



Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre Inc.

Annual Report
2020/2021

Accredited at
Certificate Level of
the Australian Service
Excellence Standards





Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre Inc and North West Sydney Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service

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Funded by Legal Aid NSW

Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre Inc. (BWGHC) is a Public Benevolent Institution with DGR Status. Donations of \$2.00 and above are tax deductible. The Centre holds **NSW Authority to fundraise: CFN/23808**.

All photos unless otherwise indicated are property of BWGHC. Thanks to the staff and students at BWGHC for their contribution of photographs to this report.

BWGHC Annual Report for 2020/2021 compiled by Sharon Labbett

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We are committed to providing a professional, affordable and holistic gender informed service, promoting health, wellbeing and empowerment for women and girls, delivered in a caring, non-judgemental, respectful and safe environment.



About Us

Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre Inc. (BWGHC) is a community-based, non-profit women's health centre which provides accessible health and wellbeing services for women and girls in Blacktown LGA regardless of their income. Our peak body is Women's Health NSW and we are part of a network of 21 community based women's health centres in NSW which share a similar mission and ethos.

OUR MISSION

We are committed to providing a professional, affordable and holistic gender informed service promoting health, wellbeing and empowerment for women, delivered in a caring, non-judgemental, respectful and safe environment.

We achieve this by:

- Providing a holistic women's health service to the community.
- Educating women and children so they can make informed choices about healthcare and well-being.
- Empowering women and children to make informed choices throughout their lives.
- Providing a safe place for women and children.
- Advocating for and supporting women from a feminist perspective.

OUR VALUES

We recognise that women's health encompasses the physical, spiritual, environmental, emotional and social wellbeing of women and girls. BWGHC offers a holistic approach to understanding, managing and supporting women, girls and the broader community in the Blacktown LGA to make informed decisions about their own health and wellbeing. This approach is based on feminist philosophy, with an emphasis on respect and empowerment for all women and girls. Our values are:

- **Dignity** – we treat all people in a way that is respectful of their diversity and as valued individuals.
- **Compassion** – in our interactions with people, we strive to be kind and empathic.
- **Optimism** – the unwavering belief in the positive potential inherent in people and society.

OUR SERVICE PRINCIPLES

- We are a community based, non-government organisation run by, and for women.
- We are a public benevolent institution providing a direct service to disadvantaged women.
- We focus on prevention and early intervention.
- We work in partnership with other agencies.
- We are accessible to all women and girls.
- We strive to maintain ethical standards in all our activities.
- We are committed to best practice.
- Our work environment reflects our values.

Our Community

BWGHC provides health and wellbeing services to women and girls in Blacktown LGA, a 'huge and diverse' area with high levels of cultural and linguistic diversity¹.

Many areas of Blacktown LGA experience high levels of socio-economic disadvantage, poor health outcomes and high levels of unmet need when it comes to service provision³.

Our area is also experiencing rapid urban development and population growth and is now one of the most densely populated Local Government Areas in Western Sydney², further increasing the demand for services.

BWGHC takes into account the unique needs of our local community. We provide accessible services that take into account the social, cultural and economic barriers that may exist for women and girls wishing to access health services and resources in our area.



Blacktown City Council 16 Days of Activism, Yarn Bombing, 2020



Report | From the Chairperson

Chairperson's Report

Dr Olayide Ogunsiji



It gives me a great pleasure to present the Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre's (BWGHC) annual report for 2020-2021 financial year, to our members, friends, and stakeholders.

Despite the many months of Covid-19 pandemic-related lockdowns and disruptions, I am very pleased to say that 2020-2021 has been a very active and successful year for BWGHC in so many areas. The highly impressive performance of the Centre during the last twelve months is clearly testified by the array of programs and services we provide. The Centre continues to build on its strong foundation and network at all levels of the organisation and consolidating a solid platform for ongoing growth and success in serving the many women and girls in our area.

In the course of the year, the Centre was successful in several grant submissions. We continue to receive donations, nominations and club grants. All these nominations and financial supports are very important to us, as they enable the provision of much needed extended services to young women and girls across the Blacktown LGA. The full details of our extensive range of programs are laid out in the following pages of this report, which I encourage you all to read in depth.

I would like to appreciate our community partners, including but not limited to the Outer Western Domestic Violence Network, Family Planning NSW, the Western Sydney Local Health District, NSW legal Aid and the Department of Communities and Justice, as well as numerous grass-root services and their workers whom we closely work with on a daily basis to ensure that women and girls get the relevant support they need.

On behalf of the Management Committee, I wish to acknowledge and extend my gratitude to our relentless Executive Officer, Jhan Leach for her professionalism, tenacity and determination in executing our strategic and operational goals effectively and efficiently. Under her leadership and guidance, BWGHC is growing from strength to strength as evident from the variety of programs, services and partnerships established over the number of years she has been in the Centre. Very importantly, I thank all the staff for their hard work, dedication, empathy and loyalty to BWGHC. This year has been a particularly difficulty one on service provision, with significant emphasis on telehealth. Without their welcoming smiles over the phone, passion and commitment, it will be difficult (if not impossible) to make a difference to the health and well-being of our clients.

Furthermore, I acknowledge and thank the members of the Management Committee for their dedication, guidance and commitment to effective governance of the Centre. Your ability to promptly respond to the ongoing changing terrain that the sector is operating in, is highly appreciated.

Finally, and more importantly, I wish to thank all the women and girls who use our services. Their ongoing trust in BWGHC to continue to be the Centre of excellence in women's health and domestic violence response in the Blacktown LGA, fuels all that we do.

I hereby present to you 2020-2021 Chairperson's annual report.

Yours Sincerely,

Dr Olayide Ogunsiji



Report | From the Treasurer

Treasurer's Report | Mehreen Ahmed



I have been a proud BWGHC Board Member since 2019 and was truly honoured when I was approached to take on the Treasurer responsibility in 2021. As I am a Director of multiple small businesses in Western Sydney, I felt it my responsibility and duty to accept the role and provide assistance in whatever capacity I am best able to do so.

I hope to be able to assist the Centre well into the future so more women and children in Blacktown community are able to access health, mental health, wellbeing, advocacy and community services with ease. This is especially necessary off the back of some of the most challenging times our community has ever faced with COVID-19 conditions affecting the Centre, the team and our entire community. We have a lot to do in the recovery phase and with the continued help and support from the outstanding leadership, staff, volunteers, donors and related community service providers, the Centre will continue to assist the community as we emerge into a new normal.

With this report, I would like to commend and acknowledge the tremendous lengths Jhan and her team went to in overcoming the difficulties presented by 2021 lockdowns in one of the hardest hit LGA's in Australia. The conditions were trying yet the Centre was fully functional under flexible conditions. We must commend these efforts, congratulations to you all. And here's to 2022 and beyond.

Yours sincerely,

Mehreen Ahmed

“Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.” — Mother Teresa.



*Blacktown City Council, International Women's Day, 2021
Jhan Leach, Mayor Tony Bleasdale & Sharon Labbett*

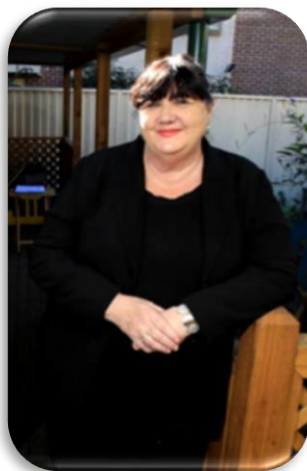


*Blacktown City Council, International
Women's Day, 2021*



Report | From the Executive Officer

Executive Officer's Report | Jhan Leach



I would like to thank our Management Committee members, Chairperson Dr Olayide Ogunsiji, Treasurer Mehreen Ahmed, Secretary Neena Sood, Karen Fernando, Susan Baxter, and Vaishali Parmar.

This year has continued to be a challenge for us all with the Covid-19 pandemic, our teams have worked with dedication and to the guidelines of our Covid-19 Risk Management plan and followed all required advice from Health NSW. I would like to thank all our professional and dedicated staff, including our service partners, contracted and casual staff, our volunteers and students on placement. Their strong resolve has been to provide women and girls with a high standard and excellence in service delivery of health and domestic violence services and this has been achieved.

Further to this I acknowledge the wonderful achievements made by all the staff of BWGHC, they're a dedicated team of women, who have collectively worked hard together to assist women, girls, children and families facing the toughest of times over these past months and years of the Covid-19 lockdown.

Congratulations to our North West Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (NWSWDVCAS), Manager Jane Attard-Taylor and Assistant Manager Kessel Ryes- Corral and the team and thank them for their dedication and excellent work, which has received much praise from Legal Aid NSW over this past year.

Thank you to our community MOU partners, Family Planning NSW, Women's Legal Services NSW, Relationships Australia, the Western Sydney Local Health District Early Childhood Nurses, Food bank and Oz Harvest, we thank you all for your ongoing commitment and service delivery to our clients.

We were successful in receiving Grant funding from both State and Federal Governments that enabled us to upgrade our phones and IT infrastructure, provide emergency Covid-19 phones and computers to our staff working from home and in centres and to upgrade our IT systems to ensure safety from Cyber-attacks. We're very grateful and sincerely thank our donors for the provision of funds for our Blacktown Women's and Girl's Domestic Violence Emergency Fund.

We received Club Grant funding from the Blacktown Workers Club, through the Clubs Grant program, and much needed storage was donated by Storage King and maintenance support from Lander Toyota, for our vehicle and to all our sponsors and donors, who have assisted us materially, physically and financially this year, we're very grateful and thank you.

We have achieved solid progress this year with staff recruitment and development, team building, Covid-19 policy and procedure changes and implementation, enabling our continuing solid service growth.

We have succeeded in collaborating with a number of government and non-government organisations across the Blacktown Local Government Areas. I would like to thank them for their support and dedication to women, girls, children and families in our community.

I am very honoured and proud to represent our organisation because of these achievements.

Yours sincerely,

Jhan Leach



Our Structure

Staff and Personnel

BWGHC employs permanent and sessional/casual staff as required and also provides students with placement opportunities. BWGHC also receives invaluable assistance and support from our volunteers. Personnel are accountable to the Executive Officer, Jhan Leach, who reports to the Management Committee.

Management Committee

BWGHC is an Incorporated Association, which is governed by a Management Committee made up of women committed to advancing the health priorities of women, girls, children and families living in our local community. The Management Committee is structured and operates according to the Rules of Association, and consists of the Chairperson, Vice-chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Ordinary Members.

Funding

- NSW Department of Health, as administered by the Western Sydney Local Health District.
- Legal Aid New South Wales.
- Additional sources of funding are sought, and provided via grant applications, community donations and strategic partnerships with other organisations.



Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre



Blacktown City Council 16 Days of Activism, Yarn Bombing, 2020



Card Making Class, December 2020



Foodbank Pick up February, 2021

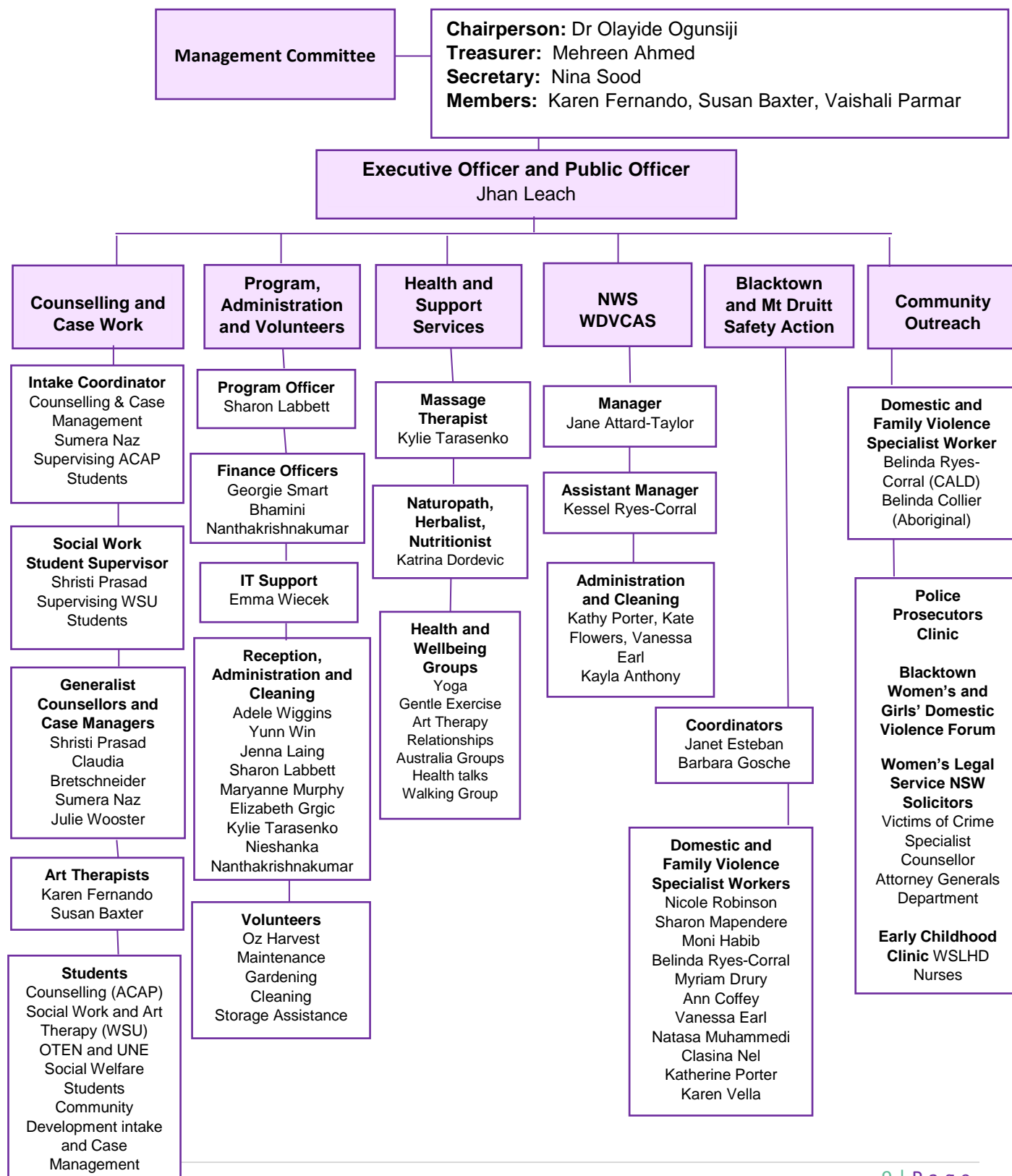
"The staff are friendly and helpful, the centre and staff are very generous and service oriented."

***Amandeep**



Our Structure

Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre and North West Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy





Working in alignment with NSW Health Goals

BWGHC works in alignment with NSW Government Health Goals. The following is extracted from the NSW Health Framework for Women's Health:

Women's health priorities across the life stages

Goal

To deliver services and foster environments in NSW which help women to meet their physical, social and economic potential, by increasing opportunities for women to be healthy at every stage in their lives and preventing avoidable detrimental health outcomes such as chronic disease.

Purpose

To identify health needs particular to women (whether biological or social); to deliver appropriate healthcare and health-promoting services; and to monitor the impact of interventions on groups of women at most risk of poor health.

Approach

The framework focuses on issues where the detrimental health impact is disproportionately experienced by women, or where the response is different for women than for men. The framework places women at the centre of decision making for their own health and acknowledges women's health is impacted by many factors including housing, rural living, employment and access to services.

As health outcomes are influenced by the cumulative effect overtime of social determinants, a life stage approach is used to structure opportunities for enhanced delivery of services and programs.

Values

NSW Health's CORE values are the guiding principles for implementation of women's health strategies.

The CORE values are:
**Collaboration, Openness,
Respect and Empowerment.**



Priority populations

While the Women's Health Framework is for *all* women, it is recognised that there are certain population groups, which experience poorer health and/or due to their circumstances may require focused attention to better address their health needs. Examples of priority populations in women's health include:

- **Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander women**
- **Women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, migrant and refugee women**
- **Women who are socio-economically disadvantaged**
- **Women with disability**
- **Women who are primary or secondary carers for other people**
- **Women who experience violence (sexual, domestic and family violence)**
- **Women living in rural and remote areas**
- **Lesbian, bisexual, trans-gender and inter-gender women.**

These priority populations are similarly identified by the National Women's Health Policy. Working to advance women's health also requires working with the communities in which women live.

Partnerships

Improving health outcomes for all women will require an across-government and multi-sectoral approach. NSW Health has funded a range of community-based services supporting women's health and arrangements for evidence-based service delivery will remain important into the future. As well, agencies will need to build strategic partnerships with other organisations which are not funded by the health system. This framework identifies the partnerships between NSW Government agencies which contribute to the infrastructure, services and programs supporting women's good health.

Source: NSW Health Framework for Women's Health, 2013





Working in Alignment with NSW Health Goals

Quality, Innovation and Performance

BWGHC is accredited at Certificate Level of the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES). Since receiving accreditation, the Centre has continued to upgrade systems and processes in order to meet ongoing improvement targets for internal processes, and strengthening our operational policies and procedures, including recruitment, employment, financial and organisational management.

Meeting High Demand

BWGHC has undergone important changes during this financial year. We have improved our Centre's facilities and continued to expand our capacity to meet high demand for services.

We have also employed additional staff to meet the continuing high demand for our counselling and case management services and for the North Western Sydney Domestic Violence Court Advocacy service.

Improving Effectiveness

BWGHC has taken an efficient and consistent approach to managing the continuing high level of demand by new clients for counselling and case management, including the growing demand for domestic violence and crisis response.

This year we have continued our work with Legal Aid NSW alongside North Western Sydney Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service. We have a good working relationship with the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program at Legal Aid NSW. Achieving solid progress this year with staff recruitment and development, team building, strategic and business planning and enabling our strong service growth.

Providing child minding for our Doctor and Nurse clinics has enabled many women to comfortably attend appointments. Our health promotions and early intervention group program has brought the Centre into new partnerships with local organisations and agencies, and provided women and girls with useful ways to address issues such as physical health, mental health and social wellbeing, regardless of age or cultural background.

The **BWGHC Domestic Violence Women's Girls' and Children's Emergency Fund** is able to respond to the growing needs of women fleeing domestic violence, and has been supported with a NSW Clubs Grant from Blacktown Workers Club. During the next 12 months, this fund will continue to provide practical assistance for women, girls and children in crisis and at risk of homelessness.

The BWGHC Reception team, the first 'point of call' for clients, received between 20 – 40 calls a day.

Over 10% of the calls were complex or crisis related, requiring sound knowledge of referral pathways and appropriate services, internal and external, for the woman or girls calling.

Meeting NSW Health Requirements

BWGHC continues to effectively, quantitatively record and measure our performance in all areas through our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which were developed in consultation with NSW Health to meet their requirements and provide a consistent framework for monitoring and evaluating performance.





Our Services

Blacktown Women and Girls Health Centre Inc. provides affordable, accessible and multi-disciplinary services to girls and women across their lifespan, particularly focusing on vulnerable population groups.

Our services target key health issues impacting women and girls, including sexual and reproductive health, mental health and wellbeing, domestic and family violence, and chronic illness and disease.

As a community health organization, BWGHC aims to operate as a 'one-stop shop' delivering integrated care to women and girls with complex needs and those who do not readily engage with health services. Services are free or low-cost. No woman or girl is turned away due to inability to pay.

BWGHC Services

- **Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service:** North Western Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (NNSWDVCAS)
- **Counselling** (Counselling support for women and girls to assist in dealing with trauma, stress and personal issues both immediate and long-term)
- **Case Management** (Consistent co-ordinated support for women and girls with complex needs)
- **Women's Health Nurse Clinic** (Free education, information, breast checks and more)
- **Naturopathy and Nutrition**
- **Remedial Massage Therapy**
- **Art Therapy**
- **Health Promotion and Community Outreach**
- **Early Intervention and Health Promotion Group Program**
- **Yoga and Gentle Exercise**



*Ikea, Marsden Park
Donation, 2020*

BWGHC Services: In-House Partnerships

Our strong partnerships with other organisations help us to provide relevant, appropriate and responsive services to women and girls in our local community. The following services are provided onsite at BWGHC through our community partnerships:

- **Sexual and Reproductive Health Doctor and Nurse Clinics:** Family Planning NSW
- **Domestic Violence Counselling:** North Western Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (NNSWDVCAS)
- **Specialist Counsellor, Victims of Crime:** Ros Leahy, Specialist Counsellor Victims of Crime for the NSW Attorney General's Department
- **Early Childhood Health Clinic:** Early Childhood Nurses from the Western Sydney Local Health District
- **Legal Support:** Women's Legal Services NSW (WLSNSW) Solicitors
- **Indigenous Women's Legal Support:** Indigenous Women's Legal Program (WLSNSW)
- **African Women's Health and Support Organisation (AWHASO):** regular outreach, meetings and information forums hosted by BWGHC
- **Australian Breastfeeding Association:** regular information and support meetings held at BWGHC
- **Relationships Australia:** Women's Choice and Change Group Program
- **Australian Drug Foundation:** Blacktown Local Drug Action Team.



Our Services

Early Intervention and Health Promotion Group Programs (2020/2021)

- Art Therapy for
- Massage Therapy
- Introduction to Art Therapy
- Yoga Group
- The Heart Foundation - Women's Walking Group
- Family Planning NSW – Women's Health Clinic
- African Women's Health and Support Organisation Forum (AWHASO)
- Oz Harvest/Food Bank
- Preventing Violence Against Women, Sikh Community – Glenwood Hub
- Art Therapy
- Living Mindfully – Self Care Group for Women
- International Women's Day – Chair yoga (online)
- International Women's Day – Art Therapy
- International Women's Day – Living Mindfully Group
- Blacktown City Council DV Stall – 16 Days of Activism
- Multicultural Mum's Group



*Women's Walking Group
October 2020*



*Blacktown Workers Club grants Event
June 2021*



Our Services

Team Building Session

In December the staff participated in a team building session, facilitated by Erica Pittman (ARCAP Registered, PACFA Accredited Supervisor), at the Crowne Plaza, Hawkesbury Valley. All staff from Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre and North West Sydney Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service enjoyed a Christmas Lunch, it was nice for all of us to get together and celebrate the end of the year, and a much deserved break



BWGHC & NWSWDVCAS Team Building Session December 2020

Work during Covid-19

During 2020 and 2021 we have continued to adapt to life with Covid-19. Our counselling services, legal appointments and Family Planning appointments during the Covid-19 lockdowns this 12 months were through Telehealth service provision. Service provision was provided face to face at our Centre inclusion of clients in crisis walk-in's and free food delivery to over 40 families were provided during the complete period. We continued to use our group room as our new waiting area for our Family Planning NSW clinics. As restrictions started to ease, we were able to begin offering, "face to face" client services including counselling, Massage, small groups, Art Therapy and Oz Harvest/Food Bank. Our children's cottage was transformed into a counselling room where staff and clients could maintain the required social distancing, however, when we went back into lockdown in term 2 due to the Delta Variant of Covid-19, we had to revert back to telephone appointments only, and unfortunately, we also couldn't not have the Family Planning Doctor and Nurse on site, so those appointments were via telehealth only. Oz Harvest and Foodbank services continued to operate with the new system and it seems to be working well, the women appreciate that we have been still been able to supply them with much needed food during these difficult times. The centre appreciates the patience of all our clients during this unprecedented time, we are looking forward to hopefully offering full services in the New Year.



Children's Cottage, set up for Covid-19 Face to Face Counselling



Two of our reception staff, Adele and Elizabeth



Accessible and Culturally Responsive Services

During the 2019-2020 Financial Period, BWGHC provided culturally responsive services to women and girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Clients were provided with a free interpreter when needed, either onsite or via the Telephone Interpreter Service (TIS).

BWGHC continued to develop and strengthen interagency and community partnerships. These partnerships allow BWGHC to benefit from the expertise of organisations which work closely with culturally diverse community groups to provide culturally responsive services including referrals, events and resources.

- Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre hosted regular outreach meetings by the African Women's Health and Support Organisation (AWHASO).
- We were members of an advisory committee that was led by SydWest Multicultural Services for the 'CALD Domestic Violence Prevention Project'. The aim of this project was to reduce violence against women and their children residing in the Blacktown LGA. The target groups were Afghan, South Sudanese and Indian Sub-Continent refugee and migrant communities.
- We delivered outreach programs for Indigenous women and girls onsite at Ngallu Wal Aboriginal Child and Family Centre and other community organisations.
- Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre participated in Refugee Week, delivering health information and service referrals to CALD communities.
- Staff attended several Naidoc events in the community.



Kylie our Massage Therapist wearing her PPE for Massages during Covid-19



Blacktown City Council, DV Stall, 16 Days of Activism 2020



Service Statistics

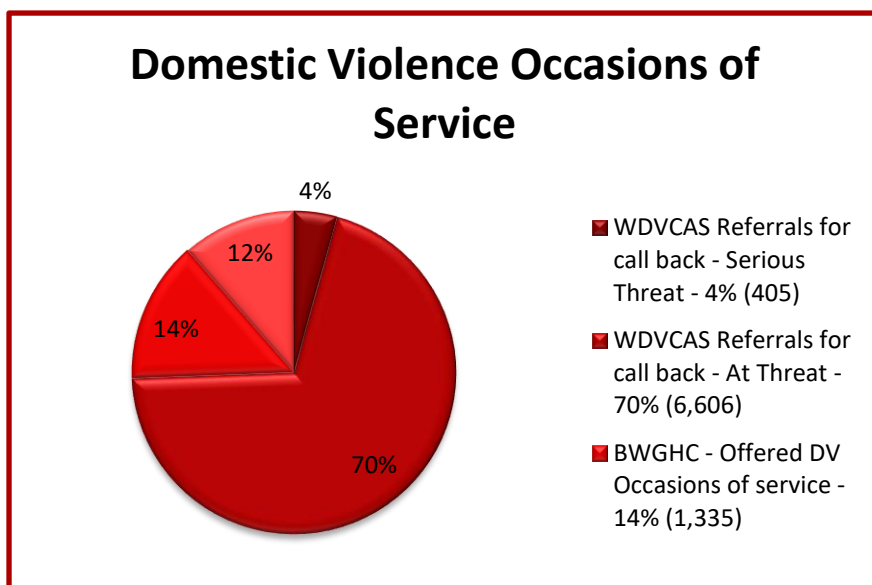
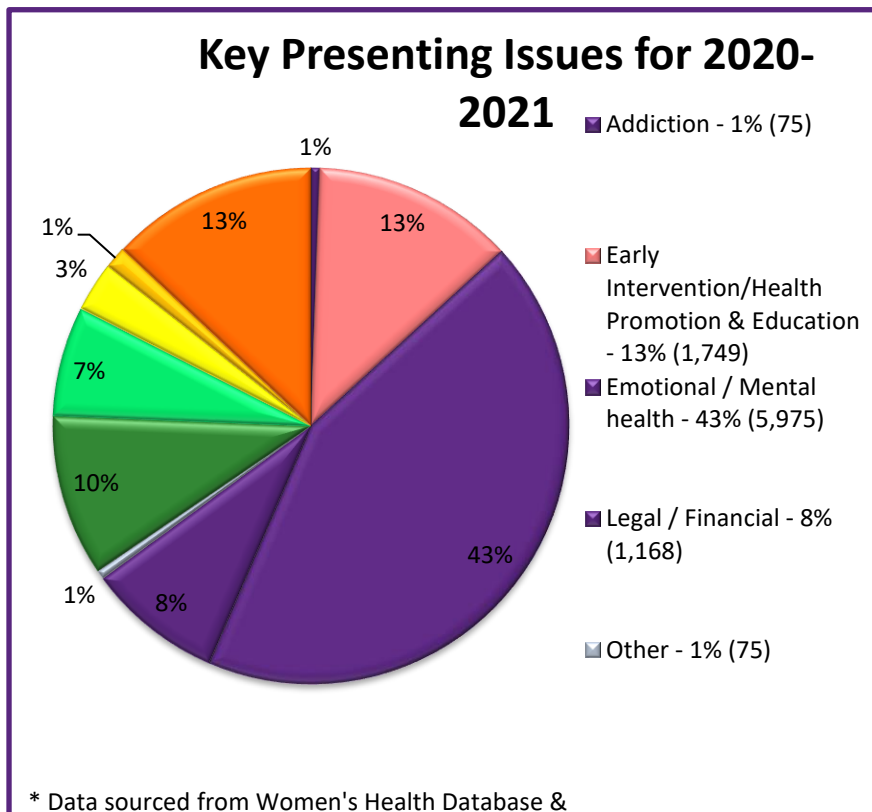
During the financial year **2020-2021**, 8934 women and girls contacted the centre for assistance

A total of **8512** women and girls contacted the centre for assistance.

4046 women and girls attended appointments.

1749 women and girls attended groups and activities.

2717 women contacted the centre for referral, information and crisis support.





About Us

The North West Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service is one of 27 services of the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program across NSW. Our service provides support for women experiencing domestic and family violence across the community. This support includes threat assessment, information, referrals, case co-ordination, safety planning and Court advocacy at Blacktown and Mt Druitt Local Courts. NWSWDVCAS assist women to obtain effective legal protection from NSW Courts through the application of Apprehended Violence Orders (AVO's). Support is provided before, during and after the Court process.

The Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program (WDVCAP) mission and aims guide NWSWDVCAS. We recognise the disproportionate and negative impact of domestic and family violence on women and provide a respectful service where women are treated with dignity, respect and sensitivity. Women can freely express their needs and make decisions in a supported and non-judgemental environment.

Our highly skilled Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Workers provide a trauma informed model of service delivery and an integrated response to women assessed as 'threat' and 'serious threat' of injury or death due to domestic and family violence.

NWSWDVCAS facts & highlights at a glance

- Provided services at 2 Local Courts: Blacktown and Mt Druitt.
- Provided 14,266 Service events to 2,885 clients.
- Assisted clients to obtain 824 Final ADVO's.
- 354 clients identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- 940 Clients assisted were from CALD backgrounds

NWSWDVCAS & Blacktown LCP is funded by Legal Aid NSW



*Legal Aid Family Law BLUEPRINT – Aboriginal
Consultation 2021*



The NWSWDVCAS team consists of:

Manager	Jane Attard-Taylor
Assistant Manager	Kessel Ryes-Corral
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker (Aboriginal Focus)	Krystle Scott
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker (Multicultural Focus)	Clasina Nel
Administrative Assistant / Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Katherine Porter
Administrative Assistant / Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Vanessa Earl
Blacktown Safety Action Meeting Coordinator	Janet Esteban
Mt Druitt Safety Action Meeting Coordinator	Barbara Gosche
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Ann Coffey
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Karen Vella
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Moni Habib
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Sharon Mapendere
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Myriam Drury
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Natasha Muhammedi
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Nicole Robinson
Cleaner and Admin Support	Kayla Anthony

We also acknowledge the following staff members:

- Sandra McBride for her time as Manager
- Myriam Drury, Sumera Naz and Kessel Ryes-Corral for their time as Acting Manager
- Nicole Robinson and Moni Habib for their time as Acting Assistant Manager
- Samantha Gordon and Vanessa Taylor, Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Workers
- Clasina Nel, Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Worker (Interim Multicultural Focus Worker)
- Belinda Collier and Nicole Robinson, Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Worker (Aboriginal Focus)
- Belinda Ryes-Corral, Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Worker (Multicultural Focus)
- Kate Flowers, Administration Assistant/Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Worker.



Manager's Report |



I am pleased to present the North West Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (NWSWDVCAS) 2020-2021 Annual report.

This report is a reflection of the commitment and dedication of the NWSWDVCAS staff to deliver the most effective and coordinated response to women and children experiencing family and domestic violence to ensure not only their safety but the best quality of service during what is a difficult time.

I have recently started the position of Manager at NWSWDVCAS. I started this position in the middle of the 2021 COVID-19 lockdown. I am aware of the isolation and challenges that such a harsh lockdown can bring to people's home, in particular, to our own Local Government Area which was named as one of the hotspot areas of Sydney.

The NWSWDVCAS is often the first point of contact for women seeking assistance for the domestic and family violence they are experiencing. Quiet often it is less than 24 hours after a traumatic incident they have experienced. It is vital that at that point of contact, effective support is provided to ensure safe and effective outcomes for the woman and her children. I have had the pleasure in witnessing the outstanding work that NWSWDVCAS staff have continued to provide during what has been a distressing time for many of our clients in particular during this lockdown period. Although we have been unable to assist women in face to face court proceedings in the recent months, we have continued to strive for safe outcomes for women and assisted in securing 824 final Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders and provided information & referral to over 19,964 support services.

I would like to thank the whole team for their continued dedication to the important work that they do for women and children in our community experiencing family and domestic violence. They continue to provide consistent and effective work in line with the WDVCA and BWGHC Visions and Aims to ensure that women are treated with respect and dignity and can live a life free from violence.

Training and Development undertaken by NWSWDVCAS staff include:

- Safety Action Meeting Training
- AVO and Court Information Sessions
- Keeping Them Safe online MRG, reporting and information sharing training
- WDVCA Unit Continuing Education Program – Working with LGBTIQ+ clients
- The 'Right to Consent' and 'Consent in Sex' awareness training
- Grant Writing Training
- ANROWS webinar "Safety in the Family Court"
- Subpoena Training
- DV-Alert Training (Multicultural focus)
- DV and partner visas webinar: understanding clients' needs and relevant processes
- Using Communication to Engage Clients. Funded by DCJ
- Counselling Skills for the Community Services Professional
- Sector Development- Collaborative approaches to supporting women survivors seeking asylum.



Manager's Report | Continued

- Enhancing Adolescent Self-esteem with Multidimensional Family Therapy-training.
- eSafetyWomen - 'Technology facilitated abuse in domestic and family violence situations' for frontline professionals in the domestic and family violence sector
- Trauma and Addiction: Taking Motivational Interviewing to the Next Level-training
- First Aid & Defibrillator Training
- Fire Warden Training
- IARC's Immigration series including, Partner Visa's, Family Violence & Immigration, New Zealand Citizens and Refugee & Humanitarian Visa's

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our key partners, in particular the NSW Police Force staff from Blacktown, Mt Druitt and Riverstone Police Area Commands especially the Domestic Violence Officers in which we work closely with. Thank you also to all the community partners who accepted our referrals and work alongside us to effectively support our clients.

I would like to thank Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre Executive Officer, Jhan Leach, the Management Committee and the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program (WDVCAP) for their ongoing support and guidance.

Jane Attard-Taylor



Working Group- African Family Harmony Forum



Our Clients at NNSWDVCAS

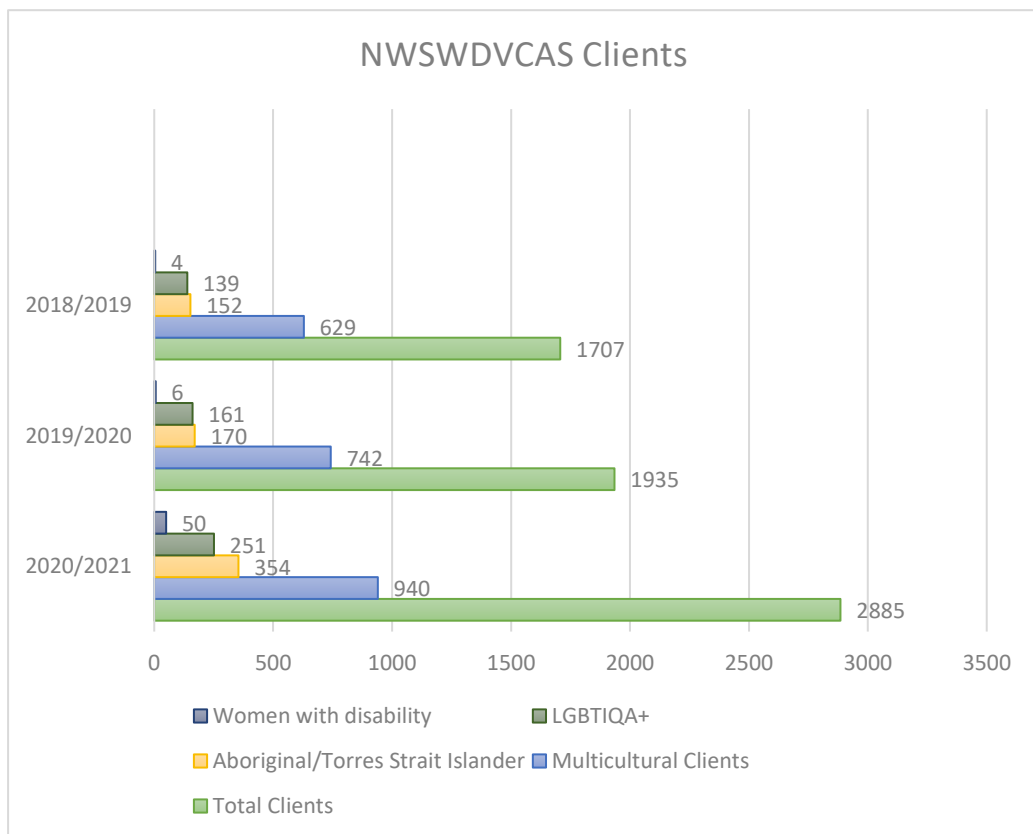
Eligibility criteria and target groups

WNSWDVCAS's are accessible to all women aged over 16 years who have experienced or are experiencing domestic violence. WNSWDVCAS's also support the children of clients wherever possible.

WNSWDVCAS's have particular regard to the following groups in our service delivery. WNSWDVCASs deliver services to these groups in a way that is tailored to their specific needs, experiences, strengths and vulnerabilities.

- Aboriginal women;
- Women from multicultural communities;
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) women;
- Women living with disability;
- Young women (under 25 years of age);
- Older women (over 65 years of age); and
- Women who have been incorrectly identified as the person using violence in court proceedings.

WNSWDVCASs also support the children of clients wherever possible.



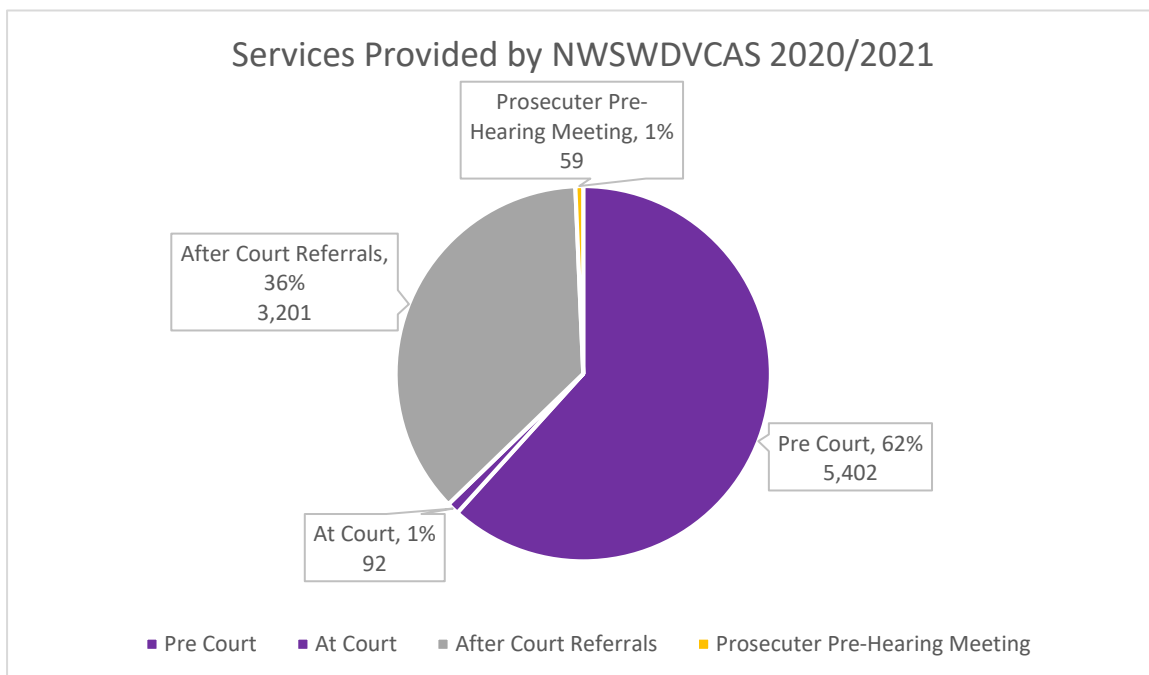


Our Services

NWSWDVCAS provide women experiencing domestic and family violence with:

- **Threat assessment and safety planning** – The Domestic Violence Safety Assessment Tool (DVSAT) is a standard means that we use when assessing the level of threat to people experiencing domestic and family violence. The use of the DVSAT allows us to offer clients appropriate and tailored support, prioritise clients at greater risk of harm and target action to prevent violence from escalating. A person may be assessed as either 'at threat' or 'at serious threat' due to domestic and family violence through completion of the DVSAT. We seek to address clients' immediate safety needs and we offer clients safety planning where possible.
- **Case coordination** – We offer warm referrals to local services for women's key needs (e.g. housing, counselling, legal advice). We arrange and follow up on the delivery of services and supports to women and their children.
- **Information** – We provide legal information which involves describing legal procedures or processes and can include providing basic information about: making an application for an AVO; making a statement to the NSW Police Force regarding an AVO and/or a criminal offence; court proceedings; the effectiveness of an AVO, including reporting of AVO breaches; the role of the NSW Police Force; the role of legal representatives, including individual legal practitioners, representatives from Legal Aid NSW including the Domestic Violence Duty Service (DVDS), Police Prosecutors and community legal centres; and domestic and family violence legislation.
- **Court advocacy** – We provide advocacy to women going through the court process in relation to domestic and family violence matters. In particular, we help women obtain legal protection through Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders (ADVOs), tailored to meet the client's individual needs. This may involve advocating on the client's behalf with other organisations.

NWSWDVCAS can work with women before court proceedings, at court and after court. Due to COVID-19 lockdowns in both 2020 and 2021, court support has been restricted and is down from previous years.





The Domestic and Family Violence Blueprint for Reform ('the Blueprint') 2016-2021 is the overarching policy framework for domestic and family violence reform activity in NSW. The Blueprint sets out the direction for a domestic and family violence system that will prevent violence, intervene early with vulnerable communities, support victims, hold perpetrators accountable, and deliver evidence-based, quality services to make victims safer and support their recovery. WDVCSs play a key role under the 'supporting victims' pillar of the Blueprint.

A key component of the Reforms is a new model of service delivery for domestic violence victims, Safer Pathway. Safety Action Meetings (SAMs) are a key element of this model.

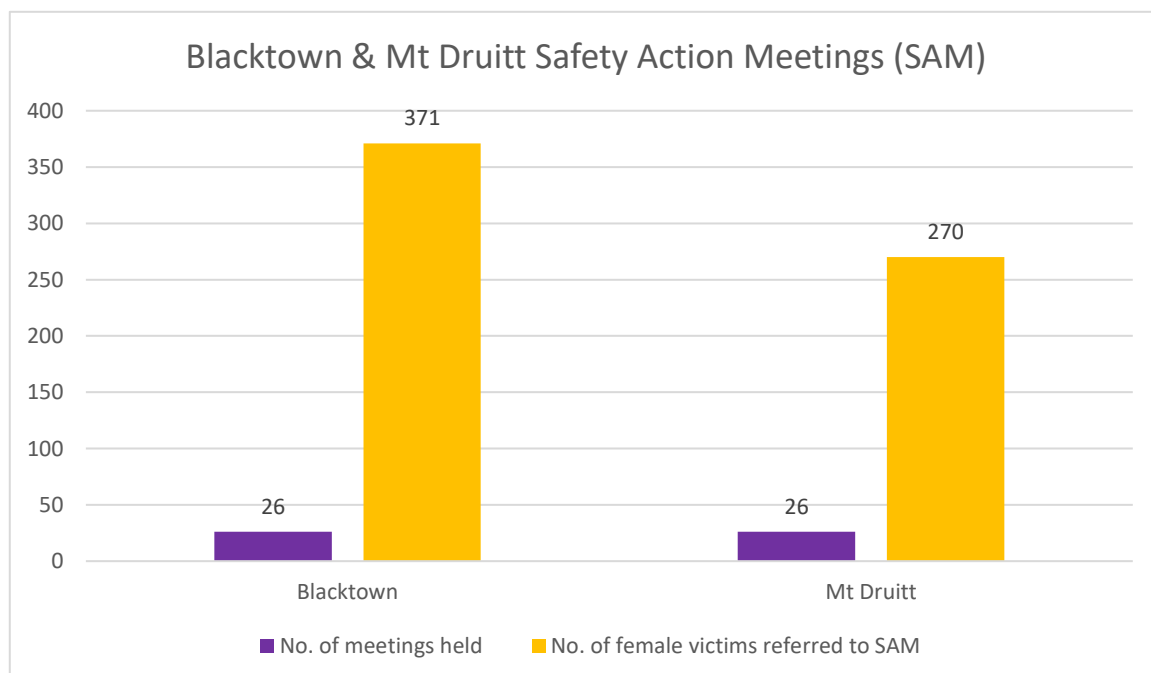
Safety Actions Meetings (SAMs)

NWSWDVCAS host the Blacktown and Mt Druiitt SAM's. These are regular meetings chaired by a senior Police officer with the aim to prevent or lessen serious threats to the life, health or safety of domestic violence victims and their children through targeted information sharing. The SAM's bring together key government and non-government local service providers working with domestic violence victims and perpetrators.

When clients are initially referred to NWSWDVCAS, they are contacted for support and their threat level is assessed using the Domestic Violence Safety Assessment Tool (DVSAT). Clients identified as 'Serious Threat' are listed on the next SAM agenda. The DVSAT also assists workers to provide appropriate care addressing the needs of the client. Immediate safety concerns are addressed through safety planning, and case-coordination is provided including warm referrals to services required such as housing, counselling and legal advice.

Appropriate information is shared at meetings to help build a comprehensive understanding of each victim's situation. This enables service providers to develop a tailored Safety Action Plan. The Safety Action Plan includes a list of actions that service providers will take to reduce the level of threat to the victims' safety, including the children. The wraparound support provides effective and timely action.

NWSWDVCAS provide victim liaison and secretariat support for Blacktown and Mt Druiitt SAMs. The meetings are held for service providers only and victims and perpetrators do not attend.





Our Key Partners

NWSWDVCAS maintain strong and effective working relationships with key partners in order to gain specialist knowledge about the systems and services available to assist women and children experiencing domestic and family violence within the justice system. We use this knowledge in a respectful and collaborative way to assist women to negotiate these systems effectively. We work co-operatively and in collaboration with the following partners:

- NSW Police Force from Blacktown, Riverstone and Mt Druitt Police Area Commands, including the Domestic Violence Liaison Officers (DVLOs) NSW Police Prosecutors, and the Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers and Multicultural Community Liaison Officers.
- NSW Local Courts, including Blacktown and Mt Druitt Local Court staff
- Legal practitioners including solicitors on the Domestic Violence Duty Scheme (DVDS)

Non-government and government organisations such as:

Our key partners include:

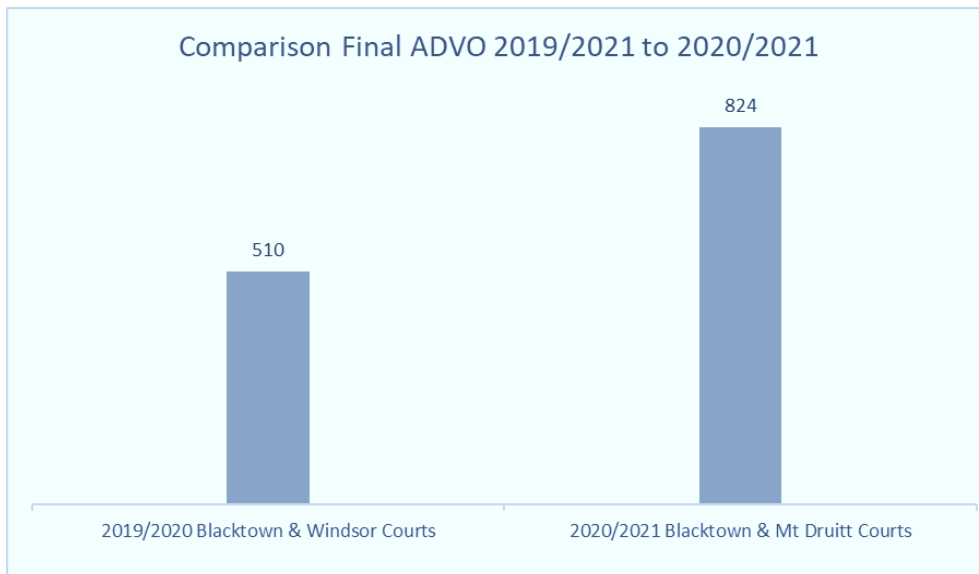
- 1800 RESPECT
- Aboriginal Client & Community Support Officer at Blacktown & Mt Druitt Local Court
- Act for Kids
- Alice's Support Services
- Anglicare
- Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation
- Blacktown Women's & Girls' Health Centre
- Blacktown/Mount Druitt Sexual Assault Service (Yarra Place)
- Bonnie's Support Services
- Brighter Futures
- Community Health Centres – Doonside, Mt Druitt and Blacktown
- Community Resource Network
- Corrective Services NSW
- Department of Education
- Domestic Violence Line
- Domestic Violence Service Management
- DV West
- Elder Abuse Helpline & Resource Unit
- FaCS Child Protection
- FaCS Housing
- Family Advocacy and Support Services
- Family Connect & Support – Barnardos Australia
- Harman Foundation
- Housing NSW
- Integrated Violence & Prevention Response Service
- Intellectual Disability Rights Service
- Legal Aid NSW
- Marrin Weejali Aboriginal Corporation
- Link2Home
- Mission Australia
- Mt Druitt Family Violence Service
- Ngallu Wal Aboriginal Child & Family Centre – Doonside
- NSW Court Service Centre
- NSW Health
- NSW Police Force Child Well-being Unit
- Odyssey House NSW
- Riverstone Neighborhood Centre
- Relationships Australia
- Rosies Place
- Salvation Army
- Services Australia, Centrelink
- Staying Home Leaving Violence
- St Vincent de Paul Society
- Syd West Multicultural Service
- The Hills Community Aid
- The Sanctuary – The Hills Women's Shelter
- The Translating and Interpreting Service
- The WASH House
- The Women's Cottage
- Uniting
- Victims and Witnesses of Crime Court Support
- Victim Services
- Wentworth Community Housing – Nurreen
- WESNET
- Western Sydney Community Legal Centre
- Warringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre
- Women's Legal Services NSW



Local Courts Blacktown and Windsor

NWSWDVCAS has excellent working relationships with the Domestic Violence Officers (DVO's) at Blacktown, Riverstone and Mt Druitt PACs; and Court staff at both Blacktown and Mt Druitt Local Court. These positive partnerships have been developed and strengthened over the years, and have ensured the effective and efficient operation of the court process and positive outcomes for our clients.

We would like to acknowledge and extend our appreciation to the DVLO's, Court staff and Sheriffs for their ongoing dedication and support.



WDVCAS Multicultural Workers meeting with NSW Attorney-General and the State's Domestic Violence Prevention Minister

Outreach Services at Blacktown and Windsor Local Court Outreach



In normal circumstances, Outreach services are usually provided on AVO List days - on Monday's at Mt Druitt Local Court and Wednesdays at Blacktown Local Court. Unfortunately, outreach at court and seconded worker roster have been suspended until COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions are lifted.

In previous years, prior to COVID-19, outreach services have included:

Western Sydney Community Legal Centre (WSCLC) – A representative from WSCLC would attend Blacktown Local Court to offer assistance to NWSWDVCAS clients in the safe room regarding the Victims Support Scheme.

Court to offer assistance to NWSWDVCAS clients in the safe room regarding the Victims Support Scheme

Services Australia, Centrelink – The Community Engagement Officer from Services Australia (Centrelink) would attend Blacktown Court Safe room to assist NWSWDVCAS clients with:

- Enquiries regarding Centrelink, Medicare and child support
- Access to payments, programs and services provided by Services Australia
- Referrals and other support to assist clients and where appropriate, referrals to Services Australia's Social Workers

NWSWDVCAS have developed and maintained collaborative relationships with these key partners. These working relationships are important not only in ensuring NWSWDVCAS receive and are able to make effective client referrals, but also by ensuring essential strategies are developed in delivering and providing services for our clients.

Seconded Workers

Seconded Workers

In previous years, prior to COVID-19, seconded workers have included:

- Staying Home Leaving Violence
- Women's Legal Service NSW
- Mt Druitt Family Violence Service
- Family & Community Services (FACS) Housing Services- Blacktown
- Family & Community Services (FACS) Housing Services- Mount Druitt
- Swinson Cottage Family Centre Inc
- Western Sydney Family Referral Service
- Wentworth Community Housing – Nurreen Women's Accommodation and Support Service
- The Women's Cottage

On AVO list days the NWSWDVCAS would normally work with a roster of around 15 seconded workers drawn from local community agencies who provide assistance to women seeking protection at Blacktown and Mt Druitt Local Court. All seconded workers receive WDVCA training through Legal Aid NSW.



Seconded Workers

NWSWDVCAS continue to maintain collaborative relationships with these key partners. These working relationships are important not only in ensuring NWSWDVCAS receive and are able to make effective client referrals, but also by ensuring essential strategies are developed in delivering and providing services for our clients, prior to court, during court and after court.

NWSWDVCAS would like to acknowledge the support and assistance provided to our clients on Court days in the past and we and look forward to working alongside our outreach services and seconded workers in the near future.

Legal Aid NSW Domestic Violence Practitioner Scheme (DVPS)

The Domestic Violence Duty Service (DVDS) provide legal practitioners to the NWSWDVCAS at Blacktown and Mt Druiitt Local Court on AVO lists days. DVDS practitioners provide legal advice and representation to our clients including: legal advice, assistance and referrals for individuals experiencing domestic and family violence (including protected persons in police-initiated AVOs). The areas of law which our clients have received advice from DVDS practitioners include: family law, care and protection, housing, social security, credit/debt, immigration, victims support and criminal law. DVDS practitioners also provide legal advice and representation for individuals who are seeking a private AVO (including cross applications); and legal advice and representation for defendants to applications for AVOs where the client is also a protected person in an associated AVO (cross application) or is considered the victim in a domestic and family violence matter.

This is an invaluable service for our clients and we would like to acknowledge the hard work and commitment by the legal practitioners and thank: Jacqueline Griffin, Nazira Sowaid, Eman Kassab, Joselyn Kishore, Ya Fei Xu, Women's Legal Services, Silvia Genovese, Uchenna Okereke-Fisher, Christopher Haseldine, and Ngoc Le.



Guest Speaking at Wesley Mission, Parent's Advisory Group DV Event



Police Prosecutors Clinic

NWSWDVCAS is involved in the Police Prosecutors Clinic at Blacktown Court in partnership with the Blacktown/Quakers Hill Police Prosecutors.

The NSW Police Force in conjunction with NWSWDVCAS jointly run the Domestic Violence Prosecutor Clinics to provide an opportunity to prepare clients for defended hearings. The Prosecutor Clinics are held once a month at Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre. The Prosecutor Clinics assist clients to eliminate any concerns they may have about giving evidence at Court by educating them about the Court procedure, and providing them with information necessary to prepare them for giving evidence at Court at the hearing of their Court matter held at either Blacktown or Mt Druitt Local Court. NWSWDVCAS would like to thank the Blacktown, Riverstone and Mt Druitt Police Prosecutors for their dedication; and we would like to praise NSW Police Prosecutor, William Jarbeau for his endless commitment and support in assisting clients to have an enhanced understanding of the Court process and giving evidence.



Blacktown Local Court House

Mt Druitt Local Court House





Community Development Engagement

Despite the impact of COVID-19 lockdown and restrictions, NNSWDVCAS have continued to maintain effective working relationships with our key partners and local services in our community. NNSWDVCAS is dedicated to raising awareness in the community of the impacts of domestic and family violence on individuals and the wider community. We have continued to represent NNSWDVCAS at interagency meetings, networks and forums and remain up to date with relevant sector information.

Meetings and Forums attended by NNSWDVCAS staff are:

- Blacktown Domestic Violence Forum (BDVF) - chaired by NNSWDVCAS
- Blacktown Women's and Girls Health Centre AGM
- Outer West Domestic Violence Network (OWDVN)
- Police Prosecutor Clinics – held at BWGHC
- Koori Interagency - Riverstone Neighbourhood Centre
- Blacktown LGA Multicultural Interagency (BMI) - chaired by Syd West Multicultural Services
- BMI Access to Services Working Group - chaired by Syd West Multicultural Services
- BMI Health Working Group - chaired by Multicultural Health Service, Blacktown/ Mt Druiitt Health, Western Sydney Local Health District
- Meeting with Staying Home Leaving Violence Team
- Meeting with Australian Red Cross – organised by Women's Safety NSW
- Meeting with Family Connect and Support Barnardos
- Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program Forum
- WDVCS Managers/Assistant Managers Meeting. Held online
- WDVCS Online Forum's - organised by Women's Safety NSW
- Addressing coercive control with Jess Hill
- Meeting with DV West.



WDVCAS Aboriginal Specialist Workers – Delegation to Parliament House

New changes and WDVCS boundaries from 1 July 2020

WDVCAS boundaries were realigned with NSW Police Force boundaries from 1 July 2020. Due to two WDVCS amalgamations, there are now 27 WDVCSs across the state, compared to 29 WDVCSs prior to 30 June 2020. This meant that from 1 July 2020, NNSWDVCAS covers three Police Area Commands (PACs) - Blacktown, Quakers Hill and Mt Druiitt.

In doing so, NNSWDVCAS provides support to women going through the court process in relation to domestic and family violence matters at Blacktown and Mt Druiitt Local Court. NNSWDVCAS receive referrals for women experiencing domestic and family violence in the Blacktown, Quakers Hill and Mt Druiitt Police Area Commands (PACs) from: NSW Police Force and Local Courts; other service providers, such as health services; and victims themselves.

The boundary realignment has led to a more streamlined WDVCS service delivery and has ensured women experiencing domestic and family violence do not have to engage with multiple WDVCSs unnecessarily. NNSWDVCAS look forward to continuing to foster and strengthen existing and emerging working relationships with key partners and local services in the Blacktown, Quakers Hill and Mt Druiitt areas.



Achieving | NSW Health Priorities

During the financial year we worked in partnership with peer agencies and funders to deliver specialist services in alignment with NSW Health priorities. We also delivered a range of presentations and activities on priority health and wellbeing topics.

NSW Health Priority: Violence

Our trauma-informed case management and generalist counselling services worked primarily with local women whose health, wellbeing and safety was being negatively affected by issues associated with domestic and family violence. Women were provided with support and practical assistance to ensure the safety and wellbeing of themselves and their children, and linked as relevant to our wellbeing activities and local services.

NSW Health Priority: Lifestyle-related chronic disease

During the year the Centre worked with a Bilingual Community Educator from the Western Sydney Local Health District to run a popular Diabetes group for women from CALD communities.

Our registered women's health nurse and naturopath/nutritionist worked to support women with lifestyle related chronic disease, including issues associated with obesity.

Our exercise and movement groups, such as yoga, have also given women and girls the opportunity to address chronic illness through exercise, as well as become linked with other services offered by the Centre's multidisciplinary team.



*Card Making Class
December 2020*





NSW Health Priority: Nutrition and physical activity / healthy weight

This year the Centre has worked with qualified local fitness trainers to introduce two exercises classes during which clients can obtain personalised attention.

These classes are suitable for women of all ages and levels of fitness and ability, whether they have undertaken an exercise program previously or not. Our registered women's health nurse and naturopath have also instituted a series of free health talks, which include diet, and nutrition related topics, including healthy weight.

Through our new partnership with Oz Harvest, the Centre has also been able to provide clients with access to fresh fruit and vegetables on a weekly basis, assisting between 20 to 30 families each week with food support.

NSW Health Priority: Reproductive and sexual health

The Centre works with Family Planning NSW to run two clinics every Wednesday where women and girls can attend for a full range of reproductive health care, including pap tests, breast checks, hormonal treatment, menopause care, contraceptive advice and prescription.

This year the Centre worked with WentWest (Medicare Local) and Pap Text to run a very successful "Paps for Pashminas" promotion, during which women who had a pap test at one of the regular Family Planning NSW Clinics.



M.T.O. Shahmaghsoudi
*Food Donation for Oz Harvest/Food Bank
May 2021*

NSW Health Priority: Mental health and social wellbeing

Our generalist and specialist domestic violence counselling services worked collaboratively with caseworkers and other members of the interdisciplinary team within a biopsychosocial framework to support women, girls and children with experiences of domestic and family violence including childhood trauma, to heal and recover from loss, grief and interrelation trauma.

As part of our ongoing health promotion and early intervention groups program, members of the Centre's interdisciplinary team also developed groups, which focused on using mindfulness as a tool for dealing with anxiety and for developing healthy and empowering behaviours.

*"Today was my first day and it was amazing, I loved it.
Meeting new people and seeing new faces at every group."*

***Alicia**



NSW Health Priority: Screening

Weekly women's health clinics were provided by our contracted clinicians, Family Planning NSW, to provide pap tests, breast screenings and checks for sexually transmitted diseases. With cervical cancer an issue for local women at a higher level than in other regions, our registered women's health nurse worked with WentWest (Medicare Local) and Pap Text to develop the popular Paps for Pashminas program, which offered incentives for women having a pap test at one of the Centre's Family Planning clinics.

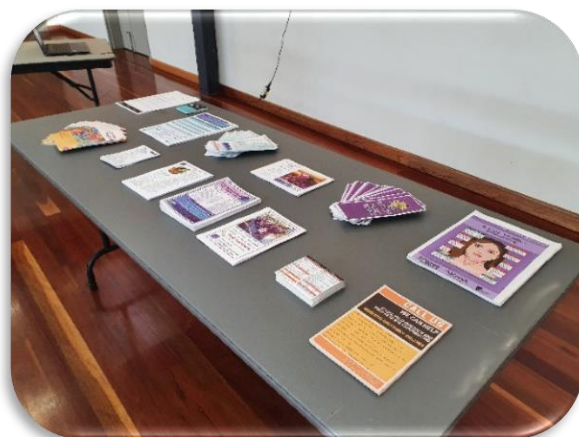


*Support the Girls, May 2021
Bra Gifting Event*

NSW Health Priority: Tobacco, drugs and alcohol

Among our range of services, the Centre's Art Therapy program has long been an integral part of our communities informed and responsive group program. This year, Art Therapists, including graduate placement students, have worked with women and young people to use creative expression as a therapeutic tool for developing safe and healthy emotional expression.

Art therapy has proven a popular and useful part of groups providing support and health promotion for women and girls in the Blacktown LGA. This year we received a small grant from the Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF) to develop and deliver a program called Blacktown Local Drug Action Team, which can prevent or minimise harm from alcohol and other drugs. The program focuses on young culturally and linguistically diverse women and girls who may be negatively impacted by substance abuse, particularly ice (crystal methamphetamines). The program will use a combination of art therapy and narrative therapy to decrease the risk of developing addictive behaviours.



*Preventing Violence Against Women
Workshop
Glenwood Hub, October 2020*



During the financial year the Centre has worked in partnership with peer agencies, local police and community services and funders to deliver specialist services in alignment with priorities identified within our community, including domestic violence.

Community Priority: Promoting empowerment and resilience in girls and children

Working with other local agencies including Blacktown City Council Youth Library Services, the Centre was involved in an art exhibition for girls at the Library from the Mitchel High School. Successfully engaging the community in an art as therapy exhibition of their artworks.

Staff members and placement students have received in-service training from agencies such as the NSW Department of Community Services, the Family Referral Service and ACT for Kids to enable the development of solid referral pathways.

A multidisciplinary team from the Centre developed two programs for high school age girls which focussed in age appropriate ways on building healthy relationships, sexual and reproductive health issues, self-empowerment, protective behaviours, personal growth and development and the healthy expression of feelings. Girls attended these popular programs from a range of ages and cultural backgrounds.

Graduate placement students worked with members of our multi-disciplinary team to offer groups utilising creative expression therapy to

students at primary and secondary school level, as well as younger post-school girls.

The Centre also offered a no appointment needed approach to encouraging students to visit the women's health clinics on Wednesdays.

The Centre hosts an Early Childhood Clinic every Monday, with nurses from the NSW Health, Doonside Community Health Centre providing professional assessment and referral for children 0 – 5 years. The Australian Breastfeeding Association Blacktown group also meets at the Centre up to eight times per year, utilising the Children's Cottage and play area for their meetings.

Community Priority: Emotional wellbeing

Our generalist counsellors worked with women and girls to identify addictive behaviours and associated issues such as anxiety, providing support and appropriate linking with specialist counsellors and agencies, after a thorough initial casework assessment. A counselling team member worked with ACAP post-graduate placement students to develop a group program supporting women with anxiety issues through acceptance based mindfulness techniques. Clients with addictive behaviours and associated issues were also able to receive support from our group program which offered relaxation, stress management and mindfulness as core elements.





Students and Volunteers at the Centre

Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health centre acknowledges the commitment and dedication shown by our students and volunteers. We really appreciate their support and assistance during their time at the centre.

Thank you so much for all your hard work and help!

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS

- * Anne Coffey
- * Susanna Lee
- * Clasina Nel
- * Lorraine Robertson
- * My Lahn Tran



Juhn, Oz Harvest/Food Bank

THANK YOU STUDENTS

ACAP Counselling:

- * Kristine O'Carroll
- * Renee Davis
- * Katarina Figiel
- * Jacklyn Skofic

Art Therapy:

- * Susan Baxter
- * Karen Fernando

Institutions:

- * Australian College of Applied Psychology
- * Open Training Education Network
- * TAFE Western Sydney Institute
- * Western Sydney University
- * University of Sydney



Costco Marsden Park Donation to Family





Art Therapist Report – Susan Baxter



Living Mindfully Creative Arts & Wellbeing

In November, Blacktown Women's and Girl's Health Centre held workshops over six weeks. We recognised the need for women to reconnect with themselves and others during these difficult Covid-19 times. The objectives of the small groups were to increase wellbeing, self-care, and reconnection with self, learning to slow down and be in the present moment whilst building new social relationships. Each session began with a guided mindfulness meditation with relaxing music, to assist women in noticing how it feels to be in the present moment. The themes varied each week. Always checking in with 'where am I, right here, right now', increasing 'self-awareness', 'self-confidence', 'self-love' and 'social connection'.

Mindfulness art therapy is helping women make new social connections lost with the impact of Covid-19 in communities across the Blacktown Local Government Area.

Some of the feedback from the participants has been that the workshops were relaxing and fun. The art making helped balance the mind and mental health distress, bringing clarity in seeing new ways of looking at things and bringing peace to our busy lives. Participants expressed feeling supported and respected whilst learning new skills in how to look after their mental health and wellbeing, which increased their self-esteem and self-confidence whilst making new social connections.

International Women's week

Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre Celebrated International Women's Week from the (8th-12th of March 2021) where we brought women together in running short art therapy sessions during the week, this provided women the opportunity to come and express themselves creatively through mindful and meditative processes using creative modalities. Many women are still feeling the effects of Covid-19 in communities across the Blacktown Local Government Area. Mindfulness art therapy was an opportunity to build new social connections. The art activities included: making bookmarks, painting, Zen triangles, mandalas and gratitude pocket mindfulness quotes.

During Term 2, Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre held Mindfulness Art Therapy Groups from April to May 2021. Bringing nature into the room, participants were encouraged to choose something from the shared space and draw inspiration for their art making. With participants experiencing the effects of lockdowns and needing to reconnect socially with others and with nature. Nature became a consistent theme that empowered and inspired women to create and connect with each other.



Susan Baxter



Massage Therapist Report – Kylie Tarasenko



Well, where do I start, what a year we have had to endure. In March this year Katrina and I were lucky to have held a living mindfully group and it was a great hit, the women got to make Stress balls, body scrubs and they also got to make wish jars.

In April I broke 2 of my fingers and I was unable to do any hands on massages. However, I was fortunate enough to make use of the massage chair for our clients during the time that I was healing. The massage chair was very much appreciated by the clients and it gave much relief and comfort, to those clients who wanted to utilize this service. Then in June we had another group of ladies just before the current lockdown hit us. Luckily, Katrina and I did manage to hold 2 consecutive groups for these women. The ladies had a lot of fun with making eye masks and also were given a head massager to take home for their convenience, we also made bath bombs and talked about healthy living choices.

Then unfortunately Covid-19 delta variant hit and lockdown began (again) and what a whirl wind these last few months have been. I have been very fortunate to pick up some work on reception during lockdown, due to other staff members being unable to travel out of their LGA. I had the privilege of helping with Oz Harvest for some of our clients to receive a bag of food on Fridays. It has been very difficult for the staff and committee to get their heads around how to keep the Centre running for our clients while also keeping everyone safe, but we have all managed to do so with great members of staff. I feel very fortunate to be a part of a great organization and team. Let's all look forward to a new year ahead and many newer beginnings. Stay safe and enjoy your loved ones.

Kylie Tarasenko

Naturopath and Nutritionist Report – Katrina



I am at the centre each Tuesday for individual client appointments. Some of this year has been Tele-health appointments, due to restrictions.

I am passionate about supporting clients on their journey towards better health and wellbeing. I enjoy supporting women to make healthier lifestyle and food choices, discuss ideas on cooking within a budget and encourage healthier shopping and cooking skills.

Healthy Lifestyle Coaching is also useful to help increase women's awareness of healthy lifestyle behaviours that can impact the risk of developing chronic disease and support women in adopting healthy lifestyles, with a focus on nutrition, physical activity, and smoking and alcohol reduction.

Katrina

Thank you to all of our Sponsors



Certificates of appreciation were presented by Mariam Maroud, Chairperson, Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre to our sponsors with great thanks.



Matt Smith, Costco Marsden Park



Rod Cullen, Lander Toyota Blacktown



Baked and Co., Certificate of Appreciation



Commonwealth Bank Doonside, Certificate of Appreciation

Thank you to all of our Volunteers



A big thank you to all of our volunteers, we don't know what we would do without, the time you give to Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre is very much appreciated.



My Lahn, Oz Harvest/Food Bank Volunteer



Lorraine, Walking Group Volunteer



Elizabeth MacDonald, Inner Wheel Volunteer, donation of 1st Aid Kits

"Every service that is provided in this centre is wonderful, very friendly environment. The staff are very friendly and counselling has helped me a lot."

***Sarah**



Jenna, helping out with Oz Harvest/Food Bank



Program Officer's Report



What a roller coaster of a ride this financial Year has been for Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre. Who would have thought that we would spend so much time in lockdown and just as we turned the corner, Covid-19 Delta Variant hits us, just as we started to open back up for small groups.

We are very grateful to Commonwealth Bank Doonside for their ongoing support and generous donations to our Women's and Girls' Emergency Fund.

Thankfully we were able to run a few small groups, the first of which was an **Art Therapy Group**, which was run in November, we then had a Card making Class, run by our very talented Receptionist, Elizabeth, the class was a great success and the women got to take home some amazing handmade Christmas cards.

In Term 1, 2021 we got to celebrate **International Women's Week**, and even though we couldn't run our regular Yoga classes, we uploaded a daily **Chair Yoga** class onto our You Tube page for the week. We also had an **Art Therapy Group** that focussed on **Empowerment** and a **healthy Living for Body and Soul** group, where the women were given tips on how to take time out for themselves, they made some stress balls and a body scrub and spoke about healthy eating. We also welcomed back the **Walking Group**, it was lovely for our clients to get some light exercise while also having the social connection with other women in the Blacktown area.

During Term 2, we started to see a little more normality return, it was lovely to see the clients back in the centre. Kylie and Katrina ran another **Healthy Living for Body and Soul** group again, which as usual was a hit with the women. Yoga also returned, albeit with a much smaller group due to still having to maintain some social distancing. We also welcomed "Support the Girls" who had a Bra Gifting event at the centre and we are definitely planning on having more of these giving events. We also offered another **Art Therapy** group.

We were fortunate to be able to continue with our **Massage Therapy**, it was adjusted for the second half of the year so that we followed the Health regulations, then in the new year, hands on massage was finally allowed but with some Covid safety precautions in place.

Halfway through term 2 we started to hear about the **Covid-19 Delta Variant**, I don't think any of us realised what was to come, and we never thought that we would have gone into a 4 month lockdown, Our counsellors were working from home with clients via telephone counselling and our **Family Planning** Doctor and Nurse Clinic also ran remotely with telehealth during this time. Thankfully, we were still able to provide the **Oz Harvest** and **Food Bank** service to our clients of over 40 families every Friday providing them with free food throughout the entire pandemic, we did however develop a whole new system for the collection of food for them, whilst still maintaining social distancing, so that we could ensure the safety of all staff and clients.

Now that we are coming out of lockdown, and we are getting more freedoms, I am sure that 2022 will be a much better year for us all, with the return of some favourite groups and services face to face. I am looking forward to welcoming everyone back next year. Stay safe everyone, and bring on 2022!

Sharon Labbett

We would like to thank our following key partners:



- MOU with **Women's Health NSW** to manage the Women's Health Database.
- MOU with **the Western Women's Health Consortium** including sister centres **Penrith Women's Health Centre**, **Bathurst Women's Health Centre**, **Blue Mountains Women's Health and Resource Centre**, **Cumberland Women's Health Centre** and **Liverpool Women's Health Centre**.
- MOU with **Family Planning NSW** to provide Doctor and Nurses clinics in- centre.
- MOU with **Women's Legal Services NSW** who provide a Legal clinic for women and girls', focusing on family court matters specifically including domestic family and intimate partner violence.
- Service Agreement with the **Indigenous Women's Legal program** to provide an outreach worker to specifically service Indigenous women from the local area needing legal advice and referral.
- MOU with **Relationships Australia** who provide groups at our Centre for women who have or are experiencing Domestic Violence and other abuses.
- Service Agreement with the **Western Sydney Local Health District Early Childhood Nurses (Doonside Community Health Centre)** who provide an Early Childhood Clinic.
- Service Agreement with **Ros Leahy, Specialist Counsellor Victims of Crime funded by the Attorney General's Department** who works with victims accessing services at our Centre.
- Service Agreement with the **Australian Breastfeeding Association Blacktown Branch**, which meets at the Centre
- A relationship with the **National Share the Dignity Organisation** providing, a collection of donated sanitary and continence products for distribution to women and girls who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.



Maryanne, Receptionist

- Agreement with **Oz Harvest and FoodBank** to provide fresh fruit, vegetables and other items as they become available, for collection by our disadvantaged clients.
- A Service Agreement with **the African Women's Health and Support Organisation (AWHASO)** who meet at our Centre to hold regular health promotion forums for women.
- A relationship with **Nova Disability Employment** providing a transition to work traineeship at the Centre to provide employment to women and girls.



*Oz Harvest Delivery
March 2021*





Connecting with Our Community

Community events provide a valuable opportunity for BWGHC to educate and raise public awareness of health issues, and advocate for women's interests in the community.

Participating in local community events also helps BWGHC gain insight into local issues, respond to local needs and develop and strengthen our interagency partnerships.

The following is a list of some of the community and interagency events that BWGHC participated in during this financial year:

- OWDVN meetings
- Domestic Violence Provider network meetings
- NOVA Employment functions
- BWGHC + NWSVDCAS AGM
- Blacktown Homelessness Hub
- Community Resources Network: (Blacktown)
- Accidental Counselling training
- 16 Days of Activism Launch
- Yarn Bombing event
- Inner Wheel – Donation presentation
- International Women's Day breakfast with service providers and Blacktown City Council
- Harmony Day (Blacktown)
- Commonwealth Bank – Donation presentation
- Parenting & Wellness Education Program
- Art Gallery - NOVA
- Women's Legal Service
- WHNSW Conference
- Jean Hailes Women's Health Week
- MYER donation presentation
- Courageous Conversations Online Launch (WASH House)
- Blacktown Police Prosecutors Clinics
- DV Vigil – WASH House



*Inner Wheel
Knitted Teddies Donation 2020*



*Inner Wheel
Christmas Knitted Teddies Donation 2021*

"Everyone is so friendly and welcoming."

***Susan**

Our Donors and Sponsors



2020/2021 - Donations from Individuals and Organisations

We are thankfully indebted to our Major Donors and Sponsors:

- Blacktown Police Local Area Command
- Blacktown RSL Club
- Blacktown Workers Club
- Commonwealth Bank
- Lander Toyota Blacktown
- Myer Blacktown
- Storage King Blacktown

Grateful thanks to our generous donors, including those who have made private and anonymous donations of goods and services:

- Blacktown RSL Club
- Blacktown Workers Club
- Baked and Co.
- Bunnings Blacktown Superstore
- Colgate Australia
- Costco Marsden park
- Foodbank
- Inner Wheel
- Ikea Marsden Park
- Mardon Meats Kings Langley
- MTO Shahmagsoudi
- Oz Harvest
- State Emergency Service Mt Druitt
- Share the Dignity NSW/ACT
- Zonta Club of Cumberland West

... And many others who have given donations large and small to assist the clients of the Centre

"The absolute love, care and respect that every staff shows to me and all the work in Art Therapy is what makes this place just amazing."

*Kamini

BWGHC would like to thank **the Blacktown Workers Club and the Blacktown RSL** and other clubs participating in the **Blacktown City ClubGRANTS** for awarding BWGHC with a 2020-2021 ClubGRANT.

BWGHC would also like to thank our sister services **Richmond Women's Cottage** and the **WASH House** for their support Throughout the year.

These services have partnered with BWGHC to deliver important services and to engage in joint fundraising activities to benefit local women and girls.



Matt Smith, Manager, Costco Marsden Park, Food Donation

Funders and Other Partners



Thank you to all our partners and funders for your collaboration and support during the financial year 2020-2021

Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre is a member of Women's Health NSW. We are primarily funded by NSW Ministry of Health and Legal Aid NSW.



Acknowledging Our Community



BWGHC loves to work co-operatively with individuals, other organisations and agencies to improve the services we offer our clients. Together, we make a community of support! With thanks:

- ACT for Kids
- Acute Care Mental Health Team (Blacktown Hospital)
- Aftercare Mental Health Services
- Alice's Cottages
- Blacktown Area Community Centres (BACC)
- Blacktown City Council
- Blacktown Hospital Women's Health Clinic
- Blacktown Hospital Social Work Department
- Blacktown Lesbian Information and Support Service (BLISS)
- Blacktown North Public School
- Blacktown Police LAC and DVLOs
- Blacktown Pride in Diversity Network
- Brighter Futures Blacktown/Baulkham Hills
- CALD Women's Health Groups (NSW Department of Health)
- CatholicCare Social Services
- Charmian Clift Cottages
- Community Resource Network (CRN) Inc
- Domestic Violence Services NSW
- Doonside Community Health team
- Family Planning NSW
- Family Referral Service
- Harman Foundation
- Headspace
- Hon Stephen Bali MP
- Hon Michelle Rowland MP
- Immigrant Women's Speakout
- Indigenous Women's Legal Program
- Junaya Family Development Services
- Karabi Youth Services
- Lalor Park Public School
- LGBTI Health Alliance
- Mackillop Family Services
- Marist Youth Services
- Mission Australia
- Nova Employment
- Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ)
- NSW Department of Health
- NSW Department of Juvenile Justice
- NSW Refugee Health
- Odyssey House NSW
- Outer Western Domestic Violence Network
- PACS Blacktown Adolescent and Family Counselling
- Police Citizens Youth Clubs
- Quakers Hill Police LAC and DVLOs
- Richmond Partners in Recovery
- Riverstone Neighbourhood Centre
- Rosie's Place (women's refuge)
- Safe Space Blacktown
- Share the Dignity (NSW/ACT)
- Staying Home Leaving Violence (the WASH House)
- SydWest Multicultural Services
- The Australian College of Applied Psychology
- The University of Sydney
- The Western Sydney University
- Transcultural Mental Health team
- Tri-Community Exchange
- Wesley Mission
- West Connect Domestic Violence Services (women's refuges)
- Women's Legal Services NSW
- Zonta Club of Cumberland West



Blacktown Women and Girls Health Inc

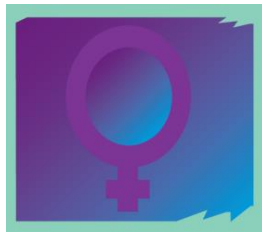
ABN 98 059 698 895

Financial Statements - For the Year Ended 30 June 2021

Detailed Profit or Loss Statement

	2020 \$	2021 \$
Income		
Sale of goods	3	(4)
Fees	5,779	28,176
Interest Income	214	1,859
Grants	2,412,091	1,666,783
Donations	4,614	20,085
Sundry income	128,886	26,430
Other revenue	60,884	102,646
Workcover	64,092	-
Rebates	25,824	-
Other income UD1	3,000	-
	2,705,387	1,845,975
Less: Direct expenses		
Accounting fees	3,382	5,900
Advertising	2,186	34
Staff	5,427	7,299
Bank charges	1,203	1,024
Cleaning	2,410	3,896
Legal , governance and accounting	19,473	45,908
Project management fees	57,992	38,082
Depreciation	5,636	7,110
Electricity & water	6,581	6,896
Equipment <\$5,000	60,963	34,915
Rent & hire	44,679	32,445
Leave pay	131,187	102,551
Medical expenses	10,646	2,535
Motor vehicle expenses	6,986	7,886
Travel-local	688	1,433
Other employee costs	11,270	3,322
Other expenses	28,030	22,442
Repair and maintenance	78,977	10,521
Salaries	1,929,936	1,225,328
Staff training	1,012	9,039
Subscription	11,070	13,276
Superannuation contribution	172,712	120,692
Telephone and fax	39,920	18,973
Workers compensation	32,398	14,740
Training	21,578	14,690
Monies carried forward	650	88,075
Sundry expenses	641	-
	2,687,633	1,839,012
Net profit / (loss)	17,754	6,963





Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre Inc. Annual Report for the 2020/2021 Financial Year

Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre Inc. (BWGHC) is a Public Benevolent Institution with DGR Status. Donations of \$2 and above are tax deductible

BWGHC is funded by NSW Health, administered by Western Sydney Local Health District and Legal Aid NSW.

Our Peak Body is Women's Health NSW.

BWGHC is accredited at Certificate Level of the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES)

We are accountable to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC) and NSW Fair Trading. The Centre holds NSW Authority to fundraise: CFN/23808.

Contact Us:

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E: info@womensandgirls.org.au

W: www.womensandgirls.org.au

 BWGHC is on Facebook

© Blacktown Women's and Girls Health Centre

NOTES

^{1&3}Keynan, M., Hossain, M., & Hughes, R. 2013, *Blacktown LGA Community Health Needs Assessment Project Report*, Western Sydney Local Health District, Sydney.

².id, the population experts, 2011, 'Community Profile: Blacktown City', compiled from 2006 and 2011 Census Data, accessed via:

*Names changed to protect client privacy. Client comments from BWGHC Client Surveys 2020/2021 FY.