

Honouring the Past.

Empowering the Future.

Walking alongside women and children in crisis for fifty years.

Refuge Victoria | 50 years

Specialist Family Violence Service

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

Refuge Victoria

Refuge Victoria is one of the largest specialist providers of family violence refuge and crisis accommodation in Victoria.

We support and empower those at serious risk due to family violence on their journey to safety and freedom by providing refuge and crisis accommodation, risk assessment and management, case management support and outreach case management.

This year marks five decades of our work, and over this time we have seen significant growth, change, and transformation. From our beginnings in 1976, working out of a small three-bedroom house, to now operating three core-and-cluster refuges, fifteen standalone crisis accommodation properties, and nomination rights to 35 transitional homes – while our services have evolved, our mission has remained unchanged; to support, enable, and empower people escaping family violence.

Our experienced and passionate 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 LGBTIQA+ led families, families without permanent residency, with members who have a disability, and sibling groups escaping violence.

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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.

"Refuge Victoria will continue to advocate for a future where safety, dignity and respect are not aspirations, but realities for all."



Introduction to Refuge

This year, we pause to reflect on our goals, achievements, processes and policies, while looking ahead to the future of our services for women and children escaping family violence.

With a renewed commitment to supporting vulnerable women and children, we have implemented new frameworks, expanded successful programs, and continued to strengthen our sector, community and corporate partnerships– each playing an important role in Refuge Victoria's progress in service delivery.

Clients remain at the heart of everything we do. Their experiences and needs drive our ongoing efforts to develop, expand and embed innovative programs and practices, particularly for those with diverse, complex or intersectional needs.

Our goal is for every client to leave refuge equipped with the tools, resources and support they need to begin their next chapter with independence, safety and freedom.

Above all, we aspire to provide every client with respect, dignity, support and hope.



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

To further amplify our impact on those escaping violence by better supporting their journey from refuge to recovery.

1. **Elevating and Expanding Our Family Violence Practice**
   Expand holistic supports, tailor care for priority cohorts and continue embedding intersectionality to better meet the needs of clients and strengthen recovery pathways.
2. **Centring the Voices and Lived Experiences of Those we Support**
   Client voice is embedded and lived experience amplified within and across our workforce and organisation.
3. **Evidencing Our Impact**
   Our focus on measuring outcomes, evidence-informed outcomes, and knowledge sharing is deepened to support continuous improvement and contributions to systemic change.

Enablers

These enablers support delivery of our strategic action priorities.

1. **A Sustainable and Resilient Organisation**
   We will explore new and diverse revenue streams to strengthen our organisational sustainability.
2. **A Thriving and Well-Supported Workforce**
   We will strengthen our employee value proposition to become an employer of choice in the family violence sector.
3. **A Culture Grounded in Curiosity, Innovation, and Continuous Learning**
   Building on our existing culture of curiosity and innovation to refine how we work, strengthen problem-solving, and empower our people.

Chair's Report

I am honoured to present Refuge Victoria's 2025–26 Annual Report as Chair of the Board. As I complete my final official Chair Report, and bring six years on the Board to a close, I do so with deep gratitude for the privilege of playing a small part in an organisation that has spent 50 years supporting people experiencing family violence.



This year has been one of forward planning, progress and renewed commitment to our mission.

Together with the CEO, our Leadership Team and Impact Co., we reviewed our current organisational goals and future ambitions to develop our 2026–2030 Strategic Plan. This plan will guide us as we amplify our impact for people escaping violence, strengthening our support for their journey from refuge to recovery, and continuing to evolve in alignment with our broadened mission: not only safety for people experiencing family violence, but freedom.

As a governing Board, our focus has been on strengthening governance, leadership continuity and organisational oversight. Key priorities included financial sustainability, risk management and modernising governance systems, while maintaining strong service impact through outcome-measured initiatives and program evaluation.

This year, we endorsed the creation and implementation of our Staff Wellbeing Hub, an online resource staff can access to support their mental, financial and physical wellbeing – strengthening our commitment to supporting the people who make Refuge Victoria what it is.

We also recognise the importance of reminding those who contribute to Refuge Victoria that their time, generosity, efforts, and support are seen and deeply appreciated.

We saw important change within the Board this year. I would like to sincerely thank Board member Antoinette Masiero, who stepped down this year, for her dedication and invaluable contribution to the Board.

We warmly welcomed Christine Robinson, Gopika Gnanakumar and Alyson La'Brooy, who joined us as Board members in May 2026. Each bringing valuable skills, experience and expertise spanning policy, strategy, frontline practice and organisational leadership, both within the family violence sector and beyond.

Our Board Observership Program continued into its third year. Shabnam Daliri completed her observership, and we were pleased to welcome Claire Fisher as our 2025–26 Observer.

As part of ongoing succession planning, I am delighted to welcome Funda Ozenc as incoming Chair. I look forward to watching Refuge Victoria continue to evolve, innovate and achieve meaningful impact from the sidelines.

I would like to thank our CEO, Janet Jukes, for her leadership. Under Janet's guidance, Refuge Victoria has become more innovative, sophisticated and ambitious about the impact it seeks to have. I also thank our Leadership Team and staff for their expertise, dedication and commitment to excellent service delivery, and our donors, supporters and community partners, whose generosity continue to uplift and strengthen our work.

For fifty years, Refuge Victoria has supported women and children on their journey to freedom and safety. The client stories included in this report speak not only to the impact of this work, but also to the strength, courage and determination of the women we support. Together, we continue to honour their bravery and stand alongside women and children when they need it most – now and into the future.



Bridget Thakrar
Chair, Refuge Victoria

CEO's Report

This year's theme of **Honouring the Past, Empowering the Future** has invited us to pause, reflect and recommit. Fifty years after our first refuge opened its doors, our purpose remains unchanged: to support women and children escaping family violence with safety, dignity and hope.



As we celebrate five decades of support for women and children escaping violence, we reflect with gratitude on where we began, the impact we have made, and the responsibility we carry into the future.

This year has been one of growth, reflection and renewed focus. Across our services, we have continued to respond to the complex needs of women, children and families, while investing in programs, partnerships and practice improvements that strengthen our long-term impact.

This year, we supported 437 individuals, with children making up half of all clients. In our first annual report in 1976, we recorded support for 288 individuals, almost two thirds of whom were children. This comparison is a powerful reminder that, while the scale and context of our work have changed, the needs of children remain central to our purpose.

Our children's programs and initiatives are purposefully designed to foster connection, strengthen resilience, and build confidence. The expansion of our Play Therapy program across all three sites has seen great outcomes for participating children and families, and its expansion will see that an even greater number of clients will be able to access this vital support.

Our Breakfast Club has also expanded across sites, providing children with connection and routine in the mornings and improving school attendance. These initiatives are vital support mechanisms for children and young people in refuge, supporting long-term wellbeing and protective factors for children and families who have experienced family violence.

We recognise and honour the diversity of our clients' experiences, backgrounds, and identities – welcoming clients of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent, migrant and refugee communities, non-permanent residents, and those who identify as LGBTIQA+.

We are committed to supporting, responding and engaging clients with respect, cultural safety and intersectionality at the forefront.

The implementation of the Empowerment Star case management tool has supported this framework by elevating and centring client voice and experience in their journey of change.

As we look back on fifty years, we recognise the partnerships, community connections, and donor support that continues to enhance and strengthen our impact. I extend my sincere thanks to our staff, Board, partners, donors and community supporters for their commitment to this work.

Looking ahead, our strategic plan for 2026–2030 guides us through our next chapter, with a focus on amplifying our impact with intersectional feminism at our core. Together, we honour the courage of the women and children we support and continue to build a future where safety, recovery and empowerment are possible.



Janet Jukes OAM
Chief Executive Officer

Our Impact

Number of Clients

437

Recorded contacts made

71,437

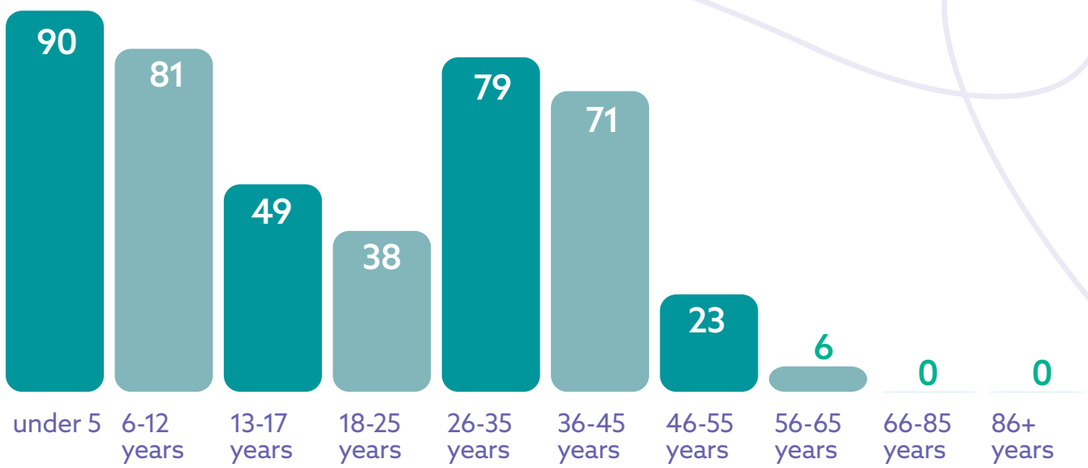
♀

Female: 315
72%

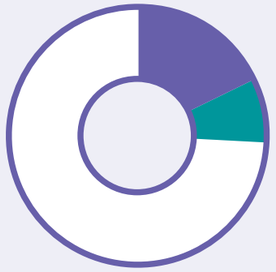
♂

Male: 122
28%

Age of Clients



First Nations Clients



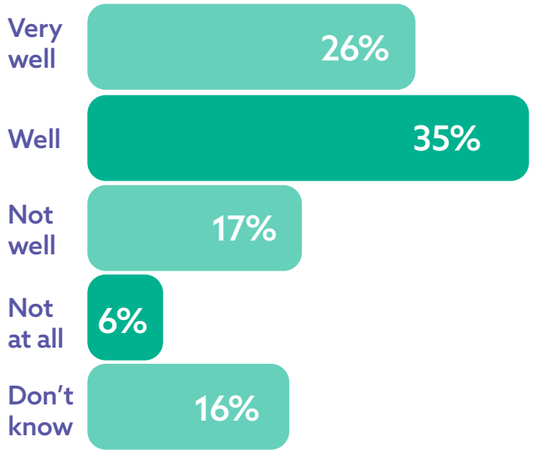
Top 5 languages
(spoken by clients, other than English)

1. Arabic
2. Bengali
3. Filipino
4. Persian
5. Dinka

Number of clients who required an interpreter

93

English proficiency





Number of nights people escaping family violence had a secure place to sleep

15,041

Honouring the Past.
Empowering the Future.

This year's annual report theme, 'Honouring the Past, Empowering the Future', reflects both a milestone moment and an ongoing commitment to the women and children we exist to support. As we mark fifty years of service, we pause to recognise the courage, vision and determination that shaped our beginnings, while also looking ahead to the future we continue to build together.

Our story began in 1976, when dedicated workers and community members responded to an urgent need for safety, refuge and support for women and children escaping family violence. Their work created the foundations of a service grounded in compassion, advocacy and belief in every person's right to live free from violence. Over the past five decades, many staff, volunteers, partners and supporters have carried that work forward, adapting to changing needs while holding firm to the values that continue to guide us.

Honouring the past also means honouring the women and children who have trusted us during some of the most difficult moments of their lives. Their strength, resilience and hopes for a safer future remain at the heart of our purpose. Their experiences continue to shape the way we listen, respond, advocate and improve.

Empowering the future speaks to our commitment to growth, innovation and meaningful change. In this year's annual report, you will read about our beginnings, stories of hope, and the new and expanded programs and frameworks strengthening our response. You will also see how collaboration, specialist practice and community support continue to play a vital role in improving outcomes for victim-survivors.

While fifty years have passed, our mission remains unwavering. We continue to stand alongside women and children escaping family violence, providing support through crisis, recovery and healing, and advocating for a future where safety, dignity and respect are not aspirations, but realities for all.

1976




Co-ordinador of the Office of Women's Affairs in the Premier's Department, Dimity Reed (left), Domestic Violence Committee members, Judy and Con, at the recent campaign launching

Wanted: a haven for those in strife

By NANCY DEXTER

"Without adequate statistics it is hard to convince some people of the need for help. We have no statistics. Nobody seems to have thought the subject important enough."

The better side of women's liberation

NANCY DEXTER TAKES NOTE



1990







2012









2021









2026









Five Decades of Responding to Change

What does it mean to keep evolving?

For more than 50 years, Refuge Victoria has adapted its services in response to the needs of women and children.

When the organisation began in 1976, family violence was rarely discussed openly. It was often viewed as an issue affecting women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, rather than a widespread social issue requiring a coordinated community response.

Two local women, Jean and Pat, attended a meeting at Ringwood Library organised with the Women's Electoral Lobby. What began as a conversation about domestic violence became the beginnings of refuge.

The first refuge was a three-bedroom house in Maroondah. There were bunk beds, shared rooms and, at times, four women and more than ten children living together.

Staff provided food, helped care for children and worked long hours to support families with very limited resources. There was no established model of professional refuge work; much of the service was built through practical support, community connections and a willingness to respond to whatever women and children needed.

From a place to stay, to a service built around safety and recovery

As understanding of family violence grew, so did expectations of what refuge could provide.

Refuge Victoria began developing programs that recognised that leaving violence was not simply about finding somewhere safe to sleep. Women and children often arrived carrying the effects of trauma, disrupted education, isolation and financial insecurity.

Over time, we introduced new ways of supporting children and young people, including dedicated child support roles and education-focused initiatives.

Former staff recall the importance of creating opportunities for children to remain connected to school and ensuring that refuge could respond to the needs of entire families, rather than treating children as an extension of their mother's experience.

This evolution also meant challenging assumptions about who could access refuge. Our service adapted to accommodate families who did not fit within traditional refuge models and recognised that safety needs to be flexible enough to respond to individual circumstances.







To keep evolving means continually adapting and innovating to provide flexible, trauma-informed support that meets the evolving needs of families beyond just emergency shelter.





Re-imagining refuge

A significant shift came with the development of core-and-cluster and dispersed refuge models.

This represented more than a change in buildings. Moving away from large communal environments and creating greater privacy, independence and flexibility for women and children while maintaining the specialist safety planning, secure locations and support of refuge.

Today, Refuge Victoria operates a combination of core-and-cluster and dispersed properties, allowing us to respond to families with different needs.

Dispersed properties, in particular, can provide options for families who may not be suited to a traditional refuge environment – including larger families who need to remain together.

The support surrounding families has evolved alongside the accommodation. Refuge Victoria now has Children and Young People's Practitioners, Nurse Educators and trauma-informed therapeutic supports, recognising that safety is only the beginning of recovery.

Still evolving

Looking back across five decades reveals both enormous change and persistent challenges. The language, professionalisation and physical environment of refuge have changed dramatically, while the need to respond creatively to women and children's individual circumstances remains.

From our beginnings in a small, rented house, to a contemporary service offering secure accommodation, specialist support and programs, Refuge Victoria's history is one of continual adaptation and innovation.





The Empowerment Star

Following training in 2025, Refuge Victoria embedded the Empowerment Star (Star) case management tool, strengthening our practice framework and centring client voice in their journey of change.

The Empowerment Star supports people who have experienced family violence in any form. It is designed to help clients build a life where they are safe, empowered and able to make choices that are right for them. The impacts of abuse can be profound, affecting many areas of life and how clients feel about themselves.

Used as a case management tool, the Star helps clients reflect on how things are right now across nine areas of life, including safety, support networks and health and wellbeing. Together with their case manager, clients can identify what needs to change so they can have greater power over their own life and choices, free from fear and abuse.

Clients entering refuge complete a Star at the start of their time with us, midway through their stay and again when leaving refuge. The Star provides a visible representation of progress in their journey of change, highlighting areas of focus alongside the skills, strengths and supports that have helped.

Inala's Story

Inala* is a 65-year-old Aboriginal woman who was forced to leave her home due to family violence from her adult son. This is her story.

I'm a mother of four children, a grandmother of 18 and soon to be a great-grandmother of three. I'm an Aboriginal woman and I'm very proud of who I am. Well, I am again now, thanks to the girls at Refuge Victoria.

For several years, I experienced family violence from my son. He'd been in prison and was struggling with drug addiction, and his behaviour became increasingly controlling and frightening. He tried to run me over, damaged my home, attempted to burn my house down and hurt things that were important to me. He kicked my dog and smashed a precious ornament that belonged to my grandmother.

I raised three of his children for ten years. He wasn't living with me, but he would come to my home and take over. He turned my grandchildren against me and eventually I was too scared to stay. I had to flee for fear of my life.

I spent months couch surfing and staying with family until I became worried that my son would find me and disrupt their lives too. Eventually, I moved from motel to motel. One motel was so unsafe and unhygienic – cockroaches crawling in the bed! – that I refused to stay there, saying I would rather sleep on the street.

Then one of my support workers from Djirra offered to connect me with Refuge Victoria. I said yes, and I'm so glad I did. When I arrived, I had lost my strength and self-respect. I was fearful and struggling to communicate and find my way through everything that had happened.



Refuge Victoria gave me my strength back. My case manager supported me, helped me communicate, arranged and took me to medical appointments, and helped me get everything sorted with Centrelink. She even helped me retrieve my dog, who was able to come with me.

Refuge Victoria also helped me secure a beautiful two-bedroom unit through the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. With support from RizeUp, the home was furnished beautifully for me. When I walked in, it felt like heaven.

I am safe now and I can breathe again. I'm still a little jumpy after everything that happened, but I'm determined not to live in fear.

My life has completely turned around. I went in negative and came out positive, and my children have noticed the difference. Now that I'm safe, I want to get out and live my life. I want to be more social, meet people and go places. I want to reconnect with my grandchildren. Most of all, I want to live the rest of my life for me.

The team at Refuge Victoria are angels in human bodies. They're comforting, caring and constructive. They gave me my strength back and helped me find myself again.

– Inala

**Name has been changed to protect Inala's identity.*





Play Therapy

Play therapy provides children who have experienced family violence with a safe and supportive space to understand and express their emotions and experiences through therapeutic play.

Thanks to a generous donation from the Pamela Lister-Rickard Foundation, play therapy expanded across all refuge sites, with the East sites commencing in mid-2026.

A total of 47 children from 31 families engaged with a play therapist to explore their feelings and experiences, develop stronger emotional regulation, build resilience and strengthen relationships with their parents.

In addition, 28 individual sessions were held with parents, supporting them to better understand their children's emotions and responses to trauma, and to strengthen connection with their child/ren.

Weekend Case Manager

The introduction of a Weekend Case Manager role this year has strengthened our capacity to provide consistent, responsive support across all refuge sites.

By extending intake and case management support across weekends, the role has helped ensure clients can access timely guidance, safety planning and practical assistance when they need it most.

It has also created additional opportunities for informal psychoeducation and supportive conversations, often at times when clients are more settled and able to engage.

The role has also strengthened support for weekend staff by providing onsite practice guidance, advice and escalation support. This has helped promote consistent decision-making, reduce pressure on on-call staff and support a more coordinated response for clients across the week.



The Big Day Out

The Big Day Out and community excursions recorded the highest participation across the program, reflecting the value families placed on supported opportunities to reconnect with their community. Families impacted by family violence can face significant barriers to participation, including financial hardship, social isolation, coercive control, housing instability and the complexities of supporting children with additional needs.

Through trauma-informed and relational practice, staff supported families to safely access new environments, build confidence and strengthen positive family connections. These activities helped reduce social isolation, increase community participation, support emotional regulation, strengthen parent–child relationships and create opportunities for children to experience belonging, autonomy and joy.

The impact of these activities was particularly meaningful for James*, aged 10, who has Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD and intellectual disability.

James has experienced family violence, housing instability and disruptions to education, medical care and disability supports. Throughout these challenges, reptiles have remained a consistent and important interest, and James hopes to one day become a zoologist or zookeeper.

During the Big Day Out event, James engaged enthusiastically in a live wildlife education session featuring native Australian reptiles. His excitement, preparation and curiosity were evident from the outset. Recognising his interest, the wildlife educator invited James to assist with setting up the session, which he approached with confidence and focus.

When the presenter mentioned the Eastern Blue-tongue's 'cousin', James immediately responded, ***'You have the Shingleback!'***

His knowledge impressed the presenter and highlighted his strengths, creating a meaningful opportunity for James to feel recognised, capable and connected through an experience aligned with his interests and future aspirations.

** Name has been changed to protect James' identity.*





Partners and Stakeholders

This year, as we honour Refuge Victoria's legacy and look to the future, we recognise the partners, donors and community supporters who make our work possible. Their generosity and expertise help us respond to immediate crisis, support recovery and create pathways toward safety, stability and independence for women, children and families.

Our long-standing relationship with Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre remains central to the way clients access refuge and crisis accommodation, through referrals, risk assessment and safety planning.

Once families enter refuge, Centrelink, Victoria Legal Aid, community legal services, financial counsellors, RizeUp and the Red Cross help clients navigate complex systems and take their next steps.

Specialist partnerships strengthen the depth and responsiveness of our practice. FVREE, Odyssey House and Rainbow Door provide secondary consultation and expertise for clients with complex needs, while Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service, the Victorian Aboriginal Child and Community Agency and inTouch enrich our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and clients from culturally diverse communities. Pride Disability and Rainbow Door also support our Refuge to Recovery program.

Children's wellbeing remains a strong focus. Playroom Therapy continues to support the expansion of play therapy across all three sites, while NDIS providers, maternal and child health practitioners, paediatricians, child protection services and schools help restore safety, routine and connection for children and young people.

Practical, material and financial support also makes a meaningful difference. Kind Hearts Collective, the AFL and Tennis Australia create opportunities for connection and joy, while The Generosity Collective, DV Collective, Our Village, Next Steps, EERN and Friends with Dignity provide essentials such as clothing and furniture.

Generous support from the Pamela Lister-Rickard Foundation and Business Concepts Group has helped sustain therapeutic and breakfast club programs for children and young people.

Housing partners, including Uniting Housing Connect, Community Housing Ltd, Women's Housing Ltd and Eastcare, help create pathways beyond refuge. Through Odyssey Victoria, staff have also accessed training that supports professional development and responsive practice.

To every partner, donor, supporter and stakeholder who has contributed time, expertise, resources and generosity this year: ***thank you.*** *Your support strengthens Refuge Victoria and helps women, children and families find safety today and hope for tomorrow.*





The Many Forms of Generosity

Every year, we are reminded of the kindness and generosity of others – not only through financial donations, but through the giving of time, resources, opportunities, and care.

This year, we have been supported by businesses, community groups, sporting organisations, and individuals from many different sectors and walks of life. The support they provide may look different, but each contribution has a meaningful impact on our services and on the healing journey of our clients.

For some donors, that impact has come through strengthening the programs we are able to offer. Our corporate donors Francom and Business Concepts Group supported Refuge Victoria in the delivery of therapeutic and children's programs, aimed at improving the mental, social, and physical wellbeing of children and young people in our service.

Others have helped create moments of joy and connection during an incredibly difficult time. Sports partners Tennis Australia and the AFL provided tickets to community events, giving clients the opportunity to make special memories while in refuge. During a time that can be full of change and uncertainty, one event or experience can lift spirits and give clients the encouragement they need to continue their healing journey.

We are also so appreciative of our community donors and partners, many of whom are powered by volunteers. These partners and their communities give their time and energy to provide essential items, meaningful experiences, and opportunities for clients to connect with their children, staff, and others.

Kind Hearts Collective generously hosted Refuge Victoria's annual Mother's Day event. The day included flower bouquet making, 'glow up' stations with hair, makeup and beautician stylists, face painting, goodie bags for mums and kids, and lots of delicious food shared.

This was a day not only for mums to feel treated, but for mums and children to spend time together outside of refuge in a safe and beautiful environment overlooking the park.

Other partners continue to meet practical needs in ways that carry deep meaning. The Generosity Collective has worked alongside Refuge Victoria for over five years, and we continue to be so grateful for their support in providing clothing packs to our clients. These clothing packs are not only essential, but also provide clients with the dignity and care they deserve.

Our newest community partner, Domestic Violence (DV) Collective, has also helped meet an important need for clients as they move from refuge into independent living. DV Collective works as a connector between businesses and charities, creating opportunities for material, financial, and community support.

Thanks to DV Collective, we were able to receive kitchen packs for exiting clients. These packs included everything needed to get settled into a new home, supporting clients through this significant transition while also providing them with dignity.





















The Power of Social Media

This year, as part of our strategic plan, Refuge Victoria established social media profiles on Instagram and Facebook, creating new ways for people to learn about our work, connect with our services, and support the women and children we walk alongside.

While our platforms are still growing, they have already become an important tool for awareness. Through social media, we are able to share information about Refuge Victoria's services, helping women and children seeking refuge understand what support is available and how they can access it.

Social media has also opened new opportunities for community support. Through our online presence, we connected with SilvaSide Biltong, a family-owned business that chose to fundraise for Refuge Victoria during May, coinciding with Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month. Their fundraiser raised more than $6,000 to support our organisation, while also helping to increase awareness of family violence prevention and the supports available to those looking to leave.

These early connections remind us that social media is more than a place to share updates. It is a space where awareness can grow, generosity can be encouraged, and important conversations about prevention and support can reach more people in the community.

Bringing Comfort and Joy

Christmas often brings out the generosity of others, and this year we were especially moved by the kindness shown by our community.

More than fifteen donors provided toys, toiletries, cosmetics, accessories, gift cards, food hampers, sporting equipment, electronics, and more, helping families spending Christmas in refuge feel remembered and cared for.

On Christmas Day, our refuges were buzzing as staff laid out meals while women and children unwrapped presents together. For some, it was the first time in a long time they had received gifts, making these moments especially meaningful during what can be a difficult and emotional time.

For one little girl, who had only hoped for a Barbie to play with, the excitement was unforgettable when she received not only a Barbie, but also Barbie's neon pink convertible. It was a small moment made possible by the generosity of others, but one that created a memory filled with surprise, delight, and care.

These gifts were more than presents under a tree. They were reminders that our clients are seen and supported by a community that cares. As we look ahead, we hope to continue building on this generosity, ensuring more families experience comfort, dignity, and joy when they need it most.

Donor Spotlight

The Pamela Lister-Rickard (PLR) Foundation provides grants to organisations supporting victim-survivors of family and domestic violence.

This year, Refuge Victoria has been fortunate to receive support from the PLR Foundation towards the expansion and ongoing implementation of our Play Therapy Program.

The program aligns with evidence-based, trauma-informed practice using creative, non-verbal methods like art and play to help children process trauma safely and at their own pace. For children who have experienced family violence, this program enables significant developmental progress, supports the development of emotional regulation skills, rebuilds a sense of safety, and above all, sets children up for the best start in their healing and recovery journey.

Thanks to the PLR Foundation's generosity and support, we have been able to implement the program in an ongoing capacity across all three core-and-cluster refuge sites, enabling greater access to the program for all clients and enhancing the support we provide.

Treasurer's Report



It is my pleasure to present the Treasurer's Report for Refuge Victoria for the 2025–26 financial year, a significant year as we celebrate 50 years of supporting people escaping family violence to live safe and free.

Refuge Victoria remains in a sound financial position. Total income increased by 5.4% during the year, driven primarily by government grants. Grant and services income was $8.01 million, an increase of 5.3% on the prior year.

Approximately 95% of total income was provided by the Victorian Government, with recurrent funding confirmed for a further two years.

Donations were also a strong contributor, increasing by 67% to $203,581, compared with $121,676 in FY25. We are grateful for the generosity of our donors. The donations received have been put to work funding the positive initiatives highlighted throughout this report.

Interest income reduced by $58,000 following the transfer of $1 million from term deposits into a managed investment portfolio and lower term deposit balances. The portfolio also recorded a fair value gain of $20,689, recognised through the annual surplus.

Employee costs were $6.02 million, an increase of 4.4%, and remained steady at approximately 71% of total income. The Board and management continue to manage expenditure carefully, ensuring resources are directed with a clear focus on outcomes.

Net assets decreased by $2.40 million, primarily due to a $2.42 million accounting adjustment to remove properties controlled by associates of Refuge Victoria from the financial statements.

This reflects a change in accounting treatment rather than a reduction in the organisation's financial resources. Importantly, the adjustment has no cash impact and does not affect Refuge Victoria's underlying financial position or long-term financial sustainability.

As Refuge Victoria marks 50 years of service, the Board remains committed to prudent stewardship, strong governance and ensuring our financial resources continue to support safe, sustainable and high-quality services for people escaping family violence.

I thank my fellow Board members, the Finance, Risk and Audit Sub-Committee, and staff for their continued commitment and stewardship throughout the year.

Their contribution helps ensure Refuge Victoria enters its next 50 years from a strong foundation.



Hamish Wood
Treasurer

Financial Summary

	2025–26	2024-25
Total Income	**8,432,997**	**8,004,431**
Expenditure		
Salaries and Oncosts	6,015,664	5,761,875
Operating Costs	2,392,973	2,192,730
Total Expenditure for the Year	8,408,637	7,954,605
Total Comprehensive Income for the Year	**24,360**	**49,826**

Summary Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2026

Current Assets	4,405,867	5,282,906
Non Current Assets	1,924,714	3,486,267
Total Assets	**6,330,581**	**8,769,173**
Current Liabilities	1,440,263	1,413,860
Non Current Liabilities	497,844	563,113
Total Liabilities	**1,938,107**	**1,976,973**
Net Assets	**4,392,474**	**6,792,200**
Equity		
Retained Earnings and Reserves	4,392,474	6,792,200
Total retained Earnings and Reserves	**4,392,474**	**6,792,200**

Highlights of the 2025–26 Financial Year

$8.43M	**$6.01M**	**$2.39M**
Income	Salaries and Oncosts	Operational Costs

Board of Directors 2025–26

Refuge Victoria is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors; a skilled group of professionals who are leaders in their chosen fields.

Thank you to our Board Directors for sharing their time and expertise to provide the governance and strategic guidance in line with the organisation's purpose, vision and mission.



Bridget Thakrar
Chair



Funda Ozenc
Deputy Chair



Hamish Wood
Treasurer



Professor Heather Douglas AM
Secretary



Sandra Treadwell-Monk
Director



Christine Robinson
Director



Alyson La'Brooy
Director



Gopika Gnanakumar
Director



Dr Kim Robinson
Director



Antoinette Masiero
Director
(up to April 2026)

Board Observers



Claire Fisher
Board Observer
(The Observership Program participant from February 2026)



Shabnam Daliri
Board Observer
(The Observership Program participant until Dec 2025)

Our People

Our people remain the heart of our organisation – a dedicated community whose passion, adaptability, and care have driven 50 years of evolution in keeping women and children safe.































Volunteers & Supporters

Refuge Victoria's work would not be possible without the support of the Victorian Government, and we acknowledge funding from the Department of Families, Fairness, and Housing with great appreciation.

We also acknowledge the continued generosity of individuals, community groups and businesses who have helped us provide advocacy, additional services, referral, and practical support to our clients.

COMMUNITY

Friends with Dignity
The Generosity Collective
Domestic Violence Collective
Impact for Women
Next Steps Australia
RizeUp Australia
Street Smart
Zephyr Education
Kind Hearts Collective
Melbourne Grammar School
Victoria Police
Smokin' Muay Thai
Lions Club Baroondah; Melbourne Markets
Shantiworks
Two Good
Reading Out of Poverty
St Kilda Mums
Safe Steps
Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service
InTouch
Djirra
Encore Logistics
AMES
FVREE
EACH - east
Haven Home Safe
Womens Legal Service
Odyessy Victoria
Deakin University
Gen West
Kara House
Elizabeth Morgan House
VACCA
Switchboard
Thorne Harbour Health

CORPORATE

AFL
Tennis Australia
Baker and McKenzie Law Firm
CorePlus Malvern East
University of Melbourne
Additive Solutions
MOFA
Blind Factory
Ray White Real Estate Croydon
Rothwell Lawyers
Sheet Society
Bunnings
International Entertainment (Aus)
Francom
Victoria Forensic Police
Hyde Melbourne
Silvaside Biltong
Baker McKenzie

PHILANTHROPIC

Philip Webb
Tennis Australia Foundation

TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS

Business Concepts Group
Harry Cohney Charitable Foundation
Pamela Lister-Rickard Foundation
Bagot Gjergja Foundation

INDIVIDUALS

D Peiris
D Slinger
R Doyle
K & D Yong
R Corke
J Lawson
M Hall
C Taylor
N Rushton
F Andrews
M Stevens
V Barillaro
C Holmes
A Siciliano
A Hudson
A Henderson-Miller
O Green
C Dowling
M Bowden
D Aitkins
L Stoddart
E Murray
N Bruning
M Velyanovski
E McDonald
K Harris
L Levin
M Cia
I Windsor
J Purchase
G Sutton
C Stronghilis
M Poliness
M Moore
Individual and family donors in memory of Apiradee

Alongside many generous anonymous donors, and 400+ individual one-off donors

VOLUNTEERS

Vicki C
Lou
Avelyn
Lynne
Kat

Refuge Victoria | 50 years
Specialist Family Violence Service

Specialist Family Violence Service
For confidential support and information call **(03) 9877 0311**

If you are in immediate danger, call 000. For 24/7 support, contact Safe Steps on 1800 015 188 or 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732.

PO Box 12
Ringwood VIC 3134
www.refugevictoria.org.au

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. 10558