

# SHOALHAVEN WOMEN'S RESOURCE GROUP Ltd

## Rosa Co-ordinated Care



## ANNUAL REPORT 2016—2017

## Contents

OUR VISION.....	3
Our Values .....	3
AIMS & OBJECTIVES .....	4
Shoalhaven Women's Resource Group Ltd .....	5
SWRG Board of Directors report 2016 - 2017 .....	6
From the Manager .....	7
What is RoCC (Rosa Co-ordinated Care)? .....	8
Client Data .....	8
Client Data at a glance .....	10
RoCC Staff .....	12
Staff Professional Development and Training 2016 - 2017 .....	12
SERVICE EVALUATION .....	14
With thanks .....	17



*Shoalhaven Women's Resource Group Limited (SWRG) is a non-profit organisation.*

*The Shoalhaven Women's Resource Group would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional custodians of the land on which our offices stand, Elders past and present.*

## OUR VISION

We are respected as a leading and sustainable service that empowers women who have become disenfranchised, to lead fulfilling lives.

The Shoalhaven Women's Resource Group will work within a feminist framework to provide a safe and sustainable environment for women by delivering services and programs which enable women to achieve self-determination.

We aim to do this by:

- Working from a woman-centered, strengths based approach underpinned by evidence based practice
- Assisting women to build social networks that will support and allow them to contribute to their community
- Building the capacity of women to be self-advocates and advocating on their behalf where necessary
- Raising awareness of issues impacting on women's ability to achieve self-determination
- Working collaboratively with other service providers

## Our Values

### **Feminism**

Women matter

### **Advocacy**

Speak up for ourselves and others

### **Collaboration**

Working together and with others

### **Contribution**

Every voice is valued

### **Holistic**

Including the whole person

### **Respect**

Ourselves and others

### **Self determination**

The right to choose

### **Individuality**

Respect difference

### **Trust**

Openness, honesty and good intent

### **Strength**

Courage to be ourselves

## AIMS & OBJECTIVES

### AIMS

- To support women who are at risk of being incarcerated, or at risk of losing their sobriety after leaving drug and alcohol rehabilitation.
- To network and liaise with other organisations in the community to ensure the best possible outcomes for clients through a case management approach.
- To support women who have complex needs to maintain tenancies.
- To provide transitional supported accommodation for women who are homeless, as a result of imprisonment and/or who are exiting drug and alcohol rehabilitation facilities.
- To raise community awareness about the impact of poverty, sexual abuse, childhood trauma, mental health, and drug and alcohol issues on women and their children, and the broader community, and to place these issues in a broader social context.

### OBJECTIVES

- To advocate for the rights of women who are incarcerated, on remand, or substance addicted.
- To provide early intervention support for women in correctional facilities as a prerelease support service, to address potential recidivism.
- To provide support, referral, information and advocacy using a case management approach.
- To create a non-institutional accommodation service where dignity, confidentiality, individuality and privacy are respected.
- To provide outreach support for women who are not accommodated by Rosa Co-ordinated Care.
- To advocate and lobby at a local, state and federal level regarding issues of violence, mental health, complex trauma and their connections to homelessness.
- To seek opportunities to educate, inform and raise the level of community awareness about issues which affect women's ability to maintain tenancies, maintain sobriety, and prevent recidivism.

## Shoalhaven Women's Resource Group Ltd

Shoalhaven Women's Resource Group Ltd is a not for profit charity providing services to the women of the Shoalhaven since 1983. We work with women from all cultural and religious backgrounds, inclusive of sexual orientation, financial and social status; while respecting individuality, dignity, privacy and confidentiality.

In 2016-2017 Shoalhaven Women's Resource Group received funding from FACS NSW to provide an intensive case management service to women returning to the Shoalhaven after leaving prison or drug and alcohol rehabilitation, or who are connected with the Justice System. Priority is given to women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and who have little family or community support.

The Company is governed by a Board of Directors elected at the Annual General Meeting. The Board of Directors is comprised of up to nine women drawn from the broader community.

The Board of Directors support staff and the service manager in achieving the best outcomes for clients and the service, meeting the legal requirements of the organisation and ensuring good governance.

### Board of Directors 2016 - 2017

**Director** Krissy Falzon

**Director** Lynette Kearney

**Director** Nessie Barrett

**Director** Renata Matyear

**Director** Sharlene Naismith

**Director** Sophie Ray

**Secretary** Tricia Forbes                      Manager - Rosa Co-ordinated Care

The Board of Directors volunteer their time to support and guide the organisation in achieving its aims and objectives.

The staff at Rosa Co-ordinated Care would like to extend their thanks and gratitude to all the Directors for their guidance and support.



## SWRG Board of Directors report 2016 - 2017

The Shoalhaven Womens' Resource Group has continued to go from strength to strength in the 2016 – 2017 year, building on the firm base that had been established the previous year.

After consultations with our Manager and staff, we decided in December not to renew the Lease on our Junction Street office premises and moved the office operations to the front building of our Hyam street premises. The Board was very grateful for the efficiency and good humour with which the staff undertook the move. The move has allowed us to make better use of the Hyam street premises, led to significant cost savings, and provided a much more comfortable environment for our staff and clients.

The rear building of Hyam Street remains as accommodation for our clients and the Board continues to work with our Manager and staff to explore ways to best manage the accommodation needs of our clients. This will be an ongoing project for the coming year.

During the year, we welcomed two new staff to the team, and also engaged Monique Ferguson, a Masters student from the University of Wollongong, to undertake an evaluation project to help us better measure outcomes of the services we provide. This was an extremely positive experience, with useful feedback from clients and staff and the development of a measuring and reporting framework. This will allow us both to continue refining and developing our services in a sustainable way, and to demonstrate our successes to partners and funding bodies.

We were also delighted to welcome Nessie Barrett and Lynnette Kearney as new Board Members. Their experience and connections within the community have already added great value to the Board's work. The Board has undertaken a project to update the constitution (last updated in around 1980!), reviewing and tightening up governance policies and procedures, instituting a Board calendar and ensuring our financial reporting systems follow best practice. We've also engaged in Board training and education, to make sure our Board members are up to date with the latest governance practice and industry knowledge. This training included sessions on the NSW justice system run by Board member Sharlene Naismith, and company finances run by the Illawarra Forum.

The Board is pleased that the day to day operations of SWRG are now well established, with appropriate risk management, compliance and strategic plans in place. We particularly thank our manager, Tricia Forbes, for her dedication, perseverance and care, and all of our staff for their patience, passion and hard work.

*Sharlene Naismith, Sophie Ray, Renata Matyear, Nessie Barrett, Krissie Falzon, Lynnette Kearney.*

## From the Manager

2016-2017 was a year for consolidation and planning for the Rosa Co-ordinated Care (RoCC) program. In June 2016, Staff and the Board participated in a strategic planning day facilitated by Illawarra Forum. This allowed us to reflect on the opportunities and vulnerabilities for the Shoalhaven Women's Resource Group and to plan our future priorities.

After we were notified in 2016 that our FACS funding for RoCC would be extended to June 2020, we felt confident to plan the development of the RoCC program. Our initial work had identified gaps in support for women connected with the Criminal Justice system or involved in harmful drug and alcohol behaviours. We conducted an evaluation of the first 2 years of the program with the help of a Masters of Social Work student. We understood the importance of meaningful connections as a way of reducing the social isolation and stigma of living with a criminal record, or with drug and alcohol addictions. The clients were telling us they were feeling socially isolated and disconnected. As a result of this, RoCC is developing a tailored social, therapeutic and educational group program. This has led to the beginning of new partnerships with Illawarra TAFE and the Shoalhaven Women's Health Centre.

During the year we updated our web site [www.swrg.org.au](http://www.swrg.org.au); and worked with students from the Digital Business Hub to create a Facebook page. The theme of our Facebook page is of courageous and inspiring women from diverse eras and experiences, who have overcome barriers and brought about change, either in their own lives or the lives of other women.

In 2016 we participated in Shark Tank and received \$2475 in donations from local businesses. This allowed us to buy new linen and towels, pay for professional haircuts and purchase internet access for the women we work with. These generous donations made such a difference to our clients. We take this opportunity to thank the businesses who donated; we have listed their details later in this report. During the year we also received support from the "share the dignity" program, a volunteer group who donate sanitary items and other personal products. We have been able to share this generosity with many women in the Shoalhaven.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the RoCC staff team for their dedication and commitment. I appreciate the sense of humour and positivity they maintain while working in such a complex work environment. I would also like to acknowledge the Board of Directors for their ongoing support, wisdom and governance. Thanks must also go to our funding bodies, partner organisations, and services with whom we work so closely and without whom we could not achieve the outcomes for our clients.

Tricia Forbes

## What is RoCC (Rosa Co-ordinated Care)?

RoCC provides holistic intensive case management support for women:

- 18 years and over
- Pre and post incarceration
- Pre and post drug and alcohol rehabilitation
- Connected with the Criminal Justice System
- Who are homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Who will be residing in the Shoalhaven

RoCC provides intensive and integrated support which, combined with housing assistance, allows for a client focused management service to enhance social reintegration and minimise reoffending.

RoCC provides support to attend court or parole; reconnect with community or family; secure and maintain tenancies; attend medical and legal appointments; and connect to training and education programs. We assist women to integrate into the community and encourage positive healthy lifestyle. We also provide assistance and advocacy with housing providers, Centrelink and other government and non-government agencies.

Since our opening in 2015, we have assisted women to negotiate Mental Health Care Plans with health providers; pay off state debts or fines through the Work Development Order (WDO) program and reconnect with the Shoalhaven community.

RoCC is the only program in the greater Shoalhaven area funded to specifically address the needs of women exiting prison and rehabilitation programs.

Women in prison are considered low risk due to low seriousness of offences:

- 23% illicit drug offences
- 15% shoplifting
- 9% non-domestic assault
- 7% fraud
- 5% retaliatory domestic violence

## Client Data

### RoCC Intake of clients - July 2016 to June 2017

#### 57 clients have been referred to RoCC in 2016 - 2017

1. 42 clients are identified as high effort with complex need.
2. All high effort and complex need clients require a high level of resources - including staff hours and brokerage support.
3. 34 clients have a diagnosed mental health condition
4. 28 clients have been in adult correctional centre in the past 12 months; 17 in rehabilitation facilities and 12 in psychiatric or health facility



Women in prison are considered high need due to mental & physical health conditions and histories of abuse:

91% serious drug dependencies

92% one or more long term health conditions

90% victims of sexual &/or physical abuse, including domestic violence

13% intellectual disability

**Referrals** have been received from:

- Community Corrections
- Dillwynia Correctional Centre
- Emu Plains Correctional Centre
- Family & Community Services
- Housing NSW
- Jarrah House
- Justice Health
- LAMP opioid treatment program
- Legal Aid NSW
- Link to Home
- NSW Health
- Partners in Recovery
- PHAMS
- SAHSSI
- Self-Referral
- Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre
- Shoalhaven Community Mental Health Rehabilitation
- Shoalhaven Homeless Hub
- The Junction
- Waminda
- Silverwater Women's Correctional Centre

### **Client Outcomes**

Positive outcomes obtained for clients during 2016-2017 include:

- Maintaining case management meetings and other scheduled appointments;
- Maintaining prescribed medication schedules for diagnosed physical and mental health conditions;
- Maintaining sobriety;
- Not reoffending;
- Securing housing;
- Restoration of family relationships;
- Paying off state debts or fines

Women enter prison with high rates of:

sexual abuse history

poor mental health

serious mental illness

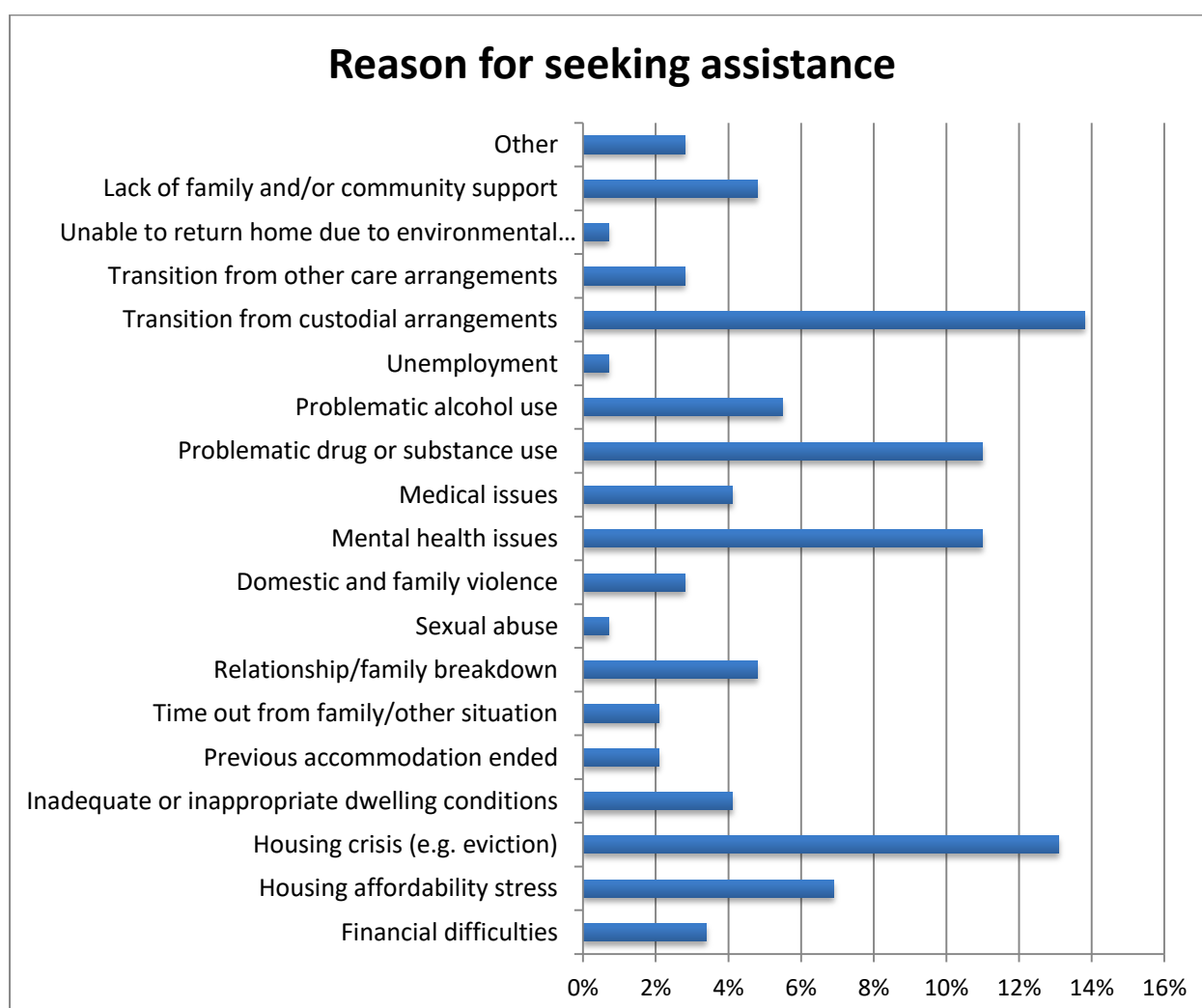
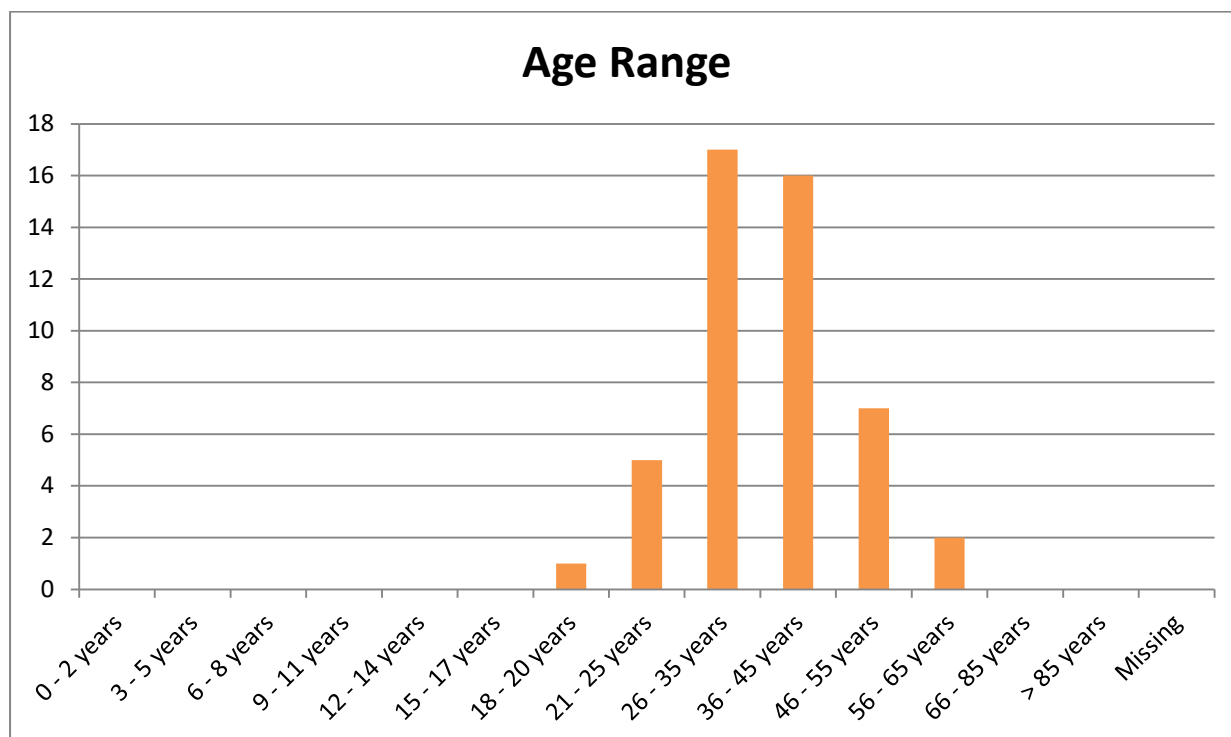
substance misuse

unemployment and

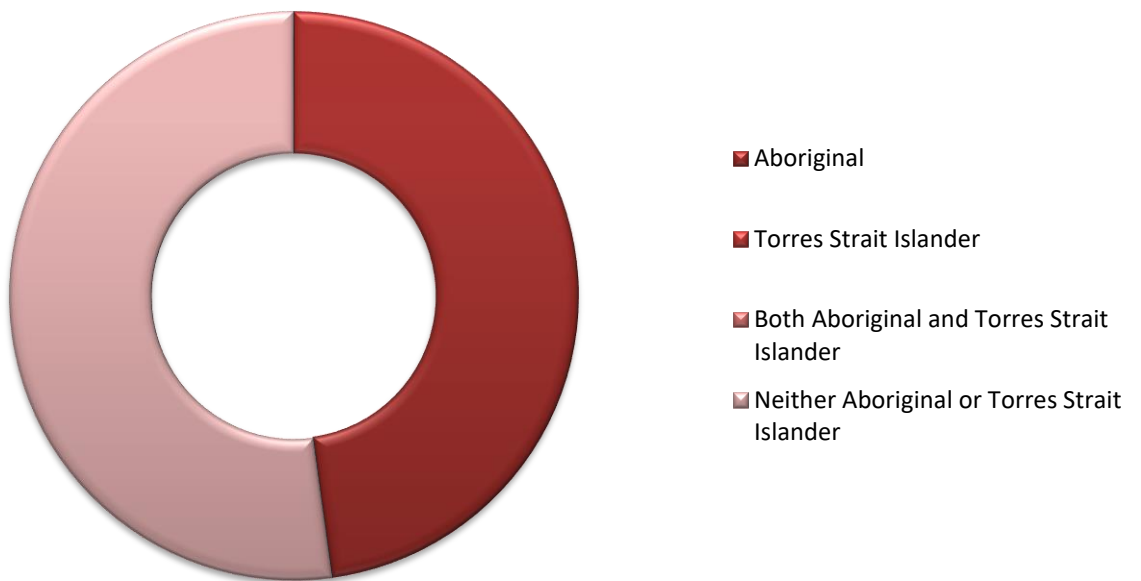
low educational attainment

NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

## Client Data at a glance

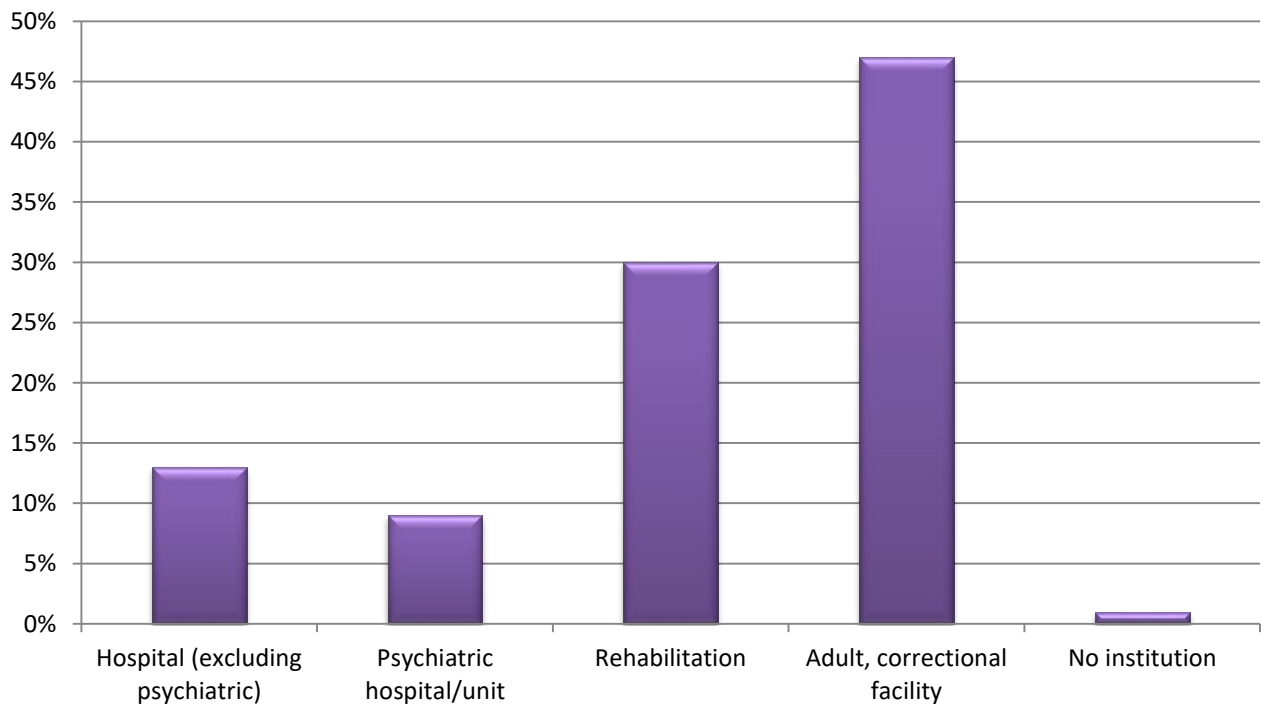


## Indigenous Status



Aboriginal women account for 29% of female prisoners in full-time custody in NSW, but only around 3% of the NSW population

## Facilities / Institutions in the last 12 months



Total number of support period days  
Total number of bed nights provided

8028  
295

## RoCC Staff

RoCC staff work from a woman-centered, strengths based approach, underpinned by evidence based practice. We work collaboratively with other service providers to achieve the best possible outcomes for our clients. RoCC staff are advocates and mentors. We work from a Trauma Informed practice perspective and our support is not time limited.

Whenever possible, staff schedule prison visits in order to meet women who will be released to the Shoalhaven. Evidence shows that connection with women prior to release leads to better outcomes and lower rates of recidivism.

Staff participate in service network meetings and shared case management meetings with other services. This year these included Waminda, SAHSSI, Partners in Recovery, Flourish, Legal Aid, The Junction, Housing NSW, Community Corrections and FACS.

All staff participate in regular external professional supervision.

### Staff 2016 - 2017

Case workers:	Kim Kerzinger (until October 2016) Lizz Gerlowska Maree Lawrence (from October 2016) Sherese Thomas (from September 2016).
Senior Case Worker:	Sharon Millett
Bookkeeper:	Vicki Schatzman
Service Manager:	Tricia Forbes

Total number of Case Worker hours = 116 hours per week.

### Staff Professional Development and Training 2016 - 2017

- ✓ Reintegration puzzle conference
- ✓ Illawarra forum conference: own it your future is now
- ✓ Security Awareness - Corrective Services NSW
- ✓ CIMS Foundations
- ✓ Navigating the Criminal Justice System - Disability Justice Project
- ✓ Trauma Informed Practice
- ✓ Motivational Interviewing: Helping People Change
- ✓ Documentation and Case Note Writing
- ✓ Assessing the needs of clients with problem gambling issues
- ✓ Aboriginal Mental Health
- ✓ Working with Individuals who have Self-Destructive Behaviours
- ✓ Recognise and respond appropriately to domestic and family violence
- ✓ Trauma and Addictions
- ✓ Understanding the Impact of Cofactor – Disability Justice Project
- ✓ Fabulous Finances

All staff attended the **13<sup>th</sup> Annual Reintegration Puzzle conference** in the last week of June. This year's theme was "Changing Systems from the Inside Out". We were successful in getting one sponsored registration through Homelessness NSW. The conference focussed on the systems that work to enable people to successfully reintegrate into the community after prison, as well as exploring the many barriers that inhibit successful reintegration. People from all over Australia and overseas attended this conference; with representatives from the community sector, advocates, people with lived experience of prison, policy makers, corrections staff and researchers.

**The conference affirmed to all staff that any positive impact for this client group is dependent on:**

- the connection staff make with the client remaining non judgemental
- the long term nature of the relationship with the client group - build trust, slowly and carefully over time
- understanding, knowledge and training of the impact of childhood trauma - "trauma informed practice"
- knowledge and awareness of dual diagnosis, mental health, intergenerational trauma
- understanding there is now definitive proof that Mental Illness is directly linked to childhood trauma, and that the theory that there is a "Chemical Imbalance " in the brain is no longer accurate.

**Some facts:**

- Australia is about to spend millions on building a new prison in NSW, while programs "inside" are few and far between, not offered in all prisons, and if someone has a sentence of less than 6 months they are not eligible to participate in any rehabilitation programs. Most women who are incarcerated have sentences of 6 months or less.
- It has been hard to gain public sympathy or engage public discourse for this client group. This has made lobbying for more services and rehabilitation programs in prisons very challenging and would require consistent effort from a peak body.
- People are spending unreasonably long periods of time on "remand", which means they are not entitled to any services.

- 38.6% of women return to prison within 2 years of release
- 49% of women in prison have children
- 33.2% of women in prison in 2011 were on remand
- 65% of women released in 2011 were in custody for less than 3 months

### **Network Meetings**

- ✓ DIG- District implementation Group- GHSH Providers
- ✓ CHADD- Corrections, Housing & Dual Diagnosis - Interagency Case Management
- ✓ CLSD- Cooperative Legal Service Delivery - Legal issues impacting on client group
- ✓ KTS – Keep them safe
- ✓ Homelessness Interagency
- ✓ LIACC – Local Implementation & Co-ordinating Committee
- ✓ Prison Interagency



The cost of a prisoner in NSW is \$237.34 per day or \$86,630 per year, per prisoner

## SERVICE EVALUATION

During the year we worked with a Masters of Social Work student from Griffith University to conduct an evaluation of the first two years of the RoCC program. The evaluation project adopted a participatory action framework to guide and collect data. This involved conducting semi-structured interviews with staff and women who were current RoCC clients. The interviews explored any significant change that has come about through engagement with the RoCC program.

The questions selected for the evaluation were modelled on the “most significant change” technique online guide (Davies and Dart 2002). They are:

- Can you tell me what life was like for you when you first started working with RoCC?
- From your point of view, can you tell a story that describes the most significant change that has come from working with RoCC?
- Why was this story significant to you?
- Do you think this significant change has affected other areas in your life? What?
- Have you worked with other agencies in the past? What is significantly different?

The research gathered stories about impact rather than output. RoCC is a long-term intensive case management program where goals such as securing housing, employment, long-term health plans and integration into community are affected by a woman’s disadvantage and trauma. The attainment of those goals takes time, longer than could be covered by this evaluation.

Four strong themes were identified from the data collection and analysis.

1. Women need to build a trusting relationship with a worker for change to occur;
2. Women identify their worker as being a mentor to them;
3. Change needs structure. Women identified the process of goal setting, strategy discussion and working to a plan as the most effective method for change, and;
4. Women need opportunities to come together with other women.

This evaluation recognises the unique way that RoCC workers engage with clients, providing long-term support that meets the complex needs of clients, creates a sense of belonging and safety and offers multiple re-engagement as required by client's circumstances. Data indicated that women need personalised, flexible support that develops over time, in a collaboration of tasks undertaken by both the worker and the client. Results also indicated that issues such as the effects of trauma, drug and alcohol use, pervasive mental health issues, social isolation and periods of homelessness need to be addressed in a way that is planned and sensitively considered through the building of relationships, role modelling and case management.

The evaluation recognises the passion and commitment of RoCC management and staff and the holistic and respectful way in which they provide their services to the women with whom they work. Most importantly, this evaluation has added essential, foundational knowledge that RoCC will use in their on-going quality monitoring framework.

*"When I got out, I knew I had to get a house or I'd go back in. So a worker sat down with me and we made a plan for how we were going to do it (talking about stable accommodation). It was going to take three months, but I didn't think I could do it. I've never been stable at anything for three months.*

*I was worried I was going to fail, but I didn't.*

*Now I'm lucky to have a roof over my head. They do the little things, they are nice, use manners and politeness and yeah, they really give a damn, they give a damn, so yeah, I gave a little bit of trust in them and it worked, I worked and I made it and I am in a home"*

*RoCC Client*

*"I listened to my worker use words with me about self-esteem and being positive, and how to look at stuff you have been through. Basically I am talking with my daughter like that now. I am trying to utilise that within her courage, and in her self-esteem to give her that... and I keep thinking about what my worker said, when push comes to shove, I am still here and I am giving that strength to my daughter now"*

*RoCC Client*

*"I've never trusted anybody in all my life. But when I got out of jail, I had to put my trust in them, you know, to make sure I'm always safe and they'd helped me out, and little by little they was helping me out. They got the housing, they came through for me you know, so they've, they've put up a promise to me and it came true. So I thought a little bit of trust wouldn't hurt nobody. They did what they said".*

*RoCC Client*

*"As a single mom, just keeping up with life, you know, trust is really significant to me, to be able to trust in somebody and for them to trust in me, too, you know, they trusted me to live there in the house and keep it, you know, clean and respect the house rules and all of those things. And that's a big thing, to, you know and just to trust, you know, it's a huge issue with women with alcohol and drug abuse who've also been through a lot of domestic violence and things like that"*

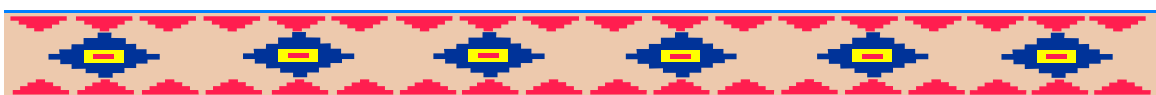
*RoCC Client*

*"I listened to my worker use words with me about self-esteem and being positive, and how to look at stuff you have been through. Basically I am talking with my daughter like that now. I am trying to utilize that within her courage, and in her self-esteem to give her that... and I keep thinking about what my worker said, when push comes to shove, I am still here and I am giving that strength to my daughter now"*

*RoCC Client*

*"RoCC are... wonderful role models... really helped me to see that I was worthwhile. Worthwhile um being here and being a part of society and staying sober and clean was... was you know, important to make all this good life changes"*

*RoCC Client*





## With thanks

We would like to thank the following business, services and individuals for their support:

Shark Tank donations received from:

- |                                   |                                 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ❖ A&D Tree Services               | ❖ Ann Sudmalis                  |
| ❖ ANZ Mobile Lending              | ❖ Asbestos Reporting            |
| ❖ Bomaderry Printing              | ❖ Gaynor Peters Property        |
| ❖ Hanlon Windows                  | ❖ Juniper Hearth                |
| ❖ Nowra City Church               | ❖ Nowra Seventh Day Adventist   |
| ❖ NR Wallace Building Inspections | ❖ Ray White Nowra               |
| ❖ Shoalhaven Garage Doors         | ❖ Shoalhaven Women's Conference |
| ❖ Southern Cross Housing          | ❖ Strongbuild                   |

Share the Dignity volunteers for handbags and personal items

Illawarra Forum staff for bags of personal items



*Shoalhaven Women's Resource Group Ltd receives funding for Rosa Co-ordinated Care from Family and Community Services NSW under the Specialist Homelessness Services, Service Support Fund.*

