

From refuge to recovery





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About us

Refuge Victoria is one of the largest specialist providers of family violence refuge accommodation in Victoria. We support and empower people at serious risk due to family violence on their journeys to safety and freedom.

From our beginnings in 1976, when we opened our first refuge to help women and children in our community, we have seen growth and transformation. We now operate three core and cluster facilities, 15 standalone refuge accommodation properties, and have nomination rights to 35 transitional homes, supporting, enabling, and empowering over 500 people each year.

Clients are referred to our service by Safe Steps, the statewide refuge referral service. We provide refuge and crisis accommodation, risk assessment and management, case management support and outreach case management support to clients in refuge and transitional properties. Our experienced staff work with clients to help equip them with the skills and confidence to reconnect safely back into the community. Our staff have expertise in working with diverse family groupings including LGBTIQ+ led families, families without permanent residency, with a member who has a disability, and sibling groups escaping violence.



Refuge Victoria acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional owners and custodians of the lands and waters on which we live and work. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and acknowledge that sovereignty has never been ceded.



We recognise intersectionality and celebrate the diverse identities within and between the sex, sexuality, and gender diverse communities. We are committed to supporting, encouraging and ensuring our staff and clients feel safe and celebrated.



Refuge Victoria is a not-for-profit organisation, primarily funded by the Victorian Government, and supported by occasional grants and generous donations from individuals, families, companies and community organisations.

Delivering exceptional service

Service delivery was front-of-mind in our work this year. Whether it was designing and implementing programs to support the education of children in refuge, introducing therapeutic programs, employing a nurse educator, or simply running daily school holiday activities for kids, our focus has been squarely on empowering our clients to move from crisis to recovery.

Fuelled by the passion of our professional staff, this year Refuge Victoria has made significant advances in our delivery of services and support.

All our work has been client-focused. We know every client has particular needs; they have had different experiences; and their dreams and aspirations are as individual as they are. We strive to provide everyone staying with us with what they need to get them on the road to taking control of their futures.

Above all, we aspire to provide them with the one thing that has been missing, sometimes for years: hope.



Purpose

To provide refuge and support for those escaping family violence.



Vision

For people escaping family violence to live safe and free.



Mission

To help people escaping family violence on their journeys to safety and freedom with individualised support from refuge to recovery.





Refuge Victoria helps people escaping family violence on their journeys to safety and freedom with individualised support from refuge to recovery.

Values

Working with Compassion

We care deeply about the work we do and who we do it for.

Empowering People

We empower people to become more confident and make informed decisions.

A Collaborative Approach

By working together and sharing knowledge, we continue to strengthen our culture and outcomes.

Act with integrity

We are respectful and transparent and will always hold ourselves to account.

Commitment to Progress

We are committed to providing the best care and outcomes for our clients through continuous improvement of our services.

Strategic Action Priorities

1

Governance & Risk

We reaffirm our commitment to governing innovatively and ethically in line with our mission, vision, purpose and values.

2

Community Connections

To build our community partnerships and networks to enable holistic and tailored support of clients.

3

Sustainability & Finance

Maintain a highly skilled, capable, stable team and remain financially sustainable.

4

Growth

Continuously look for opportunities to grow our service, enhancing the safety and support of those escaping family violence.

5

People & Culture

Create and maintain a highly skilled, capable, stable team of staff and Board members.



Chair's Report

I'm delighted to share Refuge Victoria's Annual Report for 2022/23, which I hope will provide you with an insight into our work over the past year. I have been so impressed by the unwavering dedication of our Board and staff to the organisation's vision and mission, a testament to the heart and soul of our organisation.

I would like to thank my fellow Board Directors for so generously sharing their time and expertise and give a heartfelt salute to our outgoing directors, Bernadette Dobeli, Kerrie McMahon, Raymond Burnett, and Kerryn McLean. Their impactful contributions have been integral to shaping our path, and will continue to inspire us.

I want to particularly honour Bernadette Dobeli. Bernie's journey with us began in 1990 when she joined the Brenda House collective. Her steadfast dedication over the years has been the foundation upon which our family violence refuges stand today.

From the very roots of our organisation's formation to the transformation into Safe Futures Foundation and then Refuge Victoria, Bernie's enduring commitment has fortified the governance and growth of family violence refuges for an incredible three decades. Her legacy is the very essence of what we stand for – compassion, commitment, and enduring support.

Our gratitude extends to Kerrie and Raymond, who steered our ship with executive leadership for five impactful years. Their dedication to governance has shaped our ethos, imprinting a legacy that will resonate through time. Kerryn's innovative spirit breathed fresh life into our rebranding efforts, infusing modernity and vibrancy.

As we set our sights on the future, we warmly welcome three new directors – Professor Heather Douglas, Funda Ozenc and Antoniette Masiero – to our Board. Their diverse perspectives promise a dynamic new chapter as we continue our mission of compassion and empowerment.

At the core of our journey, we remain resolute in our vision of a compassionate and empowered community. Our mission to support the most vulnerable stands unwavering. In the face of challenges, our financial stewardship remains strong, allowing us to responsibly allocate resources where they matter most.

“ Our mission to support the most vulnerable stands unwavering. In the face of challenges, our financial stewardship remains strong, allowing us to responsibly allocate resources where they matter most. ”

On behalf of the Board, I extend deep appreciation to Janet Jukes, our CEO, and the dedicated team who are the driving force of Refuge Victoria. Their tireless commitment to serving our clients is nothing short of inspirational.

Collectively, we will keep lighting the way towards a brighter, more empowered future for victim survivors of family violence – adults, children, and their cherished pets – enabling them to live their lives free from harm.

Emily Ryder
Chair



CEO's Report

While the purpose of annual reports is primarily to report on the activities over the past year, sometimes in order to get the full measure of an organisation's progress, it's necessary to look back further.

Forty years ago, when the refuges that would go on to amalgamate and eventually form Refuge Victoria were first formed, their purpose was almost entirely accommodation. They were created by church groups, radical feminists, and groups of ordinary women, who saw that family violence was a serious problem in their extended communities, and there was need for an emergency response for those in immediate danger.

It's a marked difference to modern day refuge. Yes, refuge continues to provide accommodation for individuals and families escaping family violence, but when I look at the current priorities of Refuge Victoria and our work over the past year, it's clear just how far we've come.

Over the past year, our focus has been firmly on delivering services to clients that set them on the path to recovery and beyond. Life is about more than the places we sleep; and families who have experienced family violence require much more than housing.

In this annual report, you'll read about some of the programs we've designed and implemented that address the complex needs of our clients, including ensuring that education continues for children in refuge, providing therapeutic services for those who want or require it, the addition of a nurse educator to refuge staff, and even addressing the needs of pets that come into refuge.

I am enormously proud of the Refuge Victoria staff who have worked on delivering expanded services to our clients. They are skilled, passionate, and experts in their fields. I want to also thank our Board, who volunteer their expertise and vision to provide leadership and support towards our mission.

“ Over the past year, our focus has been firmly on delivering services to clients that set them on the path to recovery and beyond. Life is about more than the places we sleep; and families who have experienced family violence require much more than housing. ”

All our services have the goal of freedom at their heart, and that goes well beyond a life free from violence. It means providing the services that empower clients with the freedom to create the futures they desire. Every client is individual, and their dreams and aspirations are as different as they are. As a service, we listen to those aspirations and strive to help more clients on the path to achieving them.

There's much more work to be done, and given the achievements of the past year, Refuge Victoria is well placed to continue to thrive in the coming year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Janet Jukes'.

Janet Jukes OAM
Chief Executive Officer

CASE STUDY



Elena's story

Elena met Jett when she was 17; he is 10 years older. The violence began once Elena was pregnant with her first child. When the baby was a few months old, Elena followed the advice of friends and family and left Jett, moving in with her parents in rural Victoria.

Jett applied through the courts for shared custody of their child, and Elena says she was forced through court orders to see Jett at his brother's home for supervised visits of the child. It was during these visits that Jett was able to persuade Elena that he had changed; he was no longer using drugs and greatly regretted his violence.

Jett and Elena married and had two more children. Elena said that for the first few years there was no violence, but then Jett began drinking again and the violence began again. It also escalated.

When Elena moved into refuge, Jett refused to return the boys and Elena was very concerned and unsure what to do as there were no Children's Court orders or Family Court orders in place. Our staff consulted with police, Victoria Legal Aid and Child Protection and tirelessly advocated on behalf of the family to develop strategies and implement the safe return of the two boys.

The family arrived at refuge with minimal clothing and were provided with donations from The Generosity Collective and Kmart vouchers to purchase additional items. Other supports we provided included safety planning, the return of Elena's car, school enrolments and home learning, assistance to write statements, advocacy with police, referral to legal assistance, housing, and counselling services.

Elena's daughter was at risk of failing VCE when she arrived at refuge, however, thanks to the persistence and hard work of the Children and Young People's Practitioner and a tutor Refuge Victoria was able to provide, she eventually and successfully completed Year 12.

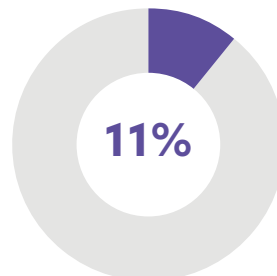
Our impact



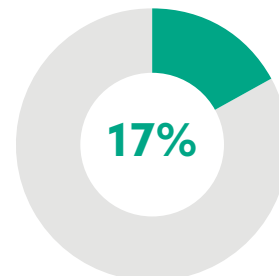
Total number
of support periods

511

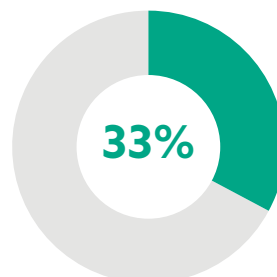
Family size



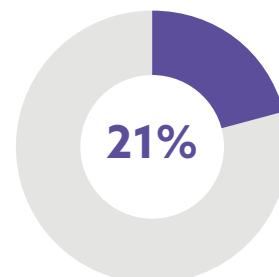
Adult clients who come
into refuge **alone**



Adult clients with **one or more**
children with them in refuge

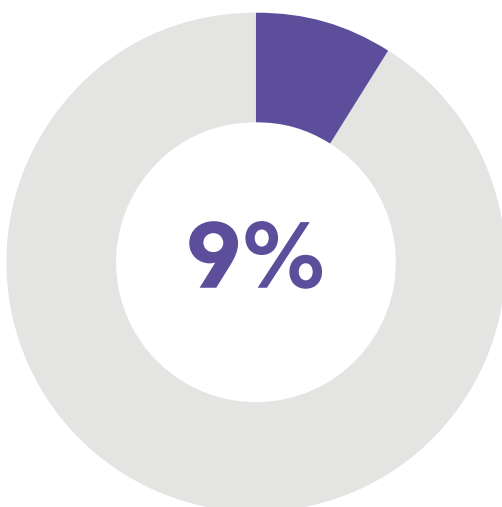


of these clients had
three or more children



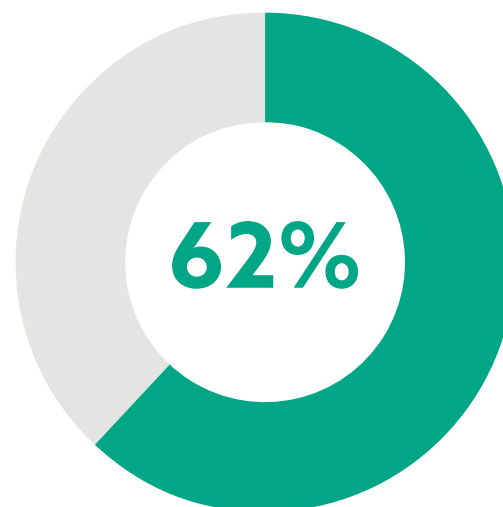
of these clients had
five or more children

Number of clients by Indigenous status



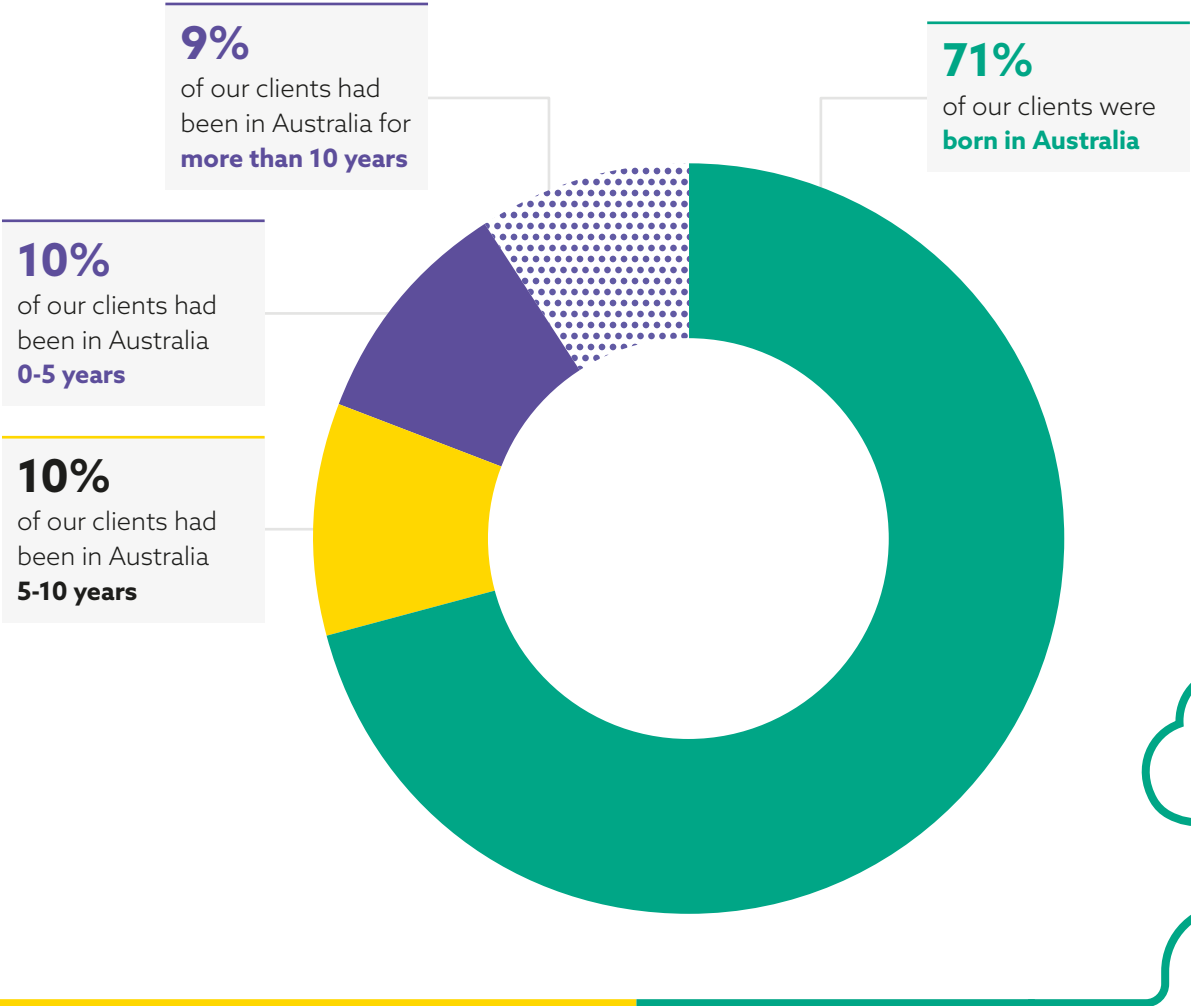
of our 511 clients **identify as Aboriginal**

Number of clients under 18 years of age



of our 511 clients were **under the age of 18**

Year of arrival in Australia



Top languages spoken
(other than English)

Arabic	Somali
Dari	Turkish
Persian	Vietnamese
Rohingya	



Top countries of birth
(other than Australia)

Afghanistan	Sudan
India	Turkey
Malaysia	Vietnam
New Zealand	

Supporting children in refuge



Every child who comes into refuge is seen as a client with individual needs as distinct from their parent and siblings.

Our Children's Practitioners work with each child to make sure they have all the supports they need to ensure that their time in refuge is a roadbump in their childhood, not a turning point. At our refuges, this means more than visits to the dentist and school enrolments. Sometimes, what a child needs most is some fun.

Coming into refuge can be a disruptive and sometimes frightening experience for children. They're taken away from their home and are unable to see their friends. They are sometimes worried about their family and might be unsure of the future.

Children's Practitioners and Case Managers work with parents to connect the children to the appropriate schools, and during a normal week most of the children at our refuges head to school and childcare. We also have a tutor who works with kids so they don't fall behind.

Like most kids, the children staying in our refuges look forward to school holidays – and with good reason. During school holidays refuge staff run a program of varied activities. Every morning the playground comes alive with the voices of very excited children, keen to see what the day holds.

“Children's Practitioners and Case Managers work with parents to connect the children to the appropriate schools, and during a normal week most of the children at our refuges head to school and childcare.”

Activities include art and craft, cooking, movie and popcorn days, and BBQs at some of the great local parks. It's important that the kids get to leave their refuge units and have fun, but these outings also have a therapeutic benefit.

One child who was staying with us spent a large amount of time in his room on an iPad and he refused to engage with his Children's Practitioner.

One day in the school holidays, we took the kids on an outing to a beautiful park with wildlife, on the edge of a creek bed with great rotundas and lovely walks to explore.

Once outdoors in nature, the child came alive, playing with sticks and enjoying a walk. The outing allowed this child to see his Children's Practitioner in a different light and now he is happy to chat. An outcome we didn't plan but one that changed the course of all interactions thereafter.

Another popular school holiday activity was the animal petting zoos that visited each refuge site. Although an event planned for the kids, it remains unclear who had the most fun, the children, their mums, or the refuge staff!

Animals can play an important role in the recovery of children in refuge. Interacting with animals can help address many physical and mental issues and can reduce stress and improve a child's overall psychological state. Animal therapy is an area of support Refuge Victoria will expand in the coming year.

Engaging in schoolwork, making friends, and having fun aren't just ways for children to pass the time in refuge; they're tangible ways to bring to children something that is often missing: hope and enthusiasm for a happy future.



CASE STUDY

Hiba's story

When Hiba and her five daughters arrived at refuge, they had no income, no access to financial supports, no bank account, and no Medicare card. They had no passports or birth certificates. Their immigration status was unknown, and they had little knowledge of the Melbourne outside their front door.

Hiba is a 40-year-old Somali woman who immigrated to Australia in 2014. Hiba married Assad, the person using violence, prior to their arrival and they had five children together.

Assad used coercive control to completely isolate Hiba. He would not allow her to leave the house and as a result she had little English or understanding of the city in which she lived. She was unable to drive and didn't know how to use public transport. Hiba was not allowed to seek medical support, despite having ongoing pain following childbirth. Hiba was captive in the family home.

Hiba was completely isolated with no control over her circumstances, until the day she reached out to a friend who put her in touch with Refugee Legal, who supported her to flee the home with the children while Assad was at work.

At refuge it became clear that there would need to be a substantial amount of advocacy involved in supporting Hiba and the children to begin to establish their new lives away from the abuse.

Hiba had no evidence of the children's births or her connection to the children, which was a barrier to accessing several vital services, including Medicare. The team was able to obtain birth certificates from a range of sources, including the children's previous schools. Over a period of months and much back and forth between Refuge Victoria and Services Australia, Hiba finally got access to Medicare.

Hiba's financial situation remained one of the primary challenges for the family. Financial assistance was provided by Refuge Victoria and Hiba was supported to open a bank account and to learn how to use an ATM, which fostered a sense of financial independence for her for the first time.

Hiba was on a temporary Bridging Visa, and working with Refugee Legal, Refuge Victoria submitted applications and various supporting documentation in the hope that the family would be able to remain safely in Australia.

Almost a year later, Hiba and the children were granted protection visas. They are now permanent residents of Australia and can start to plan their new lives with a sense of security and home.



Pets in refuge

Every client who stays with us in refuge is different: some were born and raised in Australia, others overseas; some are newborn, others with decades behind them; some have two legs, others four.

Each unit in our refuge properties has a fenced-in backyard, which means that families can bring their pets with them into refuge – and for families escaping violence, the importance of this cannot be understated.

Allowing pets in refuge saves lives, for the simple reason that women often stay in violent homes for fear of leaving their pets in dangerous situations. Asking them to leave behind their beloved pets is like asking them to leave behind a member of their family.

Families bring dogs, cats, hamsters, fish, reptiles and birds with them into refuge. Sometimes those pets are injured or traumatised.

It could be that the pets have copped the brunt of violent outbursts; sometimes they have been injured defending family members. Sadly, too often pets are hurt as a means of punishing and controlling the women and children who love them.

When pets come into refuge, they receive the care and attention their human family members do.

Animals can be seen by a vet and provided with treatment, where needed. Sometimes, especially if the family has had to move around a lot or if financial abuse has been a factor, they may not have a regular vet or have had regular check-ups, and we can organise that too.

“ Welcoming pets into refuge isn’t just important in supporting families to leave violent homes, they can also play a key role in recovery from violence, especially for children.

We connect families with vets in the area, who make sure vaccinations are up-to-date, and worming and flea treatments are given where needed.

Welcoming pets into refuge isn’t just important in supporting families to leave violent homes, they can also play a key role in recovery from violence, especially for children.

Kids who come into refuge have often experienced incredible disruptions. They’ve had to leave their friends, they can’t see family members, and a lot of the time they’re taken out of school. Playing with their pets provides the security of a familiar friend and a welcome distraction.

Importantly, interacting with their pets resets a child’s perception of love. They see that the love of a pet isn’t conditional; they experience the giving and receiving of love, instead of it being used as a weapon of violence or manipulation. Pets represent hope.





Partners and key stakeholders

During their stay in refuge, families escaping violence work closely with Case Managers and Support Workers as they create and navigate a pathway from refuge to recovery. What they often don't see are the many people and organisations working behind the scenes to support them in achieving their goals.

We would like to recognise the expertise of our many partners and stakeholders and thank them for the valuable roles they play in the services we deliver.

Safe Steps is one of the first points of contact for women escaping family violence and the tireless work of its staff is greatly appreciated. We would particularly like to thank the Brief Intervention Team who refer clients to us and then collaborate with us in risk assessment and safety planning.

Once a client is settled into refuge, we work with many partners who provide fundamental support, including Centrelink and Victoria Legal Aid, who help our clients navigate sometimes complex aspects of support, while removing considerable stress.

Other community legal services, financial counselling services, and employment services such as Fitted for Work and the Red Cross also provide valued support to our clients.

Our staff regularly reach out to our partners when specialist assistance is required. This can include counselling from Centres Against Sexual Assault, or Positive Wellbeing After Violence Ends (+WAVES) Baptistcare, visits and advice from culturally specific organisations including InTouch, the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency and Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service, Thorne Harbour Health, Switchboard and consultations and case planning from Rainbow Door and Pride Disability Services.

Children require particular supports and our team of Children and Young Peoples Practitioners works closely with NDIS providers, enhanced maternal and child health practitioners, paediatricians, child

protection services and with the education system. We would like to acknowledge the work of enrolment officers, school counsellors, teachers, and student wellbeing officers, who all provide essential assistance to support children and young people who are escaping family violence with their parent.

We are truly thankful for all our partners, funders and supporters who provide financial and material aid to our clients. Women's Health West and FVREE assist us with funding for clients through the Flexible Support Package Program via the Victorian Government and organisations like The Generosity Collective and St Kilda Mums help resource clothing needs. We are also supported by organisations such as Eastern Emergency Relief Network, various foodbanks, St Vincent De Paul and the Salvation Army.

“ We are truly thankful for all our partners, funders and supporters who provide financial and material aid to our clients.

Housing services are crucial in our work to support women and children escaping family violence as they plan for their futures beyond refuge. Our partnership with Uniting, which provides Housing Connect in-reach support, is invaluable and facilitates a pathway to the private rental market for many of our clients.

Our alliances with Community Housing Ltd, Eastcare and Women's Housing Ltd allow us to provide short to medium-term housing options for our clients, and our collaborations with Uniting, EACH, Family Access Network and the Australian Childhood Foundation provides therapeutic intervention through the Pathways to Resilience Program in the Outer East.

To all those who work so tirelessly to support our work with families escaping violence, we sincerely thank you.

Nurse educator

When people think of the medical needs of those entering refuge, it's often about injuries and trauma sustained from violence.

Yet, even at the best of times, many of us have health issues we manage, doctors' appointments to keep, and medications to have dispensed – and for those who are dealing with the multiple pressures of escaping family violence, these health needs can sometimes fall through the cracks.

That's why this year, we introduced a nurse educator to our refuge staff. The nurse educator works with women and children to make sure that their health needs aren't adversely impacted by the move into refuge. The nurse educator can arrange appointments with doctors and specialists and can help make sure clients are able to attend them. They can support clients to get and manage the medications they are required to take.

The nurse educator supports clients to stay on top of regular health checks, such as breast screens and pap smears, and offers support and information about issues such as smoking cessation.

Mothers of small children have a lot of doctors' appointments and maternal health nurse visits to stay on top of, and the nurse educator supports mothers to make sure their kids don't miss out. For older kids, often immunisations are administered at school, and those who have had to take a break from school while in refuge have traditionally been at risk of missing out. The nurse educator can make sure every child has their necessary vaccinations.

Importantly, the nurse educator listens. They gain an understanding of the health concerns of the clients and makes sure they have the information and resources they need to take control of their wellbeing for the long-term.

CASE STUDY

Binh's story

Binh came into refuge with significant family law issues. Binh and her husband had arrived in Australia a few years before, and she spoke very little English.

The abuse Binh and her daughter experienced ranged from coercive control to sexual and physical assault. Following a violent episode that saw Binh and her daughter hospitalised, Binh was referred to Safe Steps and was assessed to be at serious risk and requiring immediate protection.

During her time in refuge, Binh's mother-in-law used cultural expectations in an attempt to convince her to return, but Binh was committed to never return.

Refuge Victoria Case Workers engaged with Victoria Legal Aid to assist Binh in navigating family law issues, which included her husband's attempts at initiating mediation and her own wishes to relocate interstate.

Binh and her daughter were also referred to the Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault for therapeutic intervention, to help them heal and recover from sexual abuse.

Binh says that since arriving in Australia, her husband had limited her contact with others, leading to a sense of isolation and loneliness, but says she and her daughter have enjoyed the communal weekly breakfasts at the refuge, and the opportunities for social engagement with other residents.

The commitment of Binh to creating a safe and happy life for herself and her daughter has been an inspiration to staff and other clients.





LEARN @ Refuge Victoria

Families who come into refuge leave a lot behind. For their safety, they are relocated to areas often far from their communities. For kids in refuge, that can mean being pulled out of school.

Leaving school can be distressing for kids, and falling behind in their schooling can lead to a loss of motivation and set them up for a lifetime of disadvantage. That's why Refuge Victoria developed LEARN, a program designed to make sure a child's stay in refuge doesn't adversely affect their education.

LEARN provides individual tutoring in refuge as well as educational material, connects families to local schools, and helps children and their mothers integrate into the school community.

Children can have their learning areas assessed and are provided with educational supports that allow them to catch up on their learning or stay on track until longer term education plans are put in place.

Another service we have introduced this year is Positive Wellbeing After Violence Ends (+WAVES), a Baptcare-run therapeutic service designed to build empowerment, self-determination, safety and independence for families and individuals who have experienced family violence.

“ LEARN provides individual tutoring in refuge as well as educational material, connects families to local schools, and helps children and their mothers integrate into the school community.”

One of our refuges is participating in a 12-month pilot program, in which two therapeutic practitioners provide on-site sessions to any clients or families during their stay in refuge.

One client told us how the therapeutic program educated her about behaviours in past violent relationships. She says she now feels more confident in her ability to recognise these patterns of behaviours as potential warning signs in future relationships.



Acts of kindness and generosity

Every year, the work of Refuge Victoria is supported by individuals, businesses and community groups, keen to make a difference to families escaping family violence, and this year we received some amazing donations and made new friends and allies. Here are some of their stories.

A Christmas surprise

The wonderful generosity of the Melbourne office of global property and construction consulting firm Rider Levett Bucknall (RLB) decided to make a financial donation to help families who would be spending Christmas in refuge. They invited Refuge Victoria's Director of Services Trishia Barclay to speak to staff about the challenges facing parents and children fleeing family violence and the work Refuge Victoria does to support them.

So inspired were the RLB staff that several added to the donation from their own money, while many more went shopping, personally selecting and wrapping gifts. Thanks to the generosity of RLB staff, families in refuge enjoyed a wonderful Christmas dinner. In the week leading up to Christmas, refuge staff set up a 'shop', where kids could choose a present for their mums, enjoying the act of giving as much as opening their own presents.



Businesses with heart

Throughout the year, several businesses reached out to Refuge Victoria to offer donations and their expertise to assist our service.

In March, our friends from Mitre 10 held an International Women's Day breakfast at their Tooronga store. Tait Mitre 10 / Hardings is a great supporter of Refuge Victoria, and we look forward to continuing to work together to support vulnerable women in our community.

International consultancy firm, Accenture, invited our CEO Janet to speak at an event about how technology is being used by perpetrators of family violence, and what Refuge Victoria is doing to address it. The wonderful staff at Accenture raised money for Refuge Victoria and held a workshop where they used their expertise to address some of our technological challenges.

In May, Refuge Victoria was invited to Tribeca Financial's office to collect items that had been donated by their tribe and speak with staff about the impact that domestic violence has on families and the importance of much needed community support.



Community groups making a difference

Throughout the year, Refuge Victoria receives donations from many community groups. Quietly, humbly, and seeking nothing in return, their impact on families staying in refuge is immense.

Clients staying in Refuge Victoria's accommodation properties are all ages, shapes and sizes and our great friends at The Generosity Collective provide us with beautiful clothes specific to the needs of each client, as well as backpacks for families to carry them into their new lives.

“ All of the donations we receive fulfil a specific need and importantly free up funding that allows Refuge Victoria to deliver a wide range of essential services to our clients. We warmly thank all the individuals, businesses and community groups who continue to generously support families in refuge.

Bags of Love is a project run by Impact for Women, which provides every woman entering refuge with essentials such as toiletries and personal care items, edible treats such as chocolates, something personal like a photo album to start to create new memories, and sometimes a craft project or jigsaw puzzle.

Every person who enters refuge gets given a brand new set of bed linen, which they can take with them when they leave. With Refuge Victoria operating three core and cluster facilities, 15 refuge accommodation properties, and 35 transitional homes, that's a lot of bed linen!

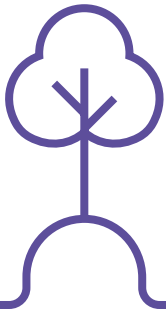
We're able to give every client a new set of bed linen thanks to the very generous donations from Sleep Safe and Next Steps. Often these two organisations provide us with enough bedding for all three refuge sites and crisis properties. That's around 100 beds each night!

Share the Dignity makes sure that women and girls in refuge are never forced to choose between buying food to eat or buying expensive sanitary items to get through their periods.

Women and girls are provided with packets of pads and tampons, as well as handbags filled with essentials, thanks to the generosity of Share the Dignity.

All of the donations we receive fulfil a specific need and importantly free up funding that allows Refuge Victoria to deliver a wide range of essential services to our clients. We warmly thank all the individuals, businesses and community groups who continue to generously support families in refuge.





Treasurer's Report

It is with pleasure that I present the Treasurer's Report for Refuge Victoria for the 2022/23 financial year.

The operating surplus for the year was \$97,940.

The result is a reflection of robust financial investment and planning throughout the year to ensure that Refuge Victoria could deliver all the necessary services to our clients.

Income for the year increased by 1% to \$7,330,516 compared to the previous year. Funding from the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, together with other generous supporters and donors all contributed to this result.

Operating expenses of \$7,232,576 for the year increased by 20% compared to the previous year. Increased expenses were attributable to staff salaries, WorkCover, property, depreciation, and other administration expenses.

Increased salary expenses were due to increased staff numbers across the whole year compared to the previous year. During 2021/22 there were staffing vacancies, which were gradually filled throughout the 2022/23 financial year.

Property expenses increased with important upgrades made to property infrastructure such as the installation of CCTV, Wi-Fi, playground equipment and gardens.

The rise in administrative costs was associated with various factors including investment in ICT services, and fees related to both maintenance and security services.

I am pleased to report that as at the end of the 2022/23 financial year, Refuge Victoria is in a very stable financial position with over \$3 million in cash reserves. The reserves will continue to be allocated as required to improve facilities and to support Refuge Victoria's staff to deliver the highest level of service to clients.

“ I am pleased to report that as at the end of the 2022/23 financial year, Refuge Victoria is in a very stable financial position with over \$3 million in cash reserves.

The Executive Team, with the support of the Board, will continue to manage the finances of Refuge Victoria prudently to ensure its work is supported by strong financial systems and best practises in the management of government funds that have been granted to the organisation.

I would like to thank all those who assisted during the year including the Board Finance and Audit Sub-Committee and in particular, Betty Wu, Finance and Corporate Services Manager.

It has been a privilege to serve as Treasurer for Refuge Victoria to support people escaping family violence to live safe and free.

Lino Sinni
Treasurer

Financial Summary

Refuge Victoria Inc

for year ending 30 June 2023

	2023	2022	2022
		Restated*	Original
Total Income	7,330,516	7,271,705	7,498,833
Expenditure			
Salaries and oncosts	4,830,614	4,288,552	4,288,552
Operating Costs	2,401,962	1,725,790	1,951,523
Total expenditure for the year	7,232,576	6,014,342	6,240,075
Total comprehensive income for the year	97,940	1,257,363	1,258,758

Summary Balance Sheet

as at 30 June 2023

	2023	2022	2022
		Restated*	Original
Current Assets	5,574,473	4,181,401	4,181,402
Non Current Assets	2,928,274	3,022,581	3,022,581
Total Assets	8,502,747	7,203,982	7,203,983
Current Liabilities	1,950,938	696,548	695,153
Non Current Liabilities	150,871	204,436	204,436
Total Liabilities	2,101,809	900,984	899,589
Net Assets	6,400,938	6,302,998	6,304,394
Equity			
Retained Earnings and Reserves	6,400,938	6,302,998	6,304,394
Total retained Earnings and Reserves	6,400,938	6,302,998	6,304,394

Highlights of the financial year

\$7.3M

Income

\$4.8M

Salaries and Oncosts

\$2.4M

Operational Costs

* The financial reports for 2021-2022 were restated due to a balance sheet adjustment accounting for the net impact from Flexible Support Packages as per AASB15.



Board of Directors 2022/23

We are grateful to Refuge Victoria's Board of Directors, who voluntarily share their expertise and skills to provide governance and strategic guidance to the organisation.



Emily Ryder
Chair



Raymond Burnett
Deputy Chair
(retired May 2023)



Bridget Thakrar
A/Deputy Chair



Lino Sinni
Treasurer



**Adj Professor
Karen Smith OAM**
Secretary



Bernadette Dobeli
Director
(retired July 2022)



Kerrie McMahon
Director
(retired February 2023)



Kerry McLean
Director
(retired May 2023)



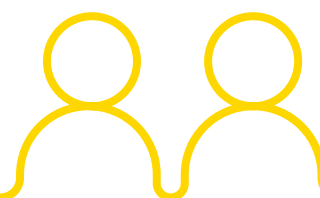
Mannie Kaur Verma
Director



Our staff

The lifeblood of Refuge Victoria is our amazing staff.

From the frontline service delivery staff who work with clients in refuge, to the finance and corporate services team at head office, every staff member brings to their work expertise, experience, passion, and an unwavering commitment to supporting families who are escaping violence.



Our supporters

Refuge Victoria's work would not be possible without the support of the Victorian Government and the generosity of the following individuals, organisations, community groups and businesses who have helped us to provide additional services and practical support for the people in our care.

Thank you for helping us to help them rebuild their lives, self-esteem and resilience, and take charge of their futures. We also acknowledge the support from donors who prefer to give anonymously.

Community support

Bacchus Marsh Lawn Tennis Club

BJ Quilters

IMPACT

Knitting for the Needy

Lions Club of Knox

Ringwood Clocktower Probus
Craft Group

RizeUp Australia

Rotary Club of Maroondah

Shimmy Mob Melbourne
(APB Dance)

The Generosity Collective

St Kilda Mums

Corporate support

Accenture

Anytime Fun Games

Contour Consultants

In The Game

Karoo Energy

Novo Shoes

Polo Ralph Lauren
Victorian Retail team

Barry Plant Eastern Group

Ray White Real Estate Croydon

Rider Levett Bucknall

Tait Mitre 10 Tooronga / Hardings

The Alannah &
Madeline Foundation

Tribeca Financial

Vanilla Sugar

Philanthropic support

Australian Communities Foundation in partnership
with Paul Ramsay Foundation

Next Steps Australia

StreetSmart

Individuals

M Anderson

F Andrews

F Buckingham

E Campbell

R Carter

D Cheong

D Cohen

D Corazzi

S Clifford

P Daffy

C Eddy

C Edwards

L Fiorda

Girlfriends Club

R Hayward

Haywood family

E Houghton

A Jackomos

S Kumaradevan

M Kearney

A King

Maroondah City Council staff
(Workplace Giving)

S McMillan

M Monger

J Nestor

J O'Connor

K Phelan

C Reside

M Sarwar

C Taylor

M G Thomas

H Titley

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria
(Herbarium staff)

R Tonge

V Tran

A Wilson

K & D Yong

Individual and family donors
in memory of Apiradee



Videos to help families entering refuge

Coming into refuge can be a daunting experience for families. At a time of enormous stress and disruption, women and children often have little idea about where they are going and what the future holds.

For children, it can be frightening. They're leaving their homes, their friends, often their schools, and we know that in the absence of knowledge, the imaginations of children can be their worst enemy, as they fill in the blanks with their fears.

That's why, this year Refuge Victoria produced two videos – one for adults and the other for children – designed for families entering refuge.

The videos, produced by Poached Egg Pictures, include a walk-through of where they will be staying, and an introduction to staff and the services they will provide and answer common questions, such as can the family pet come too?

The video for adults explains what will happen in refuge, and how refuge staff can work with them to create a safer life for their family. The video for children has a strong emphasis on reassurance and comfort and aims to get them excited about their stay in refuge by explaining how the staff can enrol them in community sporting activities, for example.

“ The videos include a walk-through of where they will be staying, and an introduction to staff and the services they will provide and answer common questions, such as can the family pet come too? ”

Having a film crew onsite for several days was a new and (mostly!) fun experience for refuge staff, who say it was a great way for them to showcase their work and share their passion for helping families escaping family violence.



For confidential support and information call (03) 9877 0311

All donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible. Refuge Victoria is a Deductible Gift Recipient.

Client names and identifying features used in this report have been changed to safeguard protection and privacy. Images of clients used are stock photos.

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www.refugevictoria.org.au