



WOMEN INC.

Annual Report

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Beryl Women Incorporated Annual Report 2016-17
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Supported by



Design by



beryl works on
ngunnawal land

We wish to acknowledge the
Ngunnawal people as the
traditional custodians of the
land we work on.

We pay our respects to the Elders
both past, present and future
for they hold the memories,
the traditions, the culture and
hopes of Aboriginal Australia.
We remember that the land we
work on, was and always will be
traditional Aboriginal land.

THIS REFUGE WAS OPENED BY
MRS. GORDON BRYANT
ON
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
8TH MARCH 1975

Plaque presented at the opening of the Canberra Women's Refuge.



Mission

Beryl Women Inc. is committed to providing high quality support and safe accommodation to women and children escaping domestic/family violence. The organisation recognises that violence against women and children is prevalent in our society and that injustices such as sexism, racism, economic inequality and homophobia contribute to families living in crisis. To redress this, Beryl Women Inc. provides a professional and accountable service that is grounded in social justice, recognising and fostering cultural diversity.

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 2016–19

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

- developing partnerships and collaborating with other community services and government agencies in order to be part of a holistic response to women and children escaping domestic violence
- strongly identifying and holding a profile in the ACT community as a feminist organisation offering high quality services
- strongly identifying and holding a 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)
- being an organisation that encourages a learning culture and is innovative in its response to support women and children escaping domestic violence.



Violence against women and their children takes a profound and long-term toll on women and children's health and wellbeing, on families and communities, and on society as a whole.

Reference: Our Watch



Edna Ryan and Beryl Henderson on the steps of Glebe Town Hall, 15 December 1984.

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.




Intimate partner violence contributes to more death, disability and illness in women aged 15 to 44 than any other preventable risk factor.

Reference: Our Watch

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Report from the Chair



As always, Beryl Women Inc. has achieved some great things this year, despite the challenges facing many not-for-profits, such as limited funding and having to do more with less.

This past year we've drawn strongly from our feminist principles and values to support us through the highs and lows of our work. Beryl Women Inc. was established as a feminist organisation in 1975, and while we've always applied a feminist framework in our service delivery, 2016/17 was a year in which we actively embedded this in our governance activities.

The importance of feminism as taking action

To support and promote women's leadership opportunities, this past year we introduced a pilot Board Development Program to help women become 'board ready'.

Over the course of this year, our Board Trainees have participated in and experienced the discussions and decisions of a Board, without the financial and legal responsibility of a Board Director. By the end of the one year program, we aim to give women the opportunity to have developed their leadership, experience what it means to be a Board Director and to have developed foundational Board Director skills.

In addition to our Board Development Program, we've introduced a standing agenda item at all Board meetings to discuss and reflect on inspiring feminist practice. Feminism is not rigidly defined, and it's a wonderful opportunity to remind ourselves it flourishes everywhere – whether it be through an everyday act of sisterhood, a man calling out sexist behaviour, or a public figure leading the way on gender equality.

Good governance

It goes without saying, that good governance is integral to the performance of any organisation. 2016–17 was an important year for Beryl Women Inc. as we streamlined our processes and increased principles of transparency and accountability.

One of the biggest changes to our governance has been moving to a paperless system. By introducing a number of apps and programs, we've greatly enhanced our communication processes. This has fundamentally changed the way our teams work together. Real work gets done faster and smarter.

We've also scheduled more out of session board meetings to focus on priority areas, such as fundraising and advocacy. These sessions have enabled us to make consistent decisions in line with our 2017 strategic priorities, including assisting with fast and streamlined decision-making when required.

It's all about the people

This past year, we've supported 115 women and children escaping domestic violence. As always, Beryl Women Inc. continues to provide a vital service for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse women and children (42% of our clients identify as CALD), including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children (8.8%).

This work would not be possible without our incredible staff, who work tirelessly and in solidarity to support our service-users. On behalf of the Beryl Women Inc.'s Board of Directors, I would also like to thank our Manager, Robyn Martin for her extraordinary dedication to our organisation. For over seventeen years, Robyn has gone above and beyond with her work to support Beryl Women Inc.'s mission. This past year has been no exception, with Robyn leading our organisation with professionalism, grace and leadership. Her work is always of the highest standard and she is steadfastly committed to the integrity of our work both in service delivery and good governance. Most importantly, she is the heart beat and soul for our team, and shows leadership in all that she does.

I would also like to formally thank Beryl Women Inc.'s Board of Directors for their ongoing commitment and efforts this past year. We've had some sad losses with some members stepping down from the Board, and new opportunities to welcome new members with fresh eyes and talents to support our organisation's work.

I would like to acknowledge the ACT Government for providing Beryl Women Inc. with our operational grant. We look forward to working with the ACT Government to implement any recommendations arising from the Inquiry into Domestic and Family Violence – Policy Approaches and Response. Beryl Women Inc. is Australia's longest running women's domestic violence refuge, and is committed to using its expertise to support better outcomes for the community in Canberra and beyond.

Finally, I would also like to acknowledge with thanks, the many contributions and support we receive from our local community, including Myer Canberra for choosing us as their charity partner; the Fruit Tingles Women's Dance –SpringOUT event who steadfastly fundraise for us year after year; Hands Across Canberra and the Snow Foundation who do incredible work not just for our organisation but the whole of Canberra community, and the many individuals who donate, volunteer, or contribute to our cause. We highly value your contribution and thank you all for your efforts, support and dedication.

As Chair of Beryl Women Inc., I look forward to strengthening the work of our organisation over the next year, and working with all of you to tackle domestic violence in all its forms.

Dana Esperanza

Chair, Beryl Women Inc.



Above all, violence against women is a fundamental violation of human rights, and one that Australia has an obligation to prevent under international law.





Domestic or family violence against women is the single largest driver of homelessness for women,¹⁴ a common factor in child protection notifications, and results in a police call-out on average once every two minutes across the country.

Reference: Our Watch



Report from the Manager

Staff and Governance Board

I'd like to formally acknowledge the Board and staff of Beryl Women Inc. Without their dedication, passion, intellect, insight and experiences, the organisation would not have continued to move forward in a climate of great change with limited funding.

Thank you all for challenging me and your continued commitment to ensure Beryl Women Inc. remains a viable organisation that continues to support women and children escaping domestic and family violence. Our reputation in the ACT community continues to grow as an organisation that has integrity, compassion and goes over and above its capacity to ensure women and children have what they need to move forward.

Beryl Women Inc. works within the following definition of trauma informed care:

"...Trauma-informed care is a strengths-based Framework that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasizes physical, psychological and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, and that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment".¹

Beryl works to ensure that the following principles underpin its service response:

- **Trauma Awareness:** the need to incorporate an understanding of trauma into the work of staff, including providing staff training, introducing practices such as trauma screening, assessments of safety and ensuring there is an emphasis on staff self-care.



- **Emphasis on safety:** practices that work towards building physical and emotional safety for both service users and providers. There is the need to reflect on trauma dynamics, and systems built that ensure clear roles, responsibilities and boundaries. Privacy, confidentiality and mutual respect is paramount, as is the need to respect cultural differences and diversity.
- **Opportunities to rebuild control:** there is a need to emphasise the importance of choice for clients and create predictable environments where individuals are able to rebuild a sense of control over their lives. This should include involvement of clients in the design and evaluation of services.
- **Strengths-based approaches:** these approaches work with clients to identify their own strengths and enhance their own coping skills. These service settings focus on the future and utilise skills-building to further develop resilience.²

Working within this framework is time consuming and is work that cannot be rushed as we are working at the client's pace – timeframes do not factor into this. Our focus is on supporting the client through this process,

which does not leave much room for other service delivery demands. Staff time is split between doing therapeutic work and non-therapeutic practical work; which often is in contention with each other. Finding a balance is difficult at times.

The costs of working within a trauma informed framework does not match with general homelessness funding, as Beryl women Inc. is a specialist domestic and family violence service that provides crisis accommodation. Homelessness cannot be our sole focus when we are dealing with the impacts of violence on women and children, with safety and security, assessing risks, and empowering women to make informed decisions in a complex social and legal environment. Homelessness becomes part of the picture as a direct consequence of domestic and family violence.

Beryl is funded under the National Affordable Housing Agreement, a Federal Government initiative with funding matched by the States and Territories. The current formula used to fund the service looks at homelessness only, and does not take into account the complex nature of domestic and family violence.

¹ Elizabeth K. Hopper, E. L. (2010). Shelter from the Storm: Trauma-Informed Care in Homelessness Services. *The Open Health Services and Policy Journal*, 2010, 3, 80-100
² bid



The combined health, administration and social welfare costs of violence against women have been estimated to be \$21.7 billion a year, with projections suggesting that if no further action is taken to prevent violence against women, costs will accumulate to \$323.4 billion over a thirty year period from 2014-15 to 2044-45.

Service Management

As part of my role on the Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DVPC), in furthering their strategic plan and providing advice to the ACT Attorney-General on issues relevant to its responsibilities on domestic violence, I organised a two day Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community forum in March 2017. The aim of the forum, titled 'Change our future – share what you know' was to:

- raise awareness in the community about domestic and family violence
- promote a clear message of no tolerance of domestic and family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- ensure those who are experiencing domestic and family violence know how to access help and support, and
- to understand and be aware of what is currently taking place in the ACT in relation to domestic and family violence within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The final report from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander forum has now been completed. A copy of the report has been provided to the Minister for the Prevention of Violence, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body and the Coordinator General for Family Safety.

The incidence of family violence in Indigenous communities is higher than in most non Indigenous communities, and evidence suggests that Indigenous women experience violence at higher rates and at greater severity than non-Indigenous women.

There is limited data available on the prevalence of domestic violence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander at the ACT level. But we know that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the ACT is highly over-represented in the number of people accessing specialist homelessness services.

Domestic violence as a reason for child protection notifications in the ACT has also been increasing, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children continue to be over-represented in receiving child protection services in the ACT. At 30 June 2016, the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children on orders in the ACT was 89.9 per 1,000 children - compared to 6.9 for non-Indigenous children. There were 197 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care in the ACT - a rate of 79.8 per 1,000 children compared to 6.3 for non-Indigenous children³.

There are also immediate and long-term health consequences for Indigenous women and children who are more likely to be hospitalised than non-Indigenous women and children.⁴

³ Forum Report (2017) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Forum "Change our Future. Share what you know"

⁴ Ibid



Children and young people are also affected by violence against women. Exposure to violence against their mothers or other caregivers causes profound harm to children, with potential impacts on attitudes to relationships and violence, as well as behavioural, cognitive and emotional functioning, social development.

– Reference: Our Watch



"Today was great; a lot of it hit home for me and spoke to me loudly. I find this group really helpful in getting out of my old mind frame, I love the support within the group."

– Feedback on the Women's Group

In recognition of this, at the national level, the *Third Action Plan – National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children* includes a priority area specifically focussed on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their families dealing with family violence. Under the Action Plan, all state and territory governments have committed to:

- ensuring that responses to family violence recognise the impact of past trauma for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people resulting from colonisation, racism and social disadvantage, and the role of these intersecting factors in perpetuating violence, and
- working with communities to develop and implement responses aimed at addressing family violence.

This provides opportunities in the ACT as part of the ACT Government's response to family violence and the broader whole of Government approach and focus.

The forum was well attended by Aboriginal and Torres Strait people; representatives from local community services (Winnunga, Gugan Gulwan, the Domestic Violence Crisis Service, Women's Legal Centre, Beryl Women Inc., Toora Women, Canberra Rape Crisis Centre/NGURU, Legal Aid ACT, CARE Financial Counselling, the ACT Council Of Social Services, Everyman Australia); from ACT Government (including

the Office of the Coordinator-General for Family Safety, Victim Support ACT, ACT Human Rights Commission, ACT Policing, the Community Services Directorate, and the Justice and Community Safety Directorate); and from the Domestic Violence Prevention Council.

Recommendations for the Domestic Violence Prevention Council and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body

Participants at the forum felt that the Domestic Violence and Prevention Council and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body should take a lead role in, or at least be the champions to progress with the right stakeholders the following:

- How to inform the next steps for designing family violence responses for the Indigenous community in the ACT by using the information and recommendations from the "We don't shoot our wounded" Report.⁵
- Development of an ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce Strategy for the sector.
- A range of supports for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers in the sector including a conference, regular catch ups to debrief and to build cross sector approaches.
- Develop a strategy and seek resources to support post-intervention work.

⁵ Community report / ACT Victims of Crime Coordinator (2009) We don't shoot our wounded: What Aboriginal victims of family violence say about the violence, their access to justice and access to services in the ACT.

Family Safety Hub

The Safer Families package announced in the 2016-17 ACT Budget is the largest action to address family violence across government and community organisations in Canberra's history.

The \$21.42 million package is delivering more services including the creation of the first Coordinator-General for Family Safety, who will be responsible for establishing the Family Safety Hub.

Beryl staff participated throughout the consultation process. The Coordinator-General sought information on our perceptions of what the Hub needs to be, to be useful for us and for our clients. The process has been based on a Social Action Research model. Staff included feedback on the Hub needing to be culturally safe and appropriate, how to provide connection and information sharing while retaining client confidentiality, the potential for the hub operating on an outreach model and to primarily facilitate conferencing type work. We also provided support and access for clients to provide confidential feedback to the design process.

I have also been invited to participate as a member of the "Core Design Team" for the Family Safety Hub. The co-design team comprises of a small group, who bring a depth of expertise and experience in different relevant areas. The role of the team is to develop innovative ideas to build the design.

We have received further requests to participate and a big "thank you" for the contributions and insight that the service has provided to date. Our contribution has been said to be invaluable in building a collective understanding around the current system, and the experiences for those with lived experiences of domestic and family violence.

The service has been involved in every stage of the consultation and co-design process and will continue to participate and contribute until such time as the Hub is established.

Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS)

An ongoing issue continues to be experienced by the service, and more importantly, the clients of the service. Women are still being threatened with the removal of children if they can't guarantee that they will have no contact with the perpetrator of the violence—regardless of the fact that they have not initiated the contact and have been placed into the situation by the perpetrator and his ongoing harassment and stalking.

It has been our experience that CYPS could do more to support women once a plan has been put in place. Beryl Women Inc. encourages all government children's services to consider a carrot versus a stick approach. The risk of using a stick approach is that, if women fail to meet the requirements, the threat of having their children removed from their care is "hung over their heads." While it is difficult to balance the needs and safety of the child and the complexities the mother/carer is experiencing, more could be done to explore innovative and genuinely collaborative ways to help women live free from violence and have children remain in their care.

Aboriginal children are over represented in out of home care, with the ACT having the 2nd highest rates across the country per capita. The ACT Government is currently undertaking a two year review, which will be co-designed with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.





COAG National Summit on Reducing Violence against Women and their Children

I attended this summit in Brisbane on 27 and 28 October 2016. The purpose of the Summit was to review progress, and highlight best practice, in government efforts in addressing domestic and family violence across Australia. The roundtable discussions brought together a diverse range of experts and stakeholders to consider key issues in reducing violence against women, and to connect individuals and organisations to encourage an integrated response.

The outcomes sought from the Summit were to review progress and profile best practice in making Australia safer for women and their children, to discuss new and innovative ways of thinking about/approaching the problem of family violence, and to develop new partnerships and determine priorities for local action that individuals and organisations can commit to.

Roundtable participants were pre-selected and did not have a choice on which roundtable to sit on. I was allocated to sit on the Diversity roundtable, which consisted of representatives from the following groups:

- The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex community
- Women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds
- Women living with disability
- Men

The final report for the COAG 2016 National Summit on Reducing Violence against Women and their Children is available at pmc.gov.au.

Department of Human Services (DHS)

We have participated in several consultations with Human Services DHS – Centrelink to assist with a research project. The Department was seeking views and input from organisations who work with those affected by domestic violence, to help them improve their website content. The content explains the support the department can provide, and had been prepared based on feedback from a range of stakeholders including Beryl. They were also looking to test the draft content to identify further possible improvements.

Information Booklets

The grant also allowed the service to develop a number of information booklets including Awareness and Safety in Spanish, Arabic, Dinka and English (pictured opposite).

Booklet 1 – this is an information booklet that provides clients with the relevant information that they need to know about being in the refuge. The booklet includes some of the policies that relate to women and children, fees, and what to expect as a client from the service. The booklet has allowed the service to reduce the use of paper and allows women easy access to the information as its small enough to fit into a women's handbag.

Booklet 2 – purposefully designed to fit in handbag size for secrecy if necessary, this booklet provides information to women who may be thinking of leaving a violent relationship and goes into detail about domestic violence. The booklet covers the basics of what a women in crisis will need to know including essential immediate safety and security information.

Website Up-Grade

Beryl Women Inc. was successful in applying for a grant through the Office of Women during this financial year to up-grade our website. The website has been completely overhauled and is much easier to navigate.

The up-grade has allowed women greater access to information that will assist them in making decisions on keeping them safe using multiple social media tools.

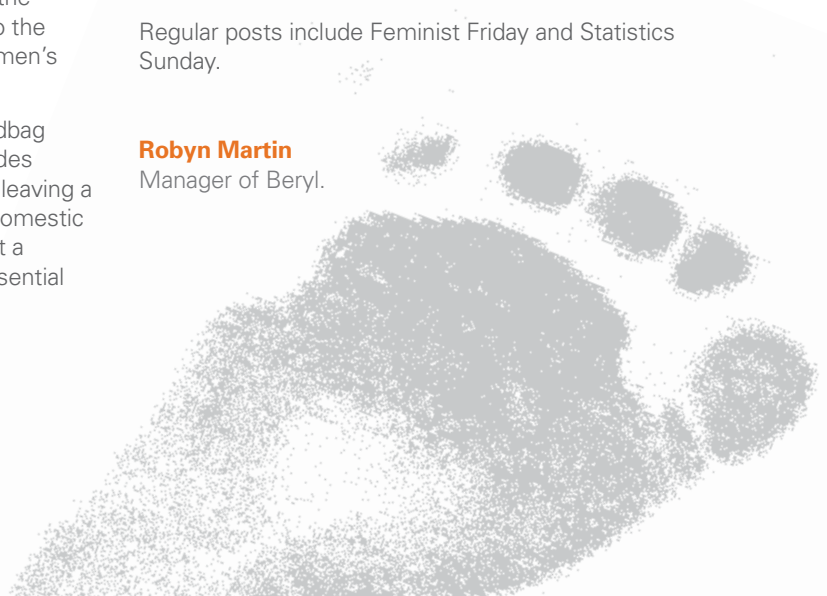
Facebook Page

Beryl Women Inc. has embraced the social media world as a means of communication for not-for-profit organisations. We launched a Facebook page in early 2016, allowing us to engage target audiences – current and potential clients, sponsors/donors/supporters, decision makers and the wider public – more easily than ever before.

The organisation seeks to encourage information sharing about safety and about the work Beryl does amongst its current and potential clients, sponsors/donors/supporters, staff and volunteers, and seeks to utilise the expertise of its employees, Board members and volunteers in generating appropriate social media content.

Regular posts include Feminist Friday and Statistics Sunday.

Robyn Martin
Manager of Beryl.





Some of the safety and information books developed for Beryl Women Inc.



"I found today's meeting very inspiring. Learnt a whole lot of things and I'm on my way to living a good and great life, thanks Linda and a bigger thanks to Beryl."

– Feedback on the Women's Group



Training

Training undertaken during this reporting period has been limited due to costs associated with relevant training, as well as the service having limited access to casual relief staff available to replace staff attending training coupled with the complex needs of clients.

Training and staff development activities completed include:

- Vacancy Management System training (Specialist Homelessness Information Platform)
- Strengthening Families
- PTSD
- Ending Domestic/Family Violence
- Middle Years Forum (Families ACT)
- Family violence, the Law and More (Legal Aid ACT)
- Privacy laws for NFP organisations
- Level 2 Smartphones and Safety training (Wesnet)
- Staff performance Appraisals undertaken
- Staff supervision
- Clinical Supervision with whole team
- Forced Marriage Workshop
- Through Young Black Eyes- Family violence train the trainer
- Overcoming Indigenous Family Violence Forum.



"Trauma-informed care is a strengths-based Framework that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma."

— Elizabeth K. Hopper,

Collaborative working relationships in the community

Beryl Women Inc. has been involved in a number of collaborative practices involving a wide range of services. We have also participated in in sector development to meet the needs of clients, and to raise issues on a broader level in relation to gaps in the sector.

Collaborative work & sector development activities include:

- Regular attendance at Joint Pathways meetings
- Working with the Women's Legal Centre – DV Unit
- Membership on the Domestic Violence Prevention Council
- Working with OneLink around access & referrals to the service
- Strengthening Families training and consultation
- Developed a close working relationship with the Red Cross Migration Support program
- Participated in meetings with and consultations for ACT Policing
- Regular attendance at Women's Services meetings
- Service visits to Social Housing and Homelessness Services
- Service visit with K. Lockwood from Tara's Angels
- Worked closely with Domestic Violence Crisis Service to provide the 2016 Christmas Crisis Accommodation Program in tandem with other services
- Attended OneLink Information meeting
- Morning tea with Minister for Women, Housing and Community Services Yvette Berry
- Worked with the Domestic Violence Crisis Service to support clients access to the Safe at Home program
- Participated in the Service Scramble – Family Law (Legal Aid)
- Attended the NSW Legal Aid Work Development Program
- Entered a Consortium (Beryl, YWCA and Doris Women's Refuge to apply for programs available with the loss of Inanna Women Inc.
- Attended ACT Women's Awards;
- Attended International Women's Day Breakfast

- provided by Northside Community Services;
- Attended UN Women's Luncheon for International Women's Day;
- Attended Domestic Violence/Family Violence Candlelight Vigil organised by DVCS on the National Day of Remembrance
- Participated in the Domestic Violence Prevention Council's CALD Communities consultation process on their experiences of domestic violence in the ACT.
- Provided consultation for the Industry Strategy Implementation Plan created by the ACT Government
- Women's Legal Centre – Meet and Greet
- Worked with the Official Visitor for Homelessness Services including several visits to the refuge (shared spaces)
- Organised a meeting with Minister Yvette Berry to discuss additional funding
- Held a meeting with Caroline Le Couteur ACT Greens MLA
- Participated in a Domestic Violence Crisis Service Consultation to develop their Communication Strategy
- Participated in a consultation forum run by Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs Association
- Held several meetings with David Mathews as the A/g Coordinator-General for Family Safety
- Attended a meeting with Minister Yvette Berry regarding the Multi Disciplinary Panel (public housing barriers) with other services
- Attended a meeting with Louse Gilding, David Mathews and Michael Reid regarding the Multi Disciplinary Panel (public housing barriers)
- Attended a meeting with Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Organisation and Everyman Australia in regard to Indigenous Housing programs
- Attended multiple meetings for the Multi Disciplinary Panel Working Party
- Member of the DVPC Working Party to support the development of the Family Safety Hub
- Participated in the co-design consultation around the development of the Family Safety Hub
- Consultation with DHS regarding Safety & online services – development of new app
- Multiple meetings with Jo Wood – Coordinator-General for Family Safety



"Good day, good information, good time, make me thinking about what happening with me and clear my mind about my situation. It can help me a lot to make me great stronger more and more – thanks."

– Resident



Media and raising community awareness

- Panellist at the launch of the domestic violence staff support policy for the Department of Communication and the Arts Gender Equality Network
- Presented to students at Radford College information about healthy relationships
- Presented to students at Girls Grammar High School and College information about Beryl and about healthy relationships
- Worked with the Ionian Women's Club
- Provided a number of Interviews to the Canberra Times in their series on domestic violence in the ACT, and to HerCanberra
-





Women are still being threatened with the removal of children if they can't guarantee that they will have no contact with the perpetrator of the violence — regardless of the fact that they have not initiated the contact and have been placed into the situation by the perpetrator and his ongoing harassment and stalking.

Beryl Women Inc.

Grants

We were successful in a number of small grants including;

- ACT Office for Women Women's Participation Grant – provided to fund costs for clients to access driving lessons. We've called the project 'Link to Independence'
- Hands Across Canberra & Snow Foundation – Grant provided to support interpreting costs for Culturally And Linguistically Diverse clients
- St. George Bank – Grant provided to support activities and purchase of equipment for our refuge's Child & Youth program.
- Women's Safety Grants Program – Grant provided for early intervention projects. Beryl developed a safety and awareness booklet to disburse through the community along with upgrading our website to make safety information for women in the community more easily accessible.

Beryl Women Inc. would like to express our sincere gratitude and thanks for the opportunity to have the valued financial support of the St George Foundation, Hands Across Canberra, Snow Foundation and the ACT Office for Women. These grants have made such a difference in our ability to bring hope to the lives of the women and their children and youth so that they may move forward in their lives and be able to reach their future potential.

Donations



Your support goes a long way in helping us to achieve these goals.

- Eternity Church
- US Embassy
- Radcliff College – Year 12 Students
- Canberra Girls Grammar – International Baccalaureate students
- Burley Strength
- All Bids Canberra
- Myer Canberra – Community Fund
- Territory and Municipal Services (ACT Government)
- Proceeds from the SpringOUT spring dance
- Proceeds raised by the Attorney General's Department and the Department of Finance for White Ribbon Day 2016
- Service One Bank
- Fauros
- Clayton Utz
- Individual donators through Hands Across Canberra portal
- Our amazing regular donators through the Hands Across Canberra portal

I would also like to acknowledge those who provide regular and ongoing giving to Beryl through workplace giving:

- National Blood Authority
- Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- House of Representatives
- National Australia Day Committee

Client services

All clients are supported to develop a case plan while they residing at the refuge. Clients are encouraged to work on meeting their own goals with the support of Support Workers.

Case management is provided within a trauma informed framework. We recognise that all clients accessing our service have been affected by significant trauma as a result of the experience of domestic violence. We also recognise strong linkages between mental health issues and homelessness and the reality that becoming homeless is itself a traumatic experience. As such, Beryl commits to ensuring our service delivery is trauma informed.

Case management commences at first contact with the client and includes initial assessment & risks assessments. This provides the service with an idea of what the client and children may need whilst at the refuge and the risk assessment is a vital process that allows us to get a sense of the risks the family may be facing. We assess the possible impacts for other clients and for staff if the client is at high risk, safety planning plays a major role prior to the client arriving at the refuge and continues to be reviewed on a weekly, fortnightly and monthly basis.

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Clients

Beryl Women Inc. articulates expertise around responding to the impacts of intimate partner violence on women and children, and the service has developed expertise and experience working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities within the context of domestic and family violence. We recognise and acknowledge the specific cultural needs of this group. Beryl's work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples contributes to translate our commitment to reconciliation into our practice. We work within the cultural definitions of domestic and family violence, which recognises the perpetrators of violence may include anyone with a close or family relationship (for example, a partner, uncle, aunt, brother, sister, in-laws as well as children and grandchildren), and may include any person who, under Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander tradition, is recognised as a relative.

The service has been involved in a number of consultations and community events over the past 12 months and includes the following:

- NAIDOC Week at Winnunga – staff and clients attending celebrations.
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Elected Body – participated in a co-design consultation in relation to outcomes and performance measures for the Whole of Government Agreement Coordination and Engagement.

- Reconciliation Day Public Holiday consultation - participated in a forum on replacing the Family and Community Day or the Queen's Birthday with a permanent Reconciliation Day to commence in 2017. The ACT Government is proposing the 29th May 2017 as the 2017 is the 50th anniversary of the 1967 referendum. The Government proposed to pursue the permanent change to the ACT's current public holiday regime to better recognise Reconciliation.
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Elected Body Forum – Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Justice Partnership – to discuss the new Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Justice partnership.

Room4Change Consultation

The service was approached by Room4Change for consultancy based support, particularly in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to improve safety in line with

"We Don't Shoot Our Wounded" report. Since the initial contact, to ensure the new service was culturally sensitive for both communities thus ensuring the service is accessible, our consultation has been provided through meetings, email correspondence and phone calls. Beryl has provided strategies on practices that will assist the service in being culturally appropriate as well as providing information on available resources, contacts for networking.

They have also expressed an interest in Beryl providing training to their team regarding the impact and trauma of domestic and family violence on women and their children, and the intergenerational harm experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children in particular.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Background clients

Beryl Women Inc. recognises that particular groups of women, including women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds may experience higher rates of domestic violence and face additional challenges and barriers to accessing support services. Beryl commits to providing services to this group, understanding that the needs of this vulnerable groups is critical for creating inclusive services that meet the needs of the whole community.

Clients are linked with several organisations in the ACT including the Migrant and Refugee Resettlement Service (MARRS) and Companion House, however, clients do not maintain contact with these services as they do not want to be connected in any way to their communities as they prefer to remain anonymous to create a level of safety and security for them.

Beryl supports Culturally and Linguistically Diverse women to navigate a system that is confusing and hard to understand due to a number of reasons that include the following:

- Lack of understanding of the language and not always having access to interpreters;
- Lack of knowledge and understanding of Australian systems and services, dealing with services like Centrelink, Police and the courts, understanding what's required and their processes can be beyond their understanding;
- Dealing with the Department of Immigration, understanding what visa they are on, what their rights are under that visa is generally not something women are aware of as they have been constantly threatened with deportation if she has not done what the perpetrator wants her to do.



"Thank you very much for your friendly help, everything is above my expectations. Amazing support workers, they are very helpful for me. Very good information that very important to drive my life, Centrelink info, children info, Medicare card info etc. all a lot of information that I didn't know before, many supports that I got from Beryl, they are awesome"

Resident

Our relationship with the Red Cross Migration Program has strengthened over the past 12 months as we are often supporting same clients. Their expertise in immigration matters and sourcing incomes through Centrelink & Status Resolution payments for women on particular visas has been invaluable for some of the women accessing the service.

Interpreting Costs

The costs of interpreting services for women who have little or no English who are escaping domestic violence is great. Providing these families with accommodation (when vacancies occur) is not a problem, however providing them with meaningful support, ensuring that they are informed about their rights, obligations as a client and our obligations as a service provider is not always possible in the same way that we support women who speak English as their first language.

We have had a number of clients who have required the services of the national Translating and Interpreting Service, which Beryl has provided as these families deserve the same level of support; which is also in line with our Access & Equity policy. If we were weren't successful with a grant for covering these costs, the service would be put into a position to make some hard decisions. We have in the past needed to inform Onelink that we are not in a position to take more than one women with no income and no English due to limited funding constricting our ability to meet the financial costs associated with meaningfully supporting these families.

It's an issue that has been discussed in a number of meetings/forums and raised with relevant Ministers and funding bodies, as some services within the Homelessness sector are not in a position to support these families at all.

Although in this year's Budget, approximately \$1.2m has been allocated for translation and interpreting services in the ACT courts, tribunal and family violence specialist services, this does not cover the costs for clients who need to engage with other non-judicial agencies.



Women's group

Women's Group continues to be held on a weekly basis 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. These service providers come on a fortnightly basis. On the week in between, the service runs workshops on domestic violence which includes the cycle of violence, self-belief, coercion and control etc.

Beautiful Women Course

This course was run by an outside facilitator and ran for four weeks, several women from the service attended and found the course extremely insightful. We saw physical, mental and emotional changes in all the women who participated in this course.

The course content covered the following:

- Improving self esteem
- Discussing the real meaning of vulnerability
- Holding onto resentments
- How to let go
- How to have a relationship with yourself.



"I found it confronting at first but extremely helpful and empowering."

Feedback on the Women's Group

Child/Youth Support Program

The Child/Youth program at Beryl Women Inc. is integral to the support that Beryl Women Inc. offers the children and young people in the service.

Over the past 12 months the program has seen many positives, highlights and much engagement with children and young people and the wider Canberra Community.

The organisation provides the child and youth program to all clients from 0-25 as this group is our largest client group. The service recognises it has a responsibility to these clients to ensure it provides a child safe and friendly environment where children and young people have a voice on issues that impact them.

The service particularly acknowledges that Beryl's practices and policies are underpinned by a Human

Rights Framework in order to ensure that the service works from a best practice model while working with vulnerable children and young people that have been impacted by domestic violence.

The service received a "one-off" grant from the ACT Community Services Directorate specifically to complement the existing children's program. These funds have been used towards the cost of an additional Child/Youth Case Worker.

The additional worker has enhanced the existing program including the Kids Klub, Youth Group and school holiday programs, which has increased our engagement with children and teens due to availability for focused and extra one to one time with our child clients.



Beryl has always employed a Child/Youth Support Worker, but capacity has been limited in what that worker can provide to individual children and young people within the service, with this client group being the largest group of clients within the service.

We know that all children/young people who have been exposed to domestic violence have been impacted in some way; witnessing or being the target themselves of the violence is a traumatic experience.

We know the stress of parenting can become overwhelming as Mum tries to cope with the emotional and behavioural challenges presented by their children as a result of the exposure to domestic violence. It is vital that this funding is ongoing to allow the service to maintain our child centred focus to continue to employ two child/youth support workers, which will allow us to continue to provide meaningful trauma informed case management as well as continuing with the kid's groups.

The children's program helps families to alleviate additional pressures at the time of crisis and continuing through to post domestic violence support and in the above period supported children and youth in the following areas:

- educational needs: school enrolments, educational liaison, IT support and learning, school engagement, links to learning support, advocacy
- medical and health: advocacy and referral to dental and GP services, teen health, transport to access these services
- mental health and wellbeing: information, referral and advocacy to specialised mental health providers, psycho educational groups, emotional support, referrals to psychologist and counselling
- child/youth Safety: Supporting access to an independent Children's Lawyer, Family law Support, contact support, safety planning, Care & Protection Referrals and Liaison with AFP Trafficking Unit
- social connections: psycho social group work, 1:1 emotional support, links to community activities and culturally specific services such as MARRS, Companion House
- opportunities for relationship building: 1:1 emotional support, psycho social group work
- physical play and indoor play: provision of sports activities and equipment in Beryl properties and outdoor spaces, school holiday activities, and
- personal development: funding of creative activities, links to community services.



I would recommend Beryl Women Inc. to anyone who is separating from partner and is concerned for child safety"

– Resident

Service demographics

We have noticed some interesting trends over the past 12 months, the number of women and children accessing the service has decreased from last year, this can be attributed to a number of factors as detailed below.

Vacancies within the Shared Accommodation

The service has experienced long periods of vacancies as women are making the decision to not share. We have two of our properties that accommodate two families, which are the size of a three bedroom government houses. Clients have no choice about the families with whom they will reside and are forced to share with. The lack of personal space for families in crisis and with complex needs means we often make hard decisions about filling vacant shared accommodation. Due to the complex needs of families.

The number of women from culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds has increased. Making up 41.7%, a number of these women are staying for longer periods of time due to immigration issues and complexity. Women without immigration status need longer periods of stay and use higher levels of resources. These lengths of stay can sometime be longer than 12 months which means that another three women don't have

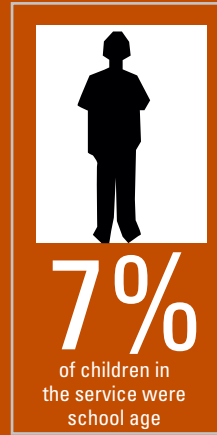
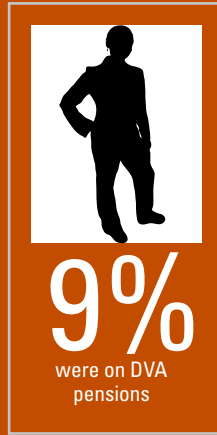
access to the service.

Thirty-three women with children were turned away from the service and the majority that were turned away did not meet the criteria of the service. All women who made contact with the service were offered another referral and general information on alternative accommodation options, with some accepting and others choosing to self-refer. A smaller number of women were also referred elsewhere due to a lack of accommodation.

Outreach support has been provided to 11 women with 23 children this year, some of these women were ex-clients of the service who were seeking support around Family Law matters and security up-grades with Housing ACT on properties they had been allocated.

Six single women were accommodated during this period and all women had children who were not in their care. Three women had Child and Youth Protection services involved and the other three women's children were in the care of the other parent.





- 20 of the women from culturally and linguistically diverse background were born overseas, 11 of these 20 women had been in Australia less than 3 years
- 3% of women were on Status Resolution Payments
- 9% were on wages
- 2% were on DVA pensions
- 58% were on Parenting payments
- 21% were on Newstart payments
- 7% were on a Disability pension
- 31% of children in the service were school age
- 15% of children were under the age of two years

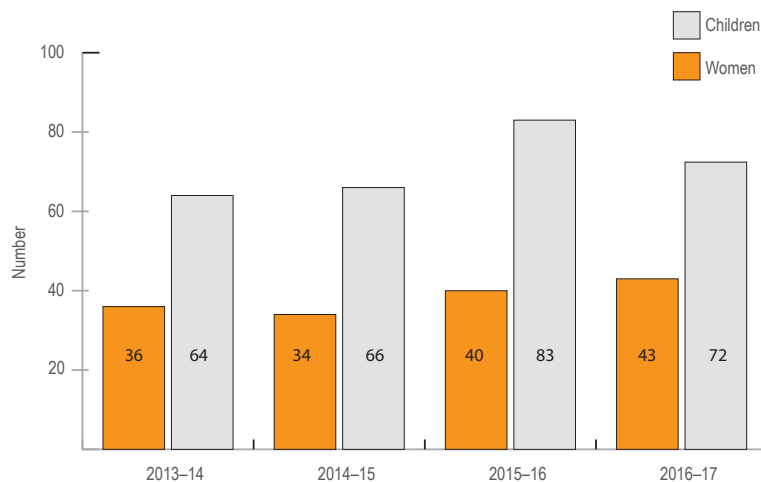


Stats and graphs

Breakdown of women and children

Children continue to make up the largest percentage of clients as shown in Figure 1. These children have—directly or indirectly—been affected by the impacts of domestic/family violence and suddenly find themselves in a refuge. They are disconnected from friends, family and social networks, often having to start a new school. Often they arrive with few personal belongings. All of these issues can contribute to many of the children experiencing significant loss and grief.

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



"Children continue to make up the largest percentage of clients"

– Beryl Women Inc.

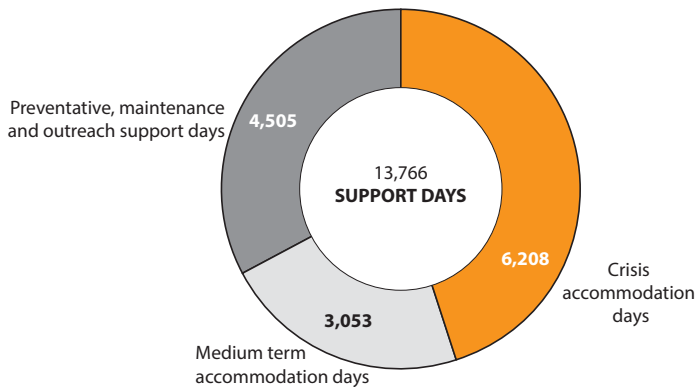
Support days

Overall Beryl Women Inc. provided 15,238 days of support which includes 6,865 days in crisis accommodation, 2,368 days in medium term accommodation and 5,705 days of preventive, maintenance and outreach support.

Preventive maintenance and outreach support is available to all clients who have been accommodated at Beryl and move on to independent accommodation for a period of around three months if required.

An interesting statistic is that despite the lower client total, there was an increase of 1,864 days of support provided. The complexity of support needs required longer client support periods.

Figure 4. The number of support days provided to each client.

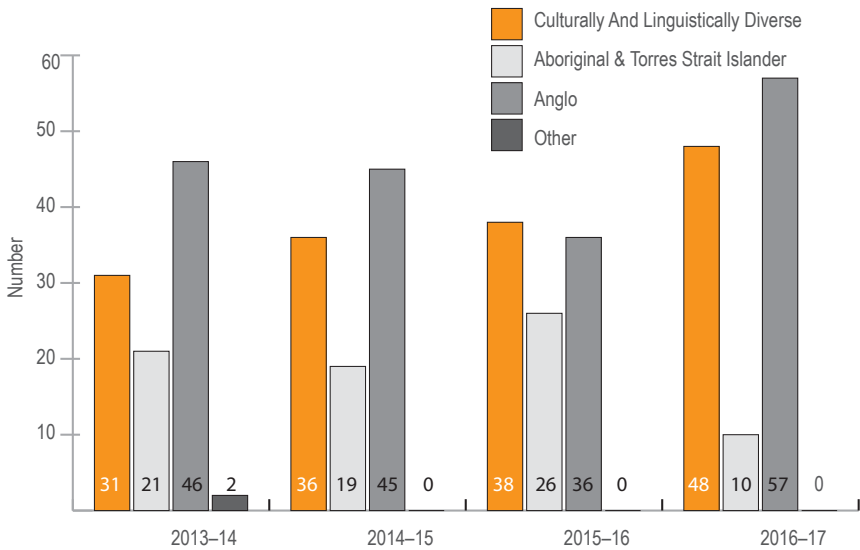


Cultural breakdown

We have seen an increase of the number of women from Culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds accessing the service this year as shown in Figure 2. This particular target group accounted for almost half of our clients.

- Culturally And Linguistically Diverse [CALD] 48 [41.7%]
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander 10 [8.8%]
- Anglo-Saxon 57 [49.5%]

Figure 2. Cultural breakdown of clients accessing support.



Report from the Treasurer

In my role as Treasurer at Beryl, I spend a lot of my time thinking about money. Mostly, I try to make sure we will have enough of it to keep doing our work. Sadly, for a small organisation like Beryl, this is always at the heart of our daily operations. Each year we rely on grants and donations to keep the doors open and funding from year to year can be very uncertain. But one thing is certain, the people who need our help will still be there. They will continue to come to us, depending on our help to keep them safe from domestic violence.

When I think about how much domestic violence costs Australia, the small amount of money we receive to prevent it seem staggering. In 2009 it was estimated that violence against women and children cost the Australian economy \$13.6 billion. This cost is shocking, but should not be surprising; given that one in six Australian women have experienced physical or sexual violence from a current or former partner since the age of 15. Domestic violence is a leading risk factor contributing to death, disability and illness in women under 50 years old in Australia. This year more Australian women will experience domestic violence than will be diagnosed with cancer.

This estimated cost of violence does not even consider personal costs incurred by the women who are the victims. They also have to pay to relocate, spend money on taxis, hotel rooms, security lights or extra bolts on doors. It does not consider the cost of therapy, or of a few days of work missed, or a self-defence class. The resources spent on legal fees and court appearances, on moving children to a new school and of changing jobs. Basically, this estimate forgets the costs women pay to hide from a violent partner or to feel safe again. And if it doesn't work, there are further costs to their health, their wellbeing and even their lives.

When I think about all this, it makes my job harder. I look at how little we have, and how much we have to do, and it seems impossible. But then something will happen. Beryl will receive a grant, or I will get a report on the amount of donations received for the month. Then I remember how much people care and how many people support the important work of Beryl. If it were not for the extreme generosity of our donors across the Canberra community, our staff couldn't spend their days keeping people safe.

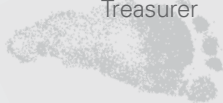




"Because what we do matters, it makes a real difference in the lives of people who most need help"

I continue to be humbled by the generosity of people I meet when volunteering at Beryl. There are so many people who want to get involved and give back any way they can. When I talk to our dedicated staff, I am so grateful to them. They work so hard, and continue to go above and beyond giving everything they can, to keep the women and children of Canberra safe from harm and violence. When I hear stories about the amazing work they do, and all the people who support them and all the people they support, suddenly this job becomes an easy one. Because what we do matters, it makes a real difference in the lives of people who most need help. Every woman deserves to feel safe. Every child should be free from harm. By working together, we can continue to provide a safe place to women to rebuild their lives free from violence.

Tessa Keane
Treasurer





Feedback from Clients

- "Thank you very much for your friendly help, everything is above my expectations. Amazing support workers, they are very helpful for me. Very good information that very important to drive my life, Centrelink info, children info, Medicare card info etc. all a lot of information that I didn't know before, many supports that I got from Beryl, they are awesome"
- "My experience with Beryl has been a wonderful one. Beryl has been supporting my kids and I socially, emotionally, psychologically and otherwise. I find the women's group really helpful. They expose to us to some services we would ordinarily not have known about. The kids group is also something the children attended and found it very helpful and engaging. The workers are very beautiful and approachable, thanks to Beryl for giving us a life"
- "Thank you so much for me helping me out. I understand that you have gone beyond what can be expected and I am extremely thankful"
- "Constant communication, open and honest, children's & women's group informative and fun for the kids, my support worker has been great and "constant/persistent with a wealth of knowledge."
- I could have been more open about struggling and sought assistance, talking about it brought me shame, the realisation kicked in when my new Support worker came on board and gave me a swift kick up the arse, I realised I had to address the issue and quick smart. Fear and shame stopped me from talking about it, I was terrified of the consequences, I didn't want to attend groups for fear of being pulled aside and everyone would know about the issue, what would have helped is the "hard line" early and meeting with Robyn in earlier days" Feedback in relation to rent arrears".

Women's Group feedback

- "Good day, good information, good time, make me thinking about what happening with me and clear my mind about my situation. It can help me a lot to make me great stronger more and more – thanks."
- "The group today was helpful for me because it remembered me that I am a good person and I am capable to do great in my life and It was the first time I saw that another lady opened herself for the group. It was fantastic."
- "I am happy to attend group because I'm really need it – good."
- "I found today helpful and I am grateful I came along."
- "I found today beneficial and will be able to use the information to help myself move forward."
- "To know about the fears and how to identify it makes me feel strong because if I know and understand about my fears, I can manage it."



"I am capable to do great in my life."

Participant in the Women's Group

Acknowledgments and thank you

Beryl Women Inc. 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.

Supporters

- All Bids
- The Snow Foundation
- Hands Across Canberra



One in five Australian
women has experienced
sexual violence.

ACT Community Services for Women statement of Apology and Reconciliation

To all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, your families and communities.

We, non-Indigenous people of this land, apologise for the human suffering and injustice that you have experienced as a result of colonisation and generations of discrimination and marginalisation that has resulted from that.

We recognise ourselves as the beneficiaries of this colonisation process and we share with you our feelings of shame and horror at the actions and atrocities that were perpetrated against your people.

We acknowledge that the removal of children devastated individuals, families and entire communities and that the intention of those policies was to assimilate Indigenous children. We recognise this as a policy of genocide.

We collectively feel a sense of outrage, and feel a particular sense of responsibility around these racist policies as their implementation required the active involvement of community welfare organisations. We unreservedly apologise to the individuals, families and communities for these acts of injustice.

We acknowledge your human right to self-determination.

We commit to working in solidarity with you in ways that you choose and determine.

We work with many people who are affected by disadvantage, prejudice, poverty, violence, marginalisation, trauma and social circumstances out of their control. We understand the long-term damage to communities when these issues are unaddressed.

We recognise your leadership, we honour your visions and we join with you in your hopes for your future and for our futures together.





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Beryl women Inc. is a specialist domestic and family violence service that provides crisis accommodation.