



Reconnecting
with our Past to
ensure a better
future



"History is about being truthful. But it is not about determining or deciding what is 'the truth.' Rather, it is about curiosity, empathy, and honesty, in a critical and constructive way. It is about being willing to admit when we are wrong, and being open-minded enough to recognise when that is. History is about being truthful with ourselves."

Image caption:

Acknowledgement

Drummond Street Services respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands upon which we deliver our programs and services across Victoria. This includes the lands of the Kulin Nations, in Naarm - now known as Melbourne. In the City of Melbourne, we deliver services and programs on the lands of the Wurundjeri, Boonwurrung, Taungurung, Dja Dja Wurrung and the Wadawurrung groups, whose connection to the land and its waterways extends back tens of thousands of years, and back to when their creator spirit Bunjil formed the land and all living things. In the City of Wyndham, we acknowledge the Wathaurong, Woiwurrung and Boonwurrung people, in the city of Geelong we acknowledge the Wadawurrung people and in the city of Whittlesea we acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan as the traditional owners of these lands.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first people of Australia. They have never ceded sovereignty and remain strong in their connection to land and culture, and in resisting colonisation. We also pay respect to the wisdom and diversity of past and present Elders and share commitment to nurturing future generations of Elders in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



Words from our President

As we emerge from the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and take a moment to reflect on the past few years, it becomes evident that our ability to recognise and respond to the evolving needs of our clients and responding to social injustices is a remarkable achievement and a testament to our framework.

Providing food to individuals living in unlawfully locked housing towers and offering support and housing trans sex workers, while also caring for our dedicated staff was a privilege. We learnt that whilst our challenges have changed from the ones faced during the pandemic, the challenges have left a lingering impact, which in many cases have become more intense with the rising cost of living. I have no doubt we can take on and support people during these challenges. Having served on the DS Board for many years I have seen proof of the incredible ways we can tackle tricky challenges and is why I was happy to be elected as Board President. In terms of personal challenges in taking on this role, the recent discovery that our organisation has a historical childhood sexual abuse claim was profoundly challenging. However, the decision to take on the role of President for the upcoming period, as we navigated the aftermath, was facilitated by the open, honest, and empathetic response from our board toward survivors. I pay recognition to the many of our staff and board members are survivors themselves as we embarked on a path that involved confronting our history, taking accountability for the actions of our predecessors, and thoroughly examining ourselves, our attitudes, systems and processes to ensure the safety of our clients in our workplace. We take pride in the way we responded by



Nerida Nettelbeck
President
Drummond Street Services

seeking assistance from external experts, processing our emotions individually and collectively, and embarking on a journey of self-discovery, reflection, learning, and growth. We threw ourselves into engaging in the restoration process and continue to be vigilant in this area. This process remains ongoing as we constantly learn from our history to guide our future. In our commitment to social justice, the board has further developed by implementing our community governance framework with the LGBTIQ+ community. We've also collaborated to co-produce a legal service specifically tailored to this community in partnership with Fitzroy Legal and Drummond Street Services, overseen by our LGBTQI+ Community Board.

Our board membership has remained stable, with several members serving for five or more years. We have actively sought to bring new voices to the table, diversifying our board to reflect the diversity in our employment practices for staff.

We are immensely grateful for the tremendous amount of work accomplished in a short period of time. Our appreciation extends to the executive team, superbly led by CEO Karen Field, and to all the staff who have become part of the Drummond Street Services family as we collectively work toward healing, reconciliation, and trust.

We have always embraced a framework that prioritises the health and well-being of all, with a particular focus on those who are often marginalised.

Our commitment to social justice shapes our work, ensuring the best possible support for everyone we engage with. Through decades of research, we consistently find that positive home environments, strong connections, peer support, and a sense of belonging are crucial in mitigating life's challenges. This knowledge is not just derived from research but also resonates with the feedback we receive from our clients across all age groups.

Our ongoing efforts to amplify the voices of those who are often unheard have driven our improvement and evolution over the years. We maintain our dedication to co-design with peer organisations and building partnerships with various levels of government.

While lockdowns are becoming a distant memory, their impacts linger, leaving a lasting mark on the lives of those we work with in all aspects of our work. The disruptions caused by the pandemic have far-reaching effects on social connections and overall well-being, especially for those who endured hard lockdowns and we still work closely with many of the families that endured some of the most unfair treatment during that period.

We've witnessed a troubling increase in distressed families due to income and housing insecurity. The rising cost of living has added stress to their lives, and we acknowledge the importance of our programs as a refuge from these pressures. Our safe and supportive environment and support services offer practical and emotional support, allowing families to navigate challenges associated with financial hardship and isolation. By fostering a sense of belonging and connection, we empower people and their families to find solace, resilience, and renewed hope amidst their financial burdens.

As part of our ongoing commitment to the principles of Social Justice, we hosted two significant All Staff events in collaboration

with the Loud Fence/Ashtree project. These events were a crucial element of our response to Drummond Street Services' recognition as a participating Institution and the reception of a Redress claim in September 2020. Acknowledging our involvement in historical institutional abuse was a challenging process for survivors, our leadership, staff, and our clients. Nevertheless, it was an essential step in the healing process. In conjunction with these events, we engaged in meaningful discussions with our Redress team and the survivors within our workforce. Attendance at these events was mandatory for all staff members, where we delved into the history of our organisation, addressing both its strengths and shortcomings. This exploration not only provided us with a more comprehensive understanding of our organisation but also shed light on the political context of the era, equipping us with valuable tools to rectify past wrongs and ensure that we own our previous wrongdoings in hope helping survivors heal but also prevent future harms.

At Drummond Street Services, we're committed to continuing our universal engagement and preventative initiatives, ensuring that those we work with can easily access support when needed. By enhancing collaboration and applying an intersectional and place-based approach to our work, we strive to ensure that those in need, regardless of their identities and diverse experiences, can pursue their dreams without limitations. From the pandemic to environmental issues and the cost-of-living crisis, we've learned that nothing is certain, but it's our duty to make a positive and active difference in the lives of those we directly support and, hopefully, have a broader impact. Our regular publication, Archer Magazine, has been a significant undertaking that few organisations like ours would tackle. However, it aligns seamlessly with our commitment to social justice by amplifying the voices that are often overlooked. We are proud to have dedicated the past financial year to amplifying the voices of those affected by incarceration, as well as the disability community, resulting in two of the magazine's most celebrated editions. Working closely with the Archer team has provided valuable insights and enriched our mission. As we approach

Words from our CEO

Archer Magazine's 10th anniversary, we look forward to continued growth in this essential area of our work. Reviewing all the diverse areas of our work and the wide range of services we offer throughout Victoria, from our support for disconnected youth & our work with families, addressing the persistent challenges faced by the LGBTIQ+ communities, to the work we do supporting those pre and post release from incarceration and beyond, I want to express my profound gratitude to our devoted staff and volunteers throughout the organisation. Your steadfast dedication to our vital work and your unwavering commitment to enacting social justice set us apart and fills me with immense pride. To our valued funders, partners, and continuing supporters, I extend my heartfelt thanks. We couldn't do it without you.



Karen Field
Chief Executive Officer
Drummond Street Services



Accreditation

High quality services and ethical practice

Part of our action that supports DS in delivering its Social Justice Framework is to ensure DS has a quality improvement framework, that is continually active and responsive in providing systems and resources that enable our workers to provide the best quality of care to all clients, program participants and partners.

Growing an organisation in an ever-increasing compliance environment has presented challenges for an innovative and fast paced organisation. However, accepting that compliance and systematic approaches to quality and performance builds stronger, more efficient organisations, will be positive for DS into the future.

This year DS achieved its second accreditation in Human Services Standard, Mental Health and QIC governance standards.

Some of the strengths highlighted by the accreditation are:

- The valued that is placed in diversity, intersectionality and lived experience – we are seen as a village that pulls together to get the best outcomes for clients.
- Our commitment to research and evaluation that builds an evidence base and confirms outcomes.
- Comprehensive resources and guiding documents, especially the protection of children is impressive.

“It’s when we stop embracing new knowledge and understanding that we build the walls that divide cultures and inhibit growth.”

– Unknown



3,010

Number of people
Intake contacted
by phone



700

Number of online
registrations of
interest received



719

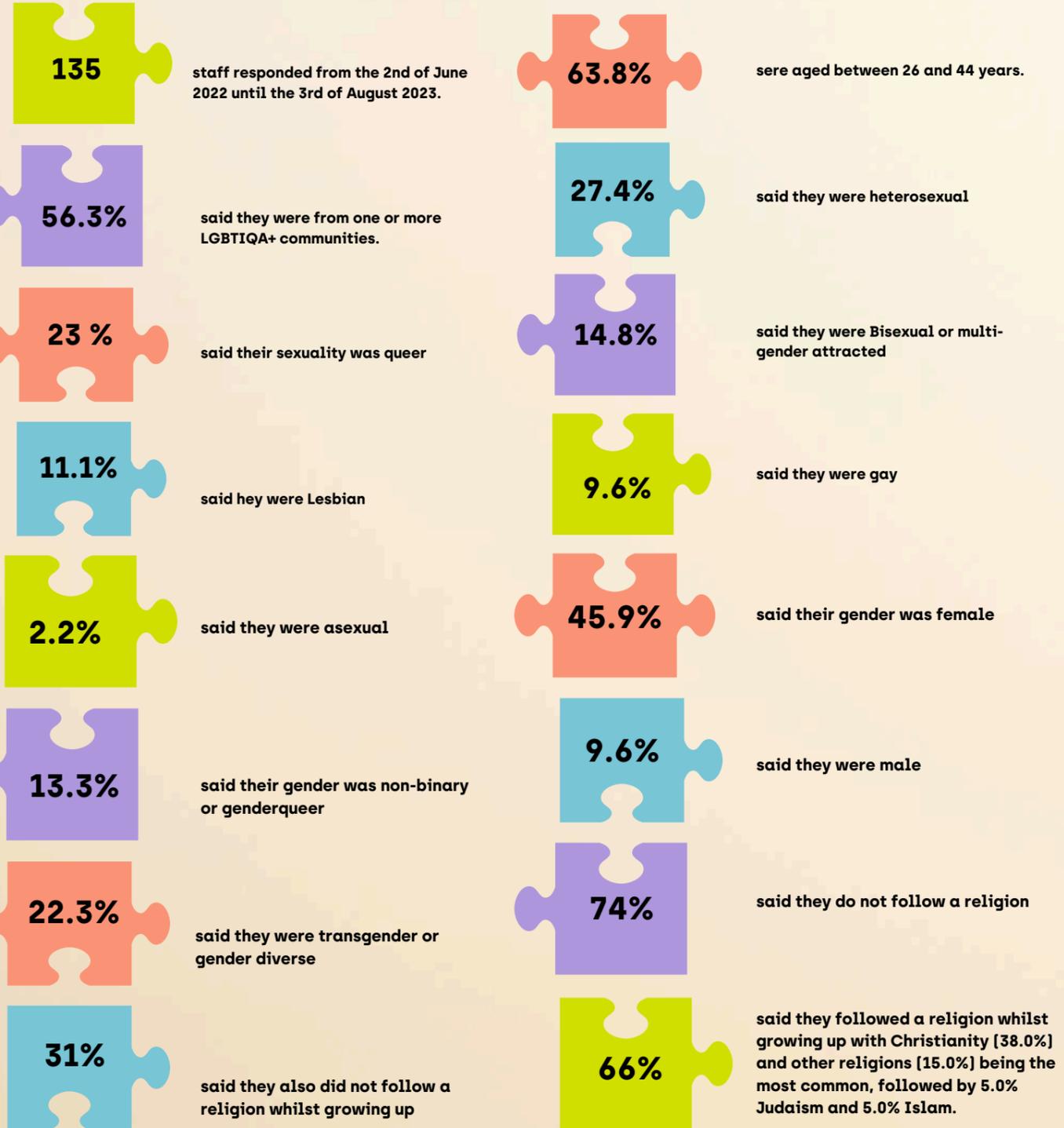
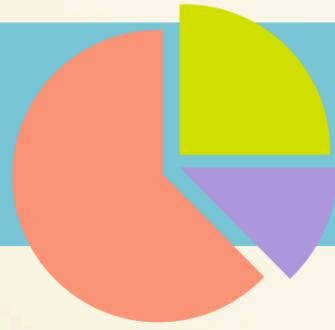
Numbers of external
case consults and
referrals



771

Number of new
Intakes completed
for individuals,
families, & people
in relationships

Staff Census Overview





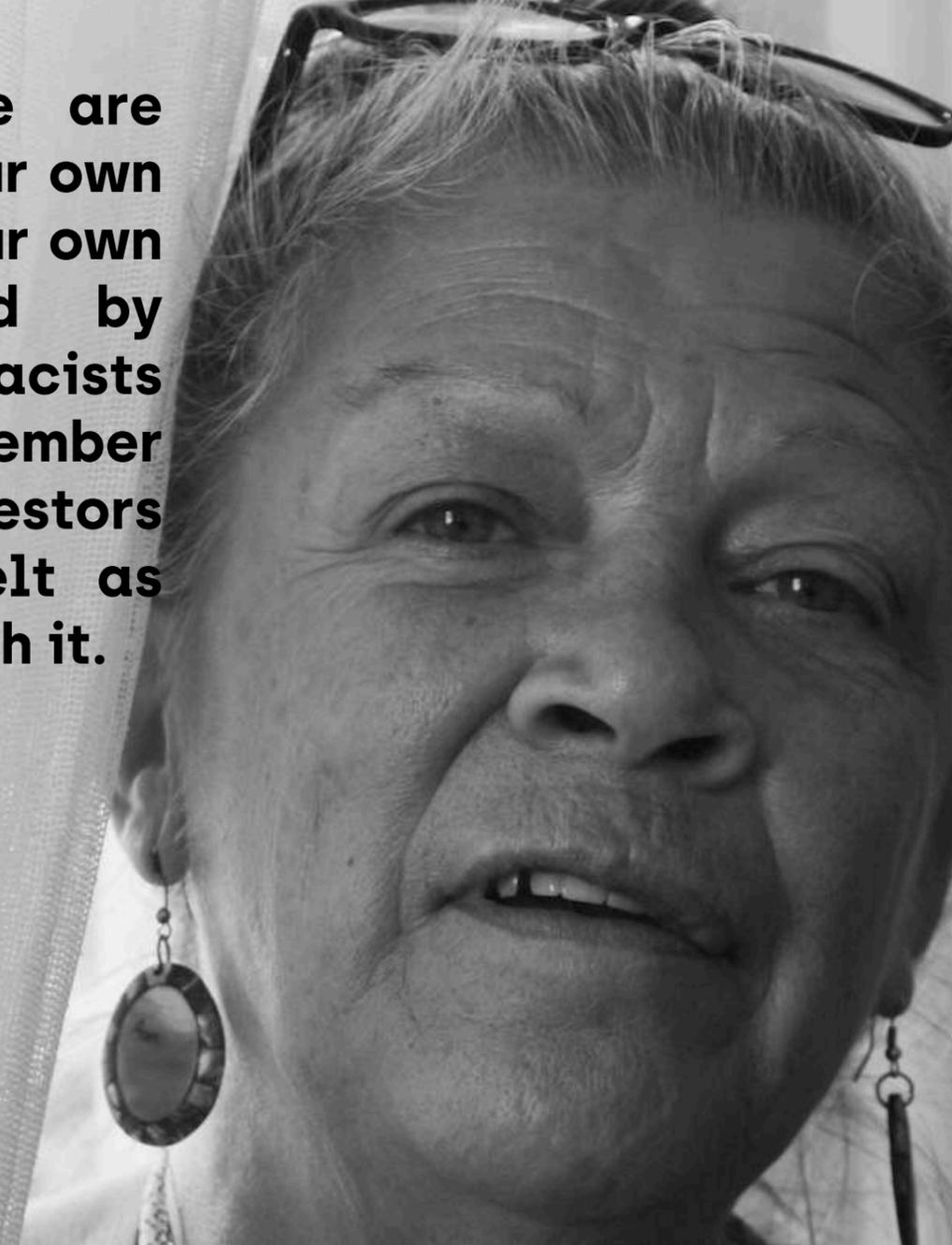
Archer Magazine

Archer Magazine, having now lived at Drummond Street Services for a full year, embarked on one of its most ambitious projects to date. At the heart of our mission is platforming lesser-heard voices from the intersections of LGBTIQ+ communities, with a social justice focus. The carceral system in this country disproportionately impacts First Nations individuals and communities, and the rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths in custody are inexcusable.

To bring light to this issue, the Archer team engaged a guest editor with lived experience of incarceration: Tabitha Lean, a Gunditjmara woman, born and raised on Kurna yerta. With the support of the Archer team, Tabitha curated stories and artwork from people with lived experience of incarceration, including detention centres and prisons, with a focus on First Nations writers.

"It's like we are refugees in our own country, on our own land. Hunted by coppers and racists alike, we remember how our ancestors must have felt as we live through it."

– Aunty Vickie Roach



For the issue launch, we handed the stage over to those with lived experience, predominantly First Nations writers/speakers, and sat in discomfort alongside our readers as we listened, and reflected on this horrifying system failure. The incarceration issue has been our fastest and highest selling edition EVER, across online sales and retail.

This year saw us platform more than 80 lesser-heard voices across our print and online platforms, including a highly nurturing process for first-time writers. We have given airtime to dozens of community health and wellbeing campaigns, through our advertising channels, and we have engaged tens of thousands of active and loyal readers across our social media platforms. Archer is looking forward to celebrating its 10th birthday this year.

Whittlesea & Latrobe Mental Health & Wellbeing Locals + Geelong Head to Health.

Drummond Street Services has strengthened its partnership with Neami, collaborating on four mental health services: Whittlesea and Latrobe Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals, Geelong Head to Health, and Geelong Otway Step Thru Care. Our commitment to social justice drives our involvement, with specialist roles like LGBTIQ+ and multicultural peer support workers ensuring marginalised groups receive needed support.

These roles align with the Royal Commission into Victoria's mental health system recommendations, which emphasize the inclusion of lived experience roles. This approach ensures that family members and carers, both biological and chosen, are involved and supported, and that diverse communities have better access to services.

The shift from larger, centralised hubs to smaller, localised services aims to improve accessibility, guided by community feedback. As new services open, older hubs will close, with transition information available on the Better Health Channel. Our specialist roles support whole-family and intersectional approaches, with staff actively engaging with the community, attending events, and hosting sessions like an IDAHOBIT morning tea at the Epping Community Services Hub.

Sonia Hernandez



Adolescent Violence in the Home

[AVITH]

The Adolescent Violence in the Home (AVITH) service provides a whole-of-family response to young people's use of violence in the home, recognising that many of these young people are also victims of family violence (FV). Existing DSS family and relationships support services work collaboratively with youth FV case specialists offering differential support within a whole of family framework.

We have found that rapport developed through our family counselling programs have been fundamental in identifying AVITH, as many families don't identify AVITH as violence and won't seek support for it, but will seek our support in relation to their child's 'difficult or challenging' behaviour. This, after a few sessions, can in turn offer a safer platform for disclosures of AVITH. This rapport enables the client, often the mother, to identify the behaviour as AVITH which in turn promotes help-seeking.

Silvana Arcifa

This model has allowed for referrals from communities that are often reticent to seek support such as CALD [35% identified as born overseas], families whereby the child has a disability [11.5%], and children who identify as LGBTIQ+ [over 5%]. Both youth specialist family violence roles became vacant in late 2022.

Recruitment was a significant issue impacting on this program, and we were not able to commence service delivery until April-May 2023. Our specific approach requires experienced practitioners who can work and hold family work, in addition to the ability to engage and connect with the young person, as well as adopting an intersectional approach – therefore training of our practitioners has also been important.



**35 %
were born
overseas**



**11.5 %
has a child
with
disability**



**5+ %
has a child
who identifies
as LGBTIQ+**

Family Law Counselling

[including Stepfamilies Australia]

The Family Law Counselling service (FLC) supports couples and families involved in separation or post-separation.

We provided 618 client sessions to over 241 individuals. We also provided group and seminar sessions. Our risk assessments identified that 83% of clients had experienced recent stressful events and 68% identified discord and/or conflict.

COVID lockdowns, remote learning and adapting to a cycle of return to school/office adjustments has clearly impacted on the amount of distress experienced by families and children in the home and in their education, as well as the capacity to seek support.

Further impact of mortgage stress and the high costs of living over the past year have further impacted negatively on families, as 9% identified economic deprivation. We continued to observe this, particularly in relation to additional increases in family violence presentations, child and adolescent mental health, child safety concerns and family conflict especially relating to parenting styles/decision-making, dealing with finances, and destabilised housing.

We supported more than 60 attendees across five different groups, including 'The Single Mothers Group' and 'The Stepfamilies Support Couch Chat'. We also developed a podcast in conjunction with Raising Children Network on the topic of blended families and stepfamilies.



23%

identified as having a CALD background



3%

identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander



17%

identified as LGBTIQA+



4.3%

identified as living with disability/chronic illness

Family and relationship services. [FARS]

Family and Relationship Counselling Services (FARS) strives to strengthen families, prevent conflict and ensure children's wellbeing through counselling and education. We support families during key transitions like forming, expanding or separating, by addressing specific challenges faced by each couple and understanding relationship dynamics from various perspectives.

Post-COVID, families face heightened stress due to increased living costs, mortgage pressures and school reintegration challenges, often leading to conflicts and separations. FARS aims for inclusivity and equity, particularly supporting vulnerable groups to reduce inequalities. Our "Couple and Relationships in a New Country" program assists recent migrants with effective communication and resilience-building strategies.

FaRS provided support to 301 clients over 1418 client sessions. We also provided 19 group and seminar sessions.

Client Breakdown



4%

identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander



25%

identified as CALD



7.3%

identified as non-binary, trans or gender diverse



14%

identified as living with disability/chronic illness



3.7%

identified as being part of a step family/stepfamily



18%

identified as living with disability/chronic illness



Family Mental Health Support Service

The Family Mental Health Support Services (FMHSS) program is rooted in family-centred intervention, with a commitment to advancing child wellbeing outcomes. Recognising the paramount influence of the family on a child's development across various health domains, we prioritise building family capabilities to foster positive mental health outcomes. Our approach extends to providing tailored interventions for at-risk communities and vulnerable groups, such as CALD Brimbank families.

For instance, in collaboration with MiCare, we offer parenting teenagers groups in languages like Syriac, Congolese, Karen, and Karenni, reflecting our dedication to inclusivity and cultural sensitivity. Additionally, specialised support, like the 'self-care' group for Arabic-speaking parents in Craigieburn, addresses specific community needs.

Beyond direct interventions, our efforts encompass actively reducing barriers, addressing discrimination and advocating for human rights. We firmly believe in affirming the rights of all individuals, families and communities to co-exist in harmony with their environment and participate fully in societal life. In the last period our impact was significant, with 430 families benefiting from our support services across counselling, groups, seminars and community events. This translated to 1410 client sessions and 65 group seminars across our family services sites, demonstrating the breadth and depth of our commitment to improving mental health outcomes for children and families.



6.1%

identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander



23%

identified as CALD



11%

identified as LGBTIQ+



22%

identified as living with disability/chronic illness



Integrated Family Violence Service Response

In late 2022, we successfully secured funding from DFFH in the West Metro area for integrated family support services, allowing for the employment of 4.9 staff members. Within the Wyndham branch, positions were established, including a therapeutic parenting role aimed at supporting parents, a senior practitioner, and a child and family practitioner. Additionally, in Carlton, a child and family practitioner position was designated to serve families residing in public housing estates within the City of Melbourne and Moonee Ponds. Furthermore, funding was allocated for an LGBTIQ+ intensive IFS program, providing up to 200 hours of support to young people identifying as LGBTIQ+ who are experiencing familial difficulties.

Wyndham was chosen due to its high incidence of family-related crime, ranking among the highest in the Melbourne metro area. According to Victorian crime statistics for 2021-22, family violence reporting to police increased by 22%.

The public housing estates IFS initiative focuses on assisting vulnerable children and young people, along with their families, with a specific emphasis on those residing in high-rise housing estates in the City of Melbourne and Moonee Valley. These families often face multiple challenges, including poverty, trauma, substance abuse, mental health issues, and family violence. Many are at risk of involvement with the Child Protection system or are already engaged with it.

Recruitment efforts took place in 2023, followed by the implementation of the service. During the initial stages, strong partnerships were established with the Western Melbourne Area Orange Door and the Western Melbourne Child and Family Alliance to facilitate the smooth rollout of the new service.

Currently, the program is providing support to 25 families.

Silvana Arcifa



LGBTIQA+ Intensive Family Services Program

In 2023, we launched our LGBTIQA+ Intensive Family Services Program to support queer young people and their families. Research shows that supportive families are the best protective factor for queer youth. Despite the higher risks of poor mental health and housing stress, many LGBTIQA+ families struggle to access appropriate care.

Our program supported three families, providing 200 hours of flexible assistance, which included:

- Liaison with Orange Door and Child Protection
- Helping parents understand their young person's gender and sexuality
- Supporting parents to co-parent after separation and access legal support
- Advocating for young people in schools and communities
- Assisting families in accessing services and financial supports
- Strengthening family communication and relationships

Our work is crucial as it addresses the unique challenges faced by LGBTIQA+ young people and their families. Our social justice framework ensures that our services are inclusive and affirming, helping to overcome the barriers faced by marginalised communities.

Looking ahead, we aim to expand the program to support more families. We envision a future where queer young people experience the same understanding, support and safety at home as their peers. By embedding our social justice principles, we strive to create a more inclusive and equitable community for all.

Nicole Dowling





Q Hub (formerly Safe Spaces)

QSpace, LGBTIQA+ Family Counselling and Support Service

Drummond Street Services (Drummond Street) in partnership with Child and Family Services Ballarat (Cafs) and Wellways has designed and implemented QHub, funded by Fairer Victoria. QHub is an initiative that is creating safe spaces for LGBTIQA+ young people in Western Victoria, in response to community identified service gaps. An intersectional framework underpins the project, ensuring that the services are culturally safe and delivered by a diverse workforce, reflecting the local communities.

QHub Ballarat and QHub Geelong are two physical spaces – along with outreach services to young people on the Surf Coast – that have been established to offer mental health and wellbeing services tailored specifically for LGBTIQA+ young people. They provide LGBTIQA+ young people and their families/carers in these regions welcoming, inclusive and integrated support, as well as opportunities to connect with peers and older role models, when they need it and close to home.

The consortium is also partnering with local organisations, LGBTIQA+ groups, individuals, families and communities to establish LGBTIQA+ steering committees and undertake a co-design process, ensuring services are responsive to local needs and provide a range of safe, accessible and wrap-around health and wellbeing support for LGBTIQA+ young people and families/carers.

QHub is staffed by a multi-disciplinary LGBTIQA+ team from Drummond Street, Cafs and Wellways as well as co-located practitioners and clinicians from other local services.

Jack Khouri

Many LGBTIQA+ Victorians live healthy, connected, happy and positive lives. However, there are some specific areas where members of LGBTIQA+ communities experience significantly poorer outcomes than their cisgender and heterosexual peers. In particular, rates of substance misuse, family violence, mental illness, self-harm and suicide are disproportionately higher for LGBTIQA+ people than the general population.

Research shows that the stigma, discrimination and family conflict and/or violence experienced by LGBTIQA+ people are key contributing factors to increased distress and poorer health outcomes. In contrast, family acceptance and connection, supportive relationships, community connection and a sense of belonging are predictors of enhanced mental health and wellbeing outcomes.

The Victorian State Government committed \$2.5 million for delivery of an LGBTIQA+ Family Counselling and Support Service over four years. The QSpace Network, comprising the QSpace LGBTIQA+ Counselling and Support Service, and the Beyond the Rainbow Capacity Building, was developed by Drummond Street Services and its partner organisations Anglicare Gippsland, Anglicare North Central, Anglicare Mallee and Upper Murray Family Care.

A part-time LGBTIQA+ family counsellor has been employed and embedded within each of the partner organisations, providing case management and other support services for LGBTIQA+ people and their families and loved ones through:

- Identification of client needs through intake screening and risk assessment
- Individual counselling and support for LGBTIQA+ people
- Family counselling and support services for LGBTIQA+ people and their families and loved ones
- Case management and other support services for LGBTIQA+ people and their families and loved ones
- Support for peers to facilitate group sessions for individuals and families
- Social media promotion of support services and groups by DS, and localised promotion by the partner orgs.



Victoria's statewide
LGBTIQA+ Family
Counselling &
Support Service

Since commencing QSpace has supported:



332
new clients



219
Families

Since commencing QSpace has delivered:



1093
sessions



4,458
contact hours



5,118
non-contact hours



With Respect, Queerspace Mental Health Response

During 2022-2023, the Queerspace counselling team was funded through both With Respect and Mental Health Response [COVID surge] streams. We saw 83 clients for counselling support through the With Respect funding stream, and 80 clients through the Queerspace Mental Health Response stream.

With Respect was officially launched in September 2018 as a specialist family violence service for LGBTIQA+ communities and their families (both origin and chosen). Funded by the Victorian Government through Family Safety Victoria, With Respect's inception was predicated on a primary prevention framework, with emphasis placed on cultivating and nurturing healthy and respectful relationships and interpersonal dynamics. The service provides support to those who have previously experienced family and intimate partner violence or who are currently or potentially at risk.

Meanwhile, Mental Health Support funding first launched in October 2021 in response to a marked increase of presentations to mental health services after numerous COVID-19 lockdowns. Counselling and support offered under this funding stream included referrals of trauma, acute mental illness, distressed families, eating disorders and gender and sexuality concerns to name but a few.

Program participants expressed immense relief in being able to be affirmed, feel safe and access empathetic support that they have struggled to find elsewhere in the community.

with *RESPECT*

Client testimonial:

"...[Practitioner] is fabulous. Aside from my current psychologist, I have never met a worker over my decades of help seeking and using the mental system, that has her level of understanding or expertise in trauma-informed care and support... I can not speak highly enough of [Practitioner] and am immensely grateful to have met her. There have been few people in my life that understand my experience and [Practitioner] just got it straight away. I felt believed, heard, and validated, but mostly I felt understood as to why I was struggling and that was a huge relief and brought much comfort. The plan is to link me in with a program that will assist further and I am looking forward to that opportunity"



Queerspace and Family Violence Response

Drummond Street Services (DS) has a rich history of extending its services to the LGBTIQ+ community. The demand for safe and validating services for this community is met through the initiatives offered as part of Queerspace and the Family Violence (FV) response program.

Within the state, Queerspace stands out as one of the few specialised programs dedicated to addressing family violence within the LGBTIQ+ community, providing empathetic support to individuals affected by and involved in such incidents. The work carried out by Queerspace considers the fact that individuals from the queer community who seek assistance for family violence case management come with a complex array of identities and experience systemic forms of disadvantage. Recognising this, Queerspace acknowledges the significance of the social and familial networks that our clients are a part of, and the positive and affirming relationships that play a protective role throughout their lives.

By adopting this intersectional approach, DS and Queerspace are actively addressing the historical erasure and harm that has resulted from a service sector that has, for too long, failed to acknowledge the complexity and resilience of the community.

A total of 306 support periods were delivered through this program from July 2022 to June 2023.



Queerspace case study

Queerspace practitioners worked with a young man who was escaping violence from his family of origin. He had been turned away from mainstream homelessness services, who told him to seek family violence support, and from mainstream family violence services, who told him to seek support from homelessness services. When he engaged with the Queerspace case management team he had been couch surfing for several weeks and was feeling isolated and facing significant financial insecurity. With the support of his case manager, he was able to access short term crisis accommodation and financial support. His case manager linked him in with our Pride in Place housing program, and together he worked with both programs to secure safe, long-term housing.

Futures Free from Violence

Futures Free from Violence (FFFV) supports women, and trans and gender diverse individuals who have used violence and seek to address its impacts. Funded by Family Safety Victoria, the program provides state-wide assistance.

Social justice is central to FFFV's mission, supporting equal economic, political, and social rights and opportunities. The program addresses the unique challenges faced by women and trans and gender diverse people in accessing support. One significant challenge is the lack of specialised, safe support services. Women using violence have limited options in Victoria, and trans and gender diverse individuals often face safety issues in traditional cis-male-focused behaviour change programs.

Recognising the different experiences and socialisation of women and trans and gender diverse people compared to cis men, FFFV offers group sessions, individual support and family assistance. The program tailors its approach to meet the needs of those who are multiply marginalised. A social justice framework guides group and individual work, risk assessment, intervention, and program delivery.

Over the past year, FFFV has supported 44 clients, along with their affected family members, including children.

FFFV is accessible both in person and online, ensuring it meets clients' diverse needs.

Mengrui Li

Living Free from Violence

The Living Free from Violence program runs at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre [DPFC] for women and trans and gender diverse people who have caused harm or used force or violence in a family setting.

The program effectively and appropriately engages clients, assesses their underlying and often complex co-existing issues, identifies individual drivers for change and tailors a service response that manages risk, increases safety for families and creates opportunities for accountability and behaviour change. The project also engages and supports victim/survivors when beneficial, appropriate and safe to do so, to provide ongoing recovery support.

Driven by a strong commitment to social justice, practitioners supported 68 people, both individually and through groups, over the year. Practitioners support clients to talk about their use of violence and the causes that underpinned that use. Through this, clients can come to a place of understanding about their past behaviours and begin to achieve real change in their lives and their behaviours.

Participant feedback about the program often focuses on benefits to their mental health and wellbeing.

Elliot McMahon



Client testimonial:

"It's the first time I've done any counselling in my life. It feels like they cared, like you're being listened to."

Pride in Place

"Establishing our Place"

Pride in Place stands as not just a new means of support for LGBTQIA+ persons facing homelessness, but also represents the largest ever commitment by the State Government to reducing the impact of homelessness on our community.

A combination and shared commitment made by FAN (Family Access Network), Uniting Care and VincentCare strives to address practical barriers for LGBTQIA+ people to receive life altering support. The 2022-23 financial year for Pride in Place focused on recruitment, establishment and finding our feet.

The opening months of Pride in Place saw the recruitment of 12 LGBTQIA+ identifying staff across six locations throughout Victoria, four of whom are employed by DSS. Direct service provision commenced officially on October 1st and since this time Drummond Street provided 68 episodes of support, with program partners delivering a further 229 episodes of support for a combined total of 297 from 01/11/22 - 30/06/23.

A further primary focus was establishing a Practice and Procedure Manual that embedded key DSS values within it. In February an all staff two-day in-person induction and training event was delivered. This event focused on introducing three key frameworks that underpin Pride in Place: intersectionality, social justice and trauma-informed practice. A critical review of these frameworks and how they apply to practice is monitored and developed continually through routine reflective practice spaces to ensure our commitment to these and confidence in applying them.

A persistent challenge remains a high volume of demand for Pride in Place – one that far exceeds our capacity. To respond to this, a capacity building and case consultation framework was developed.

Callum Fearne

Ready Steady Family

Drummond Street Services' Ready Steady Family program focuses on perinatal mental health, continuing to develop and deliver a range of service interventions to families expecting a baby or those with infants up to two years old, across the North West Melbourne catchment. A new two-year funding period for the program commenced on 1st July 2023.

Social justice is a major element of our work, addressing the social determinants of mental health, including poverty, racism, gender disadvantage, and other structural inequalities such as food insecurity, gender-based violence, poor housing, limited education, and social networks, which are critically important for birthing people in the perinatal period.



The Drummond Street Social Justice framework challenges us to take an intersectional view of who seeks our services and who does not. Therefore, we focus on assertive community outreach across public housing estates and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) populations. In these cohorts, untreated paternal mental illness adversely affects mothers' mental health, and is associated with negative emotional and behavioural outcomes for children, and poor family functioning.

Ready Steady Family also supports isolated young parents, those with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ individuals, and refugee families who often lack practical and emotional support.

Over the last year, we have worked with over 1200 parents and their babies, offering a range of supports, including:

- Intake and risk screening
- Place-based groups and seminars
- Psychological counselling
- Single-session family work
- Customised support for dads and partners
- Parent coaching (often in clients' homes)
- Family Foundations, the evidence-based couples communication course
- Social connection initiatives

Our evaluations continue to show that our flexible, "not too clinical" approach works well for clients, positively impacting outcomes for infants.

Helen Rimington

Your Way Through

Support for people affected by the Disability Royal Commission

The Your Way Through program supports those affected by the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation of People with Disability. We listen to and believe our clients, empowering them to be heard and prioritising their choice and control.

We address service gaps and support victims and survivors with dignity, respect, and knowledge. Over three years, we've demonstrated the importance of social justice in disability trauma services through co-design with those who have experienced violence, abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Building trust has been challenging, especially in systems that have historically failed the disabled community. We are committed to maintaining long-term, lived experience-focused co-design processes to strengthen this trust and hope to leave a legacy of community empowerment.



Your Way Through and the Redress Program (Complex Trauma Services) Drummond Street Services' Complex Trauma Service recognises the systemic inequalities that affect our clients, including ableism, sexism, heterosexism, racism, and classism. We uphold their dignity by recognising lived experiences of trauma and supporting self-determination.

The program fosters environments where survivors can redefine their identities positively, advocating for systemic change rather than focusing solely on individual disabilities. We work to dismantle barriers and promote a just and equitable society, affirming client strengths and supporting their human rights.

Drummond Street is committed to advocacy and changing government and social policies to ensure equitable access for all clients. Despite challenges from entrenched systems, we continue to share power and work against stigma, discrimination, and misconceptions.

Vicki Khouri/Cheryl Miller-Yell

Birdy



Funded by Mental Health Promotion in the public housing estates

Helen Rimington

In 2022, Paving the Way Forward and the Department of Health funded Drummond Street Services to facilitate an exciting pilot program called BIRDY.

This co-designed mental health promotion program was focused specifically on working alongside residents of the North Melbourne and Flemington public housing estates. After a successful consultation and co-design process, we saw more than 195 people attend BIRDY events, which included Shake Your Tail Feather: the women's dance and exercise group, Little Seeds Playgroup, I LOVE BOOKS literacy group, Laptop Legends, Understanding Mental Health info nights and Learn to Ride Bikes.

Our Social Justice framework encourages the employment of residents and promotes pathways into ongoing employment. Alongside paid community members, we ran One Stop Shop community help sessions at Flemington and North Melbourne following a drop-in model. Residents can approach our team with requests on any topic one morning a week, which quickly grew into a full day per week. We provide free coffee and three case workers to help with all kinds of issues, from housing to navigating the mental health system, form filling, paying bills, applying for jobs, family violence, gambling addictions, and drug addiction in young people. These sessions attracted up to 62 people per week.

The BIRDY crew also supported residents to actively plan and roll out three wonderful community camps, attended by more than 150 people. These included trips to the Peninsula Hot Springs for Women's Days Out, a trip to Werribee Zoo for African elders, and after school health promotion sessions at Debney Primary School, known as Active Fridays.



The Drum

Funded by City of Melbourne and City of Yarra

As a service of Drummond Street Services, The DRUM Youth Services has partnered with multiple services to ensure that young people within the community have the opportunity to easily access supports. The DRUM team runs co-designed early intervention programs during the school term and each school holiday period. In alignment with our co-design model, young people plan, guide and participate in the program development, delivery and evaluation cycle.

Young people told us they needed various things including social connection opportunities, face-to-face community events, more food during events, advocacy and support, mental health education (helping friends) and leading health promoting initiatives (like bush walking and camping). Activities included drop-in sessions engaging young people aged 8–15 in youth-led activities and projects, school holiday programs, and Real Youth Music Studio (RYMS), where young people learn to create and perform music.

Marie Iafeta & Helen Rimington



136

Number of programs run



2862

Number of individual supports



1834

Number of people who attended programs



Relink and Reconnect

Jaimie Taunoa/Marie Iafeta

The pre and post release program [Relink and Reconnect] has been operating for 12 months. In that time, we received and accepted 152 referrals for Relink and 128 for Reconnect.

This program is committed to empowering justice involved women and TGD clients to return to their communities and engage with self-identified areas of growth and development. The program also advocates for clients at every level to ensure that individual and systemic issues are known and addressed.

The work we do to support the transition back into the community is led by the client. Self-determination is at the core of every decision and the risks and outcomes are explored together in a considered way. Progress and success are measures that vary from person to person but need to be recognised and celebrated. We continue to work with Elizabeth Morgan House [EMH] to provide culturally safe service provision if Aboriginal women choose to work alongside EMH. Collaboration in this program is centred around keeping an open dialogue with our partners and developing pathways that are appropriate for Aboriginal clients and colleagues.

This program has a large assertive outreach component inside and outside of the custodial settings our clients are in. Case workers spend at minimum two days a week at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre [DPFC] to ensure that current and potential clients become familiar with them and are aware of all the DS service options. Being a visible presence at DPFC means that our client engagement levels are high.

We have not been successful in recruiting for a case worker in the Tarrengower region which presents some operational challenges for the program and requires case workers to manage semi-regular travel to Tarrengower. We continue to look for a case worker in the region.

Case workers meet with clients where they are at, meaning they go to wherever clients live and spend their time. Assertive outreach supports the case worker/client relationship, allows staff to familiarise themselves with the client's environment, and ensures that we can account for structural factors that might impact the client's goals.

Relationships are at the heart of this program, whether it is with other service providers, CV staff, DJCS, DS colleagues, or our clients. The program relies on bringing people together to work collectively to support the client's goals and ensure that their voice remains present throughout the process.

The Centre for Family Reserve and Evaluation [CFRE] continues to support Drummond Street Services by embedding our Evidence-Based Management Framework, advocating for social change, informing new policy directions, and building sector capacity. This year, we've focused on re-imagining what it means to be a social justice-driven organisation, with an emphasis on building intersectional practice in mental health and family violence services and highlighting the impact of discrimination on health and wellbeing.

Key projects include the Mental Health at the Margins toolkit, which helps mental health staff embed intersectionality at both practice and service levels. The CLIK [Cultural, Lived experience, Identity Knowledge] project supports family violence and sexual assault services in building an intersectional lived experience workforce by highlighting the unique expertise of those experiencing intersecting forms of marginalisation.

The LGBTIQ+ Health and Wellbeing project examined mental health and wellbeing needs for LGBTIQ+ people, revealing the need to better understand the impact of discrimination on poor mental health outcomes.

The HOPE Project developed family violence risk assessment tools for LGBTIQ+ children and young people engaged with statewide HOPE suicide aftercare services, alongside training for practitioners on using these tools. Our training and practice development team continues to deliver the Beyond the Rainbow training calendar for the QSpace Network, while also providing training and consultation to external services across various sectors, including allied health, justice, legal services, migration, settlement, mental health, family violence, and alcohol services. In research, we launched two pivotal studies this year: the WRAP project on collaborative service responses for families experiencing adolescent violence in the home [AVITH], and the Future-proofing Safety project, focused on building crisis-ready responses and addressing inequality. We continue our work in the AVITH space with partnership projects addressing violence among boys, young men, and multicultural youth, collaborating with institutions like Western Sydney University, Swinburne University, and the Centre for Multicultural Youth.

BethMcCann

Audience Overview



51,292

Total Audience
Across platforms



19,559

Total impressions
Across platforms

Archer Magazine



8,959

Followers



39.4

engagement rate

CFRE



238

Followers



64.29

engagement rate

Queerspace



6,446

Followers



73.30

engagement rate

Newsletter Performance

Queerspace Newsletter



423

total subscribers



52.65%

open rate

Archer Magazine e-news



1,800

total subscribers



40%

open rate

things to note:

- DS, Queerspace, Step-families Australia and Archer deleted our twitter accounts bringing our audience numbers down
- we held a regular Communications Committee meetings that organised in-person engagement such as a human flash-mob & DIY rainbow for IDAHOBIT, and 'care' afternoons for various communities as well as all staff meetings.

SERVICE DATA July 2022 - June 2023:

COUNSELLING AND CASE WORK

- General, Child, and Queer TPS: 331 sessions to 96 clients
- Family and Relationship Services: 563 sessions to 193 clients
- Family Law Counselling: 510 sessions to 192 clients
- Redress Support Services/Royal Commission: 708 sessions to 89 clients
- Family Mental Health Support Service: 1,253 sessions to 783 clients
- Disability Royal Commission: 1,109 sessions to 93 clients
- Better Access: 132 sessions to 23 clients
- Family Violence Service for Young People: 96 sessions to 37 clients
- Futures Free From Violence: 255 sessions to 44 clients
- Living Free From Violence: 114 sessions to 36 clients
- Ready Steady Family: 484 sessions to 147 clients
- With Respect/QRespect: 1,338 sessions to 244 clients
- RESTORE: 109 sessions to 14 clients
- LGBTIQ+ Disability Project: 0 sessions to 0 clients
- LGBTIQ+ Family Counselling (DS only): 17 sessions to 9 clients
- Queerspace Mental Health Response: 668 sessions to 138 clients
- Carelink: 13 sessions to 1 client
- Youth Services: 44 sessions to 9 clients

New Services:

- Pre & Post Release: 541 sessions to 95 clients
- Integrated Family Services Housing Estates: 2 sessions to 2 clients
- Integrated Family Services Wyndham: 2 sessions to 5 clients
- Mentoring Program: 364 sessions to 83 clients
- QHub: 20 sessions to 20 clients

GRAND TOTAL: 8,673 sessions to 2,353 clients

GROUP WORK

- Community Engagement Events: 13
- Seminar Events: 37
- Group Events: 60

GRAND TOTAL: 110 events

- Registered Clients at Events: 1,243
- Unregistered Clients at Events: 1,061

GRAND TOTAL: 2,304 clients

Funders

Accrue Real Estate
 Australian Community Foundation
 Belgium Avenue Neighbourhood House
 City of Melbourne
 City of Whittlesea
 City of Yarra
 Darebin Community Health
 Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
 Department of Health and Human Services
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 Department of Premier and Cabinet
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 Fitzroy Football Club
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 Give Where You Live Foundation
 Helen Gyles Turner Samaritan Fund
 Hobsons Bay City Council
 Multicultural Arts Victoria
 North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network
 P & R Gates
 Respect Victoria
 Sony Music Entertainment
 VicHealth
 Victorian Government
 Women's Health West
 Wyndham City Council
 Wyndham Community & Education Centre
 Every individual who supported our FOODS Relief program

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 Anglicare
 Arts Centre Melbourne
 Australian Venue Co.
 Belgium Avenue
 Blue Knot
 Brimbank City Council
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 City of Whittlesea
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Cloverdale Neighbourhood House
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 Department of Social Services
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 Equality Australia
 Family Safety Victoria
 GASP
 Hullabaloo Music
 IPC Health
 Murdoch Children's Research Institute
 NEAMI
 NORTH MELBOURNE LANGUAGE & LEARNING
 North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network
 On the Line
 Orange Door
 Playgroup Victoria
 Positive Attitude
 Project Echo Youth Mental Health
 RMIT Centre for Innovative Justice
 Sports Commission of Australia
 Surf Coast Council
 Switchboard
 Tarneit Community Learning Centre
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 Yarra Libraries

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