

Emma
SINCE 1979
House

Our Year of Impact

2023 Annual Report



Acknowledgement

Emma House Domestic Violence Services acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional custodians of the continent, in particular the Gunditjmara people of the Eastern Maar nation upon whose lands we live and work.

We pay our respects to their elder's past and present and recognise their ongoing connection to land, waters and culture. Sovereignty has never been ceded. It always was and always will be, Aboriginal land.

We also remember the women and children who have been killed and harmed as a result of family violence and pay tribute to the women who fought for the establishment women's services, and to our staff who continue the difficult work today to keep women and children safe.

Emma House actively values and promotes diversity in our community and affirms our commitment to always be inclusive and respectful to all people regardless of gender, age, race, sex, sexual orientation, level of ability, cultural or language background.

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Our Vision

**A society where women
and children live free
from violence.**

About us

Emma House Domestic Violence Services Inc. is the primary specialist domestic and family violence service in South West Victoria. Since 1979 Emma House has been assisting women and their children who are experiencing or have experienced domestic violence.

Emma House offers an opportunity for women to talk to someone about their situation without judgement or discrimination. We believe that everyone has the right to be safe, to be treated equally and have access to the same opportunities as everyone else. We know that violence of any kind denies people these rights. We support women and children of all ages, backgrounds and spiritual or religious beliefs.

Emma House helps to provide safety, support, information, advocacy, children's counselling, court support and case management. We provide services across the South West region of Victoria, and our service is free and confidential.

Family Violence is behaviour towards another family member of that person if behaviour:

- Is physically or sexually abusive; or
- Is emotionally or psychologically abusive; or
- Is financial or economically abusive; or
- Is threatening; or
- Is coercive; or
- Is stalking or harassment



Our Mission

Emma House is a courageous feminist, client-led organisation that aims to reduce the impact of family violence on individuals, women and children in our community.

Our Values

The organisation works from a feminist perspective and values:



Compassion



Courage



Evidence



Integrity

Our wonderful staff

We acknowledge and share our deep appreciation to each and every staff member throughout this year. It has been a year of change and uncertainty, and their commitment to our clients and our community, each other and our organisation has been phenomenal.

Chairperson report



Welcome to our 2023 Annual Report, we are pleased to share our year of impact, assisting women and their children who are experiencing or have experienced family violence.

It is a privilege to be working on the lands of First Nations Peoples and traditional custodians of the land and waterways across Wimmera South West. We respectfully acknowledge the Gunditjmarra people and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and future.

The past twelve months has brought stability to Emma House, with the decision made in December 2022 by our dedicated members to bring Emma House under the management and guidance of The Sexual Assault & Family Violence Centre (The SAFV Centre). With Emma House experiencing a number of challenges over the past few years, this decision means a sustainable future for our organisation, for our clients, staff and the South West community. Furthermore, integrating with The SAFV Centre, provides more professional development opportunities, supervision, support and infrastructure for our staff.

The impact of family violence remains high in our region and we are committed to ensuring women and children impacted by family violence receive specialist and timely responses and support.

With The SAFV Centre's guidance and leadership, and on the ground support, the appointment of Danielle Lavithis, Client Services Manager and Amy Lane, Principal Solicitor, the team has thrived with stability, strong processes and trauma-informed practices, ensuring the needs of an increasing number of clients in the South West region across many of our services was met.

Our deep gratitude to Sue Finucane and Helen Bolton who stepped into the CEO role throughout the past year and supported Emma House through the transition to The SAFV Centre.

I'd like to acknowledge the leadership by our former Chairperson Gabrielle Toscan who, along with the Board, identified the urgent need of support and partnership for our organisation, and who guided Emma House through the process of a partnership with The SAFV Centre, ensuring the commitment to our clients, our staff and the community remained the key focus. We are proud that the history and the local identity of Emma House will continue.

On behalf of the Board, I would also like to acknowledge our staff who have remained steadfast in their commitment to our clients and their work during times of change, disruption and without consistent leadership. We have great respect for your resilience and dedication to your work, our values and vision, and putting clients first in all that you do.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge and thank The SAFV Centre Leadership team for their hard work and continued efforts and my Board colleagues for their support and dedication throughout the last 12 months.

Sue Kelly
Chairperson

Governance

Emma House is governed by a Board who are committed to prevent and protect women and children against family violence. Our values: compassion, courage, growth and integrity are central to our Board and organisation.

Our Board

- Sue Kelly, Chair (commenced March 2023)
- Simone Renyard, Deputy Chair (from May 2023)
- Leah Heinrich, Secretary
- Sophie O’Keeffe, Treasurer
- Sandie de Wolf AM
- Tess Lye (joined in April 2023)

Departing Board Members

We would like to recognise our past Board Members who retired throughout the year. We thank you for your dedication and commitment to the work Emma House delivers to women and children. We are grateful for your contribution.

- Gabrielle Toscan, Chair (resigned May 2023)
- Jodi Bateman (resigned July 2022)



Our Year of Impact

36

Cases managed by RAMP

349

Case management outreach responses

101

After Hours responses (2 per week)

164

Crisis Accommodation Program recipients

332

Individual clients assisted – legal program

800

Legal services provided

66

Therapeutic services provided to families

617

Family Violence Flexible Support packages

\$961k

Family Violence Flexible Support funding

121

PSI responses

2,953

Orange Door screenings



Joining The Sexual Assault & Family Violence Centre

In mid-2022, Emma House invited The Sexual Assault & Family Violence Centre (The SAFV Centre) to form a partnership to explore the opportunity of Emma House commencing a voluntary acquisition by The SAFV Centre, to create a strong and sustainable future for family violence services across the South West region of Victoria, with robust governance, trauma-informed client services and cohesive leadership.

The SAFV Centre and Emma House share a strong alliance as specialist family violence organisations; with a similar philosophy, purpose and values in delivering services to women and children impacted by family violence. Both organisations have long and proud histories dating back to the late 1970s and were established by passionate women who were leaders in their community, offering support to women experiencing violence when no other services existed.

In August 2022, the two Boards signed a Memorandum of Understanding providing an opportunity to work closely together in a considered process to explore the benefits of a more formal alignment of the two organisations. This included consultation with staff, members, clients and stakeholders to gain further input and support our decision making.

Following robust consultation and due diligence, Emma House members voted unanimously in favour of the acquisition by The SAFV Centre in December 2022, with transition to occur in late 2023 following formal approval from our governing bodies, Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and Victoria Legal Aid.

Throughout this period, and as we move forward, our focus has been on ensuring our operations and services are business as usual with no disruptions to clients. We are open and remain dedicated to providing women and children impacted by family violence with support.

For clients, it is vital that women and children in the South West region continue to receive specialist family violence services and that the future of Emma House is secured for women and children for generations to come. As one organisation, we will provide enhanced access and coordinated responses across the Barwon, South West and Wimmera for women and children impacted by family violence.

Throughout 2023, both organisations have worked closely together to plan the transition, with Emma House staff to officially join The SAFV Centre in October 2023.

Ruth Isbel Staff Excellence Award

We congratulate Jodie Dunn, Acting Team Leader Case Management as the recipient of the Ruth Isbel Staff Excellence Award for 2022.

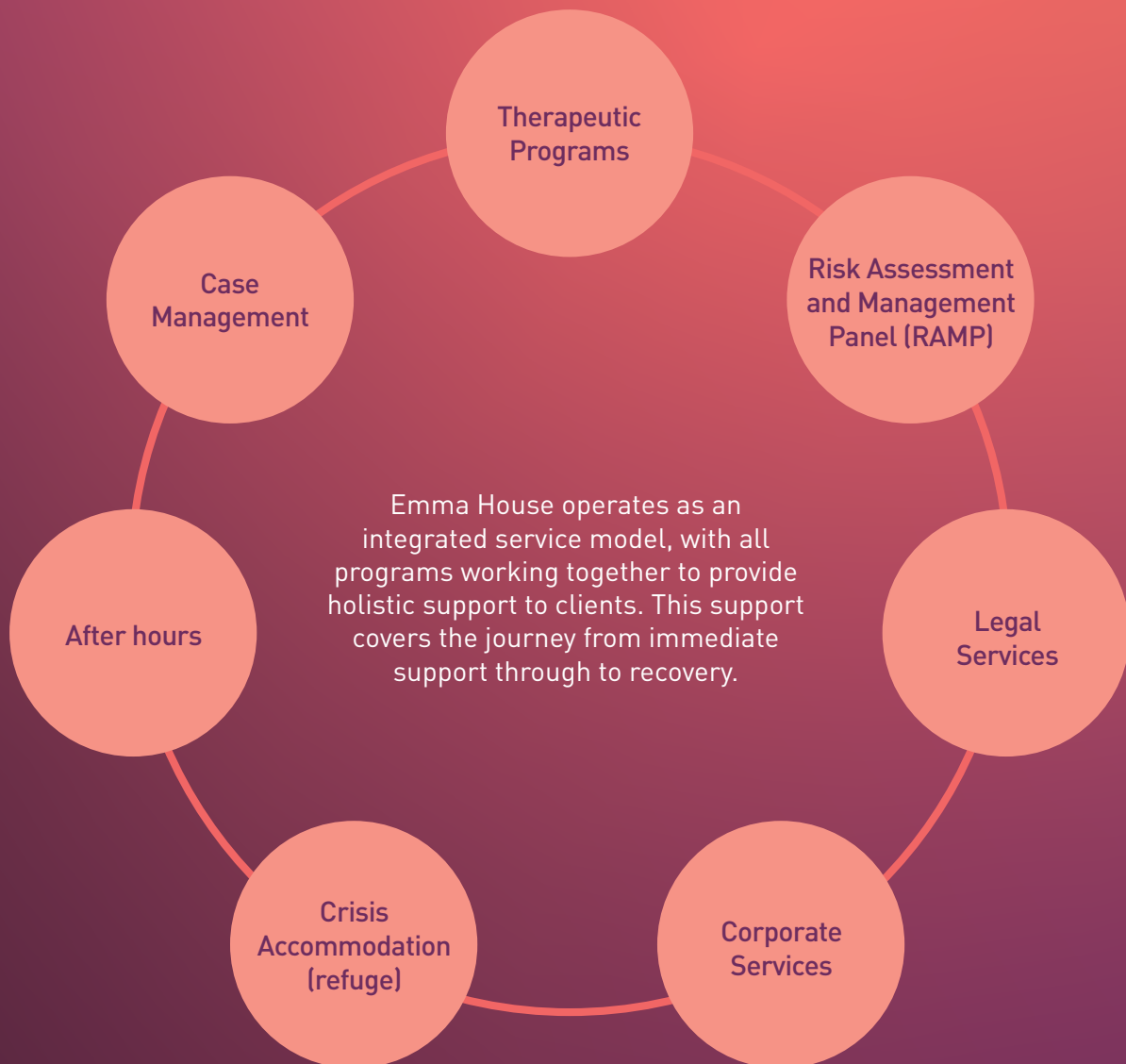
Jodie was nominated by her peers for demonstrating her commitment to Emma House and their clients, particularly through the recent tough times, all with a smile on her face.

Staff recognised Jodie's embodiment of Ruth's spirit in a way that is rarely seen or felt. She stepped up in a time of acute instability and sense of unease, and worked exceptionally long and hard to stabilise the ground beneath the amazing case managers and the entire agency. She brings warmth and kindness that has helped to restore a sense of safety during a time when it is very much needed. As with Ruth, not only is it her kindness, strength of character and practice that is worthy of recognition, but it is her absolute commitment to the purpose of Emma House.

The Ruth Isbel Staff Excellence Award was established in 2021 following the tragic loss of Ruth Isbel, Emma House Executive Officer who was an inspirational leader and colleague. Ruth led Emma House to provide the best service possible to women and children affected by family violence in the South West of Victoria. The Staff Excellence Award has been established in her memory and in perpetuity. Ruth is greatly missed and this award ensures that her joyful passion and commitment to build a strong organisation with passionate and capable staff will endure.

Our work

We are dedicated to providing support, safety, care and assistance to women and children, who are experiencing, or who have experienced, family violence, providing them with specialist, trauma-informed crisis, response and counselling support.



Case Management Outreach

Our case management services are undertaken by specialist family violence practitioners and incorporate a range of practices including screening, identification and triage, risk assessment and management, safety planning, outreach, advocacy, psycho-social needs assessment, case planning, secondary consultation, co-case management, coordination of services, referrals, exit planning and case closure.

Case management is flexible and dynamic, holistic, culturally sensitive, person-centred and strengths based. Support, centred on the client and their choices, varies in intensity and duration depending on the risks and needs of all victim-survivors in the family group.

This year, we have supported 349 clients with case management outreach support, with a focus on empowerment, perpetrator accountability, and woman and children's freedom from violence and abuse.

349

Clients supported with case management outreach services

Crisis Accommodation Program

Emma House supported 164 families in refuge and transitional housing properties. There has been significant growth in demand across the program, with an 84% increase in support from last year. We know the importance of having a safe space to stay as women re-establish their lives and move through their journey toward recovery from family violence, in a safe, supported, calm and welcoming space.

164

Families supported in refuge and transitional housing properties

84% increase from 2021-22

Our refuge and transitional properties provide safe and secure crisis and short term housing for our clients while exploring longer term housing options. Systemic long-term housing issues have been exacerbated by the rise in cost of living and the rental market pricing and remains a key focus of how we can advocate for greater social and low cost housing within our community.

We have been moving towards a core and cluster refuge to enable a smooth transition upon the completion of our new refuge build, expected commence in 2024. The core and cluster model is a multi-unit crisis accommodation, providing self-contained units where women and children receive onsite staff support in a safe and secure environment.

The team has been working tirelessly to strengthen their practice and upskill in their theoretical skills to enhance their toolkits through recovery practice. We are upgrading some of our properties to create a fresh, therapeutically conducive environments for all families we support.

After-hours response

Emma House provides 24 hour crisis care support for women and children impacted by family violence, with our After-hours response providing overnight and weekend specialist support.

This year, our After-hours response has responded to an average of nearly two calls a week, supporting and advocating for women who have just experienced a traumatic incident relating family violence.

101 After-hours responses

The After Hours response provides women and children who are experiencing family violence with support and practical assistance which includes risk assessment, safety planning, emergency accommodation and essential material aid, advocacy and support to access other services and referral for business hours support.

Therapeutic Services

Our Therapeutic Services is a dynamic program that provides evidence-based family violence counselling within a trauma recovery model. Services are delivered via individual, group and dyadic based support for women, children and young people who have been impacted by family violence. Under the umbrella of Therapeutic Services, we have Women's Recovery Counselling, Parenting Trauma Education, and Children's Recovery Counselling (previously known as Therapeutic Children's Program).

+14% Therapeutic Services support provided

This year has seen a 14% increase in support provided to women and children, providing a holistic service to our clients who may have received case management support, or seeking counselling as a standalone service

Personal Safety Initiative

The Personal Safety Initiative (PSI) assists women impacted by family violence to remain safely in their homes in the Wimmera South West. The PSI is a Family Safety Victoria initiative that aims to strengthen the appropriateness and quality of personal safety, security, and technology responses in a consistent manner as part of a broader plan for the safety, stability, and wellbeing of victim survivors. A PSI response generally includes undertaking a safety and security audit.

From this audit, home modifications are recommended to support a victim survivor's safety; including technology responses (e.g. CCTV, personal safety device, 'sweeping' devices for monitoring); home modification responses (e.g. security upgrades to doors/windows, lock changes, sensor lighting); and/or 'debugging' (e.g. home, car, and/or workplace).

121

Women supported with PSI responses

110

Safety and security audits conducted

This year, we have supported 121 women with PSI responses. This included completion of 110 safety and security audits; provision of 44 Personal Safety Devices and/or extensions of their monitoring; installation of 29 CCTV systems/video doorbells; and completion of 10 car/house bug sweeps for monitoring devices.

Risk Assessment and Management Panel

As the auspice agency for the South West Risk Assessment & Management Panel (RAMP) with the RAMP Co-ordinator employed by Emma House, RAMP is a formally convened multi-agency risk mitigation panel targeting cases of serious family violence involving women and children. RAMP continues to navigate the challenges posed by the escalation in complex and serious family violence impacting the South West region. RAMP has been able to achieve substantial positive outcomes for women and children involved.

Women referred to RAMP are identified to be at serious risk of family violence and require comprehensive holistic risk assessment and coordinated action planning to increase safety to her and her children. RAMP is not a substitute for the existing system response however works to enhance the system response for women and children. RAMPs focus on the women and children's safety and advocacy, as well as reinforcing perpetrator accountability.

Aside from the oversight of high-risk cases within the region, RAMP has also continued to deliver education and support to other agencies in the South West who are overseeing complex and serious family violence matters. In particular, recent meetings with Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative have seen positive relationship building between their family violence program and accessing RAMP.

In June 2023, RAMP began providing fortnightly in-reach support to The Orange Door South West and a practitioner presentation was provided in order to support The Orange Door practitioners to build their knowledge and management of high-risk cases. We look forward to this continuing throughout the year.

The Orange Door South West

The Orange Door South West is the primary intake point in the region for access to support and services for people at risk, including for family violence or abuse, and for families needing extra support with the wellbeing and development of children. In 2022, the Orange Door was the primary referral pathway into Emma House case management services. In the next financial year, Emma House will establish an Intake Team to also provide a referral pathway into services.

The safety of victim-survivors and children is The Orange Door's first priority. The Orange Door also recognises that a gendered understanding of family violence and an understanding of child and family vulnerability are critical to effective services and systems. The Orange Door is accessible, safe and welcoming to people, providing quick and simple access to the support and safety they need. They also engage perpetrators and plan interventions to hold them to account.

3,000 Screenings

This year has seen a marked increase in screenings with approximately 3,000 cases undertaken.

Emma House staff working at The Orange Door continue to ensure a specialist family violence practice lens is applied to their work, in keeping with the intent of the Royal Commission into Family Violence. With The Orange Door South West becoming more established and a key member of the community, we are pleased that our staff have continued to provide timely support and response to clients.

Legal program

Our Legal Program provides an integrated service to women in the South West, providing advice, assistance and representation for family violence related legal issues. The program provides a duty lawyer service at Portland, Hamilton and Warrnambool Magistrates' Courts each week, where Affected Family Members are assisted with their family violence intervention order matters.

In the last few months of the 2022-2023 financial year, the Legal Program has experienced significant growth as it re-established itself in the South West community and developed new and strengthened relationships within the region.

The Legal Program provides legal services alongside crisis, short term and longer-term support for women and children impacted by family violence and other forms of gender-based violence including sexual assault.

Throughout the year, the Legal Program assisted 332 clients and provided 800 services. Of those:

93% clients reported experiencing financial disadvantage

16% of clients had a disability or mental illness

4% of clients identified as Aboriginal

3% of clients were from CALD backgrounds

6% of clients were homeless or at risk of homelessness

332 Clients assisted through the Legal Program

Our Legal Program achieved significant growth, achieving 42% increase in the number of clients assisted from the previous year, and a 56% increase in the number of services provided to clients.

We also achieved a 66% increase in ongoing legal representation work, which includes ongoing representation in court, tribunal, dispute resolution or general litigation matters. The program assisted 29 representation matters this year, a significant increase from 10 matters in the previous year.

800 Services provided to clients in need of support

Despite a challenging labour market, the Legal Program managed to grow, with additional roles appointed in 2022-2023 and in the next financial year. This has increased the program's capacity and ensures it is well placed to assist the South West community into the future.

This year, Deputy Principal Nerida Mulvey became a Family Law Panel Practitioner with Victoria Legal Aid, which allows Emma House Legal Program to obtain grants of legal aid for clients in family law and family violence matters. With the number of panel practitioners reducing in the South West in recent years, this was a significant achievement, increasing access to justice for women and children impacted by family violence in the South West region.

Corporate Services

Our Corporate Services team provides financial, human resource, quality and compliance, reception and administration services to support the Emma House programs and staff. Other areas covered by corporate services include oversight of the IT functions of the organisation, website and maintenance of the building, assets, and infrastructure.

Emma House continues to be the lead agency administrator for Family Violence Flexible Support Packages in the Wimmera South West region. Family Violence Flexible Support Packages provide financial assistance with access to a range of supports including counselling, education, housing stability, and other practical or material needs.

\$961,835

Allocated for family violence flexible support packages

Across the past year, funding of \$961,835 was received and 617 packages were provided to support people who are experiencing or have experienced family violence.

Contracted Shared Services

To provide operational assistance throughout the year, we engaged The SAFV Centre to provide contracted Financial Services and People and Culture Services. This arrangement provided support to Emma House for finance, accounting and payroll. People and Culture are supporting HR processes including advice and support, recruitment and retention and other needs as requested. We thank The SAFV Centre and their teams for their support in these areas.



Financials

Emma House Domestic Violence Services Inc. Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2023

	NOTE	2023	2022
		\$	\$
Income			
Funding			
Victorian Legal Aid		703,607	326,220
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing		5,286,661	3,894,587
Australian Communities Foundations Grant		-	30,000
DFFH - Capital Grant		-	83,838
SWHC		-	30,000
Other Income			
Donations		67,681	27,969
Interest		30,263	10,897
Paid Parental Leave		-	34,018
Rental income		24,399	9,616
Reimbursements (including workcover)		27,911	14,022
Sundry		4,851	23,142
Total Revenue		6,145,373	4,484,309
Expenditure			
Accounting, Audit and Bookkeeping		23,147	16,845
Accreditation project		17,473	15,000
Administration costs		248,269	139,382
Client costs		1,415,463	940,033
Consultancy		136,898	41,903
Depreciation		60,204	63,609
IT Expenses		48,646	38,724
Locum Services		41,994	71,793
Loss on Sale of Assets		1,025	-
Merger Expenses		155,969	-
Minor equipment purchases		72,255	12,492
Project Expenses		35,350	17,015
Staff cost including recruitment, training and medical		193,685	146,982
Room Hire		20,054	4,539
Repairs and Maintenance		20,801	33,523
Salary expenses		3,435,289	2,639,015
Telephone & Internet		24,041	26,705
TH Upgrades		104,746	-
Vehicle expenses		15,778	17,942
Workcover premium		107,853	64,711
Total Expenditure		6,178,940	4,290,213
Surplus for the year		(33,567)	194,096
Other comprehensive Income for the Year			
Adjustment on Revaluation of Land & Buildings	1(b)(h)	-	-
Total comprehensive Income for the Year		(33,567)	194,096

Emma House Domestic Violence Services Inc.
Statement of Financial Position for the year ended 30 June 2023

	NOTE	2023	2022
Assets		\$	\$
Current Assets			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2	2,208,571	2,964,388
Investments	2	1,756,851	1,745,945
Receivables	3	-	23,252
Other current assets	4	42,324	115,978
		4,007,746	4,849,563
Non Current Assets			
Property, Plant and Equipment	5	1,126,535	1,096,953
Right of Use Assets	7	554,717	-
		1,681,252	1,096,953
Total Assets		5,688,998	5,946,516
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Trade and Other Payables	6	1,578,007	2,276,101
Employee Provisions	8	209,622	284,029
Lease Liability	7	32,557	-
		1,820,186	2,560,130
Non Current Liabilities			
Employee Provisions	8	3,191	9,358
Lease Liability	7	522,160	-
Total Non Current Liabilities		525,351	9,358
Total Liabilities		2,345,537	2,569,488
Net Assets		3,343,461	3,377,028
Members Funds			
Retained Surplus		3,338,058	3,371,625
Reserves		5,403	5,403
Total Members Funds		3,343,461	3,377,028

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank the generosity of individuals, community organisations and businesses that have generously supported our organisation and our clients over the past 12 months.

It has been an incredible year of impact, with more than \$13,000 donated, enabling us to offer our clients so much more to enhance their healing outcomes. Over the past year, we have received funds from our wonderful community, individually or as part of a corporate, local business, school or community group.

Not only have they raised funds and awareness about family violence through events, ticket sales, winter sleep-outs, rounding up sales and staff raffles, but also highlighted our services to those impacted by family violence, and how they can contact us to receive support.

We receive numerous donations from individuals for which we are extremely grateful. These donations contribute to our ability to provide flexible options for women and children. We would also like to acknowledge our sector partners whose support and assistance enable us to continue to provide a comprehensive service tailored to our client's needs.

Australian Childhood Foundation

Brophy Family & Youth Services

Centacare Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services

Colac Community Health

Colac Otway and Corangamite Child and Family Services Alliance

Corrections Victoria

Corangamite Shire Council

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

Department of Justice and Community Safety

Family Safety Victoria

Federation of Community Legal Centres

Glenelg Shire Council

Grampians Community Health

Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative Limited

Kirrae Health Services Maternal and Child Health

MacKillop Family Services

Meli

Mpower

OzChild

Safe and Equal

Safe Steps

Salvo Connect

South West Healthcare

South West Child and Family Services Alliance

South Western Centre Against Sexual Assault

The Orange Door South West

The Sexual Assault & Family Violence Centre

Victoria Legal Aid

Victoria Police

Warrnambool City Council

Warrnambool Food Share

Western District Health Service

Western Regional Alcohol & Drug Service

Wimmera & South West Family Violence Partnership

Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation

Women's Health and Wellbeing Barwon South West



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