



**Rape &  
Domestic Violence  
Services Australia**

Formerly NSW Rape Crisis Centre

# 2012-13 ANNUAL REPORT

*Promoting awareness is the first step in stopping sexual assault and domestic violence. I am proud to support Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia and to be part of this essential work.*

Lauren Jackson, Patron



This life-size print of Lauren Jackson was donated to Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia by artist Margaret Hadfield. The original painting was submitted for entry for the Archibald Portrait Prize in 2012.

## Royal Commission

Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia is proud to be part of the Royal Commission into Intitutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The Royal Commission will bring to light many shameful and criminal behaviours committed by people in positions of power. It will show how others colluded with offenders to maintain power and influence. It will also highlight how victim blaming beliefs and attitudes, and the practices and tactics of offenders, have lead to such widespread abuse of children. While this will be painful, it is hoped that this knowledge will enable us all to be more aware and better prepared to notice and act when a child's safety is at risk.

Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia has been granted \$2.9 million over three years to work with those who are involved in the Royal Commission. The money will be used to provide; Australia wide telephone counselling, training for counsellors on working with clients who are experiencing complex trauma, and counselling services for those participating in the Royal Commission.

The Royal Commission was established by the then Prime Minister Ms Julia Gillard. The Commission is inviting anyone who experienced sexual abuse in any Australian institutional setting, when they were under 18 years of age, to register to tell the Commission their story. The Commission is also interested in hearing from witnesses or anyone who has knowledge about what has happened. Concurrently the Commission will investigate the practices of a number of institutions and prepare recommendations based on findings.

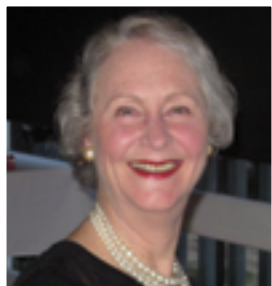
The Commission will not be seeking to prove or otherwise that the sexual abuse occurred or who was responsible. Its role is to identify institutional practices that created an environment in which such crimes occurred and were either not detected or not appropriately responded to. Where the Commission considers that information it receives may assist Police in their investigations it may seek consent to provide that information to Police. Where the information indicates that a child or children may be currently at risk, the Commission has the same duty of care as others and will take whatever action is needed to protect those children.

The Australia wide 1800 Royal Commission telephone counselling service will be available for anyone who is participating or is considering participating in the Royal Commission. This will include those who experienced sexual abuse in institutional settings and those who witnessed the abuse.

The training for qualified counsellors on working with people who are experiencing complex trauma will be accredited. Complex trauma is a common impact of experiencing sexual assault in childhood.

The locally and regionally based counselling service will work with people who, as a result of the Royal Commission, have made a decision to process the trauma they are experiencing which has resulted from childhood sexual abuse.

# Chairperson's Report



This year has been particularly notable for the Board – with a change of name for the service which reflects the increasing number of programs that are small departures from our traditional paths, and the fitting out of new premises.

With a firm of consultants, board members and staff participated in the rebranding exercise which produced our more inclusive and descriptive name, and our new look.

For the first time, the new Balmain premises provide purpose-built work areas and facilities for administrative and counselling workers and, following the closing of the Drummoyne office, staff are together again.

There has been an emphasis on further training for the Board, particularly in overall governance and in gaining understanding of operational aspects of service delivery. In-house training, presented by members of the clinical team, covered

areas like understanding complex trauma and the operational bases of crisis intervention and managing risk of harm. Along with members of staff, most of the board attended training on recruitment, and some board members undertook external training in understanding financial reports, a seminar on advanced strategy, risk and governance, and sessions of the 7th Australian Women's Health Conference.

We welcomed two new board members, Sophie Read-Hamilton and Jac Schroeder, who bring valuable skills and experiences, including addressing violence against women and applied research into women's health issues. The annual planning day included succession planning, our normal review of service policies, risk management considerations, questions of growth and expansion, and the increasing privatisation of social welfare services.

In 2014 we look forward to continuing and increasing the provision of quality programs to the community, and to the inauguration of Full Stop, our fundraising foundation, at a gala event in the Sydney Town Hall.

## Ensuring Excellence in Clinical Practice

Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia views quality in counselling practice as critical.

It is the organisation's responsibility to provide the best possible service to clients. This is of course no less than those who access services have a right to expect.

Achieving quality and seeking to continually improve quality requires Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia to:

- have clinical practice based on researched evidence,
- employ staff who are appropriately qualified, trained and experienced,
- have an organisational agenda of continuing clinical and professional development,
- have practice that is imbedded with process and outcome evaluation, and
- regularly review outcomes leading to continuous practice improvement.

Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia achieves evidence based clinical practice through a five yearly cycle of research and review. The research identifies the latest in clinical excellence, incorporates knowledge the organisation has gained through process and outcome evaluation and draws on organisational clinical expertise. This work informs the clinical practice review. Where additional services are established during the five year review cycle the research process is enacted for the specific clinical work needed. This is then integrated into the overall clinical practice of the organisation.

Clinicians at Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia hold Psychology, Social Work or equivalent Counselling qualifications, and must have at least three years clinical experience to be eligible to apply for a position with the service. Induction is held over two weeks of intensive instruction and skills development. Supervision, at the conclusion of the induction, identifies counsellor skills and learning edges. During the following six months of orientation counsellors participate in intensive clinical supervision, one on one professional development, quality assurance practices and in-service training.

External professional development is sourced as identified during supervision, at the performance appraisal conducted at four months employment and annually thereafter.

Clinical supervision, in-service training and professional



development are ongoing processes for all clinicians at the service. In the last financial year staff participated in 585 incidences of in-service training and professional development. All counsellors participated in a performance appraisal and attended clinical supervision at least every four weeks.

Process evaluation involves a collation of data from file audits, call monitoring and client file data system reports. Individual Counsellor development is undertaken in Clinical Supervision or a counsellor may attend external professional development training. Where learning edges are identified across the counselling team in-service training is organised.

Outcome evaluation is based on client feedback surveys; Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF) ratings (APA, 2000), and Goal Attainment Scaling (GAS) ratings (Kiresuk & Sherman, 1965).

# The Counselling Service

This financial year, Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia responded to 37,790 client contacts. This is a 13% increase from the previous financial year. Clients generally contact between one and four times. The 37,790 contacts to Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia were made by or in relation to 11,532 individual clients. This is an average of 3.3 contacts per client.

Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia provides the 24/7 telephone and online counselling service for anyone in NSW who has experienced sexual assault. Nationally Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia is the clinical service provider for 1800RESPECT, the telephone and online service for anyone who has experienced or is at risk of sexual assault, family or domestic violence. Both services also provide support to supporters (family and friends), and professional consultation and debrief for practitioners.

In addition, in partnership with six Women's Health Centres across NSW, counselling is provided to women who experienced sexual assault in childhood.

75% of contacts were to the 1800RESPECT service. For clients who contacted the organisation for the first time 85% contacted by telephone, 77% identified as the person who had experienced the violence and 68% identified the main reasons for the contact was domestic violence.

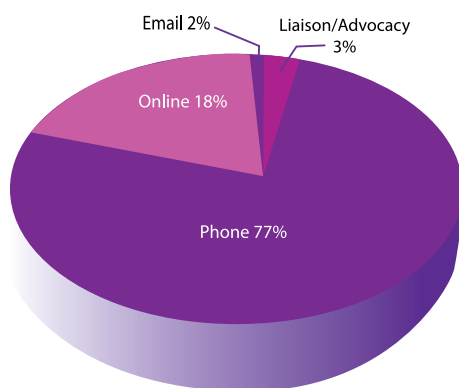
By June 2013 the telephone and online services were offering 617.25 hours of counselling per week with shifts being arranged to maximise counsellor availability during high contact periods.

Generally across states and territories the number of clients contacting 1800RESPECT aligned with population densities. Exceptions were: Queensland whose population contacts were above their population density reflecting partnership agreements between Queensland services and 1800RESPECT, and NSW and Victoria which were slightly less than population density reflecting the existence of 24/7 services in both states.

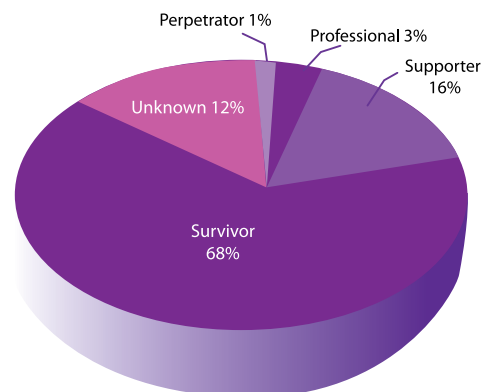
*Thank you for helping me today - the counsellor was non-judgemental and made me feel so welcome. I have been struggling with the effects of sexual abuse for many decades and was very happy to discover that a service like this one exists.* Client

## Client Profiles

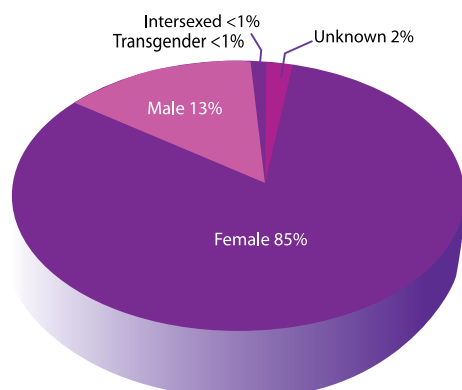
Contact Type



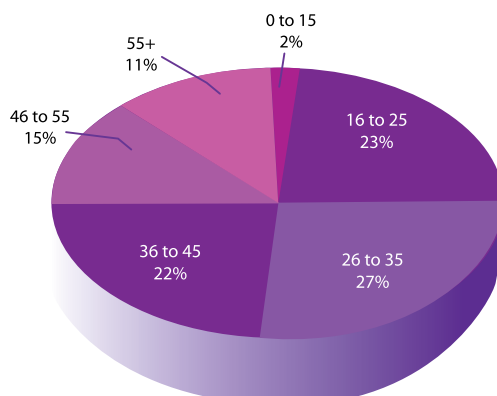
Client Category



Client Gender



Client Age





# Vicarious Trauma Management Training

Vicarious Trauma refers to the detrimental impacts suffered by people who are exposed to traumatic information. Traumatic information includes information relating to incidents of abuse, violence, torture, neglect or disaster.

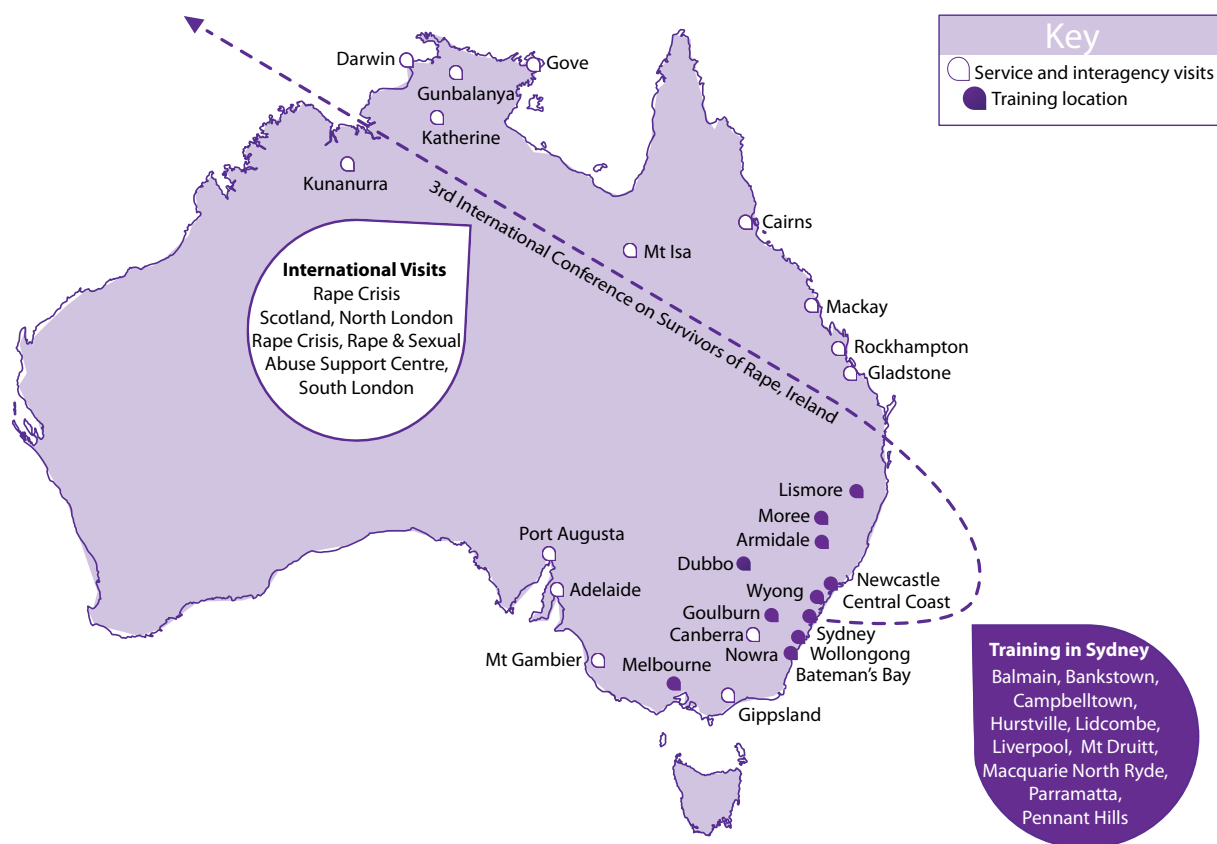
It is normal for trauma workers to experience vicarious trauma, because the only thing that predicts whether or not a person will experience vicarious trauma is the amount of exposure they have to traumatic information. The essential task in managing vicarious trauma is to notice it early and respond to it effectively as it cannot be prevented.

Organisations that manage vicarious trauma effectively acknowledge it as a work health and safety risk for which workers and organisations have a shared management responsibility. These organisations also reap the benefits, as staff

enjoy their work more, work more efficiently and effectively, and are less likely to take sick leave. Rates of staff retention are generally significantly higher. As well as being one of a range of practices to ensure quality service provision to clients, managing vicarious trauma well is a financially astute risk management strategy.

Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia continues to lead training in the area of Vicarious Trauma Management. During the 2012-13 financial year, the service provided training to organisations, networks and individual practitioners on 22 occasions, and trained over 460 people.

Training is provided to a range of organisations including Family and Community Services workers and Aboriginal women who are members of the Aboriginal Women's Sexual Assault Network.



## Maintaining Partnerships

Effective and transparent partnerships between service providers are critical to efficient service provision. Also critical is a shared understanding between those services that client needs and goals are central if quality outcomes, for the client, are to be achieved.

It is rare that a client will access one service only or that a single service can meet all of each client's needs. Human beings are complex and when they experience sexual assault and/or domestic violence their recovery can be dependent on supports, services and criminal justice responses that are integrated and clear on their role and the role of others. Services also need to be prepared to maintain engagement, potentially over an extended period, and during that period adapt to the changing needs of clients as they work toward recovery.

In working to achieve such partnerships Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia has continued its annual agenda of service and interagency visits. In the past year the Centre visited South

Australia in September 2012, Victoria in March and Queensland in April 2013. Visits with services in NSW continued throughout the year. In total Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia met with ten policy and service providers in government, sixteen non government services and presented to fifteen interagencies. This work, as well as numerous teleconferences and exchanges of written communication, confirmed existing partnerships. It also enabled the development of new and targeted service integration plans. Examples include: agreement between services on each service's specialities in relation to the stages of trauma and how that work could best be targeted to client needs, after hours response by Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia so that a 24/7 telephone service is provided, telephone support for clients in acute crisis accessing forensic services where counselling support is unavailable, or immediate counselling support where a domestic violence offender has been arrested.

# Research & Projects

## Interagency Case Management for Adults who experienced Sexual Assault in Childhood

For adults who experienced sexual assault in childhood the impacts of that violence can be extensive and devastating. Services they may access in their road to recovery may be inadequate or intermittent and are often poorly co-ordinated.

The Interagency Case Management for Adults Who Experienced Sexual Assault in Childhood Project seeks to demonstrate that improved outcomes can be achieved when organisations co-ordinate service delivery and ensure the services delivered are based on the expressed needs and recovery goals of the client.

For this project Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia is providing trauma processing counselling, Stepping Out Women's Housing Project is providing accommodation and living skills development and Leichhardt Women's Health Centre provides medical services and groups activities such as depression support and relaxation. The project is in its second year. Qualitative and quantitative data collected by Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia, including feedback from participants, will be used to identify outcomes and practices critical to recovery.

## Gunbalanya Safe House Project



*Gunbalanya: R&DVSA counsellor with the Coordinator of Katherine Women's Crisis Centre, and Gunbalanya Safe House workers*

Safe houses provide a safe place in many Aboriginal communities for women and their children when they need to escape domestic violence. Most safe houses are staffed by local women and supported by community elders.

Gunbalanya Safe House in Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory is auspiced by Katherine Women's Crisis Centre (KWCC). In 2012 KWCC contracted Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia to work with the safe house workers to develop their service and management skills. Four weeks of intensive mentoring, in-service training and professional development was provided. Essential to the project was worker induction to the KWCC supervision and vicarious trauma management program. Subsequent to the training the wet season isolated the community for four months. During that time the safe house staff maintained continuous service delivery. Critical to success was the concept that Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia staff had expertise in service delivery and trauma management and the Safe House staff held cultural and community expertise. By giving equal weight to both sets of skills and knowledge, together practices were developed that are clinically and culturally appropriate.

## Aboriginal Women's Sexual Assault Network/Hey Sis, we've got your back

In many Aboriginal communities there is a 'go to' woman when sexual assault happens. She is a safe refuge and others in the community know that violence will not be tolerated in her home.

Hey Sis is a NSW-wide network of 90 such women who meet regionally to support each other and work towards ending sexual violence in their communities. Members have met in four regions to date and plans are well advanced for further meetings that include training on the impacts and management of vicarious trauma as well as developing additional skills to support a person who has experienced sexual violence.

Discussions are underway to develop a 20 week scholarship program for Aboriginal women which offers intensive sexual assault advocacy and case management training. Ultimately, the network seeks to locate trained and supported Aboriginal sexual assault advocates in all NSW regions.

Hey Sis is a partnership project between Mudgin-Gal Aboriginal Women's Corporation and Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia.

[www.hey sis.org.au](http://www.hey sis.org.au)



*NSW Parliament House: MPs Sophie Cotsis MLC, Shadow Minister for Women, and Linda Burney, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, with Dixie Link Gordon, CEO Mudgin Gal Aboriginal Corporation and fellow Aboriginal women at the launch of the Hey Sis Network*

## Other Projects at a Glance



This artwork was donated to the service by the young women at Juniperina Juvenile Justice Centre.

### Juniperina Next Step Packs

Packs prepared by Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia with information about the services, and numerous donated items designed to support self care, are being handed to young women exiting the Juniperina Juvenile Justice Centre. Discussions with staff may lead to further project, support and training possibilities.

## Dunny Door Campaign

For those who are experiencing sexual assault or domestic violence, being seen to read or pick up information about support services can be and feel very unsafe. The Dunny Door Campaign aims to place a 1800RESPECT sticker on the back or every public toilet door in Australia. Over 100,000 stickers have already been distributed.

## Men's Secondary Prevention Program

In partnership with a private employer Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia is working to develop an effective, evidence based behaviour change counselling and group work program for men who fear they may or who have used violence in their relationships. Participants attend counselling and, when group ready, group activities. They also nominate others who provide feedback to the project researchers to broaden outcomes analysis.

## Sexual Assault Domestic Violence Alliance

Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia and DV NSW have formed an alliance of peaks and statewide women's NGO services who work in the area of violence against women. The Alliance comments on and seeks input into government policy, identifies service gaps, service co-ordination and integration opportunities in NSW.

## Changing our Name

NSW Rape Crisis Centre is now known as Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia.

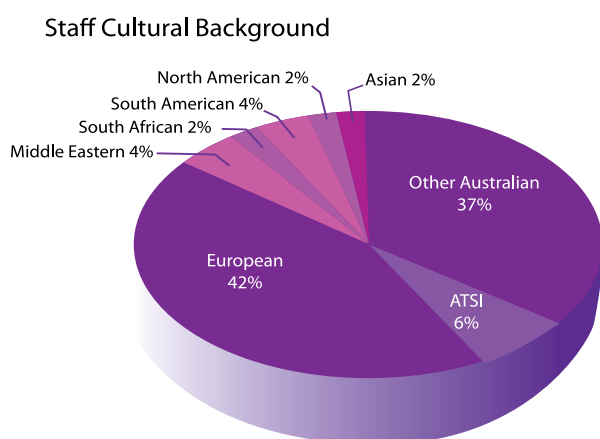
In changing the name the Board was clear that the new name needed to locate the organisation as a national service provider of sexual assault and domestic violence services. It also needed to maintain connection with the word 'rape' so that links with the service's formation in the 1970's and to similar services worldwide was maintained.

Critically the name needed to ensure that clients could easily identify the organisation's role.

In 2012, the Board began exploring options. They contracted a creative agency and held consultations with staff and stakeholders. The new name was agreed to by members in June 2013.

## Staff Profile

During the 2012/13 financial year Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia employed a total of 69 staff. 87% were employed in the clinical team. All members of the clinical team hold tertiary qualifications with the administration, project and management team holding qualifications and experience appropriate to their position. The youngest team member is 24 years and the oldest is 65 years with the average age being 30 to 40 years. At 30 June 2013, 56 staff were employed by Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia.



## Financial Report

### Income

Grants	4,446,140
Fund raising and donations	18,774
Training and contracts	164,442
Other	69,583
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,698,939</b>

### Expenditure

Wages and on costs	3,925,654
Administration	360,197
Maintenance, equipment and IT	116,936
Professional development	105,593
Resources and travel	186,911
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,695,291</b>
Transfer to Reserves	2,600
<b>Balance</b>	<b>1,048</b>