



**CASA Forum**  
Victorian Centres Against Sexual Assault

## Annual Report 2017 - 2018

*We acknowledge the first owners of this land and pay our respects to their Elders as we conduct our work in the State of Victoria.*

## Members

**Convenor and Media Liaison:** Carolyn Worth, SECASA

**Treasurer:** Joanne Sheehan-Paterson, Mallee Sexual Assault Unit

Dianne Rokvic, Sexual Assault Crisis Line (SACL)

Shireen Gunn, Ballarat CASA

Helen Bolton, The Sexual Assault and Family Violence Centre

Lynda Manley, CASA House

Annette Riddell, Eastern CASA

Karen Hogan, Gatehouse Centre

Kerrie White, Gippsland CASA

Andrea Caia, Goulburn Valley CASA

Kate Wright, Loddon Campaspie CASA

Heather Clarke, Northern CASA

Mary Clapham, South Western CASA

Kerry Burns, Upper Murray Centre Against Violence

Robyn McIvor, West CASA

Contact: Carolyn Worth, SECASA, PO Box 72 East Bentleigh 3165; Tel: 03 9928 8741;

Email: [Carolyn.Worth@monashhealth.org.au](mailto:Carolyn.Worth@monashhealth.org.au)



CASA Forum acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government



## CASA Forum's Vision, Mission and Philosophy

### Vision

A world free of sexual assault.

### Mission

CASA Forum brings together the collective expertise of the Victorian CASAs to lead and inform policy, practice and research.

### Philosophy

The Victorian CASA Forum is committed to addressing the inequalities within society which result in the perpetration of sexual violence and family violence against women, children and men.

The Victorian CASA Forum therefore acknowledges:

- Sexual assault is both a consequence and a reinforcer of the power disparity between men and women and children.
- Sexual assault occurs along a continuum of behaviour which includes:
  - Any uninvited sexual behaviour which makes the recipient feel uncomfortable, harassed or afraid
  - Unwanted touching or remarks
  - Sexual harassment
  - Coerced sexual activity
  - Rape with physical violence and threat to life
  - Sexual assault of children and the grooming of children that accompanies this crime.

The impact of sexual assault of family violence on the peoples' lives is multifaceted and complex. It includes emotional, economic and political consequences. To facilitate recovery from sexual and family violence, the Forum recognises the importance of responding to each aspect.

Recovery from sexual assault and family violence is influenced by a range of factors reflecting the positions of men, women and children in society and the power differences between them. These include differences of gender, culture, ethnicity, age, sexuality, religion, ability/disability and socio-economic class.

The entire community and other institutions are responsible for sexual assault and its consequences. Working towards its elimination is the responsibility of all in our society.

All CASAs work towards the empowerment of service users, through a victim's rights model, informed by the Victims' Rights Charter and the Human Rights Charter. The focus of service provision is the needs of victims/survivors of recent and past sexual assault.



## Introduction

The Victorian CASA Forum is the peak body of 14 Victorian CASAs and the Victorian Sexual Assault Crisis Line. Together, these organisations ensure a 24 hour service is available across the state. Working collaboratively, we ensure that women, children and men who experience sexual assault have access to comprehensive and timely support and intervention to address their needs and to mitigate the effects of the trauma they have experienced. We also undertake a broad range of primary prevention activities and programs, to address the underlying drivers of sexual assault and family violence.

This work includes:

- Community education, including a range of Respectful Relationship programs in schools and at tertiary institutions
- Professional education sessions to health, welfare and education professionals
- Informing government policy
- Advocating for law reform
- Providing submissions and data to government Inquiries such as the Federal Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the Victorian Family Violence Royal Commission
- Facilitating research to increase community understanding of the nature and incidence of sexual assault.

Over the past six years there has been a huge increase in demand for CASA services, including a rise in the number of:

- Requests for support services for the impact of sexual assault, including counselling and advocacy
- People disclosing and seeking support for past sexual assault, some disclosing for the first time
- People seeking support for a recent assault.

This has resulted in all CASAs having to deal with longer client waiting lists and in clients facing longer waiting times for counselling services. All clients who seek support for a recent assault are offered support immediately, 24 hours a day.

Additional funding has been provided by the Victorian Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) to individual CASAs, resulting in an increase in service delivery from 2015-16 to 2017-18.

All Victorian CASAs maintain accreditation against the Human Services Standards. These Standards (gazetted as the DHHS Standards) have been developed by the Victorian Government DHHS, and focus on ensuring compliance in four key areas: Empowerment, Access & Engagement, Wellbeing and Participation.



## Multidisciplinary Centres

Multidisciplinary Centres (MDCs) are regional centres where key services involved in responding to sexual assault are co-located.

The services include:

- Victoria Police Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigation Teams (SOCITs)
- DHHS Sexual Assault Investigation Teams
- CASA Counsellor/Advocates
- At some MDCs:
  - Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine
  - Department of Health Nurses
  - Victoria Police Family Violence Unit
  - Other family violence support agencies.

There are currently seven MDCs in Victoria, located at:

- Seaford PenSAC (SECASA)
- Dandenong MDC (SECASA)
- Bendigo (LCCASA)
- Geelong (Barwon CASA/Minerva)
- Mildura (Mallee SAU)
- Morwell (Gippsland CASA)
- Wyndham (West CASA).

## Therapeutic and Support Groups

Across the state, many groups were run for people dealing with the impact of sexual assault. Details of groups offered by different CASAs are included in their updates, later in this report.

## Gender Diversity

CASA Forum continues to lead a focus on improving access and services for people of different genders, including people who identify as non-binary or who wish not to be identified as male or female.



## Tertiary Institutions

Across the state, CASAs have continued to work extensively with tertiary institutions in response to on-going concern about the rates of sexual assault of university students, both on campus and elsewhere. Counselling and advocacy services have been provided to hundreds of students and CASA workers have participated in a range of actions including:

- Delivering training to staff on responding to disclosures of sexual assault
- Providing secondary consultation to university staff to support their student counselling work
- Contributing to the development of policies, procedures, communication items and online training prepared by universities

Several CASAs have counsellors based at their local university or tertiary institution, offering outreach counselling either as part of the institution's own wellbeing team, or independently.

## Victoria Police

CASA Forum maintains a strong working relationship with Victoria Police, in particular the Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Investigations (SOCIT and SOCAT) and Family Violence Units. VicPol visitors to CASA Forum this year included Senior Sergeant Brett Meadows from SOCIT and Detective Senior Sergeant Andrew Kerr and Inspector Steve Wilson from Sex Crimes.

At the local level, all CASAs collaborate closely with their regional SOCIT and Family Violence teams. As part of the Victoria Police SOCIT course, which trains police officers in sexual offences work, CASA Forum regularly delivers sessions in understanding and responding to disclosures or reports of sexual abuse.

## Service provision for external organisations

This year SECASA and the CASA Forum have arranged to provide sexual assault services for two organisations as part of their response to incidents of sexual assault:

- **Country Fire Authority (CFA)** – services for CFA members, their families and the public
- **Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR)** – services for the public following historic sexual abuse related to the operation of Puffing Billy and other government and non-government rail organisations.

**St John Ambulance** also wanted sexual assault counsellors to attend major events and festivals across the state, alongside their medical staff.

On behalf of CASA Forum, SECASA arranged a joint response for these three organisations by the 14 CASAs, so that services are provided via the geographically closest CASA.



## Members' Updates for the Year

### Victorian Sexual Assault Crisis Line (SACL)

The Victorian Sexual Assault Crisis Line (SACL), is the state wide, after-hours, confidential crisis counselling telephone service providing crisis counselling, advocacy and support for people who have experienced sexual assault, and their non-offending family members.

SACL operates every weeknight from 5pm until 9am the next day and 24/7 throughout weekends and public holidays. The service also coordinates the work of police, other emergency services, hospitals and regional CASAs in responding to recent sexual assaults.

In this financial year SACL took 15305 calls and coordinated 700 Crisis Care Units. Of these:

- 94% (662) were female, including 118 female children
- 4.7% were male (33), including 7 male children
- .5 were transgender or did not adequately describe their gender
- Children represented a total of 17.9% of all after hours Crisis Care Units.
- The majority of after hours Crisis Care Units were for adult sexual assaults (72.3%)
- 73% of all victim survivors knew their attacker or had met them beforehand or had a pre-existing relationship with them.

SACL has 9 part time counsellor/advocates and 9 casual staff, working a mix of overnights and evening shifts, and day shifts over weekends. There is one coordinator working part time.

**Dianne Rokvic**  
**Coordinator**

### Ballarat CASA

Demand for our services this year has grown considerably. This has been due to the impact of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, increased funding being given to us, and an increase in Targets and eligibility from 15 to 18 years for our Sexually Abusive Behaviours Treatment Program. As a result, we outgrew our premises at James Thomas Court in Sebastopol (an outer suburb of Ballarat). Ballarat Health Services, our host organisation, had given us this new wing in 2013 and we had enjoyed the additional space for a short while.

Fortunately, one of the houses we had occupied before moving to James Thomas Court became vacant and Ballarat Health Services offered it to us once again. We are now spread across both locations, quite happily, and have been told that plans are underway to establish an MDC in Ballarat. This will hopefully, provide additional space.

One of this year's highlights has been the introduction to the team of a therapy dog called Mia, who has taken up residence with Pip Lamb, one of our counsellors. Mia has been a welcome addition. She lifts the spirits of clients and counsellors and is a popular team member.

While Mia and Pip work together as a therapeutic team with Pip's clients, Mia is a welcome sight for all clients while they are waiting.

**Shireen Gunn**  
**Operations Director**



**Counsellor Pip Lamb and  
Mia, our therapy dog**



## **The Sexual Assault and Family Violence Centre (formerly Barwon CASA/MINERVA) – The SAFV Centre**

This year the amalgamation of our two former organisations, Barwon CASA and Minerva Community Services, was completed and our new organisation was born. We are a partner agency in the Barwon MDC, which has expanded this year to include the family violence police. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection is also a valued partner in the MDC, along with Barwon Health's co-located Community Health Nurses. We are also an integral part of the service offering at the Barwon Support and Safety Hub (the Orange Door), together with Family Safety Victoria, and we welcome the arrival of the Orange Door to Geelong.

### **Client services**

We provide immediate support to people who have recently been sexually assaulted or impacted by family violence. Our specialists provide 24-hour face-to-face services, including risk assessment, safety planning and access to emergency accommodation, as well as coordination with other specialist services, such as police investigators and forensic medical experts.

### **After Hours Crisis Response**

During 2017-18 The SAFV Centre was successful in securing funding to deliver the Victorian Government's enhanced face-to-face after hours crisis response for women and children experiencing family violence across the Barwon area. Under this service, our After Hours practitioners meet with women and their children at police stations, hospitals or emergency accommodation to assess their family violence risk and safety needs as well as offer practical support, including access to emergency accommodation, food and travel. Our After Hours practitioners work closely with safe steps, the state-wide 24/7 family violence crisis service, in delivering this service.

### **Case Management**

This year we supported 1,156 women who were accompanied by children, as part of our family violence case management service. This support included both short term case management interventions and long term case management support. During the year we recorded 1,576 periods of support for women, which highlighted that over one-third of all women we supported had re-engaged with our service.

### **Therapeutic Counselling**

During 2017-18 we provided therapeutic counselling services to 1,644 people across the Barwon area. This represents a 15 per cent increase on the previous financial year. 63 per cent were adults, children and young people requiring therapeutic counselling around the impacts of sexual assault. 29 per cent of all people who accessed therapeutic counselling were under the age of 25 years.

### **SABT Program**

Demand for this program has been increasing steadily in recent years, with a total of 108 young people supported by the program across the Barwon and Wimmera areas during the past financial year. The main sources of referrals were from Child Protection and Victoria Police. 78 per cent of referrals were male.





The program has recently been extended to include 18 year-olds, consistent with recommendations from the Royal Commission into Family Violence and Victoria's 10-year plan. During this year, 26 per cent of all SABTS cases were under the age of 10 years.

### Step Up program

Our Adolescent Family Violence Program, **Step Up – Building Healthy Relationships** - is delivered in partnership with Barwon Child, Youth and Family (BCYF), Step Up is an early intervention behavioural change program for young people who use violence against parents or carers in their homes. This year the program received 117 referrals.

### Therapeutic Groups

**Children and Mothers in Mind (CMiM)** is delivered in partnership with Kids First Australia. CMiM is an Australian-first program, designed for mothers and children aged under four years, who have experienced the trauma of family violence, childhood abuse or sexual assault. CMiM supports the attachment of mother and child and empowers women in their confidence and competence as parents. In a safe group, our expert staff work with mothers or carers and their children for 22 weeks to assist them to build their relationships and support parenting challenges. One-on-one support is also offered outside the group and during the program.

This year we delivered four CMiM groups to a total of 57 participants, representing 25 families.

**Trauma-focused Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (TACT)** is delivered in partnership with Bethany Community Services. TACT supports women to:

- Develop a greater understanding of the impact of trauma as a result of family violence or sexual assault
- Increase their emotional awareness,
- Equip them with practical thinking and self-awareness skills to regulate their emotions and impact of trauma on their day-to-day living.

This year there were 103 participants across all groups.

**Connect** is another program that is delivered in partnership with Bethany Community Services, for mothers (or carers) and their children who have been affected by family violence. Connect focuses on strengthening mother-child relationships after family violence and is informed by research on trauma. Participants develop an understanding of trauma, the impacts of family violence on their relationships and increase their skills in emotional regulation for themselves and their children. A total of 13 families participated in Connect during the past financial year.

**Body and Mind.** This innovative program for adults was launched this year. Participants focus on areas such as sleeping well, using music, connecting with creativity, health and managing trauma symptoms to gain an increased understanding of the relationship between the body and mind. Skills are developed in managing the difficult experiences associated with trauma. A total of 47 participants attended the program.

### Training

This year we delivered professional training programs for 795 participants. Of these 45 per cent were involved in the 21 Identifying Family Violence training sessions delivered under our service



agreement with the Barwon Area Integrated Family Violence Committee. They represented a diverse range of community and professional organisations.

### Gender Equity:

This year we began the innovative **Partnership, Equality and Prevention Project** with the City of Greater Geelong (CoGG). The project focused on strengthening the CoGG's work in building awareness and understanding of gender equity practices, to achieve gender equality for the prevention of violence against women and family violence. The project was embedded in the workplace and one of our staff acted as a project officer located in CoGG.

**Helen Bolton**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

### Eastern CASA (ECASA)

#### Statistics for 2017 - 2018

1128 new clients were provided with a service in 2017 – 2018:

- 1019 females
- 103 males
- 6 gender diverse

ECASA responded to 110 clients presenting for Crisis Care.

#### Group Work Programs

ECASA has run a variety of groups this year.

- Clients in **the men's group** met monthly to discuss a designated topic relating to their experience and recovery. A BBQ was held to celebrate the end of the year.
- A **women's empowerment group** ran in 10 week blocks throughout across the year. A highlight for participants was working with a local Judo group, who supported the counsellor/advocates in helping the women experience the strength of standing strongly in their bodies.
- ECASA partnered with Anglicare Lilydale Family Violence Team and ran a group for **young women** aged 14 – 17 years who had experienced violence or abuse.

#### Training and Education

In addition to our annual training programs on Responding to Disclosures and Building Foundations – Working Safely with Adult Survivors, ECASA has also provided training for four sectors of the community this year:

- Disability sector
- Education sector
- Victoria Police SOCIT teams and Family Violence Units in the eastern region
- Eastern Health.



For the disability sector, ECASA has:

- Worked with Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Eastern Region Supported Residential Services, and trained proprietors and managers of SRS's and the agencies that support SRS clients.
- Provided training to Nadrasca, a sheltered workshop.

For the education sector ECASA:

- Partnered with Barwon CASA and provided training and education to staff at Deakin University (Burwood) to support staff who respond to students disclosing sexual abuse or assault on campus. Ran a similar education program at Swinburne University.
- Conducted several Respectful Relationship programs with Secondary and Primary schools in the Outer East.
- Ran 2 successful Protective Behaviour programs with local primary schools.

For Victoria Police SOCIT teams and Family Violence Units in the eastern region, one of our counsellors worked with Carolyn Worth (Manager, SECASA) to deliver a training program to SOCIT Detectives.

For Eastern Health ECASA provided training to Medical and Nursing staff across Eastern Health's three emergency departments on how to respond to disclosures of sexual assault and family violence and how to refer clients to ECASA. Several evening sessions were held for night shift staff. Training was also provided to all Graduate Nurses employed in Eastern Health to support them in responding to disclosures at the start of their careers.

ECASA has also been working with the Mental Health Units at Eastern Health and provided an education session to 50 psychiatrists who work at Eastern Health. We are also working in partnership with Maroondah Hospital Adult Inpatient Unit Group Programs Team. We have been co-facilitating fortnightly groups for inpatients regarding sexual assault. The groups have been dependent on the needs of participants on the day but have generally involve, discussions about the definition of sexual assault, ECASAs role, support for V/S who are triggered by the experience of an inpatient stay and grounding techniques. The group also covers topic such as, exploring rights and protective options for those who may feel unsafe whilst on the ward.

## Regional events

ECASA has been involved in several regional events over the year including:

- The Eastern Region Family Violence Partnership (EMRFVP), led by EDVOS, provided information on the role of Information Sharing Entities and how the process of information sharing will occur. This half day event was attended by schools and agency personnel across the EMR.
- The EMRFVP also an ran afternoon session for schools providing them with information on the ISE changes, and how agencies in the initial tranche will work together when necessary to protect women and children in family violence situations.
- ECASA again partnered with Women's Health East to training Media Advocates. This is a program that trains women who have experienced sexual abuse and/or Family Violence to speak at events and highlight the impact of their experiences and how they have managed the impact in their lives.



## Outposts

ECASA has established 2 new Outposts over the last 12 months, at Swinburne University and Eastern Domestic Violence Outreach Service.

## Regional Partnerships

ECASA has established regular meetings with Knox and Box Hill SOCIT and Family Violence Units. We are working with Senior Detectives to explore how this area of work can develop further.

Members of ECASA have also continued to be involved in other Regional Networks:

- Family Violence Partnership
- Regional ISE project group,
- Training Media Advocates with Women's Health East, Regional Family Violence Disability Project Group and local Government Wellbeing Teams.

**Annette Riddell**

**Team Leader**

## Gatehouse Centre

### **For the Assessment and Treatment of Child Abuse – Royal Children's Hospital**

Gatehouse Centre has had a very busy year providing services to children and young people and their families and carers. We now provide services at 4 locations:

- Royal Children's Hospital
- Melton
- Hoppers Crossing
- Wyndham MDC with West CASA.

Gatehouse Centre received over 1,880 SASS (sexual assault support services) referrals for the year. The hours of services provided was over 20,000 with over 21,000 clients and their families seen.

The REFOCUS SABTS program received over 280 new referrals for the year with over 5,000 hours of services provided to clients and their families. The introduction of the 15-17yr old SABT program expanded demand with additional staff training provided.

Gatehouse Centre Group program included providing a weekly group at Child Protection SECURE Welfare Centre, for the young women detained in this Centre, and a therapeutic group program for young women at Gatehouse Centre RCH.

The training and community education program continues to be in high demand. Sessions provided include Carer Café training to foster care workers, Child and Maternal Health staff, Paediatric nurses, Child Protection staff, and Community groups, Schools, Child Care and Kindergartens.

This year our multidisciplinary approach to working with children, young people and their families was expanded to include a consultant Psychiatrist weekly session, a Masters of Occupational Therapy Project looking at parameters for possible development of a sensory integration program and a project to explore a neuro psychologist consultant. These initiatives will add to the



understanding of children and young people and assist in developing therapeutic plans to enhance outcomes.

Gatehouse Centre is providing the **Child and Family Traumatic Stress Intervention (CFTSI)**, which was developed at the Yale University Child Trauma Centre. CFTSI is a treatment model for children and young people during the peri-traumatic period, which covers the initial days and weeks following a traumatic event, before traumatic stress become established and PTSD can be diagnosed.

Already we have seen excellent outcomes for over 60 children and their families. This model represents an opportunity for an entirely new "clinic" for Gatehouse, providing an immediate response to the children and young people who present to the Emergency Department due to sexual or physical abuse, as well as to families who have been referred to Gatehouse by police, Child Protection Services, schools and other departments within the Royal Children's Hospital. The CFTSI has had a profound impact on the Gatehouse waiting list, efficiency and through-put. It also represents a new standard in the provision of rigorous, evidence-based therapeutic interventions to Gatehouse clients.

### Award received

Gatehouse Centre was awarded the DHHS Minister Mikakos Award for Innovation in Protecting Children at the annual Victorian Protecting Children Awards 2018.

### Animal assisted therapy for children who have been impacted by sexual assault

Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) is an emerging approach in Australia for working with children impacted by trauma. This year Gatehouse Centre has piloted an AAT program in psychotherapy sessions, involving a therapy dog, Ruby. The program works with children and young people who have been impacted by sexual abuse and/or engaging in sexualised behaviours. This is a particularly complex area of practice.

The Royal Children's Hospital, in partnership with researchers from the University of Melbourne, conducted a study evaluating the feasibility and acceptability of the program. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected from clients, parents, staff and the Therapist who delivered AAT.

There were three major findings.

1. Participants found the experience to be positive and would like the program to continue.
2. Uniquely rich levels of data were obtained about the range of ways in which the therapy dog facilitated the psychotherapeutic process. This went beyond sensory regulation, relationship building and mastery (which is often referred to in AAT research) to include deeper therapeutic processes such as projection and transference of feelings onto the dog, in order to explore those feelings from a safe space.
3. The effect that the therapy dog has had on the team at the Gatehouse Centre was unexpectedly strong and positive.

These findings were generated by the development and use of new data collection tools that were specifically designed for this research.



## Our Space

Many Gatehouse Centre clients have complex needs, including residing in out-of-home care, complex trauma backgrounds, disengagement from education, difficult family and social relationships, and involvement with multiple services - as well as suffering the impact of sexual assault.

Some of these most vulnerable and at risk young people in the State are forced to spend time in Secure Welfare Services (SWS). These are short-term, locked, residential DHHS facilities for child protection clients who are at substantial and immediate risk of harm. This year Gatehouse Centre developed **Our Space** – a box of therapeutic tools to assist young people to work on the issues that make them extremely vulnerable, before their release into the community.

**Our Space** is a structured psycho-educational approach. It includes ten educational and training sessions that focus on issues affecting young people:

- Cycle of violence
- Sexual health
- Contraception and pregnancy
- Tell me a story
- Cycle of violence
- Keeping yourself safe
- Myths about sex and violence
- Gender stereotype
- Consent
- Types of violence.

The program is designed to facilitate learning and discussion on these core themes in a non-threatening, non-judgemental and interactive environment.

Early evaluation demonstrates enormous benefits to the young people and to the staff who work in Secure Welfare and to Child Protection. Evaluation is currently ongoing and the program is being further developed to include content for boys such as sexual exploitation, pornography on-line and sex and the law.

It is envisaged that **Our Space** would be a valuable resource in Royal Children's Hospital areas such as Banksia, Adolescent Health, Social Work and Mental Health, as well as for Non-Government Agencies and Residential Care Units.

**Karen Hogan**  
**Manager**



## Gippsland CASA

This year the focus of our clinical practice has been on demand management, so that we could better meet the needs of our clients across the region. Our clinical governance framework has been reviewed and evolved and we have undertaken significant staff consultations. Staff engagement has been positive in exploring therapeutic interventions and practice wisdom to provide a solution for meeting the increasing demand for our services.

Our team took part in a Design Jam to explore practice and ensure that staff understood and had a relationship with the funding and service agreement element of our work, and how our everyday practice impacts demand management. This was very positive and productive and will assist our development and practice. Staff identified some innovative solutions which will be implemented and monitored over next year.

We have introduced several legislative compliance changes into our practice, such as the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme and the upcoming Children's Information Sharing scheme. These schemes will support service providers to better assess risk and develop better informed safety planning for women and children experiencing or at risk of family violence.

We have added new services and programs which will continue to provide opportunities for staff to develop further skills and diversify their practice knowledge. Alternate funding sources have assisted our financial viability and diversified our funding streams.

## Family Violence After Hours

Beginning in February, we added the Family Violence After Hours face to face response for the Inner Gippsland Region to our Crisis Care work. This service is provided in partnership with Safe Steps, and is in addition to our previous sexual assault crisis care response. We recruited some very experienced and skilled additional staff and our team has been extremely flexible and responsive in undertaking the required training and induction.

## Equine Assisted Therapy

This year we developed a partnership which made it possible to add Equine Assisted Therapy to our suite of services. Equine Assisted therapy has significant therapeutic benefits and complements the work we do. The program also has fee for service potential in the NDIS environment and in the for-profit space, through team building and staff wellbeing activities. It will be exciting to watch this program develop and grow over the coming year.

## Multiple and Complex Needs Initiative (MACNI)

This year we have been pleased to be able to offer MACNI care plan coordination to some of the most vulnerable people within the region. MACNI is a new program which again compliments our current suite of services, and is able to significantly improve clients' health and wellbeing.

## Research and Evaluation

This year has seen Research and Evaluation become more firmly embedded in Gippsland CASA's business and practice, with a broad range of activities carried out. Data collection for the Community Attitudes Survey was completed at the start of the year, and people took part across Australia.

Two manuscripts are in production for publication in academic journals and insights have been incorporated in our practice. These include languages used across the organisation, resource



development and considerations for future service programs. Other data from the survey has been used in preparing social media campaigns, community education presentations and other Prevention initiatives.

It has been exciting to see clinical staff sharing their knowledge within the sector and beyond, through webinars, blog pieces, and conference presentations. There has been a 100% acceptance rate in abstracts submitted to present at conferences. This highlights not only the talent of our staff, but a keen, multidisciplinary interest in our work.

Gippsland CASA has also had success seeking competitive funding grants this year. The proportion of successful applications submitted exceeds that of the average strike rate for small to medium non-profit organisations in Australia, according to a report by Our Community. This added funding will allow us to deliver programs and services for our clients, which would otherwise not be possible.

The conclusion of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, culminating in a 17-volume report, must also be noted. The Royal Commission has, and will continue to have, an enduring impact on our clients, our Organisation, and the sector more broadly. Gippsland CASA has had representation at various Royal Commission events, including the National Apology, research symposiums, consultations/workshops, and a presentation by Justice Peter McClelland.

Research has been incorporated into our activities in several ways. Counsellor/Advocates have requested psychoeducational materials for clients, assistance with presentations, sourcing of articles, data sourcing and interpretation, and provision of literature summaries. Research and Prevention have also worked closely together in the development, delivery, and evaluation of community education initiatives, and networking with external groups to cultivate and exchange knowledge within the sector, and beyond. Within the leadership team, Research and Evaluation has assisted in gathering feedback on how areas of the Organisation have been functioning, identifying strengths and opportunities, and planning for the future.

In summary, 2017-2018 has been a year of further integration, knowledge-building, and opportunity. Hopefully there will be much more of all this in 2018-2019!

**Kerrie White**  
**Clinical Manager**





## Goulburn Valley CASA (GVCASA)

GVCASA is a program within the Trauma Informed Services Department at GV Health and covers the West Hume region. This includes the 5 local government areas of Moira, Murrindindi, Mitchell, Strathbogie and City of Greater Shepparton.

GVCASA's main office is located in Shepparton, and outreach services are provided at Alexandra, Broadford, Cobram, Kilmore, Kinglake, Nathalia, Numurkah, Seymour, Wallan, Yarrawonga and Yea. We have a motivated and committed team of Counsellor/Advocates, Education and Administrative staff, who continue to provide outstanding support to our clients. Positive feedback is regularly received with one client stating "My counsellor is perfect, and is attentive and listens to what I have to say, she gives me positive feedback and tools to help me cope."

## Counselling and Advocacy

In 2017-2018 GVCASA supported 598 clients throughout the region. Of these clients, 76% were female and 35% were aged under the age of 18. The capacity to provide outreach services for clients is essential as 48% of our clients live outside of the City of Greater Shepparton area.

## Training and Community Education

This year GVCASA provided community education and training to a range of services and community organisations, including:

- Local Rotary clubs
- Local TAFE college
- Mental Health services
- Regional Health service staff
- Youth services.

We also worked with the Department of Education as they rolled out the Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships curriculum across the region.

## Personal Safety Education for Early Years:

GVCASA continues to provide the Braveheart's 'DITTO's Keep Safe Education program' for children aged from Kindergarten to Grade 3. During 2017-2018 the program visited 136 schools and kindergartens and provided education to over 8,000 children in the West Hume Region.

## Working collaboratively:

GVCASA is strongly invested in working collaboratively with other service providers in the region. We have welcomed other service providers, such as family violence services, SOCIT, Child Protection, Australian Childhood Foundation and PartnerSpeak, to meetings and professional development days. We also hosted a garden party at the GVCASA premises.

## Post Prison Release Pilot Program:

This Dept. of Justice and Regulation funded pilot program was coordinated by WestCASA and provided a state-wide specialist trauma service for women released from prison in the last 12 months. GVCASA received referrals for a small number of women who exited prison and settled in the West Hume region. Although this pilot program will not be continued into 2018-2019, it was a



very positive experience for clients, with one very vulnerable client still actively engaged with our service and making positive inroads towards her road to healing.

### **Strengthening Hospital Responses to Family Violence:**

GVCASA plays a major role in this work with GV Health and our team has been involved in project planning, implementation and training. GV Health is a lead regional health service for the SHRFV service model implementation across the state, and is rolling out the whole-of-hospital response internally, as well as providing support and mentorship to 7 regional health services. During 2017-2018 GVCASA has provided family violence training to 600 GV Health staff and managers. As part of the feedback, one GVH manager stated “Your presentation was the most enjoyable, engaging and useful training I have been to in a long time...”

**Andrea Caia**  
**Manager**

## **Loddon Campaspe Centre Against Sexual Assault (LCCASA)**

### **Our Organisation**

Loddon Campaspe CASA provides a range of counselling and advocacy services to children, women, men and families who have experienced sexual assault. We also provide therapeutic treatment services for children and young people with problem and sexually abusive behaviours. Our staff are trained and specialise in a range of trauma informed modalities including EMDR, art therapy, play therapy in addition to cognitive and reflective practice.

Our service area includes the Loddon and Campaspe regions, and in addition to our MDC location in Bendigo we provide outreach services in Kyneton, Maryborough, Echuca and Kyabram. These services are well utilised, and all have a waiting list for both adults and children.

### **Our Work**

This year our Sexual Assault Services provided specialist counselling and support to over 1085 people in the Loddon Campaspe Region. Of these, 402 were aged below 18. As well as specialist counselling services, we provided advocacy, reports, case conferencing, secondary consultations and support groups.

As with previous years, referrals to our Sexually Abusive Treatment Service (SABTS) programs well exceed funded targets across our service area. This has been the trend for the past three years. Over two thirds of the clients seen in this program are male. In the past year we provided a SABTS service to 99 children, young people and their families.

Our After Hours crisis service operates seven days a week for people who have recently experienced sexual assault across the Loddon Campaspe region. This year there was a 25% percent increase in call outs and responses.

We continue to deliver the Department of Justice and Regulation funded broadened trauma service at Tarrengower Women’s Prison. This year 79 women accessed our service for either individual counselling or two group programs. We also provided training to Tarrengower correctional staff in understanding trauma and its impact.



## Our Community

This year we reviewed and refined our prevention and advocacy program, which led to us strengthening our partnerships with schools, health providers, tertiary institutions, community organisations and the community. These partnerships resulted in co-delivery of training and delivery of specialist training in a range of settings.

LCCASA continues to participate in policy development and service design at a local, regional and state-wide level through our memberships of the Gender Equity and Violence Prevention (Loddon Area) Consortium, Stewardship Group for the Loddon Mallee Action Plan for the Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women, Gender Equity Coalition and Strengthening Hospitals Responses to Family Violence and Sexual Assault.

Building community and individual capacity to understand and respond to sexual harassment, abuse and violence is a very important part of our work. To facilitate this, we presented and participated in a range of events and forums including International Women's Day, 16 Days of Activism, Respectful Relationship, Health expos and forums, University O Week, Talking Justice, Rotary and the Chill Out Festival.

**Kate Wright**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

## Mallee Sexual Assault Unit (MSAU)

Mallee SAU provides counselling services, crisis care services, advocacy and support services within a large area of rural north western Victoria, including some of the most remote areas. Consequently, we provide a large number of outreach counselling clinics. In 2017-2018, these were provided at Robinvale, Swan Hill, Ouyen, Dareton, Wentworth, Balranald, Kerang, Sea Lake, Wycheproof, Manangatang, Donald, Birchip, Charlton, Nyah, Lake Boga and the Mallee Track districts.

MSAU is a program of the larger agency, Mallee Sexual Assault Unit/Mallee Domestic Violence Services, which is the primary agency in the region for the provision of sexual assault and family violence support services.

Mallee SAU/Mallee DVS is actively involved in a number of key panels, committees and service co-locations, including:

- Coordination of the regional Risk Assessment Management Panel (RAMP)
- Management of the Multi-Disciplinary Centre (MDC), based in Mildura
- Lead coordination of the regional Family Violence programs through Chairing the Mallee Family Violence Executive
- Participation in the Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group (IFVRAG)
- Chair of the National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence.

Mallee SAU runs a range of other programs including:

- Support groups for survivors of sexual assault
- Sexually Abusive Treatment Services
- Safety Hints for Adolescent Relationships (SHARP), a program in schools focused on respectful relationships delivered in partnership with Victoria Police
- Education and training for community and professional groups



- Special Needs Awareness Program (SNAP), a program focused on supporting people with an intellectual disability.
- Music and Art Therapy Children's groups.

**Jo Sheehan-Paterson**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

### **Northern CASA (NCASA)**

NCASA has experienced significant leadership changes this year with Charmaine Farrell bidding farewell to the service after 8 very positive years as NCASA's manager. The senior leadership team now includes Heather Clarke as Manager, Julie Dallaway as Client Services Team Leader and Kim Robinson as Senior Counsellor

NCASA successfully prepared for the service's second full DHHS Accreditation and undertook quality improvements to improve intake processes and support for clients while waiting to be linked with a counsellor.

The service continues to experience increased demand. During this year NCASA provided 6984 hours of service to a total of 899 cases, including 120 crisis care responses to victims of recent sexual assault. Of these services:

- 86 % clients were female, 13 % male and 1 % gender diverse
- 32 % related to recent sexual assault that occurred within the last 12 months
- 33 % related to past sexual assault that occurred more than 12 months ago
- 26 % related to a recent disclosure of childhood sexual assault
- 4 % related to a recent disclosure of past adult sexual assault
- 5 % related to the non-offending parent of a victim of sexual assault

Demand has increased especially from young people, with 40% of clients now between 12- 29 years. Hoping to engage more young male victims, we offered a social work placement to two male students, Lloyd Grant and Ken Ko, which enabled a range of digital resources targeting this cohort to be created. These include short video clips, posters and memes which will be launched in October, 2018.

With implementation of the Family Violence Royal Commission recommendations, family violence related work has continued to be a significant focus. Heidelberg, where NCASA's main office is located, is one of the five launch sites for the new Family Violence Safety and Support Hubs. This has entailed NCASA's participation in Local Establishment Group along with other key local services.

NCASA has been actively involved with Austin Health's Strengthening Hospitals' Response to Family Violence project. This has involved awareness raising and training for staff in how to recognise and respond more sensitively to patients who may be experiencing family violence. A training module focussing on responding to sexual assault has been developed by NCASA Counsellor Advocate, Sophie Rak, on behalf of CASA Forum.



Group work with both male and female clients has also continued to feature strongly at NCASA. This year the service offered a group for adult women survivors of child sexual assault and a men's group. We also piloted a new four week mindful relaxation program entitled 'The Okay Zone', to support clients on the waiting list to develop body based techniques to manage impacts and practice self-soothing.

NCASA's Respectful Relationships Program continues to be embraced by 8 secondary schools in the Northern region. NCASA has been working with students at Epping Secondary College for a number of years and over time this collaboration has developed an exciting momentum resulting in a series of Preventing Gendered Violence activities incorporating the whole school.

Activities have included:

- Working with Year 10 students to develop prevention slogans such as 'Together we make a difference' and 'Her dress does not mean yes'
- Using these slogans and Year 7-8 student art work to create a student-designed calendar with a clear violence prevention theme
- A full day of prevention activities on White Ribbon Day involving students, staff, Victoria Police and NCASA.

As a result of her work with schools, NCASA's Community Development Worker Kim Wood was invited to participate in a panel at YACVic's (Youth Affairs Council Australia VIC's) conference in October, 17 during which she spoke about the importance of engaging young men in discussions about respectful relationships.

NCASA (and Austin Health) have become signatories to Building Respectful Communities, a Northern regional plan to prevent violence against women. A very successful joint awareness raising activity was undertaken at the Austin during the Week Without Violence in October, 17 attracting the participation of a large number of staff and patients. The activity - *Austin Health: Growing a community against Violence* featured a large mural of a tree, and encouraged staff and patients to commit to taking a stand against violence against women by attaching a signed handprint to the tree's branches.



**Heather Clarke, NCASA, and Jason Payne, Austin Health**

During this year Northern CASA has also continued working to ensure our services are safe and culturally relevant to aboriginal clients in our region. Our weekly counselling outpost to the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service in Preston is now in its seventh year and is well utilised.



Northern CASA has also participated in a working group of the Northern Integrated Family Violence Regional Action Group (NIFVRAG), focussing on providing information and training for Aboriginal workers to enable them to better support clients who disclose sexual abuse. This 'Safe Pathways to Healing' work has resulted in NCASA's involvement in two well attended events for aboriginal workers – an initial forum which showcased relevant local services and a subsequent training day focussing on responding to disclosures and self-care.

**Heather Clarke**  
**Manager**

### **Ovens Murray CASA (Upper Murray CAV)**

In 2017-2018 a total of 827 victim survivors of sexual assault accessed services from Ovens Murray CASA.

Of these:

- 135 were adult males: they included adult survivors of sexual assault as well as parents of children attending for their own sexual assault support
- 476 were adult females: the majority were adult survivors of past sexual assault, parents of children recently sexually assaulted and a smaller number of recent sexual assault victim survivors
- 190 children and young people: 70 males and 120 females.

This year a strong focus of our work was with large numbers of adult victim survivors who were impacted by sexual assault in institutions and health care settings. We provided a full range of services including crisis care, therapeutic support, and legal and court advocacy.

Several teachers in the Ovens Murray district had offended, both historically and currently, against a wide student population. The local community also required significant CASA support after a long term and high-profile local GP was investigated for historical and current sexual offences. Our team worked in close partnership with local SOCIT's, Vic Pol sex crimes squad and VIFM to offer an active referral and support model to victims. The effectiveness of this model has carried over into our ongoing referral process with SOCIT's and is something we will continue to tighten over the coming 12 months.

### **SABT (Sexually Abusive Behaviour Treatment)**

A total of 35 SABT clients and their families accessed our service across Ovens Murray. We continue to take high numbers of secondary consultations and referrals from both primary and secondary schools in relation to sexualised behaviours.

Our team has participated in approximately 15 workshops and presentations on the theme of responding to and managing sexualised behaviours in children and young people.

**Kerry Burns**  
**Chief Executive Officer**



## South Eastern CASA (SECASA)

This year has been a busy year for SECASA. We have been the lead agency for the CASA Forum with State-wide contracts for the Country Fire Authority, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources and St John's Ambulance Brigade. We have expanded our group program, opened two new locations and seen our social media program and Sexual Assault Reporting Anonymously (SARA) mobile friendly website grow in popularity.

SECASA provides services from 9 locations within the south eastern region of Melbourne, and our counsellors provide outreach services at Monash Medical Centre, Clayton and two campuses of Monash University. We are a partner agency at two Multidisciplinary Centres, at Seaford PenSAC and the Dandenong MDC. Our AWARE program (Sexually Abusive Behaviour Treatment (SABT) and problem sexual behaviour) and schools programs are based at Dandenong.

We provide 24 hour crisis care services during the initial period following a recent sexual assault or family violence incident. Services are provided from three Crisis Care Units and include phone response, one-off face-to-face appointments, and support during medicals and reporting to police.

## New client statistics

3647 new clients were provided with a service in 2017-2018:

- 2007 adult females
- 718 female children
- 255 adult males
- 403 male children
- 3 transgender.

## Crisis Care statistics

During this year 296 people aged 18 and over received crisis care services related to sexual assault and 79 related to family violence. Total crisis care services were 375 for the year.

## Groups run this year

We have run a range of varied groups across our East Bentleigh, Seaford and Dandenong locations this year including:

- Protective Behaviours groups for children and parents
- Young Women's group
- Sexuality Workshop
- Women who have had a long term relationship with an offender of sexual abuse
- Reflexology group
- Art groups
- Trauma informed Yoga
- Social Media and Cyber Safety (child, youth, parents/carers)
- Cyber safety for young people and their parents/carers
- Women who have had a long term relationship with an offender of sexual abuse

## AWARE program





SECASA's AWARE program is based at Dandenong MDC. AWARE provides assessment and treatment of sexually abusive behaviour (SAB) and problem sexual behaviour (PSB) in children and young people, and support for their parents and carers.

Highlights for this year include participation in:

- The 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial International Research, Theory and Practice Conference of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abuse, in Auckland, New Zealand.
- The 'Out of Home Care' system through the Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) project with Mackillop and University of Melbourne. This work led to the team being commissioned by Mackillop to deliver training to their residential staff.
- A study about pornography with Deakin and Swinburne Universities, and a separate venture related to Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and pornography.

This year we have provided training to Department of Health and Human Services' Sexual Assault Investigation Team (SAIT) and Intake teams, and we have given lectures to RMIT Social Work students and Swinburne University's Criminology Students.

AWARE has continued to provide a high standard of service delivery to children and young people, and because of our location at the Dandenong MDC their families are supported by multiple agencies and increased levels of safety for everyone. Our client group programs now include 'Healthy Relationships' and Reflexology.

### Schools programs

SECASA offers three programs designed to educate young people on important issues related to their bodies and mental, physical and emotional wellbeing:

- Feeling Safe Together – protective behaviours for primary school children
- Respect, Protect, Connect – respectful relationships for secondary school students
- SOARR – Online safety and responsible relationships in the cyber world.

'Peer Educators' are involved in delivering the programs. They are often university students wanting to work with young people, and with SECASA. They receive training for their role and payment of expenses. As with other SECASA services and programs, the demand for our schools programs has increased. By the end of term 2 this year we reached the targeted number of sessions to be delivered in the entire year.

### Tzedek at Monash Health

Tzedek is an organisation dedicated to the prevention of sexual abuse within the Jewish and broader community, and provides support, education and advocacy. SECASA has provided counselling services and a schools program, and on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019 Tzedek will join Monash Health through SECASA. Tzedek will then become the first Jewish not-for-profit to receive funding from a government organisation.

Tzedek CEO Dr Michelle Meyer explained that services will be managed by Monash Health, but remain unchanged, including providing support services for the Jewish community for the National Redress Scheme. Tzedek will continue to operate from its current location in Elsternwick, where it is most accessible to those in need – and it will retain its existing phone number and website. A Tzedek Advisory Committee will liaise with SECASA on behalf of the service.





The new arrangement will provide Tzedek with a broader range of resources, including educational material, training and the potential for joint research. SECASA is pleased to have Tzedek as a program as this will provide a greater level of involvement with all parts of the Jewish communities, including the Orthodox denominations.

### Training and Community Education

Supported by SECASA, Janine Hill-Buxton, a Family Violence Lawyer with Springvale Monash Legal Service (SMLS) ran a two-hour training session at Pakenham, Dandenong and Cranbourne. There was a huge response, with wait lists for all venues – from professionals in the social work, mental health, family support and legal sectors. The aim of the session was to increase understanding about Intervention Orders among professionals and support them in working with clients and the public.

SECASA has provided training this year for a variety of organisations including:

- Monash University
- RMIT social work students
- Monash Health social and family violence workers
- Alfred Hospital: Vulnerable Persons Forum and Sandringham Hospital midwives
- Safe Steps
- 1800 Respect
- CFA
- Windana Drug and Alcohol Detox Staff
- Office of the Public Prosecutions (OPP) website launch.

### Sexual Assault Workforce Development Program

This Victorian-government funded program trains new and existing sexual assault workers on a range of topics. The aim is to develop workers' skills and confidence and improve the quality and consistency of responses to victim/survivors of sexual assault.

The program began 12 years ago and is delivered by the CASA Forum with SECASA as the lead agency. This year a total of 21 days of sexual assault specific training was delivered. The days were divided between 17 workshops, four were two day workshops and eleven single day workshops.

A total of 421 training places were filled by sexual assault workers across Victoria.

### PSB and SAB training

CEASE is the peak body that represents Sexually Abusive Treatment Services (SABTS) in Victoria. CEASE runs training in conjunction with the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abuse (ANZATSA) for workers who deliver Sexually Abusive Treatment Services (SABTS) in Victoria. This program is coordinated by SECASA on behalf of CEASE.

There were **5 x 1** day workshops held for workers who provide Problem Sexual Behaviour (PSB) and Sexually Abusive Behaviour (SAB) services. **123** workers from across Victoria attended this training. **Two** Advanced Practitioner Groups were also held.



## Making Rights Reality

SECASA's Making Rights Reality program has been successfully running now for seven years and focuses on:

- Ensuring access to counselling, the criminal justice system and the Victim of Crime Assistance Tribunal, for clients who have a disability
- Supporting SECASA's collaboration with self-advocacy organisations and disability services to increase referrals and share knowledge
- Training and resourcing CASA counsellor/advocates
- Providing secondary consultation to the disability sector.

Making Rights Reality also works for Women with Disabilities Victoria's Gender and Disability Workforce Development program, which provides workshops for the disability sector and a peer education program for clients called "Our Right to Respect".

Making Rights Reality received 112 referrals via intake at SECASA, for clients identifying as having an acquired brain injury, intellectual disability, learning or sensory disability, complex communication needs, autism spectrum disorder or a physical disability.

This number comprises:

- 56 adults
- 56 children
- 5.7% of referrals through the SECASA duty system over this financial year.

Other highlights for the year included:

- Coordination and presentation of a one-day workshop for CASA staff on working with people with disabilities
- Providing input to several projects including ANROWS' "Women, disability and violence"; Scope Victoria's "Speak up and be safe from abuse" project; Women with Disabilities Victoria's "Our Right to Respect: Guidelines for developing resources for women with disabilities about safety from violence".

## SARA – report anonymously

[www.sara.org.au](http://www.sara.org.au)

SARA (Sexual Assault Report Anonymously) is a mobile friendly website, used by victims and others to anonymously report sexual assault incidents to SECASA. SARA offers a softer reporting option to disclose and help make our community safer.

### **SARA reports -year 2017/2018:**

604 reports were received this year – which is 366 more than we received last year.

Data received via SARA is passed to police contacts in each state and territory. When a victim/survivor gives their contact details a counsellor is assigned to follow up with them. They are then offered counselling services and an avenue for reporting to police if they wish to take further action.



### Key facts:

- Australian studies show that between 80% and 90% of sexual assaults are not reported to police. Barriers to reporting include shame and humiliation following sexual assault, fear of revisiting trauma, and fear of not being believed (Daly and Bouhours 2010, ABS 2012, Rotenberg 2017; Heenan and Murray 2006; Gavey and Schmidt 2011; Rich 2014).
- The first contact a victim/survivor has with the criminal justice system plays a key role in determining whether they proceed with a formal complaint (Jordan 2004)
- SARA gives victim/survivors the opportunity to be placed in contact with a police officer, with that contact facilitated by a SECASA counsellor.
- There has been a 27% increase in SARA reports since the start of the #MeToo campaign – which began in October 2017, and a 62% increase since the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses into Child Sexual Abuse released its findings on 15 December 2017.

From 2013 – 2016:

- 75.8% of reports were self-disclosures
- 88% of offenders were reported as male
- 64% of reports to SARA contained a first and surname, first name or nickname
- 64% of offences reported to SARA took place in the 2010s.

### SECASA's 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday

This year SECASA celebrated 40 years of service provision. Our celebrations began with an exhibition of artwork created by SECASA clients in art groups run by artist Anne Riggs. The event was held at Monash Medical Centre Clayton and guests included supporters, clients, hospital staff and SECASA staff.



**Carolyn Worth AM**  
**Manager**



## WestCASA

### Statistics for 2017 - 2018

698 new clients were provided with a service this year:

- 82 males
- 616 females

WestCASA responded to 58 clients presenting for Crisis Care:

- 4 males
- 54 females.

### The Multi-Disciplinary Centre

WestCASA moved into the Wyndham Multidisciplinary Centre this year and has been working collaboratively with our partners there: Victoria Police Sexual Offences & Child Abuse Investigation Teams (SOCIT), DHHS Child Protection, the Westgate Family Violence Unit, the Gatehouse Centre, and IPC Community Health Nurses. The move has given us more space for our staff and our clients.

### Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT)

In September 2017 WestCASA was delighted to welcome its newest member to the counselling team - Goldie our Therapy dog. In August, WestCASA counsellor Lejla and Goldie completed the Foundation Animal Assisted Interventions training run by Lead the Way institute and Alpha Canine Professional dog training program. Lejla and Goldie are now accredited as a certified team, with Lejla as Goldie's handler. They are now part of therapy sessions, and clients are delighted.

Goldie also provides warm greetings and support in the waiting room for everyone. In April-May 2018, Goldie and Lejla co-facilitated an 8 week therapeutic group at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre. This was a highly successful group with consistent attendance and engagement by participants. Feedback from all clients and staff has been overwhelmingly positive.

### Body Based Therapy

Yoga and Shiatsu Body Based Therapies are in their 10th year of operation at WestCASA. The success of the programs has rested on their trauma informed approach and their integration into the service through good communication channels between clients, counsellors and body-based practitioners. Client feedback ensures the programs are responsive to individual needs.

WestCASA has focused on integrating trauma informed body based work with the counselling process to provide whole(istic) trauma informed care for clients. We are developing an evidence base of the benefits of trauma informed body based therapy in conjunction with counselling in a sexual assault setting.

WestCASA's Yoga facilitator Clare Pritchard has been with the Trauma Sensitive Yoga Program for 9 years. She recently obtained certification as a Trauma Centre Trauma Sensitive Yoga Facilitator, which is based on Trauma Theory, Attachment Theory and Neuroscience. Clare continues to facilitate the Trauma Sensitive Yoga Class at the Yarraville Yoga Centre which is supported by WestCASA.



Alex Caldwell has been with the Shiatsu Program at WestCASA from its inception. Her long history of working with individuals who have experienced trauma in their lives has allowed her to tailor the shiatsu in ways that emphasise safety, choice and control for each client.

The range of positive emotional and physical impacts can be best heard through the voices of its participants. Here is one woman's' reflection on some of the benefits she noticed:

*'As I have come to a better understanding and controlling of my body, I have been able to ground myself quicker and more efficiently every time I encountered a trigger. I have noticed that I can cope better with unwanted feeling and emotions. I have better sleep patterns. I have a set of bodywork I can use daily to improve my relaxation and un-wire at night.'*

### **The Statewide Post-Release Specialist Trauma Service.**

WestCASA was the coordinating agency for the Statewide Post-Release Specialist Trauma Service which concluded on 30 June 2018. Although the service is no longer operating there have been some significant learnings for CASAs and the broader service system to consider.

We learnt that many women exiting prison:

- Were often exiting into homelessness
- Had been responding to extreme levels of violence prior to their incarceration and would be subject similar levels of violence on their release
- Have a relationship with drugs and alcohol and a mental state that is fragile and easily triggered by the multiple challenges and instability that awaits them on their release.

The program has demonstrated a number of gaps in our knowledge, the limited the capacity of the model to respond to the complexity of women's needs and the continuing challenges for the existing service system, including family violence and sexual assault services, in responding to the complex needs of women exiting prison.

One of the more successful elements of the program was the provision of training workshops: "Understanding the effect of trauma on women's lives," with Community Corrections Officers (CCOs). Workers expressed an appreciation of the training, many wanting further sessions as they made more sense of the behaviour of women on their caseloads. An understanding of vicarious trauma and the importance of self-care was especially valued by the CCOs.

### **Quality Accreditation**

WestCASA's commitment to quality service provision and continuous improvement was recognised in April 2018 when WestCASA became re certified under the Human Services Standards (HSS) and International Standards Organisation (ISO) 9001:2015 standards. This recertification occurs every 3 years and requires a great deal of commitment from the Quality Assurance project worker, administration team, counselling staff, management and Board members in meeting the standards. Our clients also provided feedback that they



were aware of their rights and expressed a strong satisfaction with their experience of advocacy by their counsellor/ advocate.

The final report recognised a high level of quality service throughout the organisation with a focus on clients and their level of satisfaction.

**Robyn McIvor**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

## **CASA Forum Statement of Income and Expenditure – Year Ended 30 June 2018**

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
Recurrent Grants	153,808	71,803
Membership Fees	18,000	21,450
Royal Womens SHRFV Partnership	-	55,000
Interest	446	376
Re-imbursements	59	2,376
<b>TOTAL INCOME:</b>	<b>172,313</b>	<b>151,005</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Accounting & Audit Fees	1,000	1,000
Advertising	282	-
Bank Fees & Charges	-	120
Committee Expenses	-	430
Community Development	43,885	625
Educational Materials	-	-
Equipment	1,372	2,503
Membership & Subscriptions	1,145	420
Miscellaneous Expenditure	438	600
Office Costs	25	176
Salaries & Super	11,788	17,560
Travel	838	20
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE:</b>	<b>60,773</b>	<b>23,454</b>
<b>SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>111,540</b>	<b>127,551</b>

