



Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre Inc.

Annual Report
2021/2022

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 NSW Department of Health, administered by Western Sydney Local Health District
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 2021/2022 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.



Kylie and Sharon, Blacktown City Council 16 Days of Activism, 2021



Report | From the Chairperson

Chairperson's Report

| Dr Olayide Ogunsiji



It is with great delight that I present to you, our members, friends and stakeholders, the annual report for 2021-2022 financial year for Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre (BWGHC).

I am very happy to say that 2021-2022 has been a very active and successful year for BWGHC in so many areas; despite the ongoing challenges of Covid-19 pandemic and uncertainties surrounding our world. Within a very short notice, the Centre's procurement of Nepean- Blue Mountains WDVCS as the provider until June 2024 was completed. The excellent performance of BWGHC 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, and I really encourage you all to read in depth.

First and foremost, on behalf of the Management Committee, 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 would like to sincerely express our gratitude to our community partners. This includes but is 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.

I wish to acknowledge and extend my gratitude to our tenacious and able Executive Officer, Jhan Leach, for her professionalism, diligence 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 am very grateful to all the staff for their commitment, dedication, empathy and loyalty to BWGHC. This year has been a particularly difficult one on service provision, with ongoing significant emphasis on telehealth. Without their welcoming smiles over the phone, support, 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 sincerely appreciate the members of the Management Committee for their dedication, guidance and commitment to effectively govern the Centre. Your ability to promptly respond to the ongoing changing terrain that the sector is operating in, is highly appreciated.

I hereby present to you 2021-2022 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 have truly enjoyed my time assisting the Centre this year to ensure more women and children in Blacktown community are able to access health, mental health, wellbeing, advocacy and community services with ease. This is especially important 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 still 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 2022 economic conditions 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 2023 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.

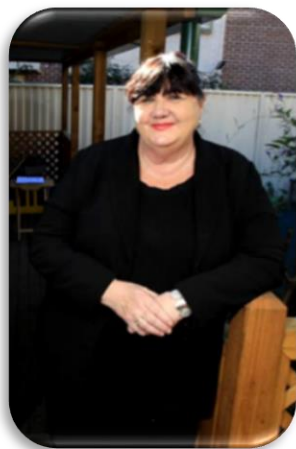


Family Planning and Admin staff Morning Tea



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.

The first six months of this year continued to be a challenge for us all with the Covid-19 pandemic, our teams continued to work with dedication and to the guidelines of our Covid-19 Risk Management plan and followed all required advice from Health NSW. We moved to face to face service delivery in January this year and 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 and the NWSWDVCAS as their 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 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, South West Sydney Community Legal Service, the Australian Drug Foundation, the Western Sydney Local Health District Early Childhood Nurses, WSLHD Multicultural Health, Food bank and Oz Harvest; we thank you all for your ongoing commitment and service delivery to our clients.

We're very grateful and sincerely thank our donors for the provision of funds for our Blacktown Women's and Girls' Domestic Violence Emergency Fund. Signature Properties Group, Blacktown Club Grant Program funding from the Blacktown Workers Club and are privileged to be this year's recipient of the CEO, Morgan Stewart's and staff Sleep Out and their commitment to raising donations for the Blacktown Women's and Girl's Domestic Violence Emergency Fund. We received much needed increase in storage donated by Storage King and dedicated and ongoing maintenance support from Rod Cullen at 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, Strategic and Business Planning and team building 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'm very proud to have been nominated by our wonderful Local Member for Parliament, Mr Stephen Bali MP, for this year's Blacktown Woman of the Year Award and honoured to be this year's recipient.

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

Malvern Chapter of the Eastern Star presentation, March 2022



Signature Properties Group, presentation, December 2021

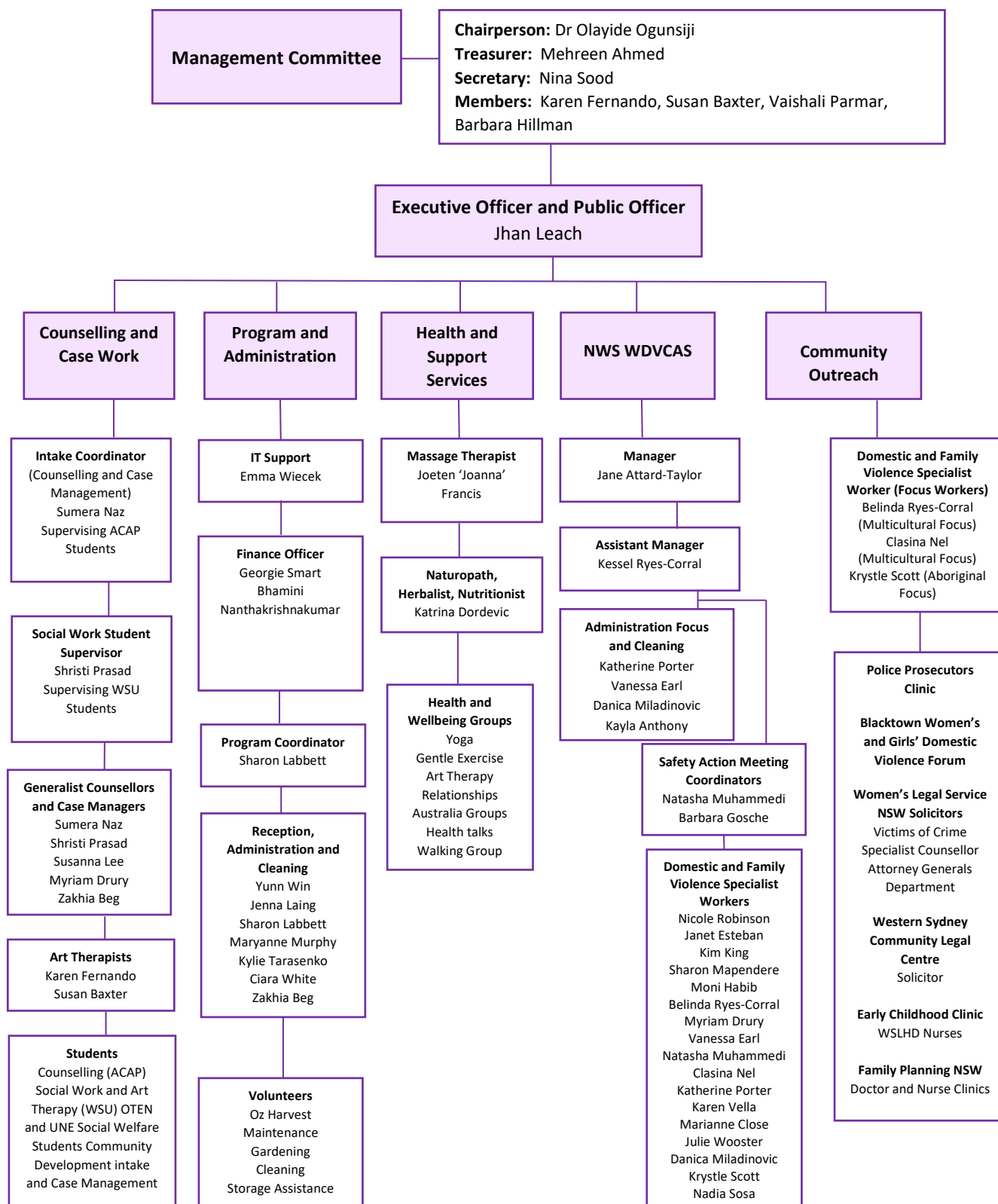
“Every service that is provided in this centre is wonderful / very friendly environment.”

***Kelly**



Our Structure

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





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.

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 (NWSWDVCAS)
- **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**



*Share the Dignity, Handbag
Donation, 2022*

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 (NWSWDVCAS)
- **Early Childhood Health Clinic:** Early Childhood Nurses from the Western Sydney Local Health District
- **Legal Support:** Women's Legal Services NSW (WLSNSW) Solicitors & Western Sydney Community Legal Centre (WSCLC) Solicitors.
- **Police Prosecutors Clinic:** (DV Clinics – Blacktown).
- **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 Drug Foundation:** Blacktown Local Drug Action Team.
- **Western Sydney Local Health District – Multicultural Health.**



Our Services

Early Intervention and Health Promotion Group Programs (2021/2022)

- African Women’s Health and Support Organisation Forum (AWHASO)
- Blacktown City Council DV Stall – 16 Days of Activism
- Blacktown Girls High School Presentation
- Chair yoga
- Family Planning NSW – Women’s Health Clinic
- Gentle Exercise Group
- Living Mindfully – Self Care Group for Women
- Massage Therapy
- Multicultural Mum’s Group
- Oz Harvest/Food Bank
- Self Care & Mindfulness Art Therapy
- The Heart Foundation - Women’s Walking Group



Oz Harvest and Foodbank Collection, 2022



Commonwealth Bank Donation February 2022

“All the staff assisting me in my needs and I am truly grateful.”

***Kelly**



Our Services

Work during Covid-19

During 2021 and 2022 we have continued to adapt to life with Covid-19. Some of our counselling services, legal appointments and Family Planning appointments during the Covid-19 lockdowns the last 12 months were through Telehealth service provision. Service provision was provided face to face when possible at our Centre including clients in crisis walk-ins. 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. The transformation of our children's cottage into a counselling room has been fantastic, so that staff and clients could maintain the required social distancing. However, the continuing lockdown in term 3, due to the Delta Variant of Covid-19, meant we had to revert back to telephone appointments only. Thankfully, we were still able to have the Family Planning Doctor and Nurse on site, so we could have both face to face and telehealth appointments when possible. 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 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 and we are looking forward to hopefully offering full services in the New Year.

*Two of our reception staff,
Maryanne and Ciara*



"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."

***Vanessa**



Our Services

Accessible and Culturally Responsive Services

During the 2021-2022 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.



Jhan Leach and Sharon Labbett, Women's Health NSW Conference, 2022



Dr Olayide Ogunsiji and Jhan Leach



Service Statistics

During the financial year **2021-2022**

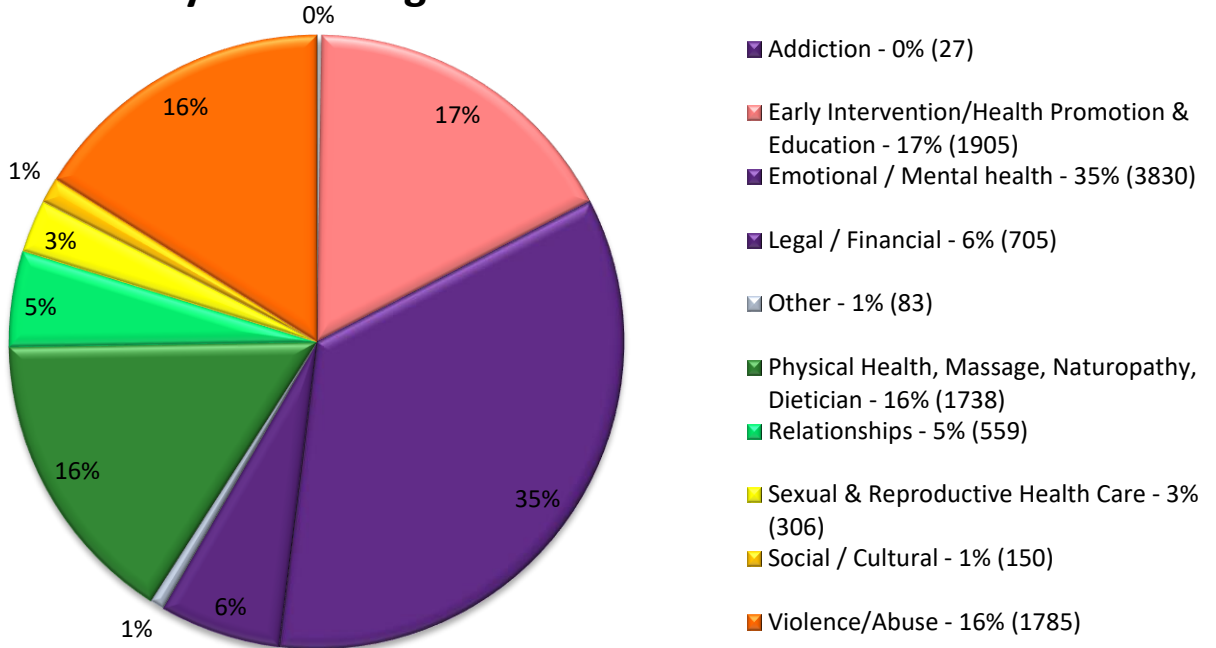
A total of **7603** women and girls contacted the centre for assistance.

3427 women and girls attended appointments.

1905 women and girls attended groups and activities.

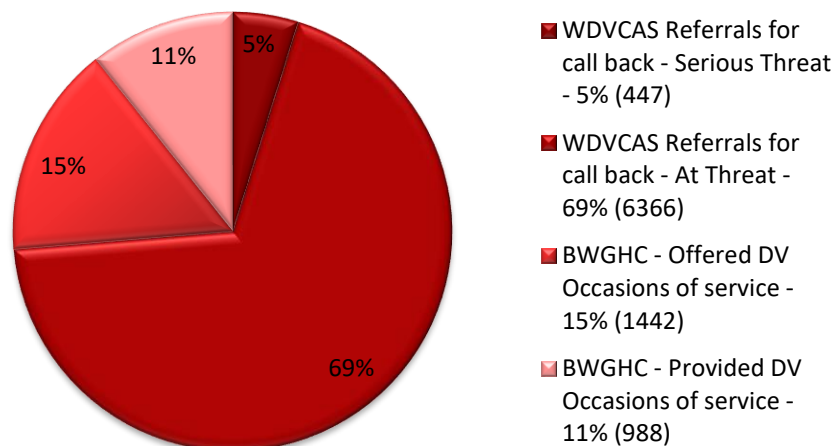
2271 women contacted the centre for referral, information and crisis support.

Key Presenting Issues for 2021-2022



* Data sourced from Women's Health Database & Quarterly Statistics Reports

Domestic Violence Occasions of Service 2021-2022





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 13,429 Service events to 2,905 clients.
- Assisted clients to obtain 660 Final ADVO's.
- 414 clients identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- 927 Clients assisted were from CALD backgrounds

NWSWDVCAS is funded by Legal Aid NSW



NWSWDVCAS Team Members

*Nicole, Kim, Barbara, Belinda, Kath, Kessel, Nadia,
Natasha, Danica, Vanessa, Janet, Karen & Jane*



Our Team

The NWSWDVCAS team consists of:

Manager	Jane Attard-Taylor
Acting Assistant Manager	Belinda Ryes-Corral
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker (Aboriginal Focus)	Krystle Scott
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker (Multicultural Focus)	Danica Miladinovic
Blacktown Safety Action Meeting Coordinator	Natasha Muhammedi
Mt Druitt Safety Action Meeting Coordinator	Nicole Robinson
Case Management Worker/ Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Clasina Nel
Case Management Worker/ Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Myriam Drury
Case Management Worker/ Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Nonye Amah
Hearing Support Worker/Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Moni Habib
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Julie Wooster
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Karen Vella
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Katherine Porter
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Marianne Close
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Meenu Kaushal
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Nadia Sosa
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Naz Sharifi
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Sharon Mapendere
Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Worker	Vanessa Earl
Cleaner and Admin Support	Kayla Anthony

We also acknowledge the following staff members:

- Kessel Ryes-Corral for her time as Assistant Manager
- Janet Esteban for her time as Blacktown SAM Coordinator
- Barbara Gosche for her time as Mt Druitt SAM Coordinator
- Clasina Nel, Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Worker (Multicultural Focus Worker)
- Ann Coffey & Kim King for their time as Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Workers
- Katherine Porter & Vanessa Earl for their Administration support



Manager's Report |



I would like to begin my 2021-2022 Annual Report by acknowledging my team at the North West Sydney Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (NWSWDVCAS). Our team consists of dedicated and hard working women who are passionate about supporting women and their children impacted by family and domestic violence. They have continued to remain committed to their work during what has been another challenging year due to the COVID-19 crisis. Each day they deliver a high standard of service to ensure that women achieve the best outcomes.

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased pressure on families and reduced access to support services. The crisis has exacerbated deep-seated social inequalities for women. During the reporting period, we have seen a disproportionate amount of women experience employment loss, financial insecurity, domestic violence and homelessness. Domestic and family violence has intensified during the

pandemic crisis and has put a strain on essential services, health services, helplines and women's support services, in particular crisis accommodation for women.

The 2022 floods have had an impact on areas within the Blacktown Local Government Area. In the first half of this year, our area has experienced many road closures and evacuation orders to suburbs such as Riverstone, Schofields, Rouse Hill and Marsden Park. We have had some residents trapped at home due to the road closures, others isolated from family members and some with significant damage to their homes making it unliveable. When safety planning with women, we have had to consider these things and at times have directed women to evacuation Centres for refuge. During this time, our team has kept up to date with the evacuation routes in the area and supported women when they have needed to access an evacuation centre to ensure that they are safe and will not have to experience coming face-to-face with their perpetrator. If this is the case, alternative accommodation arrangements were put in place.

During these challenging times, the NWSWDVCAS have continued to respond appropriately to address these challenges and burdens faced by women. Our service has made adjustments to our service delivery to ensure that we are following public health orders but also to ensure that women can remain as safe as possible whilst in lockdown at their homes. We will often be the first point of contact of support for many of the women we connect with. Our service provides advocacy and effective support to ensure safe and effective outcomes for women.

During this reporting period, we had a complete office move from our space at South Windsor to a new space at Blacktown. Our service had been at the South Windsor sight for almost 6 years. Due to the Police boundary change in 2020, North West Sydney changed from Windsor & Blacktown Courts, to Mt Druitt & Blacktown Courts. We were finding that all our meetings and events were being held within the Blacktown LGA and we were travelling further to attend these as well as attending Court. With the generosity of the Blacktown City Workers Club, they have provided an office space for our service in a prime location in Blacktown. Our new space provides lots of natural lighting and is within walking distance to public transport, Blacktown Police Station and Blacktown Local Court.



Although face-to-face service has been restricted & we have been unable to attend Court for much of the reporting period, we have assisted in securing 616 Final Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders and provided 25,952 referrals to information & support services.

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
- WDVCAP Unit Continuing Education Program – Public Speaking
- The 'Right to Consent' and 'Consent in Sex' awareness training
- Grant Writing Training
- Deciphering Controlling Behaviour in Relationships
- DV-Alert Training (Multicultural focus)
- Working Remotely with a Focus on Wellbeing
- Domestic Violence Electronic Monitoring Scheme
- Mental Health in the Workplace
- New Support for Women on Temporary Visa's Experiencing Family & Domestic Violence
- Stop DV Conference
- WDVCAP Database Training
- Support for Individuals Impacted by Domestic & Family Violence
- Safety, Gender & Disability: Are We Getting It Right?
- National Redress Scheme: Survivors & Mates Support Network (SAMSM)
- Creating Connections-Red Cross
- Fire Evacuation & Warden Training

During this reporting period, we welcomed 2 adorable baby girls into the world! A big congratulations to team members both Belinda Ryes-Corral on the birth of her baby Aurelia, and Sharon Mapendere on the birth of her baby Tapiwa.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the community partners who we collaborate with and accept our referrals to continue to work with and effectively support our clients. Also, a very big thank you to 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.

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



Our Clients at NNSWDVCAS

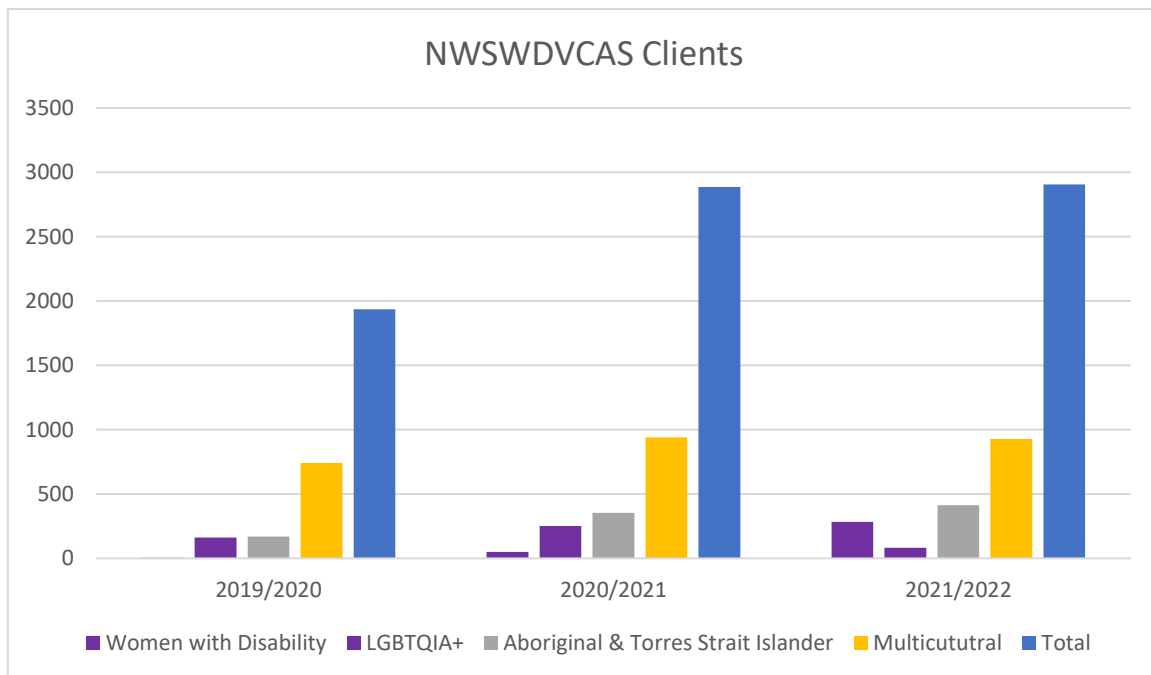
Eligibility criteria and target groups

WNSVCASs are accessible to all women aged over 16 years who have experienced or are experiencing domestic violence.

WNSVCASs have particular regard to the following groups in our service delivery. WNSVCASs 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.

WNSVCASs 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.
- **Case Management** – New to the NWSWDVCAS, we can now provide short to long-term case management services to eligible clients. Our Case Managers develop a person-centred case plan that identifies their key safety issues, needs and goals, and options for addressing these. Case management is undertaken within a trauma-informed, strengths-based framework that aims to respect and support clients' autonomy.
- **Hearing Support** – We provide specialist Hearing Support for victims in regard to defended hearings in Blacktown & Mt Druitt Local Courts for Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO) and/or domestic and family violence related criminal charge matters. We help address barriers to Court attendance and reduce the stress and trauma associated with the court process for victims, including



giving evidence as a complainant.
Clasina attending Community
Connections Event



Blacktown City Council IWD Breakfast
Jane & Kessel with Michelle Rowland MP



WDVCAS Workers attending the 2022 WDVCA Forum Myriam, Janet, Krystle, Kessel, Clasina, Jane & Nadia

CEO & Co Winter Sleep out Fundraiser Event Nadia, Kessel, Jane & Clasina



Belinda and baby Aurelia



Sharon and baby Tapiwa



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)

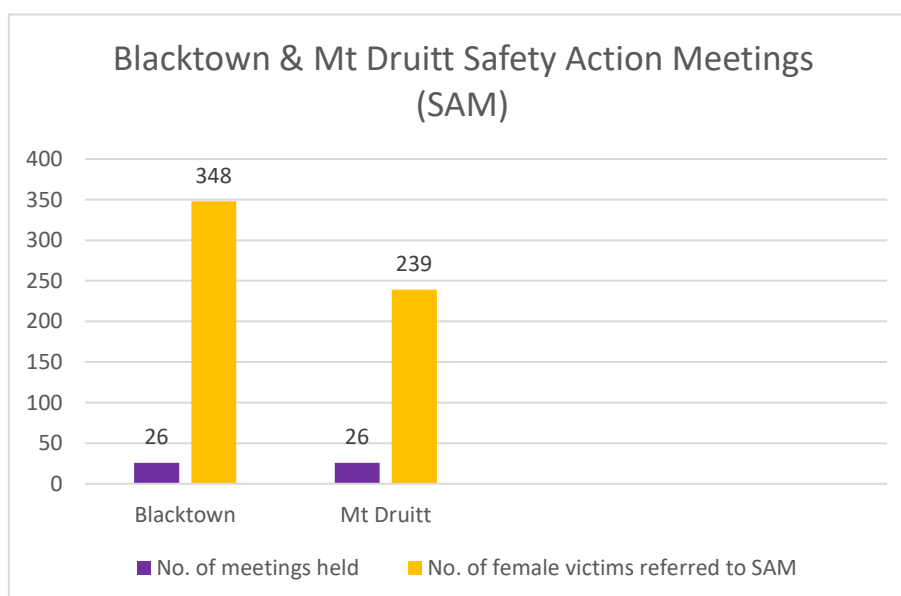
NWSWDVCAS host the Blacktown and Mt Druiitt SAM's. These are regular meetings chaired by a senior Police officer with the aim to prevent or lessen serious threats to the life, health or safety of domestic violence victims and their children through targeted information sharing. The SAM's bring together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

NWSWDVCAS held a total of 52 Safety Action Meetings during this reporting period and listed a total of 587 clients on the SAM Agenda.





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
- Indian (sub-Cont) Crisis & Support Agency (ICSA)
- Integrated Violence & Prevention Response Service
- Intellectual Disability Rights Service
- Legal Aid NSW
- Link2Home
- Marrin Weejali Aboriginal Corporation
- 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 Neighbourhood 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
- Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre
- Women's Legal Services NSW



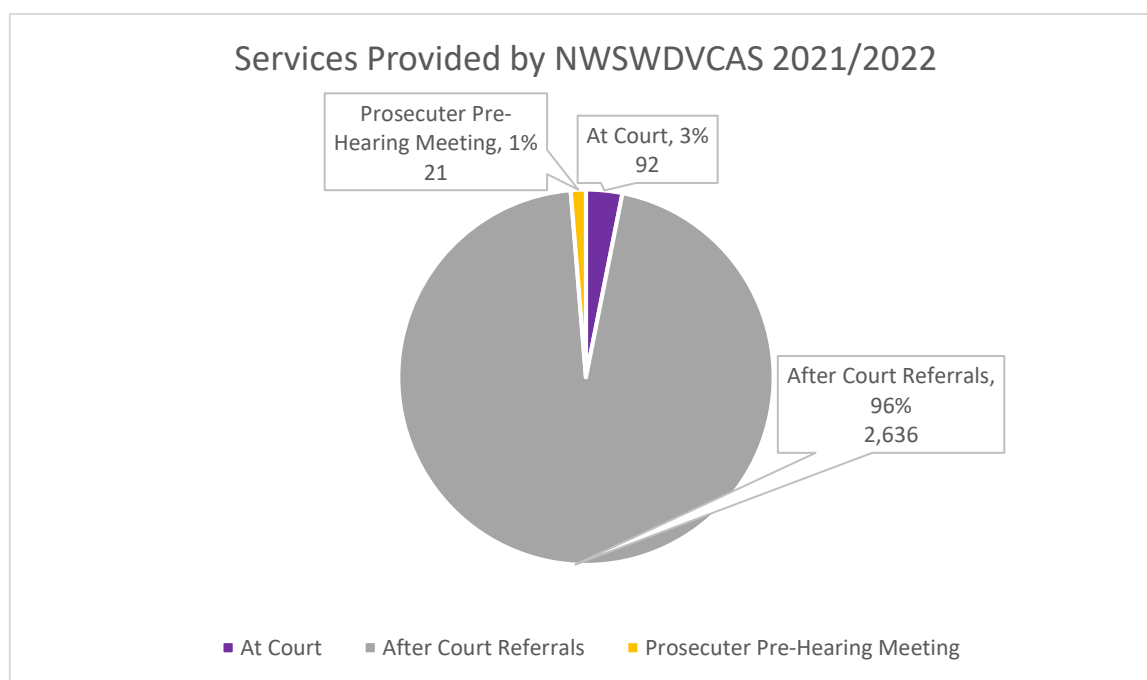
Local Courts Blacktown & Mt DrUITt

NWSWDVCAS has excellent working relationships with the Domestic Violence Officers (DVOs) 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.

Although attendance at Court has been affected by COVID-19 restrictions this reporting period, we have been successful in securing 660 Final ADVO's at Blacktown & Mt DrUITt Courts.

NWSWDVCAS can work with women before court proceedings, at court and after court. Due to COVID-19 lockdowns in both 2021 and 2022, court support has been restricted and is down from previous years.

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



2021 Christmas Party
Ann, Clasina, Moni, Kessel, Angelica,
Kayla, Jane, Barbara, Natasha, Nicole,
Belinda, Kath & Vanessa



Seconded Workers

Seconded workers are professionals drawn from local services and government agencies, such as family support services, refuges and community health centres. Seconded workers play a vital part in providing much needed assistance to women subjected to domestic violence, as well as gaining the opportunity to build on skill set and professional development. Seconded workers help the WDVCS to ensure that all women who attend court can speak to a worker who understands the dynamics of domestic and family violence, as well as local and appropriate referral pathways.

All seconded workers receive WDVCS training through Legal Aid NSW.

During this reporting period, we have been unable to have our Seconded Workers assist at Court on AVO list days due to the COVID-19 social distancing restrictions. We have since been able to see the return of our Seconded workers since September 2022 and are very grateful for the assistance they provide at Court to the WDVCS workers and our clients.

Seconded Workers

- Mt Druitt Family Violence Service
- Wesley Mission
- DV Service Management
- Staying Home Leaving Violence

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



WDVCAS Workers, Kessel & Krystle attending the Biggest Morning Tea Fundraising event



The Domestic Violence Duty Service (DVDS) provide legal practitioners to the NWSWDVCAS at Blacktown and Mt Druitt 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, Ya Fei Xu, Women's Legal Services, Uchenna Okereke-Fisher, David Morrison (Morieson), Mohammed Algalele, Mark Warren, Steven Shneider, Razia Shafiq, John Styles, Houda Hallani, Skye Cesarone and Sionea Breust.

Many thanks to the following legal services:

- Women's Legal Services NSW
- SCB Legal
- Choice Law Group
- Hammond Nguyen Turnbull
- Styles Law
- The People's Solicitors
- Jacqui Griffin Mobile Solicitors
- Algalele and Co Solicitors
- Houston Dearn O'Connor
- Mark Warren Lawyers

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/Riverstone 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, NWSWDVCAS have continued to maintain effective working relationships with our key partners and local services in our community. NWSWDVCAS 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 NWSWDVCAS at interagency meetings, networks and forums and remain up to date with relevant sector information.

Meetings and Forums attended by NWSWDVCAS staff are:

- Blacktown Domestic Violence Forum (BDVF) - chaired by NWSWDVCAS
- 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
- Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program Forum
- WDV CAS Managers/Assistant Managers Meeting. Held online
- WDV CAS Online Forum's - organised by DV NSW
- DV Vigil – organised by The WASH House
- Stop DV Conference
- 16 Days of Activism Working Group & Launch
- Learner Driver Mentor Program & Community Assistance Event – held at Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation
- Blacktown-Hills Home & Community Care Forum for Service Providers – presentation
- International Women's Day Event – organised by Sydwest Multicultural Services
- International Women's Day Event – organised by Blacktown City Council
- Australian Services Union 10 Days DV Leave Policy Launch
- DV Awareness Breakfast – organised by Blacktown City Workers Club
- The Biggest Morning Tea – organised by Blacktown City Workers Club
- Community Morning Tea- organised by Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation
- Bring Your Bills Day - organised by Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation
- Parramatta Sorry Day Event
- Creating Connections Multicultural Event- Organised by The Red Cross
- Community Safety Precinct Meetings – organised by NSW Police



WDVCAS Aboriginal Focus Worker, Krystle & Kim attending community event



Kessel being interviewed by local radio station, My88.



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 Bilingual Community Educators from the Western Sydney Local Health District to run health & wellbeing groups 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.



Sharon, presenting at the AWHASO Wellness Conference, May 2022

Seniors Expo, Blacktown Workers Club, April 2022





Achieving | NSW Health Priorities

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 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 30 to 40 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 with Family Planning NSW ran a very successful "Paps for Pashminas" promotion, during which women who had a pap test at one of the regular Family Planning NSW Clinics received a free pashmina.



Kessel, Mayor Tony Bleasdale, Jane, Sharon and Jhan, Domestic Violence Awareness Breakfast, Blacktown Workers Club, May 2022

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 focussed on using mindfulness as a tool for dealing with anxiety and for developing healthy and empowering behaviours.

"It's great to see such great support for women locally".

***Alicia**



Achieving | Our Community's Priorities

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 Centre with Family Planning NSW continued the popular Paps for Pashminas program, which offered incentives for women having a pap test at one of the Centre's Family Planning clinics.

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.



Blacktown City Council, 16 Days of Activism, Knit Bomb, November 2021



Achieving | Our Community's Priorities

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 engaged the community in both those agencies' programs and our programs.

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.

Community Priority: Emotional wellbeing

Our generalist counsellors worked with women and girls to identify addictive behaviours and associated issues such as anxiety, by 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.

"Welcoming environment, respect and professionalism".

*Maria





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

- * Katarina Kutanjac
- * Sodalis Keo
- * Lorraine Robertson
- * My Lahn Tran



*My Lahn, Oz
Harvest/Food
Bank Volunteer*

*Lorraine,
Walking Group
Volunteer*

THANK YOU STUDENTS

ACAP Counselling:

- * Zakhia Beg
- * Minet Brits
- * Giada Fichera
- * Katarina Kutanjac
- * Danica Miladinovic

Western Sydney University:

- * Nargis Afzali
- * Jamie Miles
- * Neetika Sood

Art Therapy:

- * Susan Baxter

Institutions:

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

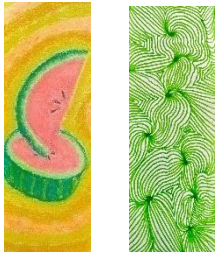


*Costco Marsden Park
Donation to Family, December 2021*





Art Therapist Report – Susan Baxter



This year's Art Therapy was slow to start due to another Covid lockdown from 25 June – 11 October 2021. By which time it was too late in the year to start a new program. Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre received funding from Alcohol and Drug Foundation, to provide creative art therapy sessions focussing on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) education, which we started February 2022.



We had relaxing music which created a peaceful atmosphere and in term 3 we were gifted with a lovely TV where we could play YouTube visual mindfulness media, which was a perfect combination with Art Therapy. Mindfulness meditation has supported women in coming into the here and now and developing a sense of peace and wellbeing. Topics included FASD, Alcohol, breaking down stigma, smoking, vaping, & other drugs and providing support referral lists.



Participants from CALD and Australian backgrounds created posters and postcards with messages to their younger selves, their children, and grandchildren about FASD, alcohol and drugs during pregnancy.



Zen mindfulness paintings and bookmarks were created with themes of nature, that inspire and bring joy in their lives, breaking down the lockdowns and bringing back social connections.



Massage Therapist / Senior Receptionist Report – Kylie



The past financial year has definitely been full of ups and downs with all the Covid-19 restrictions. We, at Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre, have tried our best to keep things as normal as possible for both clients and staff.

Operating under NSW Health regulations we were able to return to face-to-face, or if clients preferred we could still provide telehealth or phone counselling, Family Planning Doctor and Nurse Clinic continued to see clients face-to-face. We are grateful for all of our clients' cooperation with all the mandatory health regulations.

At the end of 2021, I transitioned from being the Massage Therapist, to taking on the role of the Senior Receptionist, a role that I have thoroughly enjoyed over the past 12 months. I find the role both challenging and rewarding, and look forward to another year learning more skills and assisting our clients.

Our new Massage Therapist, Joanne, is looking forward to meeting you all once restrictions are lifted and massaging is permitted. We welcome her to our Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre family.

The Reception staff would like to thank all of our wonderful clients for their patience and understanding during the Covid-19 pandemic and while new staff were trained on reception procedures. Our current reception staff consists of myself, Maryanne and Ciara.

Friday's Oz Harvest/Foodbank service has continued to run all through the pandemic and we are very happy that we were able to provide assistance to those families struggling to make ends meet during this very difficult time.

I am looking forward to seeing each and every one of you back in the centre as we come out of all the lockdowns and isolation due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Kylie Tarasenko

16 Days of Activism, Local Heroes Event, December 2021

"Feel safe, comfortable and also respected".

***Ganjuja**





Naturopath and Nutritionist Report – Katrina



Naturopathy is a holistic form of care which takes into account the various aspects of women's lives, which are impacting on their health and wellbeing.

I am passionate about supporting clients wherever they are at on their journey, towards better health and wellbeing.

With a focus to increase women's awareness of healthy lifestyle behaviours and support women in adopting healthy lifestyles, with a focus on good nutrition, physical activity, and smoking and alcohol reduction.

Snap shot of 2021/2022

Naturopathy / Nutrition appointments are available on a Tuesday at the centre. The demand for preventative health care and education, support and nutritional advice and has grown. There were 318 client contacts for this year, mostly telehealth and some face to face.

Top presenting issues were;

- * Stress, anxiety, low mood, insomnia, trauma (domestic violence) / PTSD are significant acute and chronic issue for many clients
- * Chronic illness; ie. diabetes, cardiovascular disease
- * Chronic pain including; arthritis, chronic pain following injury
- * Gastrointestinal issues; often present in people with stress, anxiety, depression
- * Assorted hormonal issues; thyroid, reproductive
- * Nutrition support; women wanting support to make healthier lifestyle and food choices.

In combination with the above women may also be dealing with language barriers, cultural constraints, loneliness, financial stress, food insecurity and lack of resources.

We try to run 2 Healthy Living groups each term, and focus on different aspects of health and wellbeing, including; stress, anxiety, insomnia, gastrointestinal issues, nutrition and self care.

Clients are also often referred internally to the women's health Dr and Nurse, counselling, case work, massage therapy, group work, physical therapies such as gentle exercise and art therapy groups. They may also be referred to their external GP.

Katrina Dordevic

*Rotary Club Seven Hills,
presentation and food
donation, June 2022*





Thank you to all of our Sponsors

A big thank you to all of our sponsors, we don't know what we would do without your generosity in supporting Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre, it is very much appreciated.



Signature Properties Group, Donation, December 2021



Commonwealth Bank Doonside, Community Donation Cheque, 2022



Jhan, with Danielle and the painting that was done while she was at the CEO and Co. Winter sleepout, June 2022



CEO and Co. Winter Sleepout, Blacktown Workers Club Car Park, June 2022



Staff at the Centre

In loving memory of Sharon Labbett

Please see below Sharon's 2021-2022 Program Coordinator's Report



Unfortunately for most of the past financial year we have had to endure more lockdowns and restrictions due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. We were unable to run any groups or events for terms 3 and 4 of 2021 and other services were provided over the phone where possible. Thankfully the Family Planning Doctor and Nurse were still seeing clients face-to-face and via telehealth, and we have also been able to provide our Oz Harvest and Foodbank program to the women and their families throughout the entire pandemic.

We have been very lucky to be the recipients of donations from quite a few different organisations and companies, whether that be in the form of cash/cheque or goods and services. We are very grateful to Signature Properties Group for their donation and for the repairs to our roof that leaked each time we had heavy rain. We also were the beneficiary of the proceeds from Blacktown workers club's CEO & Co Winter Sleepout.

Terms 1 and 2 saw some restrictions easing, however, everything was still up in air with events and groups due to the large numbers of staff and clients testing positive to Covid-19 and having to isolate for 7 days, or until they tested negative and no longer had symptoms. Our walking group started back up, and so did our Art Therapy; we provided Chair Yoga online, and clients could access the class on our YouTube Channel. Our Living Mindfully groups were back and Women's Legal Service has continued to provide legal assistance to our clients; we also welcomed Western Sydney Community Legal Service to our centre, once a fortnight on a Tuesday morning. We also started up a 'gentle exercise' group on a Monday lunchtime; Taylor from Vibe Health Club runs the class and it is proving to be quite a popular group with the women; they all get to work at their own pace and fitness level.

We were also very happy to provide the year 10 students from Blacktown Girls High School with a tour of the centre and a talk on what services Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre has on offer, and also a talk on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. They were provided with pizza for lunch, and a gift bag with all our brochures and a few extra goodies. I also attended a wellness conference and did a presentation on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

Due to our massage therapist, Kylie, taking on the role of receptionist, we welcomed our new massage therapist Joanne to the centre in May this year. Massage was a much missed service by all of our clients and it was fantastic to see them back in the centre.

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.



Blacktown Girls High School Visit, May 2022

- 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, 2022





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:

- 16 Days of Activism Launch
- Art Gallery - NOVA
- Blacktown Police Prosecutors Clinics
- Blacktown Workers Club – Domestic and Family Violence Awareness Breakfast
- Blacktown Workers Club – CEO & Co. Winter Sleepout
- BWGHC + NWSWDVCAS AGM
- Commonwealth Bank – Donation presentation
- Community Partner Forum – ACU
- Community Resources Network (Blacktown)
- Domestic Violence Provider network meetings
- DV Vigil – WASH House
- FGM Online Event
- Harmony Day (Blacktown)
- Inner Wheel – Donation presentation
- International Lesbian Day - DCJ
- International Women's Day breakfast with service providers and Blacktown City Council
- Jean Hailes Women's Health Week
- NOVA Employment functions
- OWDVN meetings
- Parenting & Wellness Education Program
- Redcross Aboriginal Women's Group – Presentation
- Seniors Festival Stall
- Signature Group of Companies – Donation to BWGHC
- We Love Kitchen opening
- Wellness Conference (AWHASO) – Presentation
- WHNSW Conference
- Women's Health Week
- Women's Legal Service
- Yarn Bombing event



*Inner Wheel
Knitted Teddies Donation 2022*



*Inner Wheel
Christmas Knitted Teddies Donation 2021*

Nice to meet new people and share cultures.

***Susan**



Our Donors and Sponsors

2021/2022 - Donations from Individuals and Organisations

We are thankfully indebted to our Major Donors and Sponsors:

- Blacktown Police Local Area Command
- Blacktown Workers Club
- Commonwealth Bank
- Lander Toyota Blacktown
- Storage King Blacktown
- Signature Group

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

- Blacktown Area Community Centre
- Blacktown Workers Club
- Baked and Co.
- Bunnings Blacktown Superstore
- Colgate Australia
- Commonwealth Bank
- Costco Marsden park
- Foodbank
- Inner Wheel
- Ikea Marsden Park
- Mardon Meats Kings Langley
- Oz Harvest
- Rotary Club
- Sargents Pies
- 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

“Staff are always very friendly, helpful and understanding”.

***Kapoor**

BWGHC would like to thank **the Blacktown Workers Club** and other clubs participating in the **Blacktown City ClubGRANTS** for awarding BWGHC with a 2021-2022 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.



Boxes with a few essential items, donated for the CEO and Co. Winter Sleepout, June 2022



Funders and Other Partners

Thank you to all our partners and funders for your collaboration and support during the financial year 2021-2022

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)
- Alice's Cottages
- Blacktown Area Community Centres (BACC)
- Blacktown City Council
- Blacktown Friendship Centre
- Blacktown Hospital Women's Health Clinic
- Blacktown Hospital Social Work Department
- Blacktown North Public School
- Blacktown Police LAC and DVLOs
- Blacktown Pride in Diversity Network
- Bonnies Support Services (Refuge)
- 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
- DV Safe Phones
- Family Planning NSW
- Family Referral Service
- Harman Foundation
- Headspace
- Hon Stephen Bali MP
- Hon Michelle Rowland MP
- Horizon Family Law Centre
- Immigrant Women's Speakout
- Junaya Family Development Services
- 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
- Relationships Australia
- Rosie's Place (women's refuge)
- Safe Relationships Project
- Safe Space Blacktown
- Salvation Army
- Share the Dignity (NSW/ACT)
- St Vincent de Paul Society
- Staying Home Leaving Violence (the WASH House)
- SydWest Multicultural Services
- TAFE NSW
- 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)
- Western Sydney Community Legal Centre
- Women's Cottage
- Women's Legal Services NSW
- Zonta Club of Cumberland West

"This service is great, it feels good to talk about something personal with a group".

***Harinder**



Financial Statements for 2021-22

Blacktown Women and Girls Health Inc

ABN 98 059 698 895

Financial Statements - For the Year Ended 30 June 2022

Detailed Profit or Loss Statement

	2022	2021
	\$	\$
Income		
Sale of goods	(2)	3
Fees	1,270	5,779
Interest Income	103	214
Dividend income	282	56
Grants	2,789,541	2,415,091
Donations	135,543	4,614
Sundry income	-	53,520
Other revenue	65,396	131,841
Workcover	5,768	64,092
Rebates	104,135	25,824
Other income	29,872	4,353
	3,131,908	2,705,387
Less: Direct expenses		
Accounting fees	22,351	3,382
Advertising	5,641	2,186
Staff	4,740	5,427
Bank charges	1,236	1,203
Cleaning	-	2,410
Legal, governance and accounting	43,320	19,473
Project management fees	65,396	57,992
Depreciation and Impairment	44,046	5,636
Electricity & water	5,662	6,581
Equipment <\$5,000	178,387	60,963
Rent & hire	60,069	44,679
Leave pay	248,978	131,187
Medical expenses	14,032	10,646
Motor vehicle expenses	5,847	6,986
Travel-local	5,515	688
Other employee costs	9,378	11,270
Other expenses	82,090	28,030
Repair and maintenance	99,063	78,977
Salaries	1,812,551	1,929,936
Staff training	962	1,012
Subscription	10,491	11,070
Superannuation contribution	192,280	172,712
Telephone and fax	40,775	39,920
Workers compensation	34,551	32,398
Training	9,936	21,578
Monies carried forward	173,035	650
Sundry expenses	611	641
	3,170,943	2,687,633
Net profit / (loss)	(39,035)	17,754





Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre Inc. Annual Report for the 2021/2022 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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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 2021/2022 FY.