

Client Information

1800 366 238

WARRNAMBOOL
PORTLAND
HAMILTON
TERANG
CAMPERDOWN

Emma
SINCE 1979
House

A woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a light-colored t-shirt and a long, dark, vertically striped skirt, is seen from behind. She is holding a young child in her arms. They are standing on a sandy beach, looking out at the ocean. The sky is a clear, pale blue. The image is framed by a large, semi-circular graphic element that transitions from a dark purple/pinkish hue on the left to a light blue on the right.

our vision

A SOCIETY
WHERE
WOMEN AND
CHILDREN
LIVE FREE
FROM
VIOLENCE.

Emma House would like to acknowledge
the service users who contributed to the
development of this brochure.

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About us

Emma House Domestic Violence Services Inc. (also referred to in this document as Emma House) 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.



our vision

A SOCIETY
WHERE
WOMEN AND
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our mission

Emma House Domestic Violence Services is a courageous feminist, client-lead organisation that aims to reduce the impact of domestic and family violence on individuals, women and children and our community.

our values

Compassion

We will adopt a compassionate and empathetic approach to leadership that welcomes different perspectives, values collaboration and promotes empowerment and safety.

Courage

We will do what needs to be done to build thriving culture, to operate differently by sharing power and promoting equality.

Growth

We adopt a growth mindset, valuing learning and perseverance. We present feedback that inspires future success and recognise the potential for growth.

Integrity

We will do what we say we will do by building strong organisational clarity, transparency and accountability to our people, women and children and the community.

How do our values shape our work?

- We believe in gender equality.
- We believe in providing culturally appropriate services.
- We believe in Aboriginal self-determination (please refer to Aboriginal Cultural Rights on page 14 for further information).
- We include women and children's voices in everything we do.
- We support our workforce to be the best they can be.
- We deliver a contemporary best practice model of specialist family violence services to women and children, focusing on critical safety responses.
- We are a shining example of an effective and accountable feminist organisation.
- We hold perpetrators of violence accountable for their actions.
- We prioritise the protection of women and children, provision of services and prevention of further violence.
- We support and encourage the community to understand and address family violence, emphasising zero tolerance.

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

Emma House complies with the Child Safe Standards and is committed to:

- Providing a safe environment for all children which promotes their health, safety and wellbeing.
- Promoting an organisational culture of child safety in which children feel valued, respected and cared for.
- Identifying, reducing and removing the risks of child abuse.
- Intervening when a child may be at risk of abuse.
- Making staff aware of their legal and moral obligations in reporting child abuse.



Emma House acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional custodians of the continent, in particular the Gunditjmara people of the Maar Nation upon whose lands we work. We pay our respects to their elders past present and emerging and acknowledge their ongoing connection to land, waters and culture and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.

We commit to continuing to work respectfully honouring their cultural and spiritual connections to this country.



Our Services

WE SUPPORT
WOMEN AND
CHILDREN
OF ALL AGES,
BACKGROUNDS
AND SPIRITUAL
OR RELIGIOUS
BELIEFS.

Emma House in Warrnambool has a range of programs and services to help women and children. We provide services across the South West region of Victoria, and our service is free and confidential.

Case Management

Case Management offers women the opportunity to talk to someone about their situation. Emma House will listen without judgement or discrimination. We believe everyone has the right to be safe, to be treated equally and to have access to the same opportunities as everyone else. We work with women to help improve their safety, and the feeling of control over their life.

Emma House support workers use their knowledge and the resources available to them to support women and their children to achieve their goals.

Transitional Accommodation Program

Emma House's transitional housing program manages and provides support for women as tenants of a number of properties within Warrnambool and the South-West.

Our refuge accommodation has the capacity to accommodate and support multiple families at any one time. Access to this confidential service is via the state-wide Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre. Emma House can provide safe accommodation and support for women and children escaping domestic violence, and support workers can provide assistance and advocacy with Centrelink, schooling and housing related matters.

Legal Program

Emma House operates an in-house community Legal Service, funded by Victorian Legal Aid. The legal service provides duty lawyer services at the three local courts – Warrnambool, Hamilton and Portland. This is a confidential legal service for women who reside in South-West Victoria.

Our legal program can assist with:

- Advice
- Intervention Order applications
- Intervention Order representation at the Warrnambool, Hamilton and Portland Magistrates Courts
- Advocacy
- Applications for financial assistance for victims of crime
- Family Law Matters
- Partner Visa Exemptions – Family Violence Provisions
- Any other matters related to you escaping domestic violence.

For further information about our Legal Program including accessing the program please ask your worker.

Therapeutic Children's Program

Emma House employs Specialist Childrens' Workers to provide support for children who may have experienced family violence.

Many children are present during episodes of family violence and some children are abused directly.

It is important for children who have been impacted by family violence within their family to be given an opportunity to talk about their feelings and how it has impacted on them.

Our Childrens' Workers can provide parents with advice and provide support to the children.

Personal Safety Initiative

The Personal Safety Initiative (PSI) assists victim survivors to access personal safety responses including home modifications, personal duress alarms and CCTV.

Using these personal safety responses has been found to deter perpetrators from breaching intervention orders and when a breach occurs, enables the collection of evidence to support criminal prosecutions.

Victim survivors are supported through the Personal Safety Initiative to access appropriate and effective technology and security responses to allow them to remain safely in their own homes and communities.

Personal safety responses for victim survivors experiencing or at risk of experiencing family violence are funded and accessed through the Victorian Government's Family Violence Flexible Support Package program.

How to access our services

The Wimmera South-West Orange Door is the intake service for all family violence services across the region.

They can be contacted on 1800 271 800.

They will undertake an assessment of your needs and if appropriate refer you to Emma House for assistance.

Eligibility Criteria

Emma House is funded to provide family and domestic violence support to victim survivors aged over 16 years and their children. We are unable to provide services to perpetrators of family violence.

Our Fees and Charges

Our specialist family violence services are free of charge and funded by the Department of Fairness, Families and Housing.

Your Rights and Responsibilities

As a service user of Emma House, you have the right to:

- Be treated with courtesy and respect
- Be informed of available services and other relevant information
- Access our services without discrimination
- Have your privacy, confidentiality and dignity always respected
- Support to be empowered to make decisions for yourself
- Decline a service
- Access independent advocacy and be supported to do so
- Have your family or trusted friend involved in providing support if you wish
- Have any complaint heard and dealt with fairly
- Access services that are culturally safe and respectful
- Access free interpreter services if required
- Be free from abuse, neglect, violence, and preventable injury.

As a service user of Emma House you are responsible for:

- Treating staff and other service users with courtesy and respect
- Being committed to your safety and recovery
- Respecting the property and resources of Emma House
- Informing your case worker of your situation.

Refusal of Service

Emma House has a zero tolerance of aggressive and violence behaviour towards our staff and other service users. We reserve the right to withdraw service provision to service users who display violence and aggression.

Our Responsibilities

We are committed to providing a service where your voice and needs are the main focus.

Our workers have a responsibility to:

- Respect you and treat you with dignity
- Respond to your diverse needs
- Respect your privacy and confidentiality
- Involve and empower you in decisions about your goals and needs
- Ensure you receive the service you have agreed to
- Provide a safe and secure environment for you when attending our services.

Children's Rights

Emma House is a Child Safe organisation committed to protecting children and young people from harm.

Children that access our services have the following rights:

- To be treated fairly
- Have a say about a decision affecting them
- Live and grow up healthy
- Have people do what's best for them
- Know who they are and where they came from
- Have their beliefs respected
- Privacy
- Be informed and express themselves
- Be safe no matter where they are
- Be cared for and have a home.

Aboriginal Cultural Rights

At Emma House we are proud to live and work on the lands of the Gunditjmara people. We strive to build and maintain strong partnerships with local Aboriginal agencies to enhance the cultural safety of our services.

We believe in Aboriginal self-management and self-determination, meaning that we will support you to:

- Enjoy your identity and culture
- Maintain and use your language
- Maintain your kinship ties
- Maintain your distinctive spiritual, material and economic relationship with the land and waters and other resources with which you have a connection under traditional laws and customs.

We also partner with local Aboriginal organisations and with your consent we can assist you to contact these organisations to provide you with support and service.

Gunditjmara Aboriginal Cooperative

135 Kepler Street,
Warrnambool
Phone 03 5559 1234

Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation

21 Scott Street
Heywood
Phone 03 5527 0000

Kirrae Health Service

Kirrae Avenue
Purnim Phone 03 5567 1270

Dhauwurd-Wurrung Elderly & Community Health Service

18 Wellington Road
Portland
Phone 1300 202 664

Working with you

Planning your support

Emma House encourages service users to be involved in developing their support plans.

We will work with you to develop a goal and a plan suitable to your circumstances. These plans will be reviewed with you regularly to keep them up to date.

Each time we update your plan we will offer you a copy.

Consumer Participation

At Emma House we believe in letting the voices of women and children inform how we design and improve our services. This means actively seeking out the views of our service users and using these in our planning and service development.

Involvement in consumer participation can be as simple as completing a survey at the end of a support period or being involved in a reference group.

If you're interested, you can obtain our client survey on our website, speak with your worker or scan this QR Code.





Your personal information

When you access a service at Emma House an electronic client record is created for you in our secure database.

To create this record and support you we need to obtain information about you including your name, address, contact details and relevant information about the support we need to provide.

You can decline to provide the information we request however it may impact on our ability to provide you with a service.

The information you provide will be used to plan your supports and ensure that you have access to any services that you require.

In some circumstances your information may be required to be provided to our funders, for reporting, auditing or for research and planning.

When your information is used in this way it will be de-identified to remove your name and contact details.

Accessing your information

You have the right to access your client record. This may include viewing your file or obtaining a summary or complete version of your record.

Sometimes we cannot release all the information contained in your file. We can discuss this with you at the relevant time.

You can also ask us to correct any incorrect or incomplete information contained in your client file.

Privacy and Confidentiality

We have policies and procedures in place to ensure compliance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cwlth) to make sure that your client record is only used in the ways discussed with you, and that it is only accessed by those involved in providing you with a service. Unless you have consented, or it is otherwise required by law we will keep your personal information strictly confidential.

For further information about how we might need to share your information please refer to the section on the Family Violence and Child Information Sharing Schemes.

Consent

When we start working with you, we will ask you to sign a Consent Form. This form will explain more about how we use your information and you can use this form to tell us who you want us to share information with about the service we provide you such as other service providers, family or trusted friends.

Referring you to other service providers

As part of planning your support we may identify other services both internally and externally that may be able to support you. We will always discuss this with you before sharing your information and obtain your consent, unless it is an emergency situation or as required by law.

Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme and Child Information Sharing Scheme

Emma House has responsibilities under the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (FVISS) and the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS). This can involve our workers sharing information with other agencies to manage your family violence risk.

Generally, your information will not be shared without your prior consent. But if there is a serious threat to an individual's life, health safety or welfare, your information may be shared without your consent to lessen or prevent this serious threat.

Sharing your information

- Sharing relevant information can be critical to managing your safety.
- Information sharing procedures will be explained to you and your consent will be sought when engaging with relevant services.
- Your information may also be shared without consent if this information is linked to a child victim survivor of family violence to assess or manage family violence risk to that child.
- If your information is shared without your consent, it will be done so in a manner that promotes your safety and takes into account your views, where appropriate, safe and reasonable.
- When appropriate, safe and reasonable you will be notified about your information being shared.
- If you believe your privacy has been unlawfully interfered with as a result of information sharing, you may make a complaint to us or to the Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner, the Health Complaints Commissioner or the Australian Information Commissioner.
- Your information is strictly confidential and will only be shared with prescribed services that are bound by law to keep it secure.
- Your information will NEVER be shared with the perpetrator of family violence under the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme established under Part 5A of the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008*.



Information Shared with You

On occasions we may share information with you about the perpetrator of family violence to assist you manage your own safety or that of your children.

- You are NOT permitted to use the information provided to you for any purpose other than managing your safety.
- You should not share the information you receive in ways that are unrelated to managing your safety (e.g. sharing on social media). Sharing your information with the wrong person could affect your or others safety.
- Information can be shared with members of your safety management network as required, but only as it relates to implementing your relevant safety plans. If information is provided to a third party, you must inform the third party that the information can only be used to manage your safety or that of your children.



Advocacy

You have the right as a client to involve an advocate of your choice to represent you at any time.

An advocate is someone you can choose to speak on your behalf and express your views, provide you with independent support or be your witness or record keeper.

An advocate can be a trusted friend, family member or someone from an independent advocacy agency. We respect your right to choose an advocacy service and can assist you to access a professional advocacy agency.

South West Advocacy

45 Hider Street
Warrnambool VIC 3280
Ph 5561 4584
admin@swadvocacy.com.au

Office of the Public Advocate

1/204 Lygon Street
Carlton VIC 3053
Ph 1300 309 337

Homelessness Advocacy Service

2 Stanley Street
Collingwood VIC 3066
Ph 1800 066 256

Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability (VALID)

34 Stanley Street, Collingwood

Discrimination

The laws in Victoria and our policies and procedures aim to prevent all forms of discrimination.

In Victoria, sex discrimination, sexual harassment, victimisation, racial and religious abuse are against the law. It is also against the law to discriminate against you because of a disability that you either have or people think you might have.

Emma House strives to provide a safe, respectful, nurturing, and positive environment where all service users are comfortable expressing themselves, their culture and language without fear of discrimination or being treated differently.

We aim to work with you to provide a service that is sensitive to your needs.

If you feel uncomfortable with the way you've been treated or believe you have been discriminated against, you can raise this with your worker or their manager or make a formal complaint to us as outlined on page 22.

If you aren't satisfied with the response to your complaint, you can contact the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission on 1300 292 153 or complete a complaint form on their website www.humanrights.vic.gov.au

Complaints and Feedback

As a service user you have the right to complain about what services we offer, how they are delivered and how you have been treated.

You can also appeal or question any decisions we have made about how we support you.

If you need assistance with advising us of your concerns, you have the right to bring a trusted support person with you. This can be a trusted friend or family member, another worker or an independent advocate.

You can also provide us with compliments or suggestions to let us know what we're doing well or let us know your ideas for improving our service.

We take all complaints, feedback and suggestions seriously and view them as an opportunity for us to improve the quality and safety of the services we provide.

How to provide feedback

When you provide feedback, you have the right to provide it anonymously. If you chose to do this, we will not be able to advise you of result of your feedback, however we still treat anonymous feedback seriously.

You can provide your feedback directly to your worker or their line manager or ask to speak with a senior manager or the Quality team.

Written feedback can be provided via our website, using the reply paid feedback forms and boxes located in our reception area or by scanning this QR Code.



How we respond to complaints

Generally, we aim to contact you to acknowledge your complaint within 5 business days and resolve it within 30 business days. If your complaint is complex in nature, it may take longer, which we will explain to you.

If you're not satisfied

Sometimes we are unable to resolve a complaint to your satisfaction. If this is the case you are welcome to complain to the following external services:

Ombudsman Victoria

9 North Tower
459 Collins Street, VIC 3000
Ph (03) 9613 6222
Toll Free 1800 806 314 (regional only)

Interpreter services:

Via telephone 131 450
On-site 1300 655 082

TTY (teletypewriter):

Call 133 677 then 03 9613 6222

Speak and Listen users:

Call 1300 555 727 then 03 9613 6222

Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)

55 King Street, Melbourne VIC 3000
Ph (03) 9628 9800
Toll Free 1300 018 228 (regional only)

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner

PO Box 5218 Sydney NSW 2001
Ph 1300 363 992
www.oaic.gov.au

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (discrimination or victimisation) (VEOHRC)

Level 3, 204 Lygon Street,
Carlton VIC 3053
Ph 1300 292 153
Email enquiries@veohrc.vic.gov.au
humanrights.vic.gov.au/get-help

EmmaHouse

SINCE 1979

Domestic & Family Violence Service

Emma House is a not-for-profit organisation providing free services to women and children in South West Victoria.

Interpreter and National Hearing Services are Available

WARRNAMBOOL • PORTLAND • HAMILTON
TERANG • CAMPERDOWN

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Police.....000

24 Hours Statewide Response Service..... 1800 015 188

A state wide 24/7 service providing women and their children with information, advocacy, referral and emergency accommodation.

Sexual Assault Crisis Line..... 1800 806 292

Respect..... 1800 737 732

1800 366 238

131-133 Kepler Street Warrnambool VIC

Phone: (03) 5561 1934

Open: Monday - Friday, 9am to 5pm

emmahouse.org.au

