

SHOALHAVEN WOMEN'S RESOURCE GROUP Ltd

Rosa Co-ordinated Care



ANNUAL REPORT 2015—2016

Contents

OUR VISION.....	3
Our Values	3
AIMS & OBJECTIVES	4
Shoalhaven Women's Resource Group Ltd	5
SWRG Board of Directors report 2015 - 2016.....	6
From the Manager	8
What is RoCC (Rosa Co-ordinated Care)?.....	8
Criteria for entering the Service.....	9
What RoCC provides.....	10
Issues and barriers facing clients in the Shoalhaven	10
Overview of client data.....	11
RoCC Staff	12
Staff Professional Development and Training 2015 - 2016	13
Client Data	14
RoCC Client.....	16



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 support women who have complex needs to maintain tenancies.
- To provide supported accommodation for women who are homeless, as a result of imprisonment and/or who are exiting drug and alcohol rehabilitation facilities.
- To network and liaise with other organisations in the community to ensure the best possible outcomes for clients through a case management approach.
- 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 employ staff from a variety of cultural backgrounds in order to reflect the cultural diversity within the broader community.
- 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 2015-2016 Shoalhaven Women's Resource Group received funding from FACS NSW to provide a service to women returning to the Shoalhaven after leaving prison or drug and alcohol rehabilitation who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. We were also supported by Southern Phones Community Grants to help furnish our transitional accommodation.

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 2015 - 2016

Director Kerry Wright

Director Krissy Falzon

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 2015 - 2016

The 2015 - 2016 year has been a year of consolidation and growth for the Shoalhaven Women's Resource Group.

In August 2015, our new manager Tricia Forbes joined us, and immediately set about ensuring that our staff were well supported in their roles, and that robust policies and procedures were in place to underpin our everyday activities.

In early 2016, we were delighted to receive confirmation from the Department of Family and Community Services that the funding for the RoCC program had been extended to 2020.

These two events have allowed us to take big steps in building and running the RoCC program this year. The staff worked very hard to fit out our accommodation, develop policies and procedures for residents, and put in place mechanisms for identifying appropriate clients to be placed in the accommodation. Although we continue to have some challenges with some of our residents, the accommodation has been in constant use since we opened it in February.

Both Tricia and the staff have also focused on building relationships with other services in the Shoalhaven, and promoting the service to increase general community awareness of our activities. The staff have continued to attend professional development courses, and Tricia has represented the SWRG at a number of meetings and conferences.

With all of this progress, we were in a position to hold our first Strategic Planning Day this year. This was a great chance for the Board and staff to reflect on where we had come from, how much we had already achieved, and what we want to achieve in the next 12 months.

Our financial position continues to be strong, and we particularly thank Vicki Schatzman for her ongoing work as our financial administrator, and Julie Hindwood from Booth Partners for her assistance with our financial compliance, budgeting and audit.

During the course of the year we welcomed a new case worker, Lizz Gerlowska. Lizz has already proved to be a great addition to our team.

In October, we were sad to farewell Faye Worner from our Board, who played such a huge role in the transition from our previous Rosa project (Nowra Women and Children's Refuge) to the ROCC program, and took on the role of temporary manager during periods when we had no manager. We thank Faye for all her work over the last few years, and look forward to continuing to work with her in other capacities. We were delighted to welcome Renata Matyear, from Carter & Ferguson Solicitors, as a new Board member. Renata has already taken on the task of updating our constitution, a huge piece of work, for which we thank her.

All of our Board members have continued to assist with issues arising for the ROCC program. We are fortunate to have a Board with a range of skills and a passion for the program.

Finally, none of this would happen without the daily hard work and belief of our fabulous staff. The Board wishes to thank all of our staff – Tricia, Kim M, Kim K, Sharon, Lizz & Vicki. We look forward to continuing to work with you through another productive year supporting women in the Shoalhaven.

*Kerry Wright, Kristine Falzon, Renata Matyear, Sharlene Naismith,
Sophie Ray*



More than one-quarter (28%) of female prisoners have sentences of less than one year. Women prisoners are more likely than males to be homeless prior to incarceration and at a greater risk of homelessness post-release

From the Manager

2015-2016 was the first full year that the Shoalhaven Women's Resource Group offered the Rosa Co-ordinated Care (RoCC) program. It was a year of learning, development and consolidation. During the year we were successful in establishing our transitional accommodation; developed our protocols, policies and procedures; participated in network meetings; strengthened existing partnerships and created new ones; and successfully completed a quality review against the SHS Standards. Our small staff team worked collaboratively on our systems, learning and developing new models and processes, at the same time as providing intensive support to the women who required our service. At the end of the year we farewelled one of our Case Workers who had been with the company since we managed Rosa Women's Refuge; and welcomed a new Case worker and Bookkeeper to the team.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the Board of Directors for their ongoing support, wisdom and governance. I would also like to acknowledge and thank 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 is a support program for women who are leaving prison or alcohol or drug rehabilitation programs and who are at risk of homelessness. RoCC provides a housing first approach, helping women to access and establish permanent and safe housing. The program also 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 is the only program in the greater Shoalhaven area funded to specifically address the needs of women exiting prison and rehabilitation programs.

Background to the Service

There is significant evidence to suggest that people, who are leaving institutions such as prisons, are at a high risk of homelessness. When people exiting prison or rehabilitation programs are homeless or at risk of homelessness, the rates of reoffending, recidivism and relapse increase significantly. Research details the overwhelming complexity of issues facing reintegration or reconnection with community. Women who are leaving institutions often have multiple needs which require a range of services to assist immediately or soon after leaving.

As stated in the *Keeping Women out of Prison position statement*; Sydney Community Foundation: “The majority of women in custody come from disadvantaged backgrounds, with experience of trauma, abuse and violence. The majority have never been part of any mainstream they can easily return to. ... Many have mental health issues or cognitive impairment due to brain injury, alcohol and other drug issues. For many Aboriginal women, the legacy of the Stolen Generations ... remains a major issue”.

Women are currently being sentenced at 4 times the number they were 20 years ago with an increase in the number of women on remand. Women have short but frequent periods of imprisonment.

With its aim at reintegration and reengagement RoCC works with women to rebuild their lives. RoCC aims to address women’s social disadvantage, accommodation and physical and mental health needs; whilst recognising the specific needs and sensitivities of the individual women.

In order to maintain accommodation it is vital that the coexisting complexity of issues that negatively impacts on each woman’s life be addressed. These issues may include: financial difficulties, lack of education, poor mental or physical health, social disconnection, addiction, family violence, legal issues, parenting or family reunification and disability.

RoCC provision of case management may cover some of these issues; however, most will need appropriate referral to specialist services. In recognition of this, RoCC encompasses a collaborative approach with existing services within the Shoalhaven community.

Women enter prison with high rates of:

- sexual abuse history
- poor mental health
- serious mental illness
- substance misuse
- unemployment and
- low educational attainment

Criteria for entering the Service

RoCC is available to women:

- Over the age of 18 years;
- At risk of going to jail or who are leaving jail;
- Already paroled to the Shoalhaven;
- Leaving alcohol and other drug rehabilitation programs;
- At risk of being homeless, or who are homeless once they leave the above institutions;
- Who agree to be involved in a housing first case management approach.

What RoCC provides

RoCC works with the client and other services to:

- Provide pre prison and rehabilitation exit support in order to assist institutions planning the exit of their client back into the Shoalhaven area.
- Coordinate integrated assistance from multiple services, e.g. mental health and drug and alcohol, medical, legal, financial, health.
- Assist clients to integrate into the community and encourage positive healthy lifestyle.
- Assist with living skills where needed, which can include education, training or employment programs.
- Support women and their families, who may be going through a period of readjustment.
- Provide support to women who feel overwhelmed by their multiple needs.
- Provide limited temporary accommodation for those women who are homeless.

The service provides a holistic and intensive case management model aiming to improve social attachment and engagement.

Issues and barriers facing clients in the Shoalhaven

Housing

1. Limited temporary accommodation.
2. Lack of affordable private rentals, with high competition for available properties.
3. TICA debts.
4. Inability to plan or to budget within limited finances and debt repayment plans.
5. Previous debt history with Housing NSW. In many cases where client has outstanding debts, including damage to property, or a history of non-payment of rent/rent arrears, clients are required to rent privately for 6 months before consideration will be given to an active Housing NSW application.
6. Until stable accommodation can be secured it's almost impossible to work on other issues the clients may have. It is difficult for clients to complete, organise and maintain relevant paperwork when they may be living out of a car, or are in a tent, or may have to leave a hotel room daily. This situation also leads to poor diet and financial issues.

Mental and Physical Health issues

1. When homeless, it becomes increasingly difficult to keep track of medications and health appointments, adding to the challenges for clients who have mental and physical health issues. Clients with acquired brain injury or who have short term memory loss, require support to remember and attend their medical appointments.
2. Many clients return to their drug and alcohol abuse habits as a means of coping with the daily challenges they face.

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

Overview of client data

RoCC Intake of clients- July 2015 to June 2016

57 clients have been referred to RoCC in 2015 - 2016

1. 51 of these client referrals have been accepted after Intake.
2. 42 clients are identified as high effort with complex need.
3. All high effort and complex need clients require a high level of resources - including staff hours and brokerage support.
4. 41 clients have a diagnosed mental health condition
5. 37 clients have been in adult correctional centre in the past 12 months; 11 in rehabilitation facilities

Referrals have been received from:

- Bolwarra Transitional Correctional Facility
- Community Corrections
- Dillwynia Correctional Centre
- Emu Plains Correctional Centre
- Family & Community Services
- Jarrah House
- Justice Health
- Kathleen York House
- Legal Aid NSW
- Link to Home
- Partners in Recovery
- SAHSSI
- Self-Referral
- Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre
- Shoalhaven Homeless Hub
- Waminda
- Silverwater Women's Correctional Centre
- William Booth House

Client Outcomes

Positive outcomes obtained for clients during 2015-2016 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, including having children returned to their care.

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

RoCC Staff

RoCC staff work from a client centred approach which is informed by a “Trauma Informed Practice” model. Whenever possible, staff schedule Jail visits to 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, Care South, Partners in Recovery, Richmond PRA, Housing NSW, Community Corrections and FACS.

All staff participate in regular external professional supervision.

Staff 2015-2016

Kim Kerzinger	Tuesday – Friday	Case worker
Kim McGuire	Tuesday- Friday	Case worker
Lizz Gerlowska	Tuesday – Friday	Case worker (from May 2016)
Sharon Millett	Monday- Thursday	Senior case worker
Tricia Forbes	Monday- Thursday	Manager (from August 2015)
Vicki Schatzman	Thursday	Finance Officer (from October 2015)

Total number of Case Worker hours = 96 hours per week.

Case management challenges:

1. Balancing the demand of administrative responsibilities and face to face time with clients including advocacy and obtaining legal documents such as birth certificates, Centrelink payments.
2. Establishing and continuing to build trusting relationships with people who have not had trusting relationships, requires skill, patience and a client focussed perspective.
3. Advocating systemically - advocating for clients who have low literacy and complex mental health issues, without disempowering the client.
4. Supporting clients to attend and to maintain regular appointments both with staff and other services.
5. Understanding the Correctional system and how to navigate it.
6. Managing and maintaining connection with clients who are still in and out of addiction.
7. Working with clients who have complex trauma and complex mental health issues.
8. Resources: managing our time so we don't burn out.



Staff Professional Development and Training 2015 - 2016

- ✓ Trauma Informed Care
- ✓ First Aid & provide CPR
- ✓ Effective complaints management
- ✓ Consumer participation
- ✓ Connecting health and justice
- ✓ Child protection update
- ✓ Children of parents who have a mental illness – resilience in families
- ✓ Hoarding and squalor: effective support responses
- ✓ Working with paranoia, hearing voices and childhood trauma
- ✓ Bridges out of poverty
- ✓ Aboriginal strong family program
- ✓ Cultural awareness

Network Meetings

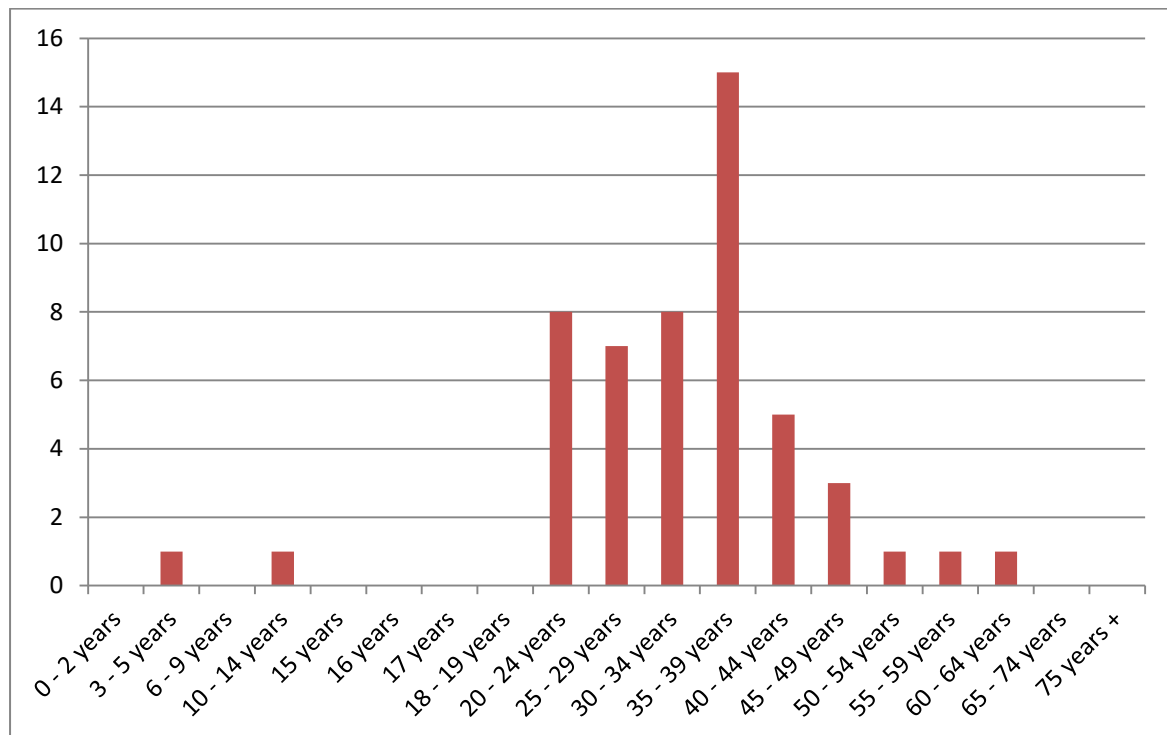
- ✓ DIG- District implementation Group- GHSB Providers
- ✓ CHADD- Corrections, Housing & Dual Diagnosis - Interagency Case Management
- ✓ CLSD- Cooperative Legal Service Delivery - Legal issues impacting on client group
- ✓ KTS – Keep them safe
- ✓ Homelessness Interagency
- ✓ LIACC – Local Implementation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

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

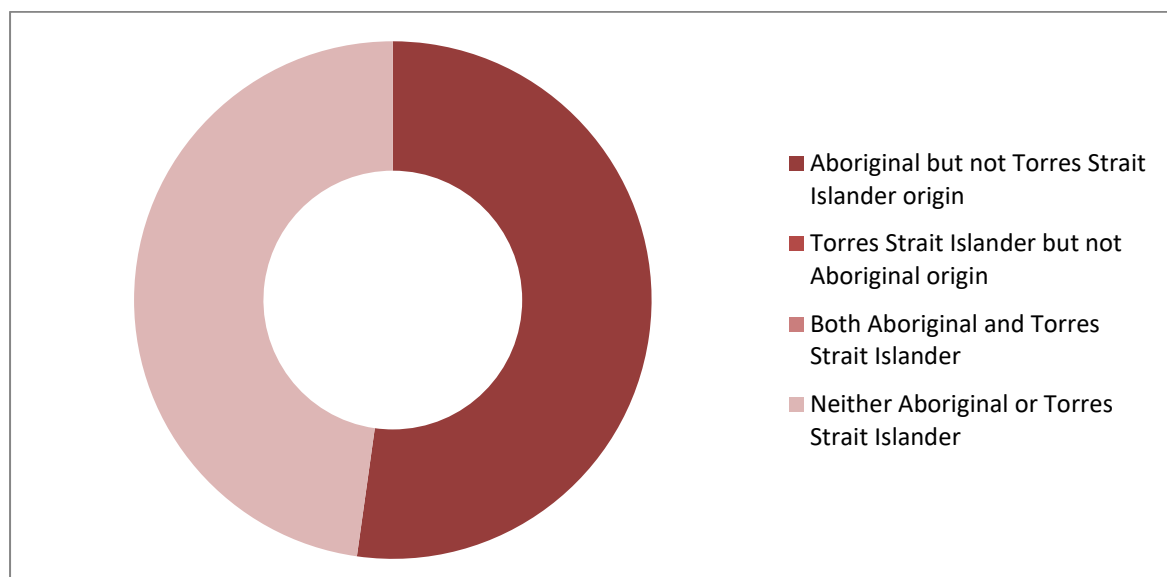
23% illicit drug offences
15% shoplifting
9% non-domestic assault
7% fraud
5% retaliatory domestic violence

Client Data

Age Range

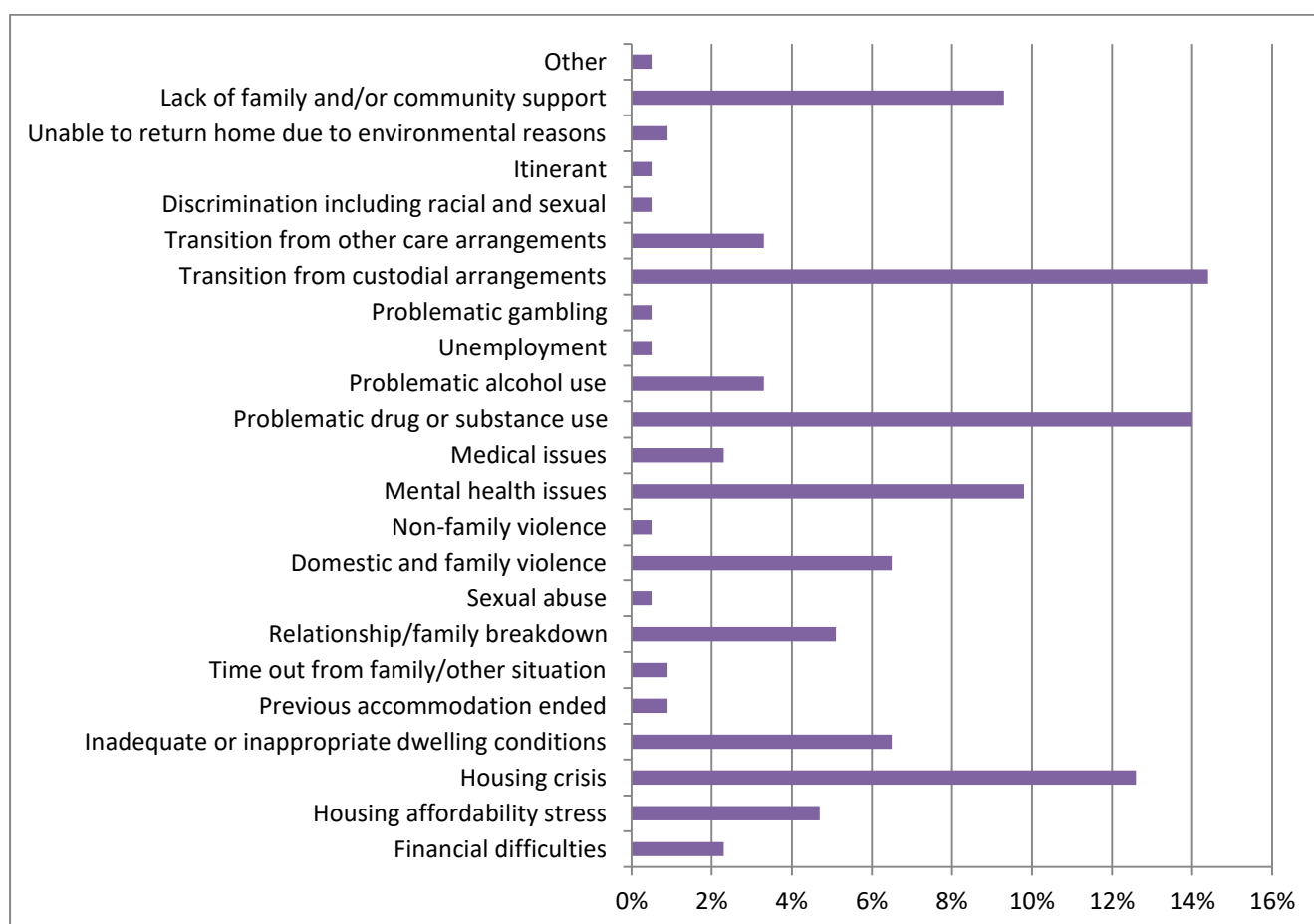


Indigenous Status

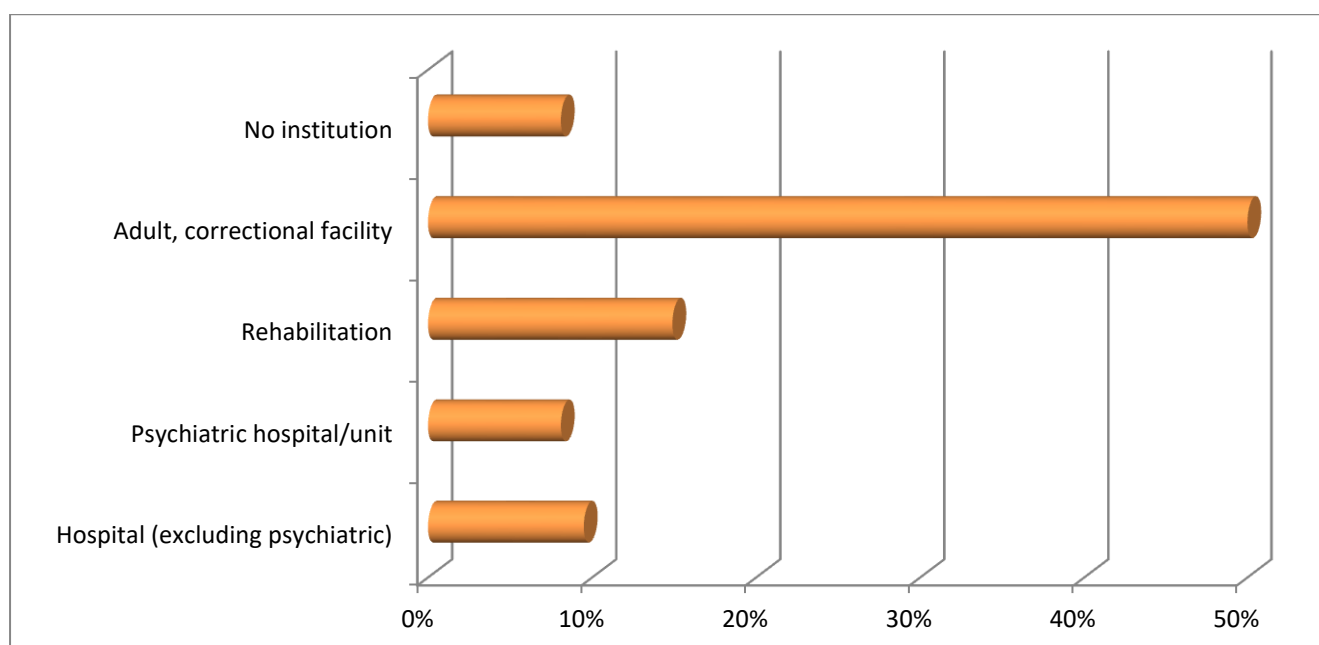


Aboriginal women account for 29% of female prisoners in full-time custody in NSW, but only around 3% of the NSW population

Reasons for Seeking Assistance



Facilities / institutions in the last 12 months



Total number of support period days 2015-2016 5292
 Total number of bed nights provided since February 2015 274

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

RoCC Client

This is Anne's story (*it could just as easily be Susie's, Jane's or Betty's*).

Anne was referred to us the week of her release from Silverwater Women's Correctional Centre. (*Ideally she would have been referred a month or more prior to release so that we would have had an opportunity to meet her and start building a relationship with her. Evidence shows that this provides for much better outcomes and a lower rate of recidivism.*)

Anne has been in Silverwater for 3 months for driving offences. (*65% of women released are in custody for less than 3 months. Betty or Susie could well have been released after being on remand – 33.3% of women in prison are on remand.*) Anne also has a pending court case. She has been charged with assault, being drunk and disorderly and resisting arrest.

Anne is a 30 year old Aboriginal woman returning to the Shoalhaven. (*The average age of women admitted into custody is 32. Aboriginal women make up 37.8% of the female inmate population, yet only 2% of the general population.*) Anne has 3 young children. (*49% of women in prison have children*)

Anne committed her driving offences by driving an unregistered vehicle while unlicensed. She lost her licence for DUI. Anne lived in the outskirts of Nowra and had to get her children to specialist medical appointments. She was also the only one in her extended family who had a car and was always being asked to run errands for others. She couldn't afford the car registration. Anne kept driving her car and couldn't afford the fines when she was caught.

Anne's children were placed in care while she was in prison. She also lost the house she had been renting. These were Anne's priorities on release. Without a home the children would not be returned to her care. On release Anne stayed with her cousin. Her cousin's house was full, but there was a spare couch.

RoCC staff started working with Anne on her priorities, and Anne soon revealed history of domestic violence which has resulted in an acquired brain injury after a particularly violent episode. (*33% of women have experienced domestic violence and / or sexual assault at some point in their life.*) Anne and her ex-partner battled alcohol addiction and often participated in lengthy drinking binges. Anne tells us that she drinks to numb the pain and dull the memories of the years of abuse she experienced from her father as a child. Anne has a long history of family and relationship violence. The years of

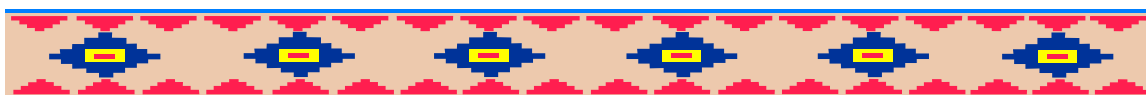
childhood abuse and trauma have had a major impact on her life. (***Research shows that the range of impacts of early trauma experiences is extensive, leading to ongoing mental health issues, often in combination with drug and alcohol dependencies.***)

Over the next few months RoCC staff worked with Anne on:

- finding stable housing
- family reunification – including working to have her children returned to her care
- maintaining parole conditions
- preparing information and providing support for the pending court case
- attending appointments – medical, legal, housing,
- maintaining sobriety
- obtaining a mental health care plan and participating in ongoing counselling
- paying off her fines

This is only the beginning of Anne's journey. RoCC staff will continue to work with Anne for as long as she requires. During this time Anne will undoubtedly have episodes of despair, will have bouts of drinking, not turn up for appointments and appear erratic and disengaged.

Anne's story is not uncommon in our service. One of the most important things RoCC is able to provide is unconditional long term support; to walk alongside women in their journeys. (***The average length of support provided by RoCC in 2015-2016 was 96 days per client***) It can take several months for women to begin to trust staff, and several more to open up and really connect, and be willing to talk through and to share their very personal stories.



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.

2015-2016 we also received a small grant from Southern Phones towards furnishing our transitional accommodation

