

**Northern Rivers Women's
and Children's Services Inc**

**2009 - 2010
Annual Report**

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Chairperson's Report

2009-2010 has been another year of growth & success for NORWACS.

The staff of the three services, Lismore Women & Children's Refuge, Bulgama Bihyn, Lismore Women's Resource Centre and the Executive have done wonderful work supporting women and children as well as raising the profile of NORWACS in the broader community and heightening awareness of the impact of domestic violence.

I would like to particularly thank the support staff and their managers for their commitment and hard work in what is often a professionally and emotionally challenging work environment. Their dedication is remarkable.

Thank you also to the administration, Executive and Women's Resource Centre staff who have made such a difference to NORWACS capacity to assist those women who do not directly access crisis services.

Special mention also for the work done with the community at large in promotion of our services, networking with the aim of expansion of the services provided and the distribution of information and programs related to women's well being.

Lastly, I would like to thank my cohort of committee members for their enthusiastic engagement in the processes of governance. It has been an honour and a pleasure to serve with you in this term of office.

I look forward to another year of involvement with this dynamic and effective multi-faceted agency.

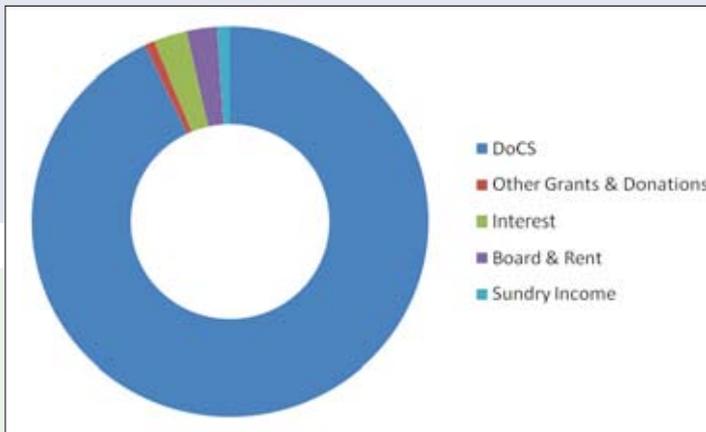
Treasurer's Report

Last year saw an increase in service provision with the opening of the Lismore Women's Resource Centre. A \$4,000 grant through Clubs NSW Community Development and Support Expenditure Scheme was received for equipment at the Centre. We have been supported throughout the year

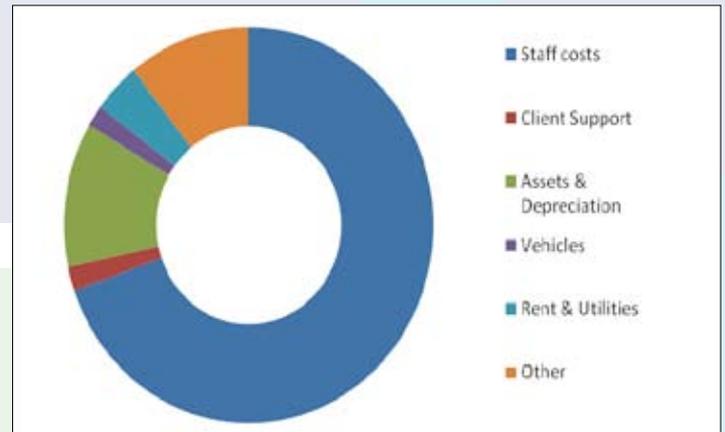
by our major funders Community Services NSW (formerly known as DoCS) through the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program.

The year ending 30 June 2010 resulted in an overall surplus for NORWACS.

Where the money came from:



Where the money was spent:



Three vehicles were upgraded during the year with a van being purchased for Bugalma Bihyn to enable larger families and groups to be transported. Also a number of items were taken off the asset register as they were traded in, broken or no longer used.

We would like to thank to knowledge the help and support given by the following groups and organisations during the year:

- 2LM Children's Appeal
- Seventh Day Adventists Op Shop, Lismore
- AGL Energy
- Alannah and Madeline Foundation
- Anglicare Op Shop, Bangalow
- Alstonville Baptist Church
- Alstonville Public School
- Alstonville Uniting Church
- Bangalow Anglican Op Shop
- Caddies Coffee Shop
- Charity Goonellabah
- Clubs NSW
- Curves, Lismore
- Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Staff Lismore
- Friends of Community Mental Health
- Fundamental Food Store Lismore
- Goonellabah Out of School Care
- Howards Deli
- Lifeline
- Lismore Base Hospital Women's Care Unit
- Lismore Ladies Benevolent Society
- Lions Club Ballina
- Lismore Neighbourhood Centre
- Lismore High School
- Lismore Public School
- Lismore Ten Pin Bowling
- Lismore Toy Library
- Plateau Quilters
- Quota Club, Alstonville
- Quota Club, Lismore
- Quota Club, Lower Clarence
- Quota Club, Yamba
- Richmond River High School
- Salvation Army
- St Vincent's Op Shop
- Sleepy Care Bank
- Telstra
- The Body Shop
- The Book Warehouse, Lismore
- Wollongbar Public School
- WIRES
- Yamba Knitting Group
- YWCA NSW
- Zonta Club Northern Rivers

We would also like to thank those individuals who donate furniture, household goods and clothing to women and children in need. Your support is much appreciated.

Executive Officer's Report

Northern Rivers Women and Children's Services Inc (NORWACS)

It is with pleasure that I present the Executive Officers Annual Report for NORWACS 2009-2010 financial year.

NORWACS is a community based organisation that is managed by a volunteer board of management. I would like to thank the management committee this year for their commitment and support to the organisation. The committee has a wide range of skills, experience and cultures that ensure the management and staff of the organisation have an understanding of the broad range of issues and needs facing women and children escaping domestic violence.

NORWACS employs the Executive Officer, Finance Officer, Receptionist/Administration Officer and Lismore Women's Resource Centre (LWRC) Project Officer.

I wish to thank all these employees for their exceptional work and commitment to the organisation over the past year. Our achievements are a result of the combined skills of all our employees. I am very privileged to head a team of professional and dedicated staff.

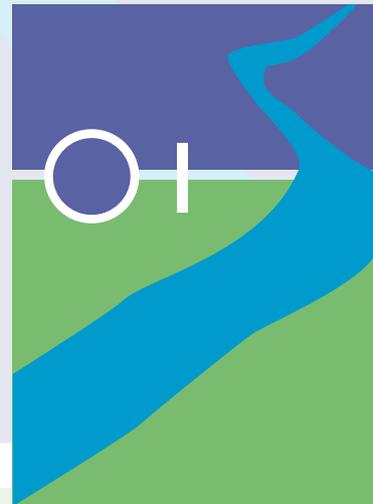
NORWACS role is to provide governance, administration and management to a variety of women's and children's services throughout the Northern Rivers Region.

Currently NORWACS auspices the following projects:

- Lismore Women and Children's Refuge
- Bugalma Bihyn (formally Lismore Aboriginal Women and Children's Refuge)
- Lismore Women's Resource Centre

Over the year these projects have had extensive involvement in dealing with the issues surrounding women and children escaping domestic violence through the provision of:

- Crisis support and accommodation
- Early intervention and prevention programs
- Post crisis support programs
- Homelessness support and Community awareness activities
- Supported transitional housing and
- Supported semi- independent accommodation



Annual Achievements

Development of Department of Human Services (DoHS) Service Specifications

Over the last year NORWACS has implemented DoHS Performance Monitoring Framework (PMF) and developed new Service Specifications including for the first time, individual unit costing for service provision.

The PMF requires the development of Service Specifications and is the process DoHS uses to monitor funded services to ensure that funds are being used appropriately, in response to Government priorities and community needs.

The PMF is an integral component of the reforms currently being implemented across all Community Services funded programs. The PMF describes Community Services approach to reviewing NORWACS performance against the requirements of the Service Agreement and the activities and results detailed in the Service Specifications.

The Service Specification is the mechanism by which DoHS and NORWACS plans for service provision and is translated into contractual terms. It is an agreement between NORWACS and DoHS on the range of services to be provided in exchange for the allocation of SAAP funds. It is also an agreement on the outputs and outcomes to be achieved and the way in which these outputs and outcomes will be measured

through monitoring and evaluation. The newly revised DoHS Service Specification templates were developed and completed in October 2009 by Lismore Women and Children's Refuge and Bugalma Bihyn in consultation with DoHS. The unit costings developed for each project will determine the capacity and levels of activity for service delivery. This will be further incorporated into the organisations planning through the managers and staff work plans for the year.

Opening of Lismore Women's Resource Centre (LWRC)

Lismore Women's Resource Centre opened in July 2009 and is a project of NORWACS.

The LWRC is committed to providing a neutral and inclusive space where women can seek resources and referral about issues affecting their lives and those of any accompanying children. The purpose of the centre is to meet the needs of all women in the community by providing a space where women can have a sense of ownership, empowerment and feel secure to conduct and participate in community development and related activities.

The LWRC employs a Project Officer whose role has been to plan, consult and implement services and activities for the LWRC.

The LWRC works in partnership with the Lismore Women and Children's Refuge, Bugalma Bihyn and other local service providers such as the Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre, Legal Aid, Women's Health, ACON, Housing NSW, DoHS and others to provide services and events focusing on issues affecting women and children including domestic violence, health and legal issues, homelessness and community awareness campaigns.

The LWRC has a Community Advisory Committee with representatives from Lismore and District Women's Health Centre, Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre, ACON Northern Rivers, Northern Rivers Area Health Service, The Family Relationships Centre, Lismore Council and Housing NSW.

Development of Lismore Women's Resource Centre Strategic Plan

In collaboration with the LWRC Project Officer we have developed the strategic plan for the LWRC over the first year. The strategic plan will continue to be reviewed and developed annually. The following 7 goals have been developed including details of strategies and outcomes for each goal.

Goal 1: Develop the strategic plan for year one of the LWRC

Goal 2: Secure funding for the position of LWRC Coordinator

Goal 3: Promote the service within the community

Goal 4: Identify future partnerships

Goal 5: Development of Policy and Procedures

Goal 6: Service Development

Goal 7: Development of a sustainable Service Budget

All of the goals have been achieved within the required timeframes and some have been rolled forward for further development next year including an emphasis on Aboriginal women with the aim of ensuring that the Centre is inclusive, accessible and of value to Indigenous women in the community. Of the women in Lismore, 3.7% identify as Indigenous, this is significantly higher when compared to the NSW average of 2.1%.

Housing NSW Registration and Accreditation Process

In 2007, the NSW Government launched Planning for the Future: New directions for community housing in New South Wales 2007/08 – 2012/13. This strategy aims to support the growth of the sector and to build the capacity of, and confidence in, community housing.

The five themes of the strategy are:

- 1. Growth:** Facilitate the growth and continued innovation in the community housing sector to assist more people in need
- 2. Diverse and flexible responses:** Support diverse and flexible responses to meet individual and local needs using local opportunities
- 3. Stronger communities:** Support individuals and their local communities to become more sustainable, self-sufficient and resilient
- 4. Capacity and confidence:** Build the capacity of and confidence in community housing to ensure sector growth and the delivery of quality tenant outcomes
- 5. Viability and sustainability:** Putting in place financing and structural arrangements that achieve long-term business sustainability for community housing providers

Under the Housing Act, NORWACS must be registered as a housing provider to receive assistance from Housing NSW. To become registered NORWACS is required to satisfy the Registrar that we have demonstrated a commitment to providing community housing consistent with the Housing Act & The new Regulatory Code.

The Registration process requires NORWACS to submit information and evidence about its performance against requirements for the eight performance areas under the Regulatory Code

- 1: Fairness and Resident Satisfaction**
- 2: Sustainable Tenancies and Communities**
- 3: Asset Management**
- 4: Sound Governance**
- 5: Standards of Probity**
- 6: Protection of Government Investment**
- 7: Efficient and Competitive Delivery of Community Housing**
- 8: Development of Projects**

During this year I have attended training and briefing sessions about this process. NORWACS is due for registration in August 2010. During the year I have been reviewing and developing NORWACS policies and procedures that relate to the requirements under the regulation code in preparation for registration in August 2010.

Restructure of Administration position

As a result of the relocation of NORWACS to the new premises at Woodlark Street Lismore the organisation needed to initiate a review and restructure of the Administration position.

A number of factors had contributed to the position being no longer relevant to the needs of the organisation, these included insufficient business demand, changes to the organisational structure and other operational issues.

A consultation process was undertaken with the employee, relevant staff and management to review the current position description and develop a new position that was more relevant to the needs of the service.

The consultation process resulted in a new position being developed, namely a Reception/Administration position. The position would provide receptionist duties for NORWACS including the Lismore Women's Resource Centre and assist NORWACS in maintaining efficient administrative functioning.

This new position commenced in June 2010 and will be reviewed later in the year prior to formal recruitment processes.

Development of NORWACS Policy & Procedures

This year we continued with the development of the NORWACS Policy & Procedure manual. This completes the final organisational change resulting from the restructure from LWCR Inc. to NORWACS Inc.

The aim of the process was to develop a NORWACS policy and procedure manual that would cover all the governance responsibilities of the whole organisation. This manual will sit alongside each service policy manual and replace outdated governance policies in each project manual.

The NORWACS policy manual will be completed in October 2010, following on from this will be a review and update of the policy manuals at each of the projects.

Lismore Women and Children's Refuge (LWCR)

During the past year the Lismore Women and Children's Refuge continues to evolve and adapt to changes necessary to meet Lismore and the surrounding communities changing needs.

The organisation has experienced some major staffing changes, with the resignations of 2 long standing General Support Workers and the relocation of Counsellor/Group Coordinator to the Lismore Women's Resource Centre. These resignations have kept me busy with the recruitment & induction process.

As a new manager I have enjoyed this challenge and will continue to assist in the professional development of LWCR newest staff members and welcome them to the team.

This year in my role as manager I have been responsible for assisting staff in the development of individual staff work plans. These work plans are essential planning tools for LWCR & are a requirement of NSW Dept of Human Services reporting requirements and ensuring LWCR's ongoing funding.



Service Data Collection

LWCR currently records statistical data using the SAAP (Supported Accommodation and Assistance program) this data is collated by NDCA (National Data Collection Agency). This data collection is essential to the service and its future funding, therefore it is important to have staff record data accurately and regularly.

As manager, I have appointed the Family Worker to be solely responsible for the recording of service SAAP data. This worker has an extensive knowledge of the program and has the ability to assist new staff members in data collection and recording.

Client Group

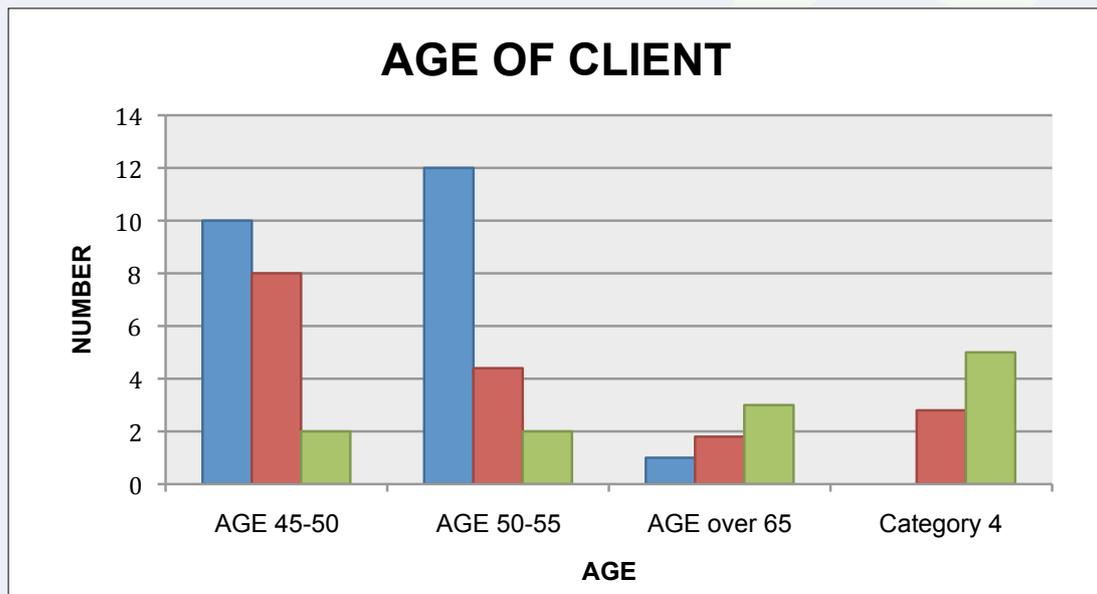
This year the Lismore and surrounding areas has seen an increase in the cost of rental properties, a trend that is reflective of housing markets across NSW. The current lack of safe, affordable and sustainable housing has resulted in an increase in the number of women and children accessing the service. Unfortunately there is a negative side to this situation, in which women and children are choosing to remain in unsafe situations due to the fear and uncertainty of becoming homeless. Women with children have the extra responsibilities and pressures of supporting their family on a single income or benefit. Perpetrators of domestic violence are becoming increasingly aware of this situation and therefore their methods of power and control are becoming more effective as the woman may see herself and her situation as desperate and overwhelming.

Single, Older Women

LWCR has noticed an increase in rates of single, older women accessing the service. High rental Rates force this group to remain in unsafe housing or they rely on friends and family members to assist them afford costs. Shared housing seems their only option, which is not always ideal, especially for those women already struggling with past traumas.

Table 1: Age of client

This table shows a comparison of older, single women who were accommodated at LWCR 2008-9 & 2009-10 years. The blue shaded column shows 2008-9 & the red shaded column shows 2009-10.

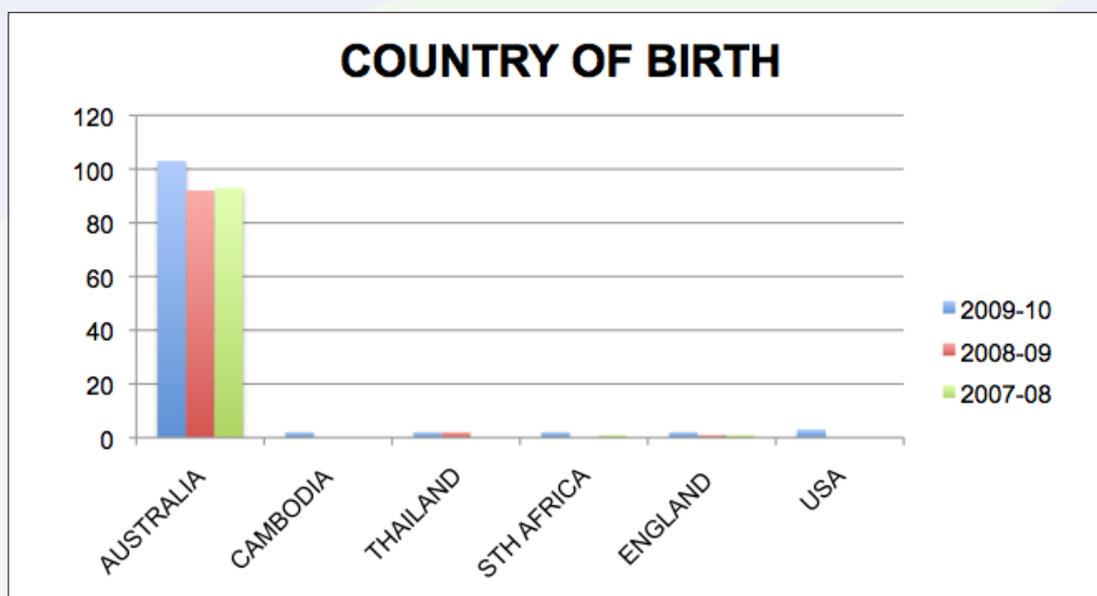


As manager of LWCR, it has been difficult to balance the dynamic of single women and women with children. In the past, women with children have been given priority over single women when allocating refuge/transitional housing, however this priority needs to be reviewed, due to changes to the housing market and increased living costs.

CALD (cultural & linguistic diversity) Women and Children

LWCR statistics show an increase in women and children from CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) backgrounds, seeking crisis accommodation support. These women and children present to the service with similar issues to other women however, their needs vary drastically dependant on their immigration status. CALD women and children face huge difficulties when attempting to access Government financial support services, this situation being amplified by cultural differences and language/communication barriers. Domestic violence for these families is usually hidden and therefore community workers are limited in the supports they provide. LWCR has been fortunate thus far in its ability to provide a high level of support to this client group, however due to the increasing numbers of CALD women and children contacting the service, it concerns me how long this can be sustained. In response to this situation, I will continue to approach local charities for material aid and prepare a funding submission requesting extra funding to assist this client group.

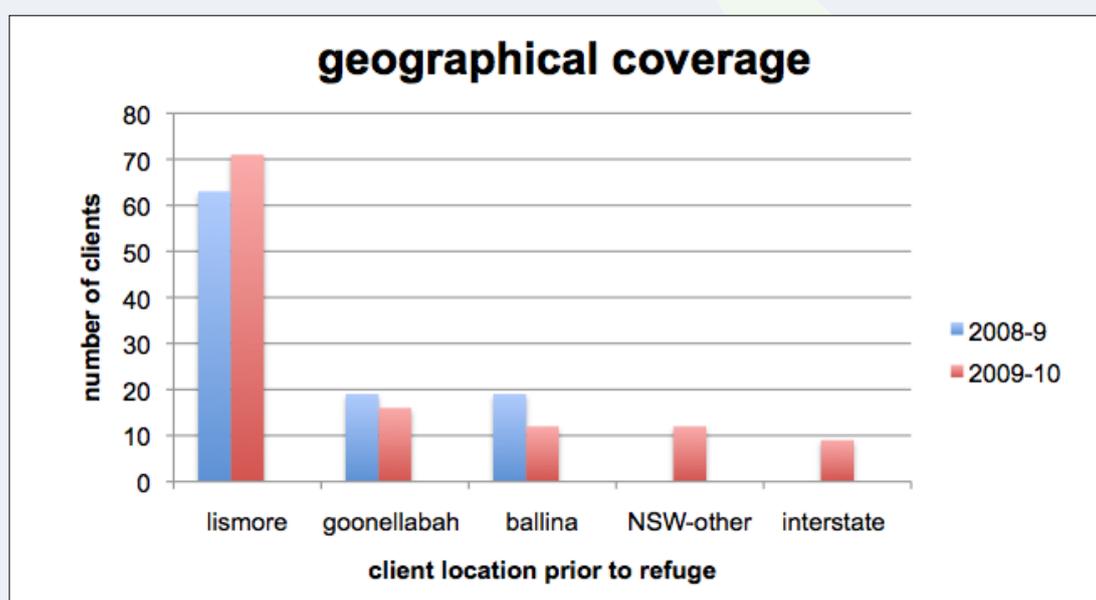
Table 2: country of birth of client 2007-8, 2008-9 & 2009-10



Geographic Coverage

LWCR continue to support women and children from a vast geographical area, however there has been a noticeable increase in Refuge interstate transfers and out of local area requests for accommodation. Changes to Government legislation with regard to mandatory reporting has resulted in an increase in children being removed from families where domestic violence is present. This has meant that women are forced to look for alternative housing options in order to have their children restored to a safe environment. These housing options are becoming increasingly rare due to increased rental costs and high demand. Women are looking at relocating to areas that are unknown to perpetrators or closer to supportive family and friends. Refuges seem to be used as a stepping stone to the families' new start. Alternatively as a safe place to stay until the perpetrator is incarcerated or legal proceeding are in order.

Table 3: shows the geographical location of women and children prior to being accommodated at the refuge. The blue shaded columns 2008-9 and the red columns 2009-10 results.



Service Activities

LWCR Staff Planning Day

LWCR held a service-planning day on the 22nd of February 2010 at the Lismore Women's Resource Centre, one of the aims was for staff to update their individual work plans to be in line with NSW Dept of Human Services reporting requirements. In addition, the staff discussed the development of a new outreach policy specifically designed for LWCR. All staff contributed to the discussion and a future-planning day will be set for final development of the outreach policy.

Volunteers Christmas Morning Tea

As manager I believe in the acknowledgement of all those who donate and support LWCR. A morning tea was held at the resource centre to thank these individuals and groups. Unfortunately due to the busy time of year not all representatives could make it, however, those who did were impressed with the Lismore Women's Resource Centre facilities and support that was available to women and children in the Lismore area.

Residents Christmas Party

In December, staff and residents of LWCR enjoyed a Christmas picnic at Shaw's Bay, Ballina. Staff and residents were blessed with perfect weather and spent the day swimming, beach walking and eating lots of yummy food. The highlight of the day was watching the children opening their presents and eating half melted chocolate Santa's.

International Women's Day (IWD)

This year staff and residents gathered at the Lismore Women's Resource Centre to celebrate IWD. Both women and children shared their creativity and painted a mural, embracing women, using images and words to tell their unique stories of empowerment. The day ended with friendly discussion, laughter and a light lunch.

Student placements

This year I have been responsible for the supervision of three Tafe students during their placement at LWCR. Students observed staff in their client service delivery, attended children's outings, attended outreach visits and community awareness events. It was encouraging to meet students interested and passionate about women's issues and the positive way they interacted with the residents of the service. LWCR was rewarded with a new local service directory, which was developed, by one of the students. I look forward to supporting many students in the future, as I believe they bring life and energy to the refuge.

Service Results/Outcomes

This year LWCR has supported a total of 148 women and children through the provision of crisis accommodation services. The results were obtained from the National Data Collection Agency.

LWCR has undergone some significant staff changes this year, which has affected its capacity to collate and store data. NSW Dept of Human Services have also changed their requirements and staff are in a process of either learning new reporting/data requirements or understanding LWCR data collection procedures. The appointment of a sole worker to record such data will see an improvement in the way the refuge stores data, thus being able to capture a realistic picture of LWCR clients which approach the service for support.

Homelessness Prevention and Community Awareness

This year the addition of the Lismore Women's Resource Centre has increased LWCR capacity to provide homelessness prevention and community awareness through a variety of outreach programs. The following programs and services are delivered directly from the LWCR project:

- Insightful counselling service.
- Specialist Domestic Violence groups.
- Children's Domestic Violence workshops
- Educational workshops in local high schools (The Love Bites program). Community events - reclaim the night, IWD, child protection week, sorry day celebrations, naidoc week, white ribbon & Remembrance Day.

Case Management and Early Intervention Support

Staff have provided case management support to 92% of accommodated clients who accessed the LWCR service in the past year. The remaining 8% of clients did not engage with the service, or their length of stay was too short to be case managed.

The past year has seen an increase in clients with complex needs, this increase is due to a number of reasons, and however lack of affordable housing, increased living costs and changes to government legislations are the major contributing factors.

Staff have over the past year attended weekly client case management meetings to discuss the complex issues of clients. These meetings allow staff the time to look at caseloads and request support of the family worker where children issues are involved.

Case Management Post Crisis Support

LWCR provide ongoing post crisis domestic violence support to non residential clients of the refuge. Regular case management support is given to women and children of LWCR exit housing. In most cases a worker will remain with the woman for reasons of consistency and confidentiality.

Supported Crisis Accommodation (24 Hour on-call)

Staff participate in the LWCR 24hr on-call roster, and provide an appropriate response to women and children who are victims of domestic violence and or sexual assault. Support may include:

- Emotional support
- Information & referral
- Practical support

These women may be current residents of LWCR or from the wider community.

Supported Transitional Accommodation

In addition to the refuge accommodation, LWCR provide exit housing to residents of the refuge. Women and children must have stayed at the refuge in order to be considered for further supported housing. These properties assist women and their children with their emotional healing and provide a safe, affordable environment until permanent housing is available.

Supported Semi- Independent Accommodation

LWCR has developed a partnership with Bugalma Bihyn and Women up North Housing, Women's Integrated Community Housing Network (WICHN).

This partnership assists women in their transition to other support services and future independent housing. LWCR & WUNH share case management roles for a period of 3 months at the start of the lease.

Highlights, Barriers and Recommendations

A personal highlight for me was being employed as manager of LWCR; I feel privileged to be part of a wonderful organisation and will continue to promote the service within the community.

The Lismore Women's Resource Centre has proved to be a great asset to the organisation. I have been given positive feedback from a wide range of people within the community.

Some other highlights include:

- State conference 2009
- International Women's Day Celebrations
- Sorry Day

The induction/recruitment process has been challenging, however I trust that my efforts will be rewarded with a positive, well balanced team of workers in the future.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Management Committee for their support and commitment to the clients and staff of LWCR.

I would like to thank all the staff at LWCR for their support, hard work and dedication. I appreciate the work you do and I look forward to another productive year.

Bugalma Bihyn

(Lismore Aboriginal Women and Children's Refuge)

I am a proud strong Aboriginal woman who has managed Bugalma Bihyn for the past fifteen months. It is a service I am extremely proud of and feel privileged to work in.

I believe it has been a great asset to many women from Lismore and the surrounding communities. Bugalma Bihyn has given these women and their children a new life free from fear and danger.

It has empowered these women to move on to a better quality of life. Although not all women have gained or maintained the strength they need, they still derived a great deal of benefit from the service and hopefully will return at some later date.



Services Activities

Supported Crisis Accommodation

Bugalma Bihyn provides accommodation and support to women and children who are victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. This includes providing crisis intervention, emotional support, accurate information, referral advice and practical assistance. Women of the community can attend weekly groups at the Lismore Women Resource Centre. Counselling can also be accessed through the Lismore Women Resource Centre. Bugalma Bihyn provides a 24hr on call service to clients who have access to support and information on referral numbers.

Case Management Early Intervention Support

Bugalma Bihyn provides individual culturally appropriate case management to each client on a weekly basis. The support staff assist the client to define their immediate needs and supports, appropriate referrals and access other organisations, i.e. Department of Housing, North Coast Community Housing, Women Up North, Community Options, Commonwealth Care link, Centrelink, Homecare, On Track, legal Aid, Family Law Court and Doctors.

Group Work

A person was appointed in January of this year to co-ordinate and to oversee the facilitation of groups, provide supervision, training and mentoring to staff at Bugalma Bihyn.

Since that time staff from Bugalma Bihyn run a women's group at the Women's Resource Centre Lismore on a weekly basis. The groups are well attended by 4-8 women weekly who reside at the refuge as well as women in the community.

The groups are for Aboriginal women who have been effected by or are experiencing domestic/family violence /sexual assault. These groups assist with prevention and community awareness as well as post crisis support. The obvious rationale for the groups is its potential to empower and respond to alleviating the damaging effects associated with domestic/family violence. Together women build an environment of safety and consistency in which they explore the effects domestic violence is having on their lives.

The group takes on various forms of interaction and activities and the women play a major role in what they expect from the group. Often the women prefer to invite speakers from the local community for information sharing.

Creative art activities and outings are another preference as this supports women to feel comfortable enough to talk about their individual stigmatisation and shame.

In consultation with staff we monitor and evaluate all groups and programs as well as provide training to the facilitators on a weekly basis. We support the staff to access appropriate educational materials for the groups.

- Residents group sessions are held once a week
- Women Groups held at the Women's Resource Centre once a week
- To maintain community awareness and address homelessness, we run a six to eight week group for women in the wider community and our clients present and post and any referrals from other agencies

Post Crisis Support

Bugalma Bihyn support and encourage women who have been residents or women from surrounding communities to ring in for information and referral to other services.

- We provide information and advice to women and children at risk of homelessness
- We promote community awareness
- We provide case planning to identify the client's strengths. Risk and immediate needs are assessed and coordinated with appropriate services to meet the clients need. We also monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the services delivered to the women and children

Outreach Accommodation

Outreach accommodation is provided for women who are victims of domestic violence and or sexual assault, who have been housed at Bugalma Bihyn but, are needing ongoing supportive housing. Staff provide support to the outreach accommodation for a period of three months. This support is offered to continue building their support networks, foster independence and to support their pursuit to find permanent accommodation and implement strategies to maintain secure long term housing.

Highlights, Barriers and Recommendations

Bugalma Bihyn provides accommodation for up to six weeks, sometimes this is not long enough, and clients needs an extended period of intensive support. We have become flexible and started to deliver an extended program to cater for clients' individual needs.

Abused single and older women are on the rise in the local area, there are very limited appropriate services / accommodation available for these women. For example locating and securing housing is extremely difficult for single and older women as their income levels are smaller and women with children are often given preference.

The staff of Bugalma Bihyn in partnership with Lismore Women's Refuge and Lismore Women's Resource Centre celebrated NAIDOC day together in the form of a workshop, "Mapping our Mob". It was a great day and the Indigenous and non Indigenous workers forged a lasting bond.

International Women's Day was celebrated at the Lismore Women's Resource Centre & Bugalma Bihyn attended.

I initiated a celebration for "Sorry Day" in conjunction with the Lismore Women's Resource Centre and the Lismore City Council. The attendance was tremendous. The Mayor, Council Members, clients from Bugalma Bihyn, Lismore Women and Children's Refuge, Rekindling the Spirit, the Community Legal Centre all attended and an enjoyable day was had by all.



'Sorry Day' 2010

Recruitment

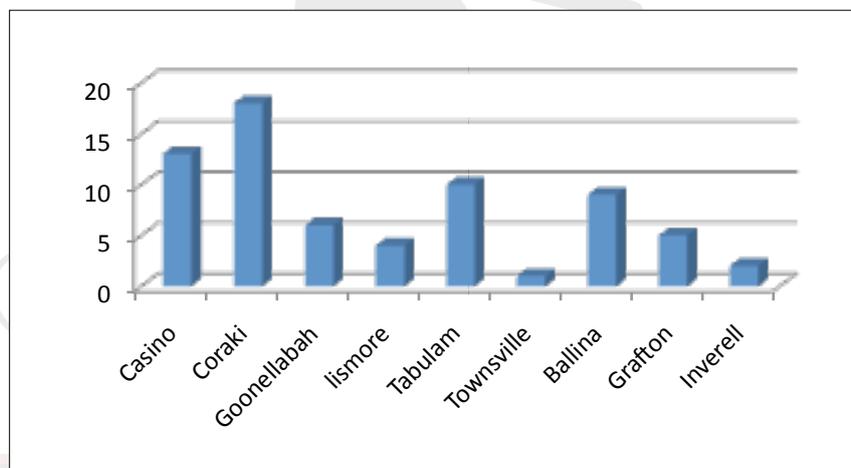
In the last twelve months we had a large staff turnover for various reasons. Recruitment took place twice and the following areas of training were undertaken by new and existing staff.

- Group Skills
- Child protection Dynamics
- First aid
- Case Management skills
- OH&S

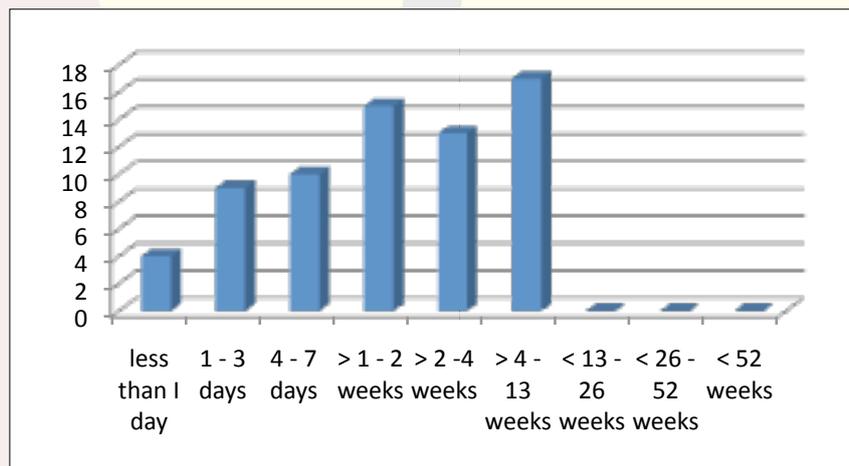
Ongoing personnel development is available to all staff. To a great extent workers are responsible to initiate and identify the type of "skill area" they wish to undertake or broaden their training.

Service Data Collection

Geographical Intake



Statistical Profile - Client Support Periods



In Conclusion,

I would like to thank the Executive Officer for all of the support she has given me over the last twelve months.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment my staff have shown not only to the clients but also to me over the last year. The staff's committee has been a wonderful asset and I would like to extend my thanks to them.

The Lismore Women's' Resource Centre and Lismore Women and Children's Refuge have been a tremendous and strong network to work with and I believe they have enhanced our service and the quality of the client's life.

Insightful Counselling

The relocation of the Insightful Counselling service from the Refuge to the Women's Resource Centre (WRC) has improved the service immensely. Situated in the CBD, provides women discreet and easy access, in an inviting and comfortable environment. Utilising the centre has alleviated the compromised confidentiality and stigma attached to refuge.

SAAP Case Management Early Intervention and Post Crisis Support

The Insightful Counselling service comprises three essential components:

- Individual counselling
- Group work
- Community awareness / education

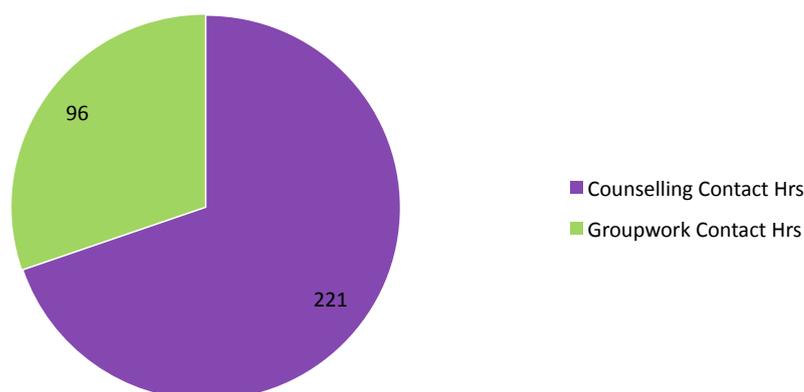
Two counsellors provide a total of 10 counselling appointments each week. The WRC admin worker making contact with the clients on the day before their appointment has reduced the rate of Failure to Attends. The majority of counselling appointments are early intervention and prevention from homelessness, with many women safely planning their transition from the abuse, reducing the need to escape into crisis accommodation. Family Law issues and ongoing abuse via children's change over are also common.

Group work consists of at least 3 separate groups each week. Each Thursday during school terms a group is held for women of the community who have experienced Domestic Violence (DV) and/or Abuse is held at the WRC. The groups held over the past year have been Coping with Anxiety, New Beginnings and Exploring Anger, Attracting women from as far as Bonalbo with participants usually aged between 25 and 40yrs, with the exception of one Coping with Anxiety group where the bulk of women were 50yrs+. Two separate weekly support groups for residents of each of the refuges focussing on the effects of DV. Groups are well attended with 8 to 13 participants in each.

During the year we also facilitated in partnership with ACON a Lesbian Relationship group promoting healthy relationships with a focus on Same Sex DV, held in the evenings for 8 weeks. Along with KidsMore Klub workshops (8 to 12yr olds) with the family worker from the refuge.



Early Intervention and Post Crisis Support



SAAP Homelessness Prevention and Community Awareness

Love Bites is an early intervention/prevention program, promoting healthy relationships with a focus on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, ran in state high schools right the way through Lismore, Goonellabah, Casino, Kyogle, Woddenbong and Bonalbo. We Facilitate the Domestic Violence section of the program at each school throughout the year.

Active participation in community awareness events and campaigns – Reclaim the Night, Suicide Prevention Day, Remembrance Day, International Women’s day. Regular meeting attendance at: Domestic Violence Liaison Committee, Mental Health Interagency, Love Bites Steering Committee, Women’s Resource Centre Advisory committee, and various sub committees to plan and organise events.

A busy and highly productive year for Insightful Counselling.

Lismore Women's Resource Centre

Service activities

July 2010 marks the first year anniversary of the Lismore Women's Resource Centre. The first year goal was to work strategically to ensure sustainability of the Service, both operationally and in responding to the ongoing needs of the community.

Numerous funding opportunities have been explored and consultations held with the community and the sector, resulting in an accumulation of knowledge and resources. These have been drawn upon throughout the year and guided the activities of the Centre.

The Lismore Women's Resource Centre has been a venue for the Early Intervention and Prevention Activities and Groups run by the Lismore Women and Children's Refuge and Bugalma Bihyn (Lismore Aboriginal Women and Children's Refuge).

In addition the venue has provided space for other community groups to hold AGM's, training programs and grass roots community development activities.

Service results

The Resource Centre was successful in obtaining funding from the Victims of Violent Crime Act Grant through the Department of Corrective Services. The funding was used to purchase the equipment to establish an IT Centre and website.

A quarterly newsletter has been developed and distributed to the sector as a means of communicating and sharing resources and knowledge about the activities of the Centre and Women's Services, locally and nationally.

Consultations revealed a desire for community and sector input to the community development activities of the Resource Centre. As such a Community Advisory Committee has been established and provides a forum for feedback and advice which is fed back to the Project Officer and the NORWACS Management Committee.



Community Awareness

The Resource Centre has been involved in the organisation and hosting of many Community Awareness Campaigns including:

- International Women's Day
- NAIDOC Day
- Sorry Day
- Remembrance Day
- Reclaim the Night
- Child Protection Week

Most recently the Lismore Women's Resource Centre has taken on the role of Convenor for the Domestic Violence Liaison Committee. A revised Terms of Reference was proposed and agreed upon for the coming year with a focus on Community Awareness Campaigns and Events.



IWD Mural



Family Support Network Inc.



Legal Aid
NEW SOUTH WALES

women's domestic violence
court advocacy services

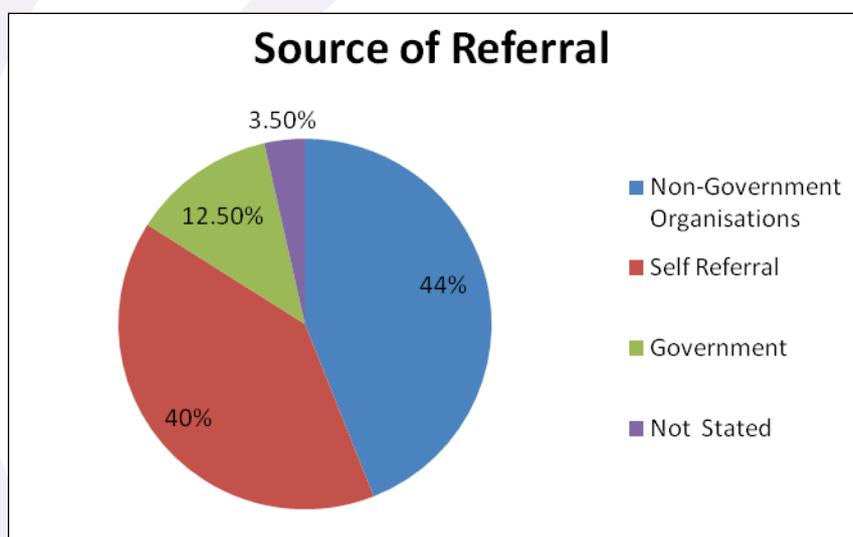
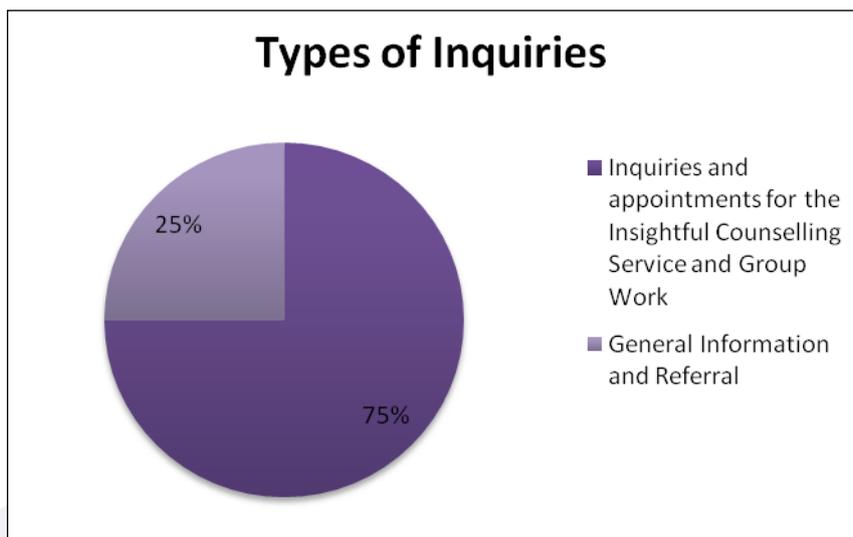


Financial Management

NORWACS continues to provide the Governance and Financial Management of the Service through an auspicing arrangement. The Executive Officer and Finance Officer for NORWACS play an ongoing and integral role in the Strategic Planning of the Centre and act as consultants in the development of funding proposals and partnerships.

Service data collection

A 'snap shot' for the month of April 2010 gives insight as to the types of inquiries received at the Resource Centre and the referral pathways leading women to the service:



Highlights, barriers and recommendations

The Resource Centre has received much positive publicity in the local media and endorsement by community figures such as Mayor Jenny Dowell and Federal Member for Page, Janelle Saffin.

Ongoing and sustainable funding is always going to be a barrier to the delivery of services to the community. However, as a counter-strategy, partnerships have been developed with organisations such as the Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre to create new pathways for women to access the Centre.

The Resource Centre has conducted consultations for the second year strategic direction of the service. We look forward to working with an increased focus on Aboriginal Women with the aim of ensuring that the Centre is inclusive, accessible and of value to all women in the community.