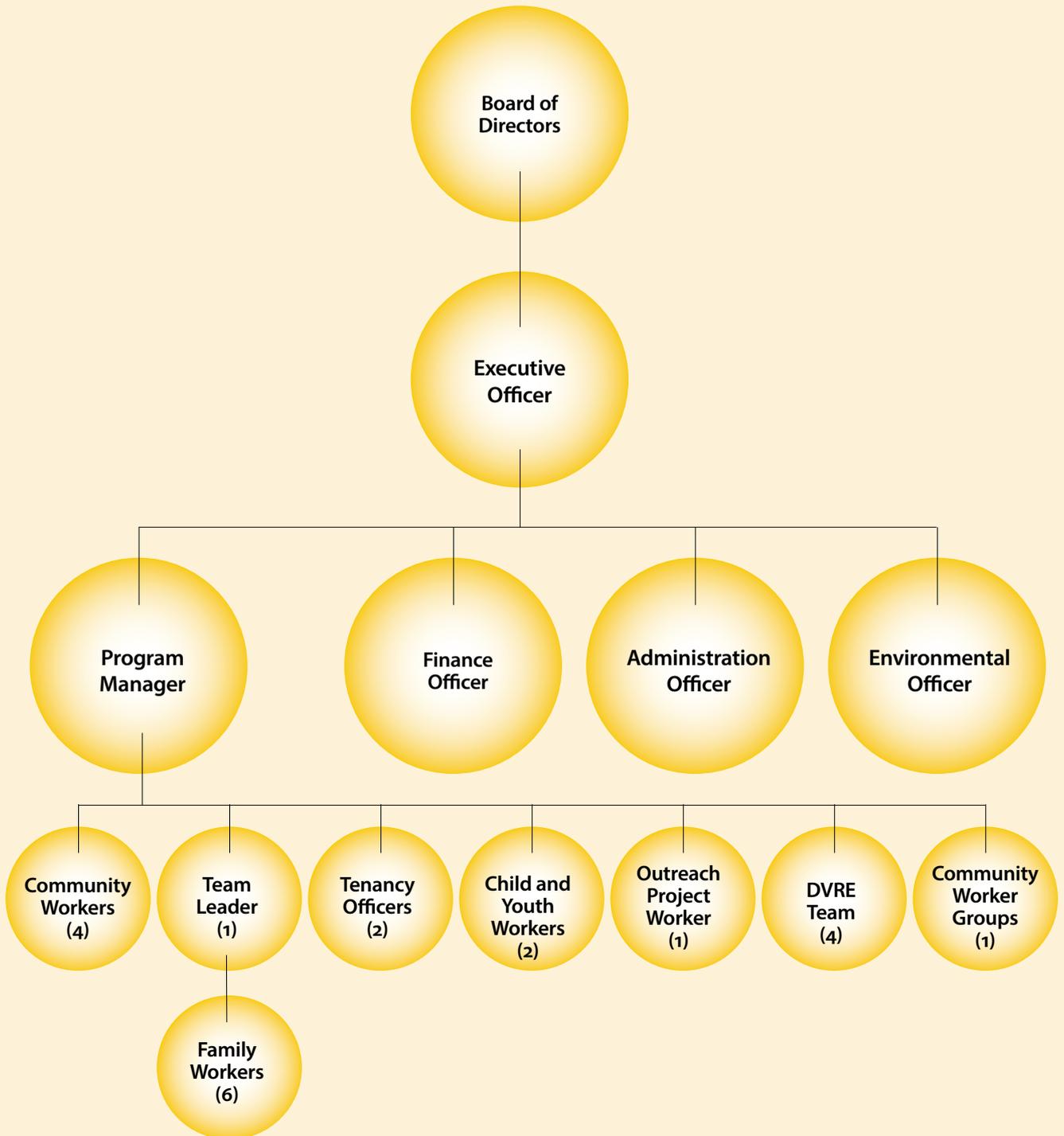


Amelia Scott

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

Organisational Chart

Bonnie Support Services Ltd



Five Year Financial Summary

Bonnie Support Services Ltd

ABN 24 003 100 445

	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Income					
Government grants	2,643,992	2,330,669	2,304,565	2,036,393	1,937,403
Donations and corporate support	54,764	100,988	40,531	53,642	18,000
Rental income	246,149	273,681	227,370	210,092	254,900
Interest	4,875	15,998	29,259	27,806	29,263
Other	56,852	56,882	20,500	4,438	27,089
Total Income	3,006,632	2,778,218	2,622,225	2,332,371	2,266,655
Expenses					
Salaries and on costs	2,151,672	1,917,964	1,919,793	1,797,872	1,791,288
Client brokerage	282,343	209,122	151,269	94,780	150,393
Operating expenses	491,862	541,516	508,135	446,710	653,820
Total Expenses	2,925,877	2,668,602	2,579,197	2,339,362	2,595,501
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	80,755	109,616	43,028	(6,991)	(328,846)

The Company recorded an operating surplus of \$80,755 for the year ended 30 June 2021 compared to an operating surplus of \$109,616 in 2020. The surplus is due to the Federal Government temporary cash flow boost provided to not-for-profit organisation during the economic downturn associated with COVID-19 and consistent donations.

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 2021 -2024 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 2021 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.

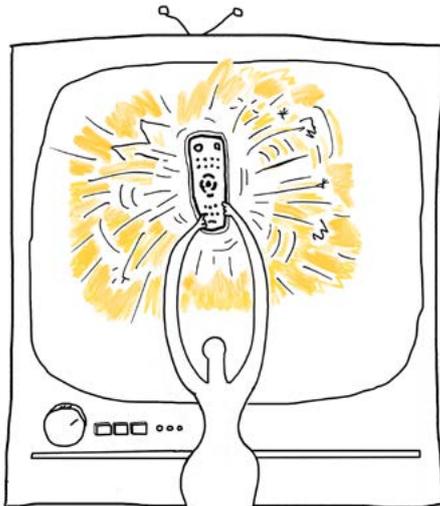
Donors and Supporters 2020-21

Agnes	Cheryl Bosler from Ken Chapman	Fiona White (letter addressed to Kona)	Luci	Services NSW Liverpool
Airflow	Chris Bowen MP	GCI	LWHC	Shaibana Thompson
Almena Rodrigues	Chris Patten	Golden Manna Ltd	Lyn Braico	Share the Dignity
Amanda	Cindy	Good360	Lynda Johnson	Sothy Bun-Lack
Amy Busuttill	Clancy College	Grazia Siciliano	Mar Nguyen	St Vincent de Paul Society NSW Access and Inclusion Team
Ana Nasarre	Commonwealth Bank Greystanes	Gregory Dumbrell	Marcela Reyes	Street Smart sleepsafe
Anglicare	Community Corrections Fairfield	Habitat for Humanity	Margaret Collins	Summer Ng
Anna Ralston	Community Quilts, The Quilters Guild of NSW	Irrelevant Society	Maria Fabion	Support the Girls
Anne Bennell	Connie Iria	Jacqui Brett	Marianne and William	Susanna Mason
Anne Coombs	Corrective Services Liverpool	Jane Cateris	Martyn Wilson & Taylor Owynns	Sydney Women's Fund
Austral Retirement Village residents	Craig and Brad Wroblewicz	Janise	Mele Hausia	Talia
Baptistcare	CWA Fairfield	Jen Huynh	Melisah	Tammy Zak
Beb and John	Deanna Ivetic	Jodie	Merryl Hull	Tania Galaz
Bethany Smith	Department of Community and Justice South	Joe	MFS	Taylor Owynns
Bill Crews' Exodus Foundation	Western Sydney Commissioning & Planning Team	Josh McFerran	Michelle Roberson	TGF Donnan
Bossley Park High School	Diane Powell	Joyce Fedele	Mouna Sabonne	Trish McFerran
Brenda Dempster	Diior 10	Judith Daly	One Hand One Heart	Two Good Co
Brendan Watson	DVNSW (Happy Holiday Project)	Julie Smith	Oz Harvest	Valerie Baird
Bronwen Stade	Elias and Kristina Chami	Kathleen Maxwell	Paola	Veronica Mitchell
Bunnings (Villawood)	ELIZABETH DUNDAS	Katia Mallouh	Pat and Theresa	Victoria Webster
Cabramatta High School	Elizabeth Piris	Kerry Priestley	PIMCO	Wattle Grove Lions
Cabra-Vale Diggers Club	Erin Wroblewicz	Kiri Libbesson	PRD Panania	WEFT shop
Cara House	Fairfield Council	Kirstie	Quilt NSW	Wetherill Park Tafe
Carmel Daley	Fairfield Council Staff	Ladies of Variety	Rana Yalkub	William Pone
Carole Best	Fernwood Fitness	Laura Varrica	Rapid Relief Team	Woman of Valor Liverpool City Church
Carolina Guerra & Karena Pyrce	Wetherill Park	Lesley Burgess	Robyn Mefcalfe	Yang
Casey Pereira		Linda Pham	Roger Rodrigues	Zafirsh Akba
CBA Fairfield Branch		Lipstick Sisterhood	Rory Toomey	Zahra Arhawi
Centrelink Liverpool		Lisa Lai	Runa	Zen Tea Lounge
		Liverpool City Church	Salvation Army Fairfield	Zeyal Salih
		Liverpool Council	Sandy Janjic	
		Liza Lim	Sarah Marsh	

HAPPINESS IS...

We worked with Moya Sayer-Jones and the team at Only Human Stories to create a powerful campaign 'Happiness Is'. It featured these original drawings by Tennyson Nobel and Bonnie's stories to remind us of small but powerful things we experience in life when women are free.

HAPPINESS IS...



WATCHING WHAT I WANT...

tu

HAPPINESS IS...



HAPPY KIDS MAKING NOISE...

HAPPINESS IS...



HAVING SOME TIME TO YOURSELF.

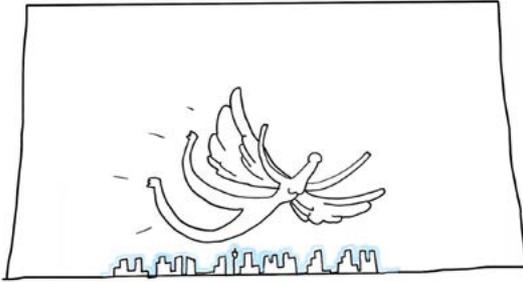
HAPPINESS IS...



CHOOSING MY OWN CLOTHES...

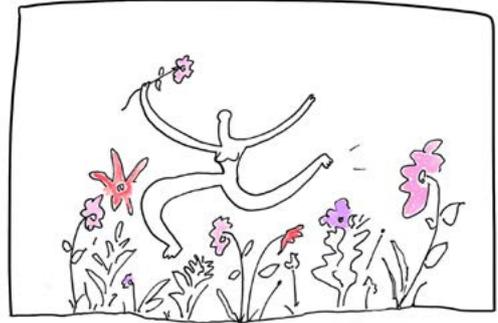
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HAPPINESS IS...



NOT HAVING TO TELL PEOPLE WHERE I'M GOING...

HAPPINESS IS...



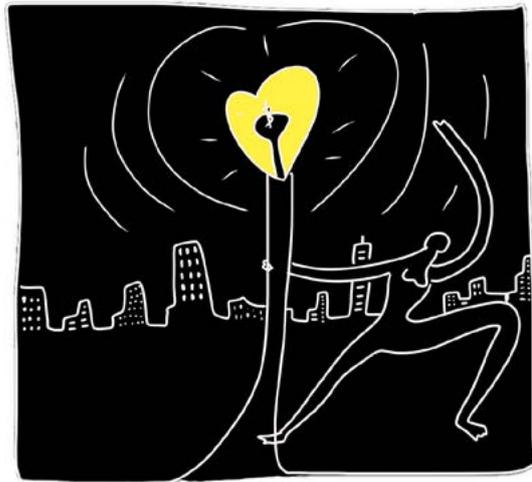
NOT WALKING ON EGGSHELLS...

HAPPINESS IS...



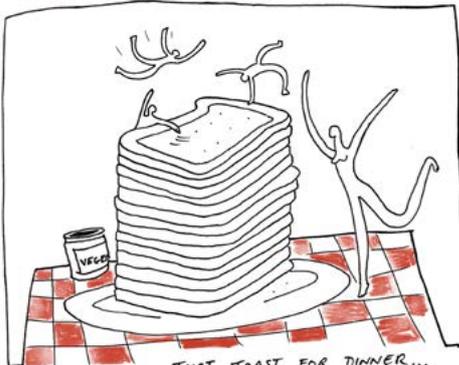
KNOWING WHAT I'M COMING HOME TO...

HAPPINESS IS...



NOT BEING AFRAID TO WALK HOME LATE...

HAPPINESS IS...



JUST TOAST FOR DINNER...

HAPPINESS IS...



MAKING A CALL WITHOUT BEING LISTENED TO...

Bonnie
Support Services

by women and *with* women



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

www.bonnie.org.au



**Communities
& Justice**

Bonnie's receives our primary
funding from DCJ



Brand Story & Design: Only Human Stories
www.onlyhuman.com.au