Beryl Women Inc.

**annual report 2015-16**



Beryl Women Inc.

Specialist domestic and family violence accommodation service.

Office Hours

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Mission

As a feminist organisation, we recognise that violence against women and children is prevalent and that injustices, such as sexism, racism, socioeconomic inequality, homophobia and discrimination against disadvantaged groups, contribute to family crises. To redress this, Beryl Women Inc. provides a professional accountable, trauma-informed specialist domestic violence service, which is based in principles of feminism, social justice and reconciliation, and recognises and fosters cultural diversity. Beryl has an ongoing commitment to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children, and women and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Organisational Aim

Beryl Women Inc. aims to contribute to the enhanced safety of the families who stay at Beryl, to their improved health outcomes and to provide opportunities to increase their skills and confidence to manage future crisis.

Goals of Strategic Plan

July 2013 – June 2016

To be a sustainable organisation that provides high quality domestic violence-specific services to women and children

Through

To develop partnerships and collaborate with other community services and government agencies in order to be part of a holistic response to women and children escaping domestic violence

To strongly identity and profile in the ACT community as a feminist organisation offering high quality services



To strongly identity and profile in the ACT community as a service that is welcoming of, accessible to, and appropriately supportive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children and women and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD)

To be an organisation that encourages a learning culture and is innovative in its response to support women and children escaping domestic violence

Herstory

Originally named the Canberra Women’s Refuge, Beryl was established in a house in Watson in March 1975 with a grant of $4000 from the Department of the Capital Territory. Volunteers, who ran a 24-hour roster, seven days a week, staffed the first refuge. In 1976 the service moved to a duplex in Kingston and sometime later funding was received for employment of a skeleton staff.

In 1976 the service changed its name to Beryl Women’s Refuge, after Beryl Henderson. Beryl started the original trust fund for the refuge, which, outside of the $4000 grant received from the government, was the sole means of supporting the cost of running the service. In 2005 the service changed its name again to Beryl Women Inc.

Beryl Henderson was an active member of the ACT Women’s Liberation Movement and the co-founder of the Abortion Law Reform Association in Canberra. She also worked for Family Planning and the Humanist Society. Beryl taught languages on an Israeli kibbutz from 1960 to 1964 before coming to Australia. She returned to Israel in the late 1970s and died there in her 94th year. She will always be celebrated for her dedication and commitment to the cause of equality. Beryl Women Inc. is proud to carry Beryl Henderson’s name as a daily reminder that those wonderful ‘big sisters’ who came before us, made possible the services we have today.

Report from the chairperson

Staff and Governance Committee

It is my pleasure to write to you as Manager of the longest serving refuge for women with children escaping domestic violence, this year being our 41st year of operation.

Unfortunately, domestic violence continues to occur across Australia at alarming rates and this year alone, 31 women have lost their lives at the hands of their partners or ex-partners.

Beryl Women Inc. is open to all women from the local community as well as women from other states and terrritories. The service is particularly focussed on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children in crisis as well as women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds, these cultural groups making up the majority of clients over the past 12 months, this diversity is also reflected within the staffing structure, the sharing of cultural knowledge is encouraged and has enriched clients and staff relationships, connecting with clients and their children is vital when supporting women and their children who are escaping domestic violence.

The work of Beryl Women Inc. is based on a feminist analysis of power and informed by the unique experiences of women and children’s lives. It recognises the underlying political, social, structural and economic disadvantages faced by women and children escaping domestic/family violence.

Beryl Women’s Inc. has developed skills and expertise in responding to domestic violence, and will continue to focus its service delivery in providing support, advocacy, case management and safe housing to women and their children who have been impacted by domestic violence.

Support staff have been working within systemic barriers, trying to navigate a system that often times re-victimises clients, as a result, staff have been creative and innovative in finding solutions for better outcomes for clients against this backdrop.

Robyn Martin

Manager

Report from the Manager

2015/16 has been a productive and extremely busy year for Beryl Women Inc. Before getting into the details, including our financial performance and the important steps we are taking to become an even better organisation, I would like to share a few observations about the past year.

Over the past 12 months, I met with many of our stakeholders, clients and government ministers across Canberra, these meetings have made it clear to me that Beryl Women Inc. is widely viewed as a service that is valued within the community and that the work the organisation is doing provides women and children leaving a domestic violence relationship with options they would not ordinarily have.

We are a small organisation with 6 staff members, based in Canberra, however, our reputation as a strong feminist service, as a specialist domestic violence service providing accommodation and support to women with children within a trauma informed framework is well known and respected within the Canberra and surrounding communities.

**Family Law Court & compliance to orders**

This is an ongoing issue that women are experiencing, it’s a complex and involved process for any women. For women who have experienced domestic violence there are additional dynamics and pressures for women to navigate through, this is especially true for women with English as a second language and comprehending and understanding what the orders mean, our role is to assist and support women through this process which can sometimes mean writing affidavits for women, ensuring they understand all the court documents and what they need to do to comply with those orders, we want to empower them and not disempower them through this process. This process is time intensive and complex.

**Reconciliation Week Events**

Reconciliation Week has occurred during this reporting period, with Committee members, staff and clients participating in a number of events including the Bridge Walk – Sorry Day.

During this reporting period, we invited Aunty Janet Phillips, a Ngunnawal elder to come in and do a cleansing of the shared properties, as clients had expressed negative energy and a heaviness within the spaces, after this was done a number of clients spent some time talking to Aunty Janet, leaning more about Aboriginal customs and culture, she was very generous with her time and extremely caring of the clients.

**ACT Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Elected Body**

In October, 2015, I attended a forum held by the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, the forum was held with CEO/Managers of Community Service organisations working with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities in the ACT. To build relationships with other leaders in the community to strengthen collaboration and working together on strategies to improve services and circumstances for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples.

To continue with their important work I took the opportunity to work collaboratively to continue our relationship and have met with the Chairperson – Di Collins to discuss a number of issues in relation to domestic violence with the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities and have gotten some agreements on working together to address these issues through my role with the Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DVPC).

Acknowledgments

I would also like to specifically acknowledge the support of our funding body the Community Services Directorate and the Social Housing and Homelessness Services staff of the Community Services Directorate.

Other partners we would like to acknowledge are DVCS, CRCS, Toora Women Inc. First Point Central Intake Service, Women’s Services, ACT Legal Aid, Women’s Legal Centre, Street Law, Centrelink Social Workers and Community Contact Officer, Office for Women, Northside Community Services, Relationships Australia and the many other services that directly or indirectly supported Beryl Women Inc. during the past financial year. We hope to continue to work in collaboration with you all in the coming year.

Service Management

Strategic Planning

Beryl Women Inc. held its annual Strategic Planning day in October, 2015 at which time we undertook a SWOT analysis of the organisation and from that we could then develop a Strategic Plan based on the findings of the SWOT.

The SWOT analysis has determined changes for consideration by the Committee before developing the next strategic plan. Accepted recommendations may result in realigning of organisational goals and will assist the Committee to focus on what actions need to be taken and focused on over the next 12 months.

Other issues discussed during the Strategic Planning included the following;

* Professional development for staff
* Sourcing additional funding
* Amendments to mission statement and aims of the organisation
* Fundraising
* Awareness raising within the community
* Partnerships
* Capacity raising of the organisation
* Upskilling the Management Committee

Staff Planning

In early March 2016, the staff team of Beryl came together for a period of two days to discuss key strategic issues and practical elements of the work of Beryl Women Inc. This session occurred against the backdrop of some significant challenges for the organisation; in particular the need to respond to a 30% decrease in core funding that had occurred over the three years prior. This had resulted in a significant reduction in staff and some realignment in the work priorities for staff that still require finalisation and embedding in operational practice.

Over the last period there have also been significant shifts in the broader women’s and homelessness sector which has impacted on the organisation. This has presented the staff team to reflect on the emerging need, emerging good practice and the specific role that Beryl can play in supporting women impacted by domestic violence.

This session confirmed the staff team view that Beryl has a distinctive and important role to play in relation to both service provision and advocacy around the issue of domestic violence. The staff also believe that recent experience has provided the opportunity for staff to reflect on what are the key issues, what Beryl is expert at, and what is the most significant role that Beryl can play in supporting the community.

The session enabled staff to reflect on their experience, and how it matched with the evidence base regarding domestic and family violence. This confirmed that there is a specific role to play in providing tailored services for women and children who have experienced violence as a result of intimate partner relationships. There was clarity that this was:

* At the most significant end of risk (i.e. this is the form of violence where women and children are at most risk of death or injury);
* It is an area where there has been a reduction in the level of service (with many homelessness services who had previously embraced a feminist analysis moving to a more mainstream service around family violence); and
* Beryl had specific expertise in this area.

Domestic Violence Christmas Crisis Program

Beryl continued its participation in the Domestic Violence Christmas Program this year, which commenced on the 16th December, 2015 and ceased on the 4th February, 2016.

Statistics of the program indicate that clients were staying for longer periods of time with complex and/or intensive support needs

The program supported 15 adults (this included male victims) and 17 children, with Beryl supporting 2 families during this period and support included the following:

* Transport to appointments;
* Commonwealth Bank – opening new account
* Court Support – Applying for Domestic Violence Order;
* Centerlink – crisis payment
* Clothing from donated items to Beryl;
* Food and food vouchers;
* Safety planning which included safety around technology;
* Toys provided to children;
* New mobile phone;

Donations

Beryl Women Inc. has continued to build strong relationships in the community and is very grateful to all the individuals and businesses that have provided support to the service.

We continue to receive regular financial donations through the Hands Across Canberra portal, these monies go directly into supporting women and children accessing the service.

We have recently developed a partnership with Allbids.com.au in relation to providing storage space for donations of furniture as well as actual goods, they are also in the process of trying to source delivery solutions as this is a major issue for the service and for the women who need to arrange items to be picked up and taken to their new property.

I would like to formally acknowledge and express our deep appreciation to all the people who have donated either money, furniture or other household items. Our clients have benefited greatly from the generosity of the general community.

Grants

This year we were successful in applying for numerous grants. These grants complement existing funding that the service receives from the Community Services Directorate— our main source of funding—and include:

* Hands Across Canberra
* ACT Women’s Grants
* Snow Foundation and Hands Across Canberra
* Community Services Directorate
* Commonwealth Bank

Training

We are committed to the ongoing training and development of our workforce, aimed at the provision of high quality services for our client group. In keeping with this commitment, staff have undertaken the following training to enhance and build on their current skills. These include:

* PSTD
* Getting your Board on board
* Facebook training
* Technology Safety training
* Hands Across Canberra – Capacity Building Workshop
* First Aide
* Relief workers,
* first aid;
* MEA Workshop;
* Children leaving the country – Airport Watch
* Parenting session with Legal Aid
* Responding to trauma – Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples

2 staff members attended SNAICC Responding to trauma – Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples, this training has increased staff members awareness in responding to trauma, the information has been passed onto all staff employed by Beryl, The training has enhanced existing knowledge and skills.

Collaborative Working Relationships in the Community

Beryl has been involved in a number of consultations within the ACT community. These ensure that the service is up to date with changes within the sector and importantly continues to maintain strong positive working relationships with Government and Community Services on issues related to domestic/family violence, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children and women from a refugee background. Staff attended the Launch – Canberra CALD Women’s Forum as well as attended a number of forum meetings that followed the forum in the establishment of a Committee/Board.

* ACT Consultation – National Framework to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children;
* Social Housing and Homelessness Services Re: Coming Home Program & Alliance;
* ACT Human Rights Commission – “We Don’t Shoot Our Wounded Report”
* Women’s Services
* Women’s Centre for Health Matters – 25yr Birthday
* Domestic & Family Violence Policy Manual launch – Community Services Directorate
* Respectful Relationships – Canberra Men’s Centre, CANFACS & Domestic Violence Crisis Service;
* Women’s Centre for Health Matters – AGM
* CANFACS
* Better Services Workshops and service visit re DV Maps (capturing preferred experience of women & children who are or have experienced domestic violence.
* Specialist Homelessness Sector Co-design workshops
* Governance Group – Prevention of Violence Against Women and Children
* Gap Analysis – Office for Women
* Death Review – Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DVPC)
* Woden Community Services
* ACT Domestic Violence Data Project
* Whole of Government Service Funding template
* Belconnen Community Services re Gateway tender
* Community Sector Industry Plan
* Joint Pathways
* DV Xmas program Wrap up meeting
* Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Elected Body
* Specialist Homelessness Forum
* ACTCOSS Budget Forum
* ACT Violence Prevention Awards
* Snow Foundation
* UN Women Luncheon – International Women’s Day event
* ACT Women’s Awards
* KPMG Workshop – Evaluation of 2nd ANROWS Action Plan under the National Plan
* Family/Sexual Violence Memorial Meeting
* Domestic Violence Prevention Council
* Women’s Legal Centre
* Official visitor for Homelessness
* Minister Berry – Domestic/family & sexual violence memorial
* Committee membership interviews
* Services & Support for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT
* Minister Berry
* Legal Aid
* WDOP
* Woden Community Services – development of an MOU re clients in their area
* Senior Manager – Gateway Services and IHSG
* Gap Analysis – Office for Women
* Candle Light Ceremony – DVCS

**Nguru Program –CRCC**

I was involved with an interview process for the Nguru Program (CRCC). I also have been involved on their Reference Group for the same program, having being elected Chairperson. The Reference Group has been re-named and is now known as the Alliance, its purpose is to ensure cultural knowledge is used in CRCC practices with clients and stakeholders and inclusivity and respect underpin the relationship with CRCC.

16 Days of Activism Campaign (25/11/15 to 10/12/15) with the YWCA, hosted a ‘stop work’ action from midday, where we call on women to stop work, stop consuming, and to gather at Parliament House to collectively call on the government to take action to end violence against women.

**Launces**

* Domestic & Family Violence Policy Manual – Community Services Directorate
* ANROWS launch – Met evaluation of existing interagency partnerships, collaboration co coordination and/or integrated interventions and service responses to violence against women.
* Press Club – Launch Amnesty International Report – Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Children Imprisonment
* Launch – 2nd Implementation Plan Act Prevention of Violence Against Women & Children

**Service Visits**

* Co-ordinator-General Domestic Violence in the ACT
* Woden Community Services
* Doris Women’s Refuge
* Legal Aid
* WDOP
* Social Housing & Homelessness Services (SHHS)
* Woden Community Services – development of an MOU re clients in their area
* Doris Women’s Refuge
* Senior Manager – Gateway Services and IHSG
* Woden Community Services – Onelink
* Streetlaw
* Belconnen Community Services – Onelink tender process

**Staff Wellbeing**

Discussion at the recent staff planning focused on staff wellbeing as all staff recognise the importance of self-care as a number of clients have complex issues that have been challenging.

A team session on reflective practice (peer supervision) will occur at least once a month as the focus of the session

External supervision will be arranged for the team – to occur once every three months

**Research Participation**

Beryl has participated in several research projects over the past financial year and include the following:

Participated in a research project to identify good practice and innovative approaches with Indigenous women experiencing family and domestic violence in remote and regional Australia. The research is funded by Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS).

This research was a **partnership project** with the town-based Alice Springs Women’s Shelter (ASWS), tri-state the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women’s Council (NPYWC) Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) Service, and the Domestic Violence Crisis Service (DVCS) in the Australian Capital Territory.

The overall aim of the project is to improve the evidence-base on and resources for key areas of concern to specialist women’s services, namely advocacy, safety planning and outreach, which incorporates Indigenous women’s perspectives (as service users, community members and staff) in responding to family and domestic violence in remote and regional Australia.

**Beryl Research project**

As part of the preparation for the staff planning and continuing conversations with the Governing body of Beryl Women Inc. we commissioned a consultant to undertake a research project looking at domestic violence v’s family violence, as there has been a complete language change and domestic violence has become invisible over the past couple of years and where does Beryl sit with this, as we have been funded as a domestic violence service for women & children.

The research looked at the following:

1. What does it mean to be a domestic violence service rather than a family violence service: what does this mean in relation to how we target our services, how we engage with clients, what impacts may this have on particular groups of women in the community (i.e. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women with disability)?

2. Where does our service sit on the homelessness service continuum given this is where we derive the bulk of our funding support (what does this mean given we see crisis housing support as only one of the services we provide)?

3. How do we translate our feminist philosophy into the service model? What does this mean in the context of gender fluidly (in relation to services to same sex couples, transgender clients etc.)

4. How does our commitment to trauma informed practice impact on our work outside the client support work (i.e. tenancy management, property management, etc.). Are there ways in which we can address some of the inherent tensions we face due to the different roles we have to play?

5. How do we ensure that we deliver the very best service to the clients that are most vulnerable and difficult to reach/connect with given the resource constraints we face?

**“Hear me Out” Research Project – Women’s Centre for Health Matters (WCHM)**

Beryl Women Inc. assisted in the research project that the Women’s Centre for Health Matters (WCHM) titled “Hear me Out” Women’s experience of seeking help for domestic violence in the ACT: A qualitative research report, which was released in April 2016.

A copy can be found on the WCHM website.

**Gap Analysis**

**Sector training that Beryl staff have provided during the year**

* Guest speaker – DV Centrelink
* Indigenous Leadership Forum – Mogo (Domestic violence awareness)
* Guest Speaker – Reclaim the Night
* ABS – Australia wide DV awareness raising via video linkup
* Indian Women’s Network – DV awareness raising
* Australian Young Labour Conference (DV awareness)
* Relief workers,
* first aid;
* MEA Workshop;
* Children leaving the country – Airport Watch
* Parenting session with Legal Aid
* Responding to trauma – Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples

Media and raising Community Awareness

Beryl Women Inc. has been involved in a number of awareness raising activities through media and some of those include;

* Interview with 2XX
* ABC - Triple 666
* Queanbeyan Age
* Several articles in the Canberra Times, HerCanberra
* Guest Speaker – Relationships Australia AGM

Client Services

Women’s Group clients attended and participated in an event (movie and discussion) held by Beryl in raising awareness of Aboriginal &Torres Strait Islander issues, many of the clients were from a CALD background and had little or no awareness of the countries histories in relation to its First People,

Supported client in applying for a Domestic Violence Order (DVO) and security upgrades to enable the client to return home to her Housing ACT property, the following security upgrades were completed, the client felt safe to return home with her 2 children;

\* lock on manhole;

\* window locks through property;

\* sensor lights - front and back;

\* check all security doors are working and fitted and lockable.

Safety Planning was also done with the client prior to her leaving the refuge.

**CULTURALLY & LINGUISTICALLY DIVERS BACKGROUND CLIENTS**

Culturally And Linguistically Diverse women accessing the service over the past 6 months have presented with a range of complex issues ranging from residency, interpreting services and Centrelink payments. Eligibility for basic income and visa restrictions, prevent women and their children from independence and in turn they become highly dependent on the service.

Networking within the community sector, and outsourcing support to other organisations, is integral to case management. Immediate support needs are income, transport, immigration, interpreters, housing, cultural barriers and emotional support for grieving and traumatised women and children. The cultural barriers include perception of women, the refuge, accommodation, parenting, religion, language and Australian lifestyle. The first few weeks require intensive support with Centrelink, immigration and housing.

Domestic violence orders are in place for about half of the CALD women. The cultural elements around pursuing a DVO’s has been challenging for some of the women. Most of the women have no family support or social networks and it is common for a range of support needs to arise from this isolation. Their immigration status prevents consistent income and in some cases any income; Beryl financially provides for the client whilst they are residing at the refuge, but this is limited to one woman at any given time, due to the costs associated with this. A proportion of these women are coming from interstate.

Support to CALD families include the following:

* Parenting teenagers
* School liaison and enrolments
* Support and advocacy in relation to change of name for self and son
* Linked mother to The Junction Re: health & wellbeing
* Advocacy & support with ATO re TFN
* Linked in with Vision Australia re vision issues as a result of domestic violence
* Client donated time to Beryl to work in the gardens, therapeutic work for stress and anxiety
* Support to client in relation to expiry of 6 year DVO from another state
* Court support with applying for DVO’s
* Court Support with matters in the Family Law Courts
* Migrant Youth Centre
* ACAT re electricity account
* Smith Family re support and tutoring support
* MARRS
* CIT
* MASH School holiday program
* St Johns
* Emotional and financial support
* Victims Support
* CIT – English classes

Beryl has utilised the family safety pack aims to reduce violence against women from CALD backgrounds by providing information about the laws in Australia and women’s right to be safe, to people coming to Australia on a partner visa.  It also aims to strengthen support for women coming to Australia on a partner visa by providing information on the family violence visa provisions and available support. The pack includes four factsheets (translated into 22 languages):

-       domestic and family violence

-       sexual assault

-       forced and early marriage

-       family violence and partner visas.

The pack also includes a low literacy storyboard with pictures and minimal text which has been used with clients.

Women’s Group

Beryl continues to create a therapeutic environment that encourages a sense of community and connectedness for women and children. We do this in a number of ways including various service functions and a Women’s Group held weekly during the school term.

Women’s groups are held during the school term, other service providers are invited to attend as a means of women connecting with these services, this ensures that linkages and connections are made whilst women are clients, and meets their needs of case management. When women leave the service they have the confidence to continue contact with these services, it helps break down some of the barriers for them with our support

* Basic First Aid
* Legal aid
* Individual client meetings with Legal Aid
* Soothing Boxes
* Bazaar
* Care Financial
* Kids Parenting and DV
* Streetlaw
* Legal Aid Community Legal Educator
* Parenting after Domestic violence
* ACT Young Women of the Year – Workshop on Resilience

Every other week, we do workshops on domestic violence, topics covered are as follows:

* cycle of violence
* brainwashing
* normal reactions to trauma and severe stress
* Biderman’s chart of coercion

Feedback from women in relation to these workshops has been very positive with women gaining a greater understanding of the dynamics of domestic violence particularly the information on “brainwashing” and “crazy making” that women often feel as a result and gaining clarity that they are not crazy.

A Bazaar has been held during this reporting period where all donated items e.g. curtains, kitchen ware and general household items were place out in the common area of the refuge and all accommodated and outreach clients were invited to take any of the items that might assist them in setting up a new home. It’s a festive event, lots of food, music, laughter and connections being made between clients. Feedback from clients about this event has always been extremely positive.

CASE STUDY

Child/Youth Support Program

The organisation is committed to working with children and young people and supporting them to find an alternative lifestyle without violence. Beryl aims to formally acknowledge and address the issue of violence experienced and/or witnessed by children and young people in their homes. Children and young people accessing the service are seen as individuals with their own complex issues and problems with and apart from their parents.

The Child Support Program works individually with children, in groups and also with the mothers. It aims to assist mothers to develop, where necessary, the skills and resources to create long-term solutions for their child’s/children’s health and wellbeing.

Building relationships and developing linkages with relevant agencies that can support the work with children is seen as a priority for the program.

During each school term, the service runs Women’s Groups with a Toddlers Group running at the same time. Beryl’s group model aims to provide an environment that fosters young children's development through provision of, and participation in, a variety of developmentally appropriate play experiences and activities. The group provides opportunities for children who would not normally access a playgroup to increase their skills and confidence, and to develop valuable social and support networks.

Support to other children in the service is tailored to the individual needs and unique preferences of the primary school and adolescents staying with Beryl Women Inc. The program aims at developing self -confidence, self -esteem and life skills in this stage of their growth. A lot of the time is spent just ‘talking about life’. These conversations provide the perfect opportunity to consider how to deal with the challenging experiences that young people have encounter.

Our Child Support Workers have advocated with a number of schools in the area in relation the impacts on learning with trauma and how children can show disassociative type behaviour regularly in class when they get overwhelmed. Children also find it difficult to concentrate and keep up with work.

**Funding $60,000 – Child Support Program**

The one-off grant of $60,000 received from Social Housing & Homelessness Services during 2015/16 has allowed the service to prove a more a comprehensive child support

program which provided a varied and individualised approach taking into consideration client needs, family supports and available service staffing and resources, this additional funding enhanced the existing program, The impact of an additional funding has also ensured that gaps in support for children are reduced and areas for development such as community collaboration, education and relationship building within the sector are able to continue as well.

Given that the funding was a one-of grant, the lack of ongoing funding for this program within Beryl will have an impact on services provided to children.

Beryl employs one Child Support Worker within its existing budget; there will again be limitations on what levels of support will be provided to children within the service. it would be impossible for each child to receive individual support as we will not have the resources to do that given that children make up the largest percentage of clients within the service.

Since the funding has stopped, we have started a process of reviewing the children’s program which also includes 3 groups per week as well, at this stage it is unclear what the program will look like over the next 6 months.

The Children’s program has worked collaboratively with families and support workers in providing trauma informed case management to children and young people residing in the refuge as well as families receiving support from an outreach capacity.

The program has provided a varied and individualised approach taking into consideration child needs and family supports and available service staffing and resources.

Meetings attended by Child Support Workers (CSW) at a number of Primary Schools to discuss child’s learning needs.

Discussion during this meetings have focused on the impacts on learning with trauma and how the child have been showing disassociative type behaviour regularly in class when he gets overwhelmed. He also finds it difficult to concentrate and keep up with work.

C SW had observed this child had a lot of worries for a young boy (grief and loss) and is very conscious of the difficulties the family have and still face.

He had experienced some anxiety and has shown he needs further support emotionally related to the events in the past. He is started to express strong negative self-concept and low self-esteem re his schooling abilities. The CSW discussed with school re: tutoring and school psyche to see him at the beginning of the year to do an assessment to see where he is at.

CSW observed child to have body twitching and moments of zoning out. Seems to have worsened over the past couple of months.. Explained he will need to see psych but should be getting some medical tests. Could be trauma related and not in counselling. School psychologist is aware and school meeting to be setup. Meeting with school and support plan developed for child around emotional support and links to 1 to 1 make teacher in the school.

Referrals made to the following services:

* Child Counsellor
* Sourcing support for cost, through Snow Foundation

CSW advocating with another school on behave of child client, issue discussed, the school identified that the child needed further tutoring to help him keep up with other students. Other issues were raised by the school in relation to his social interaction also identified but not serious.

CSW discussed with Mum and child options of joining some group with physical activity to help him with focus and learning and social connections with other children. Followed up a gymnastics program and awaiting feedback. Referral to Victim Support for financial support for activities.

The Service has advocated on behalf of women and children with the following services;

* ANU-studies & extension of time to complete work/assignment/presentation with the Inclusion and Welfare branch;
* Legal Aid – Access and Airport watch list
* Centrelink – incomes, child support exemptions
* Medicare
* Immigration – residency
* Marymead – supervised access
* CYPD
* Women Health Service
* Housing ACT
* Gungahlin Child and family centre re Giggle and Grow
* Snow Foundation re: financial assistance for client (car repairs & registration)
* MACH nurse
* Transition to Recovery program
* Civic Mental Health
* Return To Work Grants
* Social Workers at Hospital
* Doris Women’s Refuge
* DVCS
* FirstPoint
* Child & Youth Family Services Gateway
* St Vincent de Paul
* ACAT re electricity bill
* ANU –legal support
* CIT
* MARRS
* Victim Support
* Snow Foundation – funds to support client with removalist costs from SA to ACT
* Advocacy with Housing ACT – Allocation teams re disability requirements
* ADACUS
* DUO – disability support
* Access of children
* Family Law courts and access orders
* Emergency Child care
* Airport Watch list.

Supported client with medical appointments/test/hospital visits due to trauma/anxiety of being in those facilities due to past experiences in another country.

Service Demographics

This financial year, the service supported 44 women with 79 children, a total of 123 clients provided with crisis accommodation as a result of escaping domestic violence.

We have provided outreach support to xxxx women and their children

18 clients were turned away from the service as they did not meet the criteria of the service and were referred to other services that could meet their needs.

18 women accessing the service come to the act seeking safety and security

All clients accessing the service all stated that domestic violence was the main reason they were seeking support, however, a number of other reasons compacted their experience of domestic violence and include the following:

3.1% stated they were experiencing financial difficulties;

5.0% stated they were experiencing housing crisis;

7.8% stated mental health issues – a combination of theirs and the perpetrator of violence;

5.4% stated that they had a lack of family and or community support;

16.8% also acknowledged that they were/had experienced relationship/family breakdown;

70.9% were receiving no income at the time of entering the service;

23.6% of women were receiving parenting payments;

3.1% of women were in the workforce;

**Breakdown of women and children**

Figure 1. The number of women and children accessing Beryl Women Inc.

44 women with 79 accopanying children, children still making up the largest percentage of clients accessing the service.

**Cultural Breakdown**

**Figure 2. Cultual breakdown of clients accessing support**

* 32 Aboriginal clients
* 44 Culturally and Linquistically Diverse Background clients
* 47 Anglo clients

Over this financial year, there has been an increase in Aboriginal and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse clients accessing the service

**Support Days**

Beryl provided 16,830 days of support, this is an increase of 1,592 from last year which also includes preventive maintenance and outreach support. Preventive maintenance and outreach support is provided to women who recently exited the service as well as women who have not

**Figure 3.** The number of support days provided to each client.

Feedback from Clients

* “The women at Beryl were fantastic with making me welcome in a safe house, great help with all the help we needed to get back to our home, made me feel I was stronger to be at home, gave me the courage to get away from y ex and to get the help for me and my boys, their help and understanding is so grateful now and still ongoing”
* When asked “did you see any changes (both positive & negative) in your children whilst staying at Beryl? The client stated “positive – they were uplifted after Ange came and even opened up to her. I had told her on a phone call before she came over, that they may not but if they do open up then would she mind listening. My children felt so much better afterwards and they it was great for information as well they just went from strength to strength after that”
* “information to require help and put in contact with the right services. Discussions at group were amazing on different ways to deal with things and they sure opened my eyes and mind to how domestic violence/mental abuse goes hand in hand and explained what the victim feels and goes through. I just thought I may be nuts while with my ex, but definitely has strengthened me to deal and not go through it again”
* *“I believe that the entire organisation is extremely helpful in all aspects and requirements. My son and I always felt safe and found all of the workers in the entire organisation to be friendly and approachable. Linda has been outstanding with the help and support, she has shown us and for that we are so thankful, she has always been there for us as always but all of the staff as a whole have gone above and beyond in whatever help we have required. We are so thankful for all the help and encouragement we have received thru this entire time”*
* *I found my case worker Linda was just from heaven for me, she taught me a lot – how to live, how to think and how to respond. All what I know was how to react. Linda preserve with me in a time I thought she is going to say I had enough of you, but no, she was always there for me and all the workers were wonderful with me when Linda was not here and they did amazing job with me. I am very grateful to Beryl, thank you very much for being a family for me”*
* *“this group session was really helpful, I was given a lot of information and knowing I’m not alone on this road to discovery a better life. I have lots of things like self-reflecting and dealing with a lot of denial, so this session was eye opening, thank you.*

FACTS v’s MYTHS

**Myth: Domestic and family violence happens only to poor, uneducated women and women from certain cultures.**

Truth: People of any class, culture, religion, sexual orientation, marital status and age can be victims or perpetrators of domestic violence. Because women with money usually have more access to resources, poorer women tend to use community agencies, and are therefore more visible.

**Myth: Some people deserve to be abused; they are responsible for the violence or they provoke it.**

Truth: No one deserves to be abused. The only person responsible for the abuse is the abuser. Abusers tend to blame the victim for their behaviour, and friends and family often hear only their perspective.

**Myth: If the victim didn’t like it, she would leave.**

Truth: There are many reasons why a woman may not leave, including fear for herself, her children and even pets. Often women face significant practical barriers to separating from their partners, including a lack of money and housing options. Due to the effects of the abuse, many women lack confidence in their own abilities and accurate information about their options. Not leaving does not mean that the situation is okay or that the victim wants to be abused. The most dangerous time for a woman who is being abused is when she tries to leave.

**Key facts**

The following basic statistics help demonstrate the prevalence and severity of violence against women:

* On average, at least one woman a week is killed by a partner or former partner in Australia.1  ​
* One in three Australian women has experienced physical violence, since the age of 15.2
* One in five Australian women has experienced sexual violence.2
* One in four Australian women has experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner.2
* One in four Australian women has experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner.3
* Women are at least three times more likely than men to experience violence from an intimate partner.4
* Women are five times more likely than men to require medical attention or hospitalisation as a result of intimate partner violence, and five times more likely to report fearing for their lives.5
* Of those women who experience violence, more than half  have children in their care.6
* Violence against women is not limited to the home or intimate relationships. Every year in Australia, over 300,000 women experience violence – often sexual violence – from someone other than a partner.7
* Eight out of ten women aged 18 to 24 were harassed on the street in the past year.8
* Young women (18 – 24 years) experience significantly higher rates of physical and sexual violence than women in older age groups.9
* There is growing evidence that women with disabilities are more likely to experience violence.10
* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experience both far higher rates and more severe forms of violence compared to other women.1