



Annual Report

2022-2023



**WOMEN'S CENTRE
ALBURY WODONGA**

Supporting Women in Albury Wodonga



ABN 85 476 895 526



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Acknowledgement of Country

The Women's Centre for Health and Wellbeing acknowledges the Wiradjuri people as the traditional and original custodians of the land on which the Women's Centre for Health and Wellbeing, Albury Wodonga sits.

We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to Elders both past, present and emerging.

Wiradjuri Ngiyani Vindyamali Aboriginal Mayiny Murrubandhda Mayinny galangga NSW Ngangaagi

We respect Aboriginal people as the First People and custodians of Australia.

We support the Uluru Statement from the Heart



LGBTQIA+



The Women's Centre is a safe and inclusive place for LGBTQIA+ people.

The health and safety of LGBTQIA+ people of diverse sexual orientation and/or gender expression is our priority. We are committed to diversity, inclusion and showing support for the LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, asexual and other) community.

LGBTQIA+ people in Albury Wodonga experience discrimination, sexual and domestic violence, and statistically, experience high rates of depression and anxiety.

In 2022, the Women's Centre team chose to participate in Inclusion and Diversity training and education to ensure that our frontline team, our services and programs are inclusive and meet the needs of all our clients.

We look forward to engaging more with the LGBTQIA+ community moving forward into 2024.



INCLUSION & ACCESS



ACCESS

In 2022 renovations of our office space and training room allowed for the creation of better wheelchair access. Our clients with disability now have greater access and comfort when visiting the centre.

INCLUSION

The Women's Centre welcomes people from all cultures. Albury Wodonga has a large number of new migrants, some of whom we have welcomed at the centre. Translation services are available. True inclusion is our learning and responding to women of all ages and from all cultural backgrounds.

LANGUAGE

As per the Anti Discrimination Act, the Women's Centre has indefinite certification granted by the NSW Attorney General under section 726A of the Act, certifying special needs programs, activities or facilities that promote access for certain groups of people affected by unlawful discrimination. In our written material and social media, our clients are referred to as "Women" and "Girls".

However, clients are referred to and known by the name and pronoun that they prefer.

The Women's Centre is a safe space for women that have experienced trauma, sexual and/or physical violence. We ask everyone that enters the centre to be inclusive and kind.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Marge Nichol

This year has flown way too fast. We have continued to be very busy in all areas of the Centre. Our counselling, intake and groups have all exceeded our expectations. With our waitlists for both counselling and groups being managed in a much more professional manner than in previous years.

The new Training room upstairs certainly has benefited the clients and staff immensely and is being used most days each week now. The groups that we continued to offer throughout the year were Self-esteem, Circle of Security Parenting, Shark Cage, Anxiety and Meditation. In April we offered a new group "Walk and Talk", aimed at those women who wanted a group that was less structured. This group has some regular attendees now which is good to see. The Anxiety group is overflowing with so many regulars that have also been able to make long term friendships outside of the Centre.

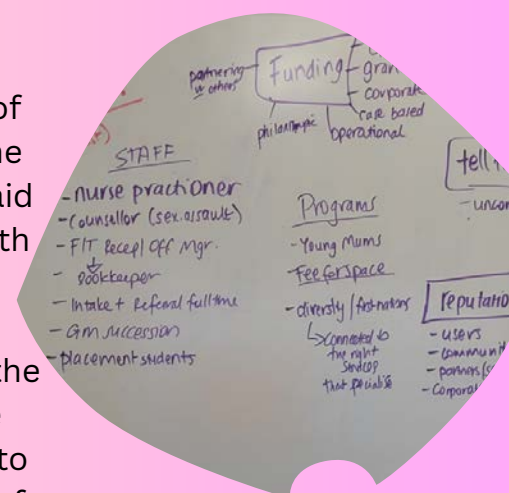
In Term 4 of 2023, we are starting two brand new groups, developed by our counsellors. The "talking to children about family violence" will be delivered at the Centre together with a family therapist from Upper Murray Family Care. Which we hope is the start of a good partnership moving forward with UMFC. The other group starting is the "connect, heal and support" group for childhood sexual assault survivors.

At the 2022 AGM we were able to finally adopt changes to our Constitution to reflect who we are today and the changes in the sector in which we work in. The "Committee of Management" became the "Board of Directors" of the Women's Centre as part of the new Constitution. We welcomed as new Board members at the AGM, Teigan Pearson, Yvonne Lingua and Laurae Healey, as we said good bye to Naomi Inwood and Jacqui Finlay, and thank them both for all their hard work while on the Board.

In March 2023 the Board had it's strategic planning day. We had the involvement of the staff as well in our planning for the next three years, in order to bring both the staff and the Board on board as to the direction of the Centre for the coming 3 years. The direction of the Centre is also determined by our funding and the increase needed for the Centre to be able to sustain the services that it currently provides to the women of our community.



Strategic Plan 2023 – 2025



CHAIR of the Board report - Tegan Sheil

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank Marge and the staff for their passion, consistency and enthusiasm over what has been another challenging, but successful year for the Women's Centre.

We commenced the year in our recently refurbished premises, and I am pleased to see the additional space upstairs being used for group facilitation, training, and meetings.

In March the Board held a strategic planning day in this new space to map out the direction of the Centre for the next three years. This was a really valuable day that enabled us to workshop our vision, mission, and our key strategic priorities. Compiling the resulting Strategic Plan was no small task, special appreciation goes to Kristy Campbell and Marge for their dedicated efforts in putting this together. A heartfelt thank you also to Board members Carly Sheather, Yvonne Lingua, and Bronwyn Wood for your invaluable contributions to the financial, strategic, and governance aspects of the Centre on this day and ongoing.

In May, we successfully navigated our three-yearly ASES Accreditation audit, culminating in a stellar 100% score. Marge's meticulous preparation and follow-up efforts, including policy updates and stakeholder coordination, played a pivotal role in this achievement.

We were honoured to be nominated for multiple awards this year. We were finalists in the 2023 Telstra Albury Wodonga Business Awards, and were a recipient of a 2023 Qantas Regional Grant. There are not many recipients of this grant and we were lucky enough to be one of them, enabling us to provide more financial assistance to help women and children fleeing domestic violence.

At the last AGM we farewelled two of our Board members, Naomi Inwood and Jacqui Findlay. I would like express my appreciation for their dedicated service. Naomi remains on at the Women's Centre in her role as Finance Officer.

At this year's AGM we farewell two Board Members, Katherine Allsop and Teigan Pearson. Katherine is one of our longest serving board members and also Secretary. Her knowledge of the Women's Centre, and vast expertise will be missed. I would like to thank them both for their time and contribution to the Board, and the Women's Centre.

We are entering the next year with some fresh faces and a strong board of qualified and experienced women. I extend a warm welcome to our newest Board members Carly Brown, Mell Millgate, Elizabeth Sandow and Belinda Horn.

In September 2023 we were elated to hear the NSW Government will be increasing funding to Women's Health Centres over the next four years. This is a long overdue and well needed increase will empower us to expand our services and bring in additional staff, significantly enhancing our ability to support our clients and the broader community. Although cross-border funding challenges persist, we are optimistic about what this means for us and Women's Centres across NSW.

I anticipate another impactful year at the Women's Centre, and express my heartfelt gratitude to all who contribute to its ongoing success.

About Us

The Women's Centre for Health and Wellbeing (ALBURY-WODONGA) INC is an incorporated association and registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) as a Charity with Public Benevolent Institution status.

The Women's Centre has provided services to Women in the Albury Wodonga Community since 1986. We provide services for all women and girls above the age of 16. We welcome older women, women with disability, those who identify as women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse women. The Women's Centre is certified exempted by the anti-discrimination act in perpetuity to describe itself as an entity providing services to Women and Girls.

Our mission is to provide women with a safe place to come to seek free or affordable services.

Our direct mission is to support women in crisis, domestic or family violence situations (current or historical)



Vision & Mission

Our Vision

To create safe places for women to use as their space.

Our purpose

The **primary purpose** of the organisation is to promote and provide activities which foster the general health and wellbeing of women in the community.

Our Mission

At the Women's Centre we believe that every woman has the right to feel empowered and to be successful. We believe that by supporting women to become the best versions of themselves, we are helping them to accelerate their lives.

Our Motto

“Empowered women, empower women”

Our Foundations

Our vision is delivered through Our Foundations, being:

- Human Rights & Social Justice
- Valuing Women's contribution to our community
- Leadership, Equity and Promotion of Women
- Advocacy for and with Women

GOVERNANCE

The Women's Centre for Health and Wellbeing Board of Directors positions are voluntarily held by Women from within our community that are dedicated to ensuring there are health and wellbeing services available to all women in Albury Wodonga and surrounds.

The Board are committed to safeguarding the continuation and expansion of needed services using their diverse backgrounds and skills from areas such as law, health, welfare, education, finance, business, social and employment sectors to bring the best people and resources to the Centre.

Each Board member brings their lived experience of being women, daughters and mothers, partners and community members.

CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS

Tegan Shiel - Chair

Kristy Campbell - Deputy Chair

Katherine Allsop - Secretary & Public Officer

Carly Holden - Treasurer

Bronwyn Wood

Teigan Pearson

Yvonne Lingua

Elizabeth Sandow - casual member September 2023

Mell Millgate - casual member September 2023

Carly Brown - casual member September 2023

Belinda Horn - casual member September 2023

Jacqui Finlay- acting Chair & Public Officer - (resigned November 2022)

Naomi Inwood - Treasurer - (resigned November 2022)

Our Board of Directors

Accreditation, Memberships & Training

Our Board of Directors bring a diverse skillset to the Women's Centre.

Our Committee Members bring years of experience in Law, Governance, the Health sector, HR, Marketing, Finance and small business ownership.

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Member of the Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI)

Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD)

Member of Australian Association of Psychologists Inc (AAPI),

Australian & New Zealand Academy of Eating Disorders (ANZAED)

Rural & Remote Significant Interest Group

Weight Stigma Significant Interest Group Health at Every Size® (HAES®)

Australia

Association for Size Diversity & Health (ASDAH)

Regional Eating Disorders Clinicians Network Member of the Law Society of NSW

Associate Member of the Law Institute of Victoria

Certified Practising Marketer (CPM AMI)

Member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing (MCIM)

Certified Practising Accountant (CPA)

Currently studying Masters in Business (MBA)

Board members and Staff at the Gala night for the Telstra Business Awards - August 2023



Employee

Accreditation, Memberships & Training

Our Employees have accreditation and membership with the following;



ASES Accredited

Australian Bookkeeping Association

MAASW - Member of Australian Association of Social Workers

Justice of the Peace NSW

Member of Australian Counselling Association

Circle of Security Parenting Certification

Training throughout the year:

NILS training

MARAM training

Trans Vitality: Trans-Affirming Practice

Trauma Responsive Leadership

Safety Action Meeting training

Safe phones training

Motivational Interviewing & Cognitive Behaviour Therapy Training

Empowering Excellence: Introduction to Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT)

Empowering Excellence: Introduction to Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT)

Empowering Excellence: Evidence based relaxation therapy & Psychoneuroimmunology with Dr Judy Lovas

Empowering Excellence: Using Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT)

Flexibly - Beyond Metaphors and Formal Exercise

Training being undertaken to expand services:

Diploma of Community Services

Diploma of Financial Counselling

Special Partnerships

Our thanks to these organisations that provide vital services to our clients

These services can be booked by calling (02) 6021 5773 or visiting our website www.womenscentre.org.au



Our thanks to **Full Stop Australia** for funding a Counsellor who provides services to Women and girls over 18, who have experienced Childhood Sexual Abuse. This is a valuable counselling service, and the counsellor operates at the Women's Centre every Friday.

No Interest Loans funded by **Good Shepherd** are for the purchase of essential goods and services. Loans can be used to pay for bond & rent, car repairs & registration, medical or dental expenses, education essentials, household items and essentials. Other items as requested.



Hume Riverina Community Legal Service hosts a free clinic at the Women's Centre every Wednesday morning with a Lawyer - Erin Quilliam. The Legal Service can assist you with things such as:
Family Law and children's matters.
Family Law - property matters.
Victims Services/VOCAT
FV Intervention Orders.

Safety Action Meetings (SAMS) are Coordinated by **Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy**. SAMS is a regular meeting of local government and non-government service providers that aims to prevent or lessen serious threats to the safety of domestic violence victims through targeted information sharing and responsive, timely manner.



Groups we belong to

Our thanks to these organisations that provide vital services to our clients

These services can be booked by calling (02) 60215773 or visiting our website www.womenscentre.org.au



Women's Health NSW are our peak body. Women's Health NSW continues to advocate for Women's Health issues and source funding. There are 20 Women's Centres within NSW and Women's Health NSW advocates for all of the Centre's at NSW Government level.

We work closely with **YES Unlimited** to bring about a strong support network for Women and girls who are experiencing Family and Domestic Violence and homelessness. Recently we have partnered with **YES Unlimited, AWAHS, AWH Sexual Assault service and WDVCAS** court support with a grant from NSW Department of Communities and Justice for a more collaborative referral pathway for Sexual Violence and Domestic Violence victim survivors.



The **Border Domestic Violence Network (BDVN)** is a grassroots network of over 95 family and domestic violence service providers and community members with lived experience of family violence, based in Albury Wodonga,

The **Ovens Murray Family Violence Partnership (OMFVP)** is all government and non-government domestic violence services that work together for domestic violence survivors in the Ovens Murray Region, and funded by the Victorian Government to provide domestic violence services in our region.



Partnerships & Community Engagement

Thank you to the following organisations

Domestic & Family

Violence/Rape/Sexual Assault

Albury Police DV Unit
Safe Steps
WDVCAS
Border Domestic Violence Network
Oven's and Murray Family Violence Partnership
The Orange Door
Gateway Health
Mission Australia
Wellways
Intereach
Albury Wodonga Health
Centre Against Violence
Upper Murray Family Care
Risk Assessment and Management Panel Victoria (RAMP)
Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service (AWAHS)
Full Stop Australia

Legal advice

Hume Riverina Community Legal Service
Ambrose Kampen
WDVCAS- DV court support
NSW Police
Victoria Police

Housing security

Yes Unlimited
Hub Housing
Link2Home
Betty's Place
Beyond Housing

Financial, Clothing, Job & Food security

Albury Wodonga Regional Foodshare
Our Sister's Closet (Women's Centre own initiative)
Anglicare - Financial Counselling
Upper Murray Family Care
Madec employment agency
APM employment agency
Asuria Albury
CVGT
Centrelink
Carevan (The Carevan Foundation)

Child-focused

The Orange Door- children/families at risk
Upper Murray Family Care
Department of Community and Justice - Child protection
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency

Our Funders

Thank you to the following organisations

Funding Bodies

NSW Health - Murrumbidgee Local Health District
NSW Department of Community and Justice
Department of Family, Fairness & Housing
Family Safety Victoria

Grants

Rotary Club Albury
NSW Communities and Justice - Community Building Partnership
Good Shepherd - NILS program

Our Donors & Sponsors

Our thanks to the following individuals, businesses and organisations for their support

Myer Albury
Hume Bank



Our Thanks

Donors & Sponsors, Funders and partners



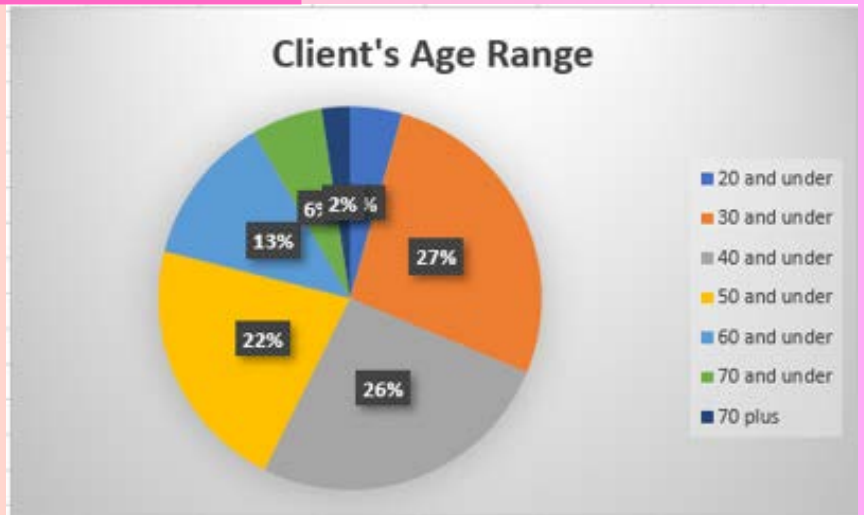
Hume Bank



Full Stop Australia



Our Year In Numbers 2022-2023



5026

Number of Appointments 2022 - 2023

The Women's Centre proudly supports women from both the NSW and VIC side of the border.

3365 From NSW
1661 from VIC
172 other States

3995

Number of Domestic and/or Family Violence Appointments

449 clients - 3995 appointments
254 NSW clients
195 Vic clients

621

Number of Women we Currently Support

The Women's Centre proudly supports women from both the NSW and VIC side of the border.

74

Crisis Clients

These Women and Children leave home seeking safety, usually at very short notice. We assist with emergency accommodation, clothing, food, children's and baby essentials as well as assistance with Police, AVO, Victims of Crime, Centrelink and more

60

AVO Applications NSW

In 2022 - 2023 there were 60 clients who had AVO/IVO's in place in or applications made through intake at the Women's Centre.

156

Victims of Crime Applications (NSW&VIC) - 92

Flexible Support applications (VIC) - 6

Escaping Violence Payment Applications (NSW & VIC) - 58

Women that experienced a crime such as Domestic Violence are eligible to apply for Victims of Crime Compensation. This can include block hours of counselling, safety doors, video cameras or a lump sum of money payment.

91

Women with a Disability

We are delighted that 91 women with disabilities have attended therapeutic groups and counselling at the Women's Centre. Accessibility and ensuring access for our clients has prompted several changes at the WCHW.

65

Our Sisters Closet

Thanks to generous donations from the community, 65 women were provided with new corporate/office wear to attend interviews and start employment

61

ATSI - Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander

It has been an important year of meeting ATSI services in Albury Wodonga. These valuable relationships will assist us to support women with the best possible services.

21

CALD - Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

Working with women from diverse backgrounds has opened new information channels with other organisations and sourcing health information in other languages. Plans are in place to grow services and resources for CALD women

8

LGBTQI+

Talking to and working with the LGBTQI+ community has opened up opportunity for future growth and relationships

NO INTEREST LOANS

Supporting our clients to purchase or pay off urgent items.

\$85,763

Amount of money distributed in NILS Loans 2022/23

79

NILS applications approved 2022/23



The Women's Centre website accepts NILS applications online now which is also working well.

"I absolutely appreciate the help they provided me"

COUNSELLING

The Women's Centre has two part-time counsellors, as well as a counsellor one day a week funded by FullStop Australia. Our counsellors are generalist, family and domestic violence counsellors. The counsellor funded by FullStop Australia is a Childhood Sexual Assault counsellor. The demand for our counselling services are high with up to a 3 month wait list, unless there is an urgent need for counselling.

3

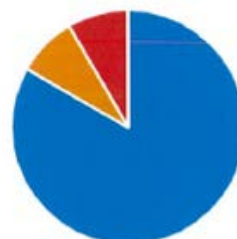
Part time Counsellors

3

month wait list for counselling

After participating in the Women's Centre counselling sessions, have you noticed a positive difference that has helped you towards your goals?

- Yes, I have noticed some difference... 10
- Maybe, I have noticed some sm... 1
- No, I don't notice any difference... 0
- Definitely, I have noticed a lot of... 1



"Getting my thoughts in order and working on calming my n ...

"I'm feeling less anxious and more positive within myself

"Understanding the way I feel"

THERAPEUTIC GROUPS

Our therapeutic groups held throughout 2022/23 in numbers.



117
Group
sessions

67%
Increase
in attendees

The term by term schedule continued to be implemented throughout 2022/23 and has continued to work extremely well with our referral partners and the wider community, which is reflected in our increase in numbers of both groups and attendees.

Client feedback from clients who attended our groups.

All the above and reconnecting with female empowerment, breaking safe in my own skin and home town again despite childhood abuse and history with Dv :)

Cassily and Chelsea are fantastic facilitators

*Finding new resources to manage unhealthy habits of co dependency by learning about the nervous system affects and causes of abuse
Learning How to love care and protect myself in a very supportive environment with other women in a non judgemental setting.*

Connecting with people experiencing similar issues. Strategies and understanding how anxiety can be managed.

Learnt new information eg about nervous system and responses, finding new coping techniques, safe sharing with like-minded women

*Finding new resources to manage unhealthy habits of co dependency by learning about the nervous system affects and causes of abuse
Learning How to love care and protect myself in a very supportive environment with other women in a non judgemental setting.*

These groups and workers are absolutely essential to support women and their families.. the service needs support and resources that are available to meet the needs of their growing service



OUR SERVICES

Counselling

Generalist Counselling, Historical Sexual Assault Counselling, Domestic and Family Violence, Sexual Assault

Intake and Referral

Women in crisis, women seeking assistance with Domestic and Family Violence, Sexual assault. We support women with applications for AVO, Work Development Order, Work Development Permit, Victims of Crime Compensation. We offer assistance with Police, emergency accommodation, assistance with Centrelink and more. We offer internal referral for counselling, legal clinic, food hampers.

NILS No Interest Loans

Via The Good Shepard, NILS offers small interest free loans that can be repaid via Centrepay.

Therapeutic Groups

Circle of Security, Self Esteem, Shark Cage, are run over a twelve month schedule. These groups run for 8 weeks and have earned high praise from participants. The weekly Anxiety Group runs each Tuesday throughout the year and provides a relaxed and friendly atmosphere for participants to drop in whenever they like.

Hume Riverina Community Legal Service

+ Legal clinic one day per week that provides advice regarding separation, divorce, access, court and more.

+ +

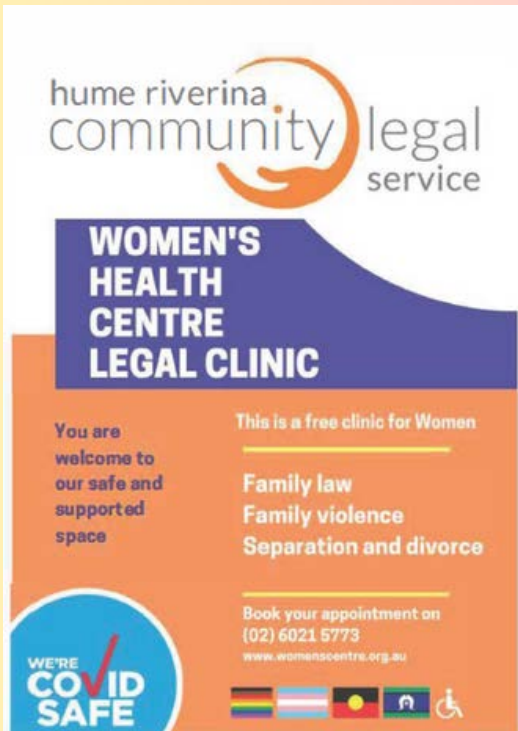
+ Emergency Clothing for Women and Children in crisis & Our Sisters Closet

New clothing, toiletries, makeup, shoes, coats, pajamas, nappies and other baby items. Share the Dignity bags of sanitary products Our Sisters Closet provides new work attire for women seeking employment or to provide appropriate work attire when starting employment.

Meditation

This group meets once a week and is guided by one of our therapists through a relaxing meditation session.

OTHER SERVICES OFFERED AT THE WOMEN'S CENTRE



This **FREE LEGAL** clinic is available one day per week and is generously provided by Hume Riverina Community Legal Service. They assist our clients with

- Family law
- Family violence
- Separation and divorce
- Answering your questions about court

This vital service assists women from diverse backgrounds to access legal advice when they are at their most vulnerable, in a safe and supported space.

FIRMER FOUNDATIONS ONE ON ONE FINANCIAL COACHING

We also have one-on-one coaching through the Firmer Foundations program, every second Thursday afternoon. It is a **FREE** service, if you feel you need to have a deeper understanding on how to manage your finances and would love someone to coach you along the way.

Please call us on (02) 60 215773 to book your spot.

GROUPS OFFERED DURING THE YEAR

Term Four
Term Four Starts 24th October 2023
Each Tuesday 9:30am to 11:30am



This group supports you in learning and nurturing better self-esteem and confidence. Connect with like-minded women in a safe and gentle space. Learn where self-esteem comes from, what shapes it throughout our lives, how it affects our health and every other aspect of our life.

We talk about the ways we can move towards accepting ourselves and welcoming more happiness into our lives.

Sessions are structured with content and practical activities, but they also allow lots of time for discussion and sharing our experiences.

Term Four
Term 4 starts 23rd October 2023
Each Monday 9.30am to 12pm




The Shark Cage® is an 8 week supportive and informative group for women that have had more than one experience of abuse in their lives.

The purposes of the program is to get free of patterns of repeated violence or other abuse, to spot the differences between 'Sharks' and 'Dolphins' around us, and to strengthen our protective resources - the 'Shark Cage' which can keep us safe. The course is designed for women that have experienced sexual abuse or domestic violence.

INTERESTED? Call us for more information. We can book you in over the phone and set up a time for a short phone interview with the group facilitator on either the 18th or 20th April.

Call (02) 6021 5773


Support Group
Every Tuesday
1.30pm to 3pm



Anxiety is something all humans experience at times. It can range from short term to long term, slightly stressful to hugely challenging, specific to general, and can include worry, tension, panic, avoidance, phobias, compulsive or obsessive thoughts or actions. Good news, whatever the type, people definitely can, and do, manage and recover from anxiety, to live the life that is meaningful for you. Part of that recovery, for lots of people, is knowing that you are not alone, that others are coping with similar things, and that you have a chance to listen, or to talk, with people who understand. A support group for people who experience any type of anxiety, and/or their friends or family, is held at the Women's Centre in Albury.

The group is held every Tuesday from 1:30pm to 3pm, at 526 Swift St. Albury. Cost is an optional gold coin donation, to contribute to tea, coffee and biscuits. This informal group is a safe space to share our experience of Anxiety. We often have a laugh and you are welcome to just come and listen. The group size is a maximum of 10 people each time, and can often be smaller. There is no need to register, but you are welcome to let us know you are coming, or to ask any questions, by calling us on 02 6021 5773 or emailing administration@womenscentre.org.au.

Parenting Term Three
Term Three commences Tuesday 25th July 2023 for 8 weeks



Circle of Security Parenting™ is a program designed for parents and carers of children aged 0-12 years who would like support to help their children to build secure relationships.

This programs help children experience greater self-esteem, better relationships with parents and peers, enhanced school readiness and an increased capacity to handle emotions

The program uses videos of real child-caregiver interactions, lots of opportunity for discussion, and a supportive recognition of every caregiver's strengths and positive motivations. All participants who attend every session will receive a Certificate of Completion.

Participants book a pre course meeting now for 12th or 18th July.

Walk & Talk Group
Alternate Fridays 10.30am - 12pm
Every Second Friday - 25th August, 8th September, 22nd September, 6th October, 20th October, 3rd November, 17th November, 1st December, 15th December



Join Sarah every second Friday for a Walk and Talk, you can get fit at the same time as making new friends.

The Walking group meets at the Women's Centre in Albury at 10.30am. After the Walk and Talk, participants are also invited in to the Centre for a cuppa and more of an opportunity to get to know the other participants and talk about interesting events of the day.

Interested? Call (02) 6021 5773 to register your interest. We look forward to hearing from you!

Call to register your interest

Book Now
Term Four starts 23rd October 2023
Mondays 1pm to 3pm



Whether you are a parent, family member, carer or someone else in a child's life, it can be tough knowing how to talk about family violence, no matter what age the child might be. This new group program is for anyone who would like to learn more about talking with kids about family violence.

We will talk about the ways that family violence can impact on children differently, depending on their age and developmental stage. We will also talk about ways to prepare for difficult conversations with children.

We will discuss particular needs that children might have if they are feeling angry, guilty, frightened, sad/grieving, confused or missing someone. We will also talk about specific ways that you can support children with these different needs, depending on their age, and share tips and ideas to make things easier on you.


There will be lots of time for discussion in the group, for people to share experiences, wisdom, struggles and ideas.

The group program is co-facilitated by the Women's Centre and by Upper Murray Family Care.

The program is 8 weeks long, every Monday from 1pm to 3pm, starting from the 23rd of October and our last session is on the 11th of December. The program costs \$246 in total. Speak to us at the Women's Centre if you want to find out about affordable options for payment. If you are interested, phone 02 6021 5773 to ask questions, or to book in for a 15 minute phone chat/visit.

* If possible, it is very helpful to do the Circle of Security Parenting program before doing this program. However, participants who have not completed the Circle of Security Parenting program are also welcome.

Every alternate Thursday from 26th October 10.30am to 12pm
Every alternate Friday from 3rd November 1:30pm to 3pm



Do you need to make time in your schedule to relax?
Would you like to learn some new techniques in how to relax your body and mind in a safe space?
Our class focusses on conscious breathing, grounding ourselves and quieting intrusive thoughts

Connect with like-minded women in a safe and gentle space.

Call (02) 6021 5773

Book Now
Term Four starts 25th October 2023
Wednesdays 10:30am to 12noon



This group is for only Childhood Sexual Assault survivors.

The intention of this group is to create a safe space for survivors of child sexual assault to connect with other women who have a shared and yet unique experience themselves or supporting others who have. It is hoped that through sharing and connecting with others in a safe environment we can promote post traumatic growth.

This will be run as an 8-week course to support survivors of childhood sexual assault to know they're not alone. The grief, confusion, anxiety, disassociation, anger and rage you may feel as a direct response to child sexual abuse is something too many people suffer alone in shame and silence. It is hoped that this group, will support you to connect with others and the truth of who you are by embracing your worth. When we compassionately connect with ourselves, and others in a supportive environment we are given an opportunity to not just survive but to thrive.

OUR SISTERS Closet



Need clothing for a job interview?
Or to start a new job?



INTAKE AND REFFERAL

Intake and Referral is the first point of contact many women have with the Centre. Some women are referred to us via external organisations from both sides of the NSW and VIC border.

Intake and Referral is our most complex and diverse service. Through the intake process each individual's story is heard and from that information, appropriate services at the women's Centre or external service and assistance suggested and made available.

Most women that come to us need to access services such as counselling as soon as possible, even if they do not necessarily identify as being in "crisis". Our current wait times for emergency counselling is over three months.

Key relationships with community partners such as Yes Unlimited, Betty's Place, AWHS and Albury Wodonga Health continued to strenghten further in 2023. This enabled communication between our services to be concise and streamlined and ultimately give much more immediate assistance.

Women - (And their children) in Crisis requiring emergency accommodation, clothing, food, toiletries, financial assistance, support with government and non-government agencies

133
Women

87%

of all clients need to access three or more of our services at the time of Intake

Our Community!

Toiletries and Clothing drives throughout the year



Thank you to the individuals, organisations and community groups that have generously donated to the Women's Centre for the annual 2023 Toiletries and Clothing drive. Organisations such as Barnawartha Country Women's Association donated clothing and toiletry items and several cash donations, as well as Crafty Crafters from Indigo Valley for their donations of clothing and cash. There were so many other organisations that collected items for us and we are really grateful for their commitment to what we do.



Cash Donation ASAHI Beverages Social Club - October 2022

Marge Nichol on behalf of the Women's Centre was presented with a large financial donation from ASAHI Beverages South Albury at a morning tea. The Social Club raised the funds throughout the year with the aim of putting back into the local community. The Women's Centre was very grateful for this donation which will help many women in crisis.



Share the Dignity bags - December 2022

The Women's Centre received Women's and Girls dignity bags along with Mums and Bubs bag from Share the Dignity, which certainly was a huge help to the Women and children we were able to give them too. Share the Dignity support over 3000 charities around Australia in their distribution of Dignity bags.



Carevan Christmas Hampers - December 2022

Members of Carevan Meals Service came into the Women's Centre to drop off a number of beautiful Christmas Hampers.

The Hampers provided Christmas items to 25 families of our clients from Albury Wodonga. Each hamper was designated for one of the clients of the Women's Centre who was in need.

It has been another hard year for many people, and we would like to thank Carevan for their generous and thoughtful gift for people that we support.



Our Community!

OUR SISTERS CLOSET ABC INTERVIEW MARCH 2023

March 2nd 2023 ABC Radio Interview with our General Manager, Marge, welcoming women to access " Our Sisters Closet" - for women who cannot afford new clothing for a job interview or to start employment. We also have clothing, toiletries and a range of other items to support women who may need support after leaving a Domestic Violence situation. Thank you ABC Radio



WODONGA CRICKET CLUB LADIES DAY MARCH 2023

March 2 2023 A huge THANK YOU to Wodonga Cricket Club for naming The Women's Centre for Health and Wellbeing as the recipient of their first Ladies Day Charity Event. Thank you to all the sponsors and donors, everyone who attended and the event coordinators and volunteers. One of our Counsellors, Sarah, was a guest speaker on what was a lovely day. The information below has been taken from the Wodonga Cricket Club FB page "Last Saturday the deck at John Flower Oval turned into a sea of pink as more than 40 fabulous ladies came together to help us celebrate our first Ladies Day Charity Event! THANK YOU to the local businesses who supported us in making this event and spoiling lots of lucky ladies with prizes on the day! We raised a total of \$2,200 which will be donated to the Women's Centre for Health and Wellbeing Albury Wodonga supporting local women in our community.



PUSH FOR INCREASE IN FUNDING FROM VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT - October 2022

October 29th 2022 Our thanks to The Border Mail and Tania Maxwell MP for their support and publicity regarding the Women's Centre for Health and Wellbeing urgent call for funding to support the numbers of women seeking our services.

Don't wait for women

...an umbrella service which offers classes in essential support services) if they couldn't care for them. "They shouldn't have to come to us then and then back to the (Fringe) Door to tell their story - I don't think that's acceptable," she said. "But what they want is to be able to go back on that cycle because when you do that, you lose them and they just don't go and get the support they need." Ms Nichol said Gateway Health also provided counselling support, but that waitlist was 12 to 18 months. She said with funding for one more counsellor, the centre could probably get its waitlist down to three weeks. In Wodonga and Wangaratta, family violence exceeds the state average by half and in Benalla by 82 per cent, so there is a high need for the service in the region. "I will continue to be and encourage them and in a few months they will be back months. "People feel coming knocking on the door as a sign of hope, these are women who are leaving, they are courageous and they are motivated when they are motivated."

...women's centre... by help of the... building" say they... can't have women... they continue to advocate for... services. Albury-Wodonga Women's Centre for Health and Wellbeing general manager Marge Nichol said NSW and Victorian government funding would run out in about 18 months. "We've got to try to find ways, but that's not really viable either," she said. The centre is 90 per cent funded by NSW and 10 per cent by Victoria, but about a third of clients are Victorian. Ms Nichol and member Northern Victoria Tania Maxwell MP are asking the states for more funding. Picture by Ash Green.

Our Community!

Women's Centre for Health and Wellbeing calls for help with basics April 16th 2023 - Border Mail

Marge is talking about the toiletries and clothing donation campaign currently running, for women and their children escaping Domestic/Family Violence/Sexual Assault.

When people escape Domestic Violence, they often leave when an opportunity presents itself, and they have no clothing or necessities with them, nor money to afford to purchase these items. The Women's Centre creates emergency clothing and toiletries packs for these families. A list of items requested for donation is in the comments section.



CALL FOR AN INCREASE IN VICTORIAN FUNDING - Petition April 2023

The Petition was read by the Hon Wendy Lovell MP in the Victorian Parliament on May 5th 2023, requesting a review and increase to our funding from the Victorian Government. The current level of funding from Family Safety Victoria has not increased since 2011.

CALL FOR AN INCREASE IN VICTORIAN FUNDING - March 2023

ABC Goulburn Murray for interviewing our General Manager Marge Nichol. Marge discussed the Women's Centre's ongoing need for additional funding from Victoria to meet the numbers of Victorian women that come to us for our services and support. Marge talks about the petition we are asking Victorians to sign that will be taken to that states legislative council in the hopes of generating a long term solution.

**ABC
GOULBURN
MURRAY**

Our Community!



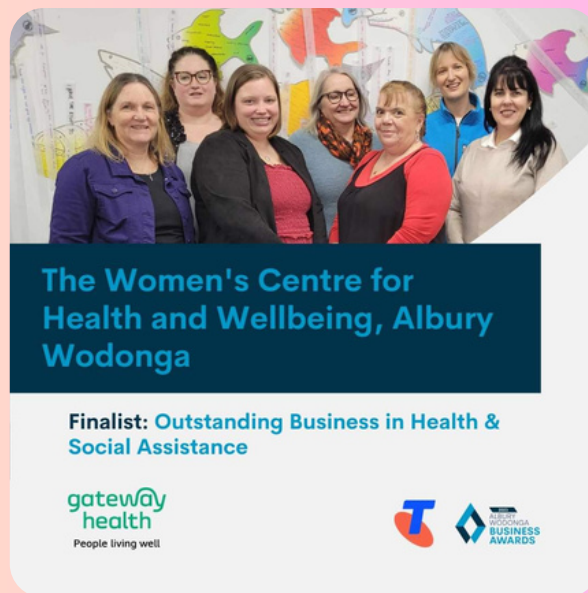
Our Petition Campaign for 2023 The Border Mail January 2023

A **HUGE** thank you to John Moody & the Rapid Relief Team who have supplied us with non-perishable food tubs throughout the year for our clients who are in crisis or simply need to put food on the table, which we have been able to compliment with Arnolds food vouchers.



Lack of adequate funding for Women's Centre - Border Mail. July 2022

Tania Maxwell MP - Tania delivered a speech to the Victorian Parliament in June 2022 addressing the lack of adequate funding for the Women's Centre. Addressing also the cross-border issues.



June 2023 - We were very proud to be a finalist in the Healthcare and Social assistance category amongst so many wonderful organisations that do amazing things within our community.

Our Community!

Business Case for an increase in funding from NSW Government - The advocacy for an increase in our core funding from the NSW Government continued throughout the year. Driven by our Peak Body CEO - Denele Crozier and all the 20 Women's Centre's across the state.

The Business Case was submitted to the NSW Ministry by the end of October 2022, and was also part of the NSW Labor party election platform. The increase in our core funding was to enable the Women's Centre's to be able to sustain the services to Women and those who identify as Women across NSW. The delay in the delivery of the NSW Budget caused some angst amongst the Women's Centres.

Scenario 2 of the Business Case was passed as the way forward, and for the Women's Centre here in Albury means that our core funding will more than double and with this means we can increase our services by way of increasing counselling, intake and group services to the Women of our area.

Some extracts from the Business Case are below.

"ALBURY-WODONGA Women's Centre for Health & Well-being have been amazing. Both in my current role at Gateway Health and my previous role at Centre Against Violence. They have provided excellent Family Violence counselling for victim survivors of family violence. They provide reasonably priced counselling for women who would otherwise not be able to access this support. There is a large gap in the local area in terms of affordable Family Violence counselling which the Women's Centre supports to fill. Without this service clients in my region would be majorly negatively impacted- and be facing high financial costs for counselling or excessive waitlists (12 months +). For women who have been impacted by Family Violence they are already suffering financial impacts, this would create further barriers to them receiving support".

Family Violence Case Manager,
Gateway Health

Domestic and Family Violence / Sexual Assault	Females	Males
Domestic and Family Violence Related Hospitalisations rate per 100,000 population (2019/20)	15.9	2.2
Domestic Violence Related Assaults percentage of incidents reported to Police by gender of victim (2021/22)	67%	33%
Domestic Violence Related Assaults – 3 year change (2018-21)	3.1% increase	
Sexual Assault – percentage of incidents reported to Police by gender of victim (2021/22)	88%	12%
Sexual Assault – 3 year change (2018-21)	4.8% increase	

FIG 2: NSW Key Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Indicators by Gender (Sources: NSW HealthStats; BOCSAR Crime Statistics)

Key Priorities

- The Women's Health Program model and approach provides access to much needed trauma-informed mental health services outside of the acute care environment, as well as treatment, preventative health and health education services to women across their lifespan
- The program is closely aligned to key priorities across a range of current NSW Government health strategies and Frameworks.
- Key Priorities include:
 - improving access to community care outside hospitals
 - strengthening service integration and co-ordination
 - addressing the social determinants of ill health
 - preventative health: improving health education and literacy so that people stay well for longer
 - improving service accessibility and outcomes for priority populations

The Women's Health Program, delivered by Women's Health Centres, provides a holistic and integrated approach to community-based health care for priority populations of women which addresses the social determinants of ill health.

The program provides access to much needed trauma-informed mental health services outside of the acute care environment, as well as preventative health and health education services to women across their lifespan which allow them to take an active role in their health and well-being and decisions around care.

In addition, the community network infrastructure, developed over 40 years by individual Women's Health Centres, supports a 'no-wrong door' approach to servicing, and maximises the impact of both Women's Health Program Funding and other Funding.

The Women's Health Program model and approach is closely aligned to key priorities across a range of current NSW Government health strategies which include:

- improving access to community care outside hospitals
- strengthening service integration and co-ordination
- addressing the social determinants of ill health
- preventative health: improving health education

Client Stories

CLIENT STORY - This client wishes to remain anonymous

"I attended the Women's Centre in early 2021 at rock bottom of my life. I was an alcoholic drinking hourly to survive. After going DUI at more than three times the limit, and losing my licence immediately, I knew I needed help. With the support of Tracey (Intake and Referral at the Women's Centre) I was able to start drug and alcohol counselling, have an Interlock put in my car and avoid being jailed for my charges and DUI.

Two years later I am over two years sober. I am two months away from getting my interlock removed from my car. I am working full time, supporting other people (Disability). I'm able to look myself in the mirror without hating who I see looking back at me. I thank myself every day for connecting with the Women's Centre and getting the help and support I desperately needed.

I will be forever grateful to Tracey and the Women's Centre for all they did for me during that time."

IN HER OWN WORDS

The following is a personal story of a woman who we support.

"Lost in a sea of turmoil.
Feeling so lost,
Not knowing where to go.
Feeling very confused and battered,
No bruises to show.
I was mentally distraught.
Somebody mentioned the Women's Centre in 526 Swift St, Albury.
I wandered in through their door.
It was the best thing ever.
I was welcomed with a lot of understanding,
and feeling very comfortable.
I received valuable help on how to cope.
The counselling was the best I have had,
I trusted my counsellor.
She helped me confront a lot of issues.
I highly recommend the Women's Centre to any female who feels lost.
Great service for the Women of Albury Wodonga."



Client Stories

IN HER OWN WORDS - The personal story of a Woman we support.

“The Women’s Centre helped me so much over the past 12 months.

I left a psychologically abusive relationships where I was subject to coercive control among other forms of abuse. I had very little resources and found it hard to leave, but with encouragement from my psychologist and help from my family I managed to move myself and my daughter.

I was suffering from significant trauma that meant I couldn’t work (and still can’t) which has obviously put huge financial strain on us.

I found the Women’s Centre after being bounced around between multiple organisations due to the fact that we had moved from Victoria to NSW when we left.

I kept hearing “No we can’t help you because the abuse occurred in Victoria” or “No we can’t help you because you now live in NSW.”

Finally, I spoke to Tracey at the Women’s Centre, and I heard “Yes, we can help you, we don’t care where you live!”

Tracey, Marge, and Chelsea helped me navigate access to funding I was entitled to (which made an enormous difference) supported my application to Centrelink when it got tricky, linked me to free legal advice, helped me get a NILS loan to buy essential items I didn’t have like a heater and a vac cleaner. They helped me put together a VOCAT claim which was complex and beyond my mental capacity at the time.

They identified courses I could attend to support me through my recovery and set me up stronger to move forward in life and not fall into the same relationship patterns again. They helped me understand my rights and how to enforce them to protect myself.

I am now connected with Cassily, one of their excellent trauma counsellors, who I see regularly to further support my recovery.

Sadly, a lot of women are in similar and much worse circumstances that me and it means demand for this service is high. More funding to enable more resources to help more women is needed. Education for young men and women as a preventative would be incredible too. “



Client Stories

Thank you to our client *Bea for allowing us to share her story. (*not her real name)



Bea is a new mum with a young baby. Bea was experiencing domestic violence and wanted to leave Albury Wodonga. Our Intake and Referral team supported Bea to access “Escaping Violence package”, which financially supported Bea to move. The team assisted Bea in moving to her new town. We worked together with other services to get her settled into temporary accommodation and then transitional housing. We received this message from Bea today:

“I think I may have a proper house pending a meeting next week! I’m so excited, Things are really working out here. I also wanted to thank you for everything you’ve done I honestly never thought I’d have the guts to leave and with your help my life has flipped I’m so happy and **** is doing amazing. Not to mention I’ve been spending so much time with my family. In such a short time I feel as though I’ve found myself. I appreciate everything you (all) have done for me! 😊”

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS



Income and Expenditure for year ended 30th June 2023

INCOME

Grant income	\$359,234.60
Non-recurring Grant income	\$ 38,061.56
Therapeutic Groups income	\$ 6,485.90
Trauma Counsel income	\$ 40,759.60
Donations	\$ 20,384.15
Other Income	\$ 21,517.97

Total Income **\$486,443.78**

EXPENSES

Administration expenses	\$ 11,226.35
Depreciation	\$ 4,404.35
Employee related expenses	\$550,409.50
Office expenses	\$ 35,737.12
Rental expenses	\$ 61,345.56
Repairs and Maintenance	\$ 3,627.72

Total Expenses **\$666,750.60**

For full set of audited financial statements please visit Australian Charities and Not-for-profits commission www.acnc.gov.au

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS continued

Board of Management's Declaration

Women's Centre for Health & Wellbeing (Albury/Wodonga) Inc. For the year ended 30 June 2023

The Board of Management has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In accordance with a resolution of the Board of Management of Women's Centre for Health & Wellbeing (Albury/Wodonga) Inc., the Board of Management declare that the financial statements for the year then ended, a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes:

1. Present a true and fair view of the financial position of Women's Centre for Health & Wellbeing (Albury/Wodonga) Inc. as at 30 June 2023 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements and the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Act 2009* and the *Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012*; and
2. At the date of this statement there are reasonable grounds to believe that Women's Centre for Health & Wellbeing (Albury/Wodonga) Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This declaration is signed for and on behalf of the Board of Management by:

 
General Manager

Sign date: 8/11/23



**WOMEN'S CENTRE FOR HEALTH
AND WELLBEING (ALBURY
WODONGA) INC**

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