



ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



Shoalhaven Womens Resource Group Ltd trading as ROCC for Women
ABN 94 002 660 120

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We are **ROCC FOR WOMEN** and we’ve been providing services to the women of the Shoalhaven since 1983.

Women leaving prison or rehabilitation often need support with rebuilding their lives and connecting with community. Our intensive case management service supports those women who are most at risk – the homeless or those at risk of homelessness.

We work with women from all cultural and religious backgrounds, inclusive of sexual identity, financial and social status and support those who have no family or community support.

ROCC for Women acknowledges Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the land and water we live and work on. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

ROCC for Women receives funding from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) under the Specialist Homelessness Services, Service Support Fund.



ROCC offers long-term case management for women 18 years and over who have had contact with the criminal justice system and/or where alcohol or other drugs is impacting negatively on their lives. We offer personalised, tailored, flexible supports and a wraparound, holistic approach for women who have experienced or are experiencing trauma.

Vision of ROCC

To realise the dignity and well-being of women within their communities.

Mission

To deliver trauma-informed, strength-based supports to foster resilience in, and advocate for, women.

Values and Behaviours

Diversity

Embrace everyone's story

Feminism

Women matter

Individuality

Our own and others

Advocacy

Speak up for ourselves and others

Self-determination

The right to choose

Collaboration

Working together

Resilience

Survive and thrive

Contribution

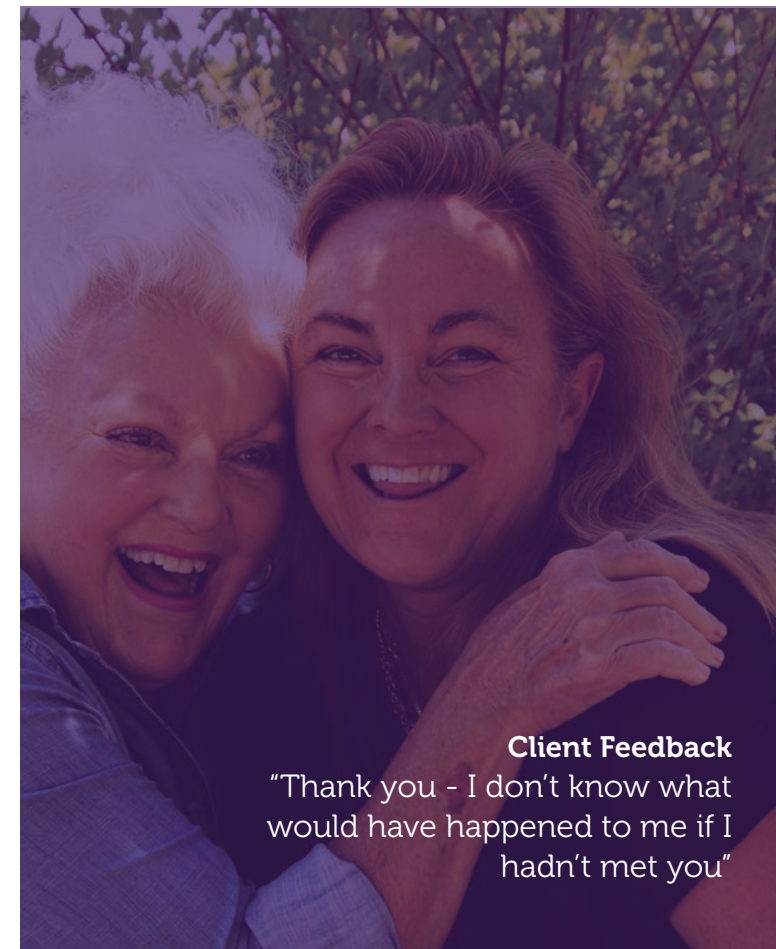
Every voice is valued

Honesty and Integrity

Openness and good intent

Holistic

Include the whole person



Client Feedback

"Thank you - I don't know what would have happened to me if I hadn't met you"

Board of Directors

Our skilled, committed and experienced Board are actively involved and passionate about our service.

Sophie Ray

Sophie is an experienced Board Chair, Non- Executive Director of Not for Profit, ASX listed and private companies and business owner in the Shoalhaven. Formerly a corporate lawyer at PWC, Sophie is a Fellow of the AICD, graduate of Women on Boards' ASX program and a member of Women on Boards.

Sharlene Naismith

Sharlene is the Solicitor in Charge of Legal Aid NSW, Nowra and has worked in the Shoalhaven as a solicitor for over 20 years including as the Principal Solicitor of Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre. Sharlene practices primarily in housing, mental health and consumer law.

Kerry Wright

Kerry is a civil lawyer with Legal Aid NSW, Nowra, since 2015 and has lived in the Shoalhaven for 20 years. She has extensive experience on community led boards in the ACT and Shoalhaven and has managed and delivered services for children, young people, job seekers and people requiring legal assistance through community legal centres.

Denise Clark

Denise brings over 20 years experience in the corporate sector, predominantly in IT, service delivery, business development, project management, process improvement, mentoring, document control and training. Denise also previously worked in the community and education sectors and has lived in the Shoalhaven for 25 years.

Kelly Stehr

Kelly brings over 20 years experience in senior management roles in Human Resources both locally and internationally. She has extensive business and operational experience across a range of industries working currently as the Executive Manager People & Culture with Shellharbour City and has previously worked with IKEA, Travelex, Rentokil Initial and the University of Wollongong.

Simone Finch

Working across the human services sector for the past 35 years, Simone brings a range of skills and experience to the Board. With a particular interest in corporate governance, she has turned around numerous organisations, ensuring their viability through a blend of strong systems, compassionate culture and good governance. Now having a career change, Simone is pursuing a design and academic path, with a focus on ethics and sustainability.

Directors during 2022-2023 and now retired:

Lynne Dooley and Nicole Moore

Board of Directors Report 2022 - 2023

In 2022 – 2023, the focus of the ROCC Board and leadership team has been on building for the future. The year saw the retirement of one of our longest serving staff members, Sharon Millett, who had been with ROCC since its inception in 1983. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank her for her contributions not only to ROCC itself, but to the lives of women in the Shoalhaven, which are significantly better because of her work. We also farewelled two of our Board members, Lynne Dooley and Nicole Moore. Their contributions in helping manage ROCC's transition to a more strategic and business-like organisation are significant, and I thank them both.

With these changes, the Board focused on succession planning to ensure the organisation has a strong pipeline of staff and leaders into the future. After carrying out a skills analysis to ensure we have the right mix of skills and experience on the Board, and an external recruitment campaign, we welcomed Simone Finch, Kelly Stehr and Rita Haddad as new Directors on the Board of ROCC.

The Board is confident we now have the right mix of skills, experience and passion throughout the organisation, and looks forward to the Board and staff working as a team to continue to grow ROCC.

Growth is necessary because of the increasing demand for ROCC's services. The Board was pleased that this year ROCC exceeded the KPI set for it by its primary funder, the Department of Communities and Justice (providing services to 98 women through the year). Additionally, through the efforts of our CEO, ROCC has this year formed strong partnerships with other local services including Waminda, Salt, Southern Cross Housing and others, which have led to increased referrals to our service. The CEO has also strengthened ROCC's advocacy role, with ROCC taking an active role in a number of forums, in some cases as an invited speaker, including with Homelessness NSW, and Shoalhaven Council.

The increased focus on partnerships and advocacy has also been assisted by the rebranding exercise that we undertook during the year with the

assistance of Web Design Solutions NSW based in the Shoalhaven. Our new website, logo and social media pages have been remarked upon by many stakeholders, and have certainly assisted in driving interest in ROCC. The Board is also proud that this year ROCC devoted some time and resources to developing its Reconciliation Action Plan, which is particularly important given that almost one third of ROCC's clients are indigenous.

All of these activities were carried out within the framework of ROCC's strategic plan 2022 – 2025 and our risk management framework. The Board has continued to keep the strategic plan at the heart of its decision making, and spent some time during the year with our strategic facilitator Katie Fox, reviewing which pillars of the strategic plan had been met and updating the plan to ensure that it continued to reflect ROCC's values and mission.

A key part of ROCC's strategic plan, and an increasing priority given the increasing demand for services, is ensuring ongoing funding for the organisation. The Board was delighted that it's contract with DCJ was extended to 2026, and has

worked with our CEO to identify other sources of funding. Thanks to her efforts, ROCC has been the recipient of a number of grants this year, including from the FRRR, Shoalhaven City Council and PHN Coordinare which have funded programs for our clients, and capacity building activities for the organisation. The Board and CEO will continue to focus on locking in ongoing funding arrangements over the next year.

On behalf of the Board, I thank our CEO, staff and all the stakeholders with whom we've worked this year for their efforts and their support of ROCC. We are at an exciting stage in the evolution of ROCC and its services, and look forward to working collectively to be able to continue that evolution to provide more support to women in the Shoalhaven going forward.

Sophie Ray
Chair, SWRG

CEO Report

It was a big year for ROCC and, I imagine, for everyone as we emerged from COVID restrictions, perhaps with new perspectives and choices. Three of our staff retired during the financial year and we thank them again for their contribution over the years. The organisation has changed and adapted since its inception in 1983 as it continues to support the women of the Shoalhaven. In 2022-2023 we entered a new season with a new brand and a strategic plan to take us forward.

Wellbeing has been a key focus and we are very grateful for the additional wellbeing grants from Shoalhaven City Council and PHN Coordinare that provided for clients, together with staff, to attend art classes, art therapy, mosaic making, an Aboriginal cultural and bush medicine course, the Shoalhaven Zoo, a whale watching boat trip and share food together. We thank TAFE for holding an information session for our clients, explaining access to courses and tailored assistance, and we had jewellery making sessions facilitated by one of our Board Directors, Sharlene Naismith, which were very popular with

clients and staff. The outings and activities provided the opportunity to connect, learn new skills, explore creativity, and have some fun together. Client feedback was very positive and confirmed improved wellbeing and enhanced social integration into the community. We are hoping to secure more funding and donations this year to continue wellbeing programs for the clients (and our staff). We are also engaging in wellbeing programs for our staff and increased training opportunities.



We are very grateful for the support of the Foundation for Regional and Rural Renewal for funding our brand development, new website, and providing funds to improve our operational capabilities and build capacity.

We are primarily funded by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) as a Specialist Homelessness Service (SHS) and we are pleased to confirm that SHS funding has been extended to June 2026. This provides certainty, stability and the opportunity to strategically plan for sustainability of employment and service delivery.

We thank our local Shoalhaven service supports that keep us humming:

ShowellTech for our IT support and cyber security,

Web Design Solutions NSW for assisting with our branding, website and Annual Report publication,

Booth Partners for our bookkeeping and accounting, and

Share the Dignity for coordinating the generous donations for our clients.

We also thank DCJ, Nowra Community Corrections and the many services who support our clients on their journey and collaborate with us to deliver positive outcomes including but not limited to Waminda, SALT Care, One Door, YWCA, Nana Muru, Legal Aid, Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre, SAHSSI, SYFS, Aboriginal Legal Service Nowra, Aboriginal Housing Office, Shoalhaven Womens Health Centre, Shoalhaven Neighbourhood Services, Services Our Way and the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District.

ROCC participated in the Homelessness Taskforce and the Thrive Together Fair. Co-ordinated by Shoalhaven City Council, these initiatives enable collaboration with other services so we can learn how to improve the support for our clients.

As we have all seen in the media over the past 12 months, homelessness is complex with many contributing factors. This year we are focusing on being trauma-informed, that is, being a safe place from a client's perspective, welcoming, available to listen, and finding resources that increase capacity for clients to make informed decisions that will support obtaining and sustaining housing.



We are also reviewing our policies, practices and documentation to ensure information is accessible and easy to understand.

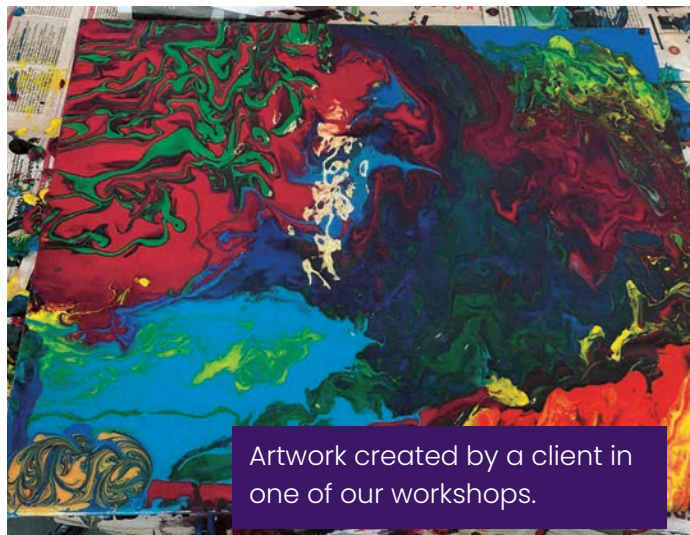
Most of our clients have experienced complex trauma. Complex trauma can be defined as severe, long-lasting, uncontrollable, and frequent stress. Its effects are often unrecognized, misdiagnosed and unaddressed. Trauma is pervasive, the impact can be very broad, often deep and life shaping. Trauma can affect beliefs, values and the ability to have helpful relationships.

"A traumatic experience impacts the entire person – the way we think, the way we learn, the way we remember things, the way we feel about ourselves, the way we feel about other people, and the way we make sense of the world are all profoundly altered by traumatic experience." (Dr Sandra L Bloom 1999).

Research shows that people who witness violence in the home during their developmental years can be deeply impacted in their sense of identity which in turn shapes their belief system about self and the world. Development may be severely

affected and can result in challenges across the life span. (*Klinik: The Trauma Informed Toolkit p.44, Second Edition 2013*). For many clients it is “just the way it has always been” and often happens in relationships that are meant to be caring. As damage can happen in relationships, it is also in relationships where healing and help can occur. Sometimes clients have had damaging relationships, not only with family and friends, but also in interactions with services. We work with vulnerable women and we aim to create a safe environment from the client’s perspective and actively listen, be calm, welcoming, connected, authentic, empathic, present, clear in communication, kind, non-judgmental, non-reactive, responsive to emotions and needs, accountable, reliable, appropriate, ethical, honest, fair, consistent, a positive cheerleader, and have healthy boundaries and stability. We can provide dignity in the exchange, hope when the client has none, and a space for the client’s silence or emotion. This is all within a broader society that often labels and blames without seeking to understand.

Clients may also have a fear mindset born out of trauma. Fear can be, amongst other things, contagious, overwhelming, stressful, escalating, defeating, deflating, distracting and can immobilize action. Trauma recovery is possible but it takes time, training and experience to build a constructive caseworker/client relationship so that the client can identify and work through the areas they want to focus on. Due to our long-term funding, clients can return to the service and stay in touch with our



Artwork created by a client in one of our workshops.

caseworkers as they navigate life without retelling and reliving their traumatic story.

We exceeded our DCJ funding expectations in 2022-2023 together with clients that left and returned for further support during the year. A huge thank you to the team for supporting our clients! In particular, we acknowledge and thank Sharon for her many years of service and commitment until her retirement in March, Amanda for two years and Maree for 7 years of journeying with our clients and providing holistic case management.

A significant challenge for clients and caseworkers is the limited social and affordable housing in the Shoalhaven particularly following the influx, during and post COVID restrictions, of investors/occupiers with “work from home” flexibility and the increase in lucrative short-term residential leasing. We continue to work closely with Southern Cross Housing and other landlords to seek to improve housing outcomes for clients.

We committed to Aboriginal cultural training and have developed the first stage of our Reconciliation Action Plan which will soon be available on our website.

As reported by our Chair, we have welcomed new Board and staff members and farewelled others. I thank the Board for their commitment, willingness, wisdom and ongoing support. The Board and staff developed our Strategic Plan 2022-2025 and we have successfully delivered our first year’s objectives. With our new Board and team members, we are looking forward to growing our service, enhancing wellbeing and focusing on each unique client so that they feel safe, heard and supported to explore options to secure and sustain a safe and stable home.

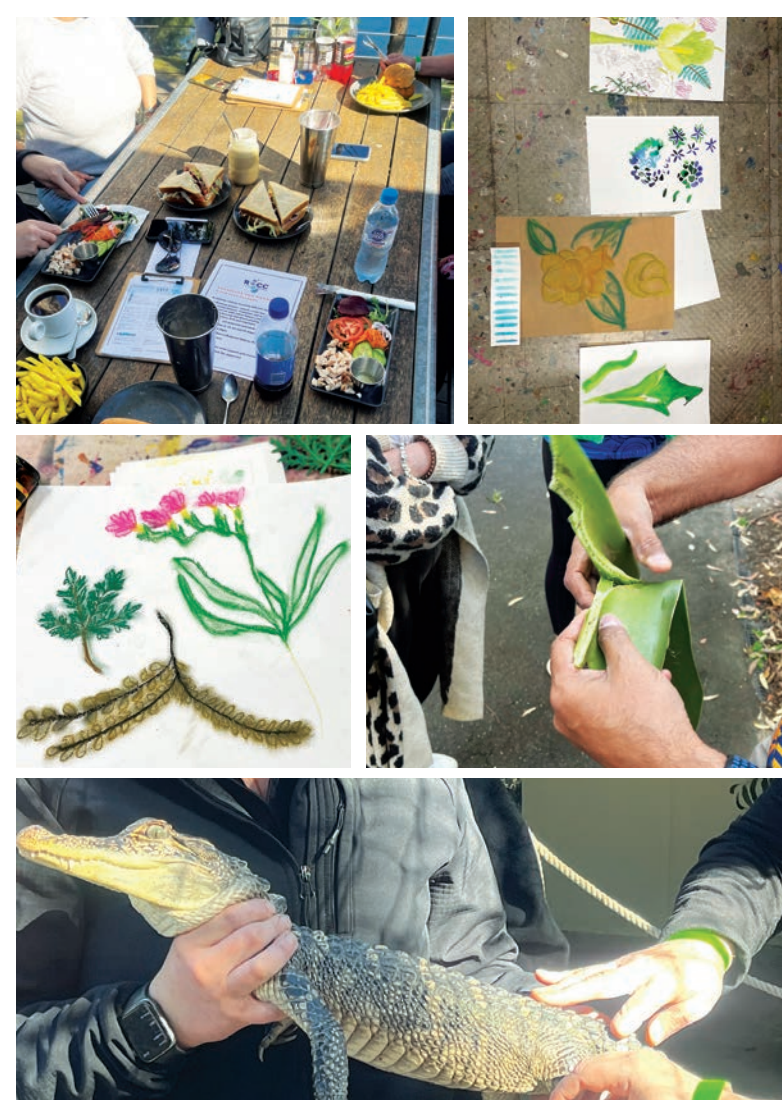
With gratitude,
Coralee

Wellbeing Grants

COORDINARE – phn South Eastern NSW – Commonwealth Psychosocial Support Grants Program provided for our clients to improve social connectedness, social skills, friendships, relationships and reduce isolation, build on an individual's ability and skills and increased community accessibility and awareness.

Shoalhaven City Council – Community Wellbeing Grant – Participating in a social group at an external location through a fun art activity and sharing food and conversation reduced barriers and built a sense of connection and belonging.

The group sessions enabled healthy connections to community, learning new skills, and meeting new people which supports long-term sustainable positive change. As a result of the regular sessions, clients have now formed a social network, supporting each other at other times (eg connection, transport etc) and are less reliant on services.



PHN Coordinare Grant

Client Feedback

PHN Coordinare Grant - Botanical Art Workshop at Nowra Art Gallery

"This has been so good for me to get out and have some social time. I only wish I had of known about social groups like this earlier. Sign me up for the next one!"

"So good to be out of the house and learning a new art style."

"Great to meet other women and feel comfortable in a nice setting."

"I'm so proud of my artwork and it was easy even with my disability limitations."

"The group is so relaxing"

"I was feeling really stressed on the way here but I am really glad I came. It helped me relax and feel better about going home. "

"I am really proud of what I created."

Client Feedback

PHN Coordinare Grant - Whale Watching Trip

"Nice day out Thank you – that was great"

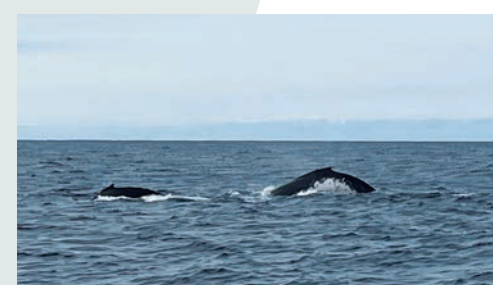
"Lovely day out Gets me out doing things"

"Improves my mental health by getting outside."

Client Feedback

PHN Coordinare Grant Djungga Kultural Tour Booderee – culture, history, bush tucker and medicine

"Pretty informative", "That was awesome", "Really cool",
"Thanks very much"



Why ROCC?

We have been providing effective support services to women in the Shoalhaven for four decades. We offer wraparound holistic one-to-one long term case management and regular group workshops/programs to facilitate improved social connection, life skills and psycho-social supports.

Our positive, professional, passionate and dedicated team of women provide client focused services with practical supports, community and referral connections, life skills, and housing pathway supports for clients leaving NSW Correctional Centres or rehab, and supports for tenancies at risk.

Support

to stay out of prison or go to rehab and afterwards when you come home

Community Services

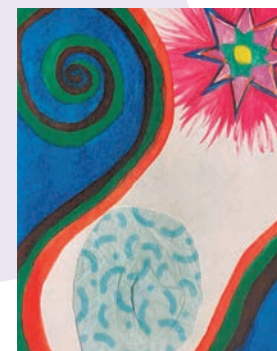
referral and support to connect to a range of community services

Housing

assistance with public and private housing

Long term support

to address the areas you identify as challenges in your life



Art Therapy



Client Feedback

"Since I have been with ROCC I feel safer"

Her Story

ROCC staff appreciate the privilege to offer long-term, personalised, tailored, flexible supports and to walk alongside women on their journey of recovery and reconnection. With histories of trauma and systemic failures, it can take several months for women to begin to trust staff and be willing to share their very personal, and often traumatic, stories. ROCC staff focus on the woman, learning about the person underneath labels, are client driven in case management and have a holistic approach. Building rapport is key to long term positive outcomes and it is challenging for community services staff with workload and capacity limits and limited referral/support options for clients.

The following stories are a compilation of some of the challenges for clients of our service. Asking for support is the first hurdle and is very challenging when there are waitlists throughout community services with resultant delays and repeated rejection. The lack of affordable and habitable social and disability housing in the Shoalhaven significantly impacts on a client's capacity to manage their lives and navigate a path to wellbeing.

Client Feedback

"Thank you for everything you have done for me you have improved the quality of my life 100%"

Her story - a reflection

She remembered the train trip back to Bomaderry like it was yesterday. The beauty of the countryside passing by and the fresh air and smells she hadn't experienced for months. The euphoria of being free. Well, sort of. She was out of that place. It still gave her nightmares. She never wanted to go back there. Prison. She said that last time but she still ended up back there again.

It wasn't just the place or the restrictions or the people. Yes, that was all challenging and she was glad to have it behind her. It was the rejection. The isolation. The loneliness. The anxiety. Her mental health had really deteriorated in there and there was nothing she could do about it. They wouldn't give her anything and it was hard to self-medicate in there. Her family had given up on her. Her parents, old now, were struggling with their own stuff. Her children had been growing up without her and were disconnected. No-one had visited her in there. The wave of pain washed over her, drowning her again.

She remembered when she was young that she had dreams, hopes for her future, but her life hadn't

turned out that way. Why did some people seem to get it sorted but she couldn't?

Growing up she watched her parents. She had no choice. She was a captive. Her Dad's anger. Her Mum's fear. They had to be quiet, compliant, hyper vigilant. Her Dad's drinking and, what she recognised now as her Mum's trauma responses, was all she knew as family life. She didn't understand them. She had felt anxious all the time but didn't have a label for it then. But now she had some mental health supports, had done some programs and yarning about it, and she had realised that she had generations of trauma in her life. School had been hard. She didn't have the right stuff for school and couldn't clearly think a lot of the time. There was other stuff that had happened too when she was young. Bad stuff that had to be hidden. Not talked about. Stuffed down. She's working through that now and the sessions are starting to help her move forward. It explained a lot. She didn't want that for her kids. That's why she's motivated to change the patterns of thinking and behaviours which led her to drugs and prison and away from her children.

Her children are adults now and moved away. They had wanted nothing to do with her and had been angry with her. Her son didn't understand why she had been that way. Her daughter was following in her footsteps, getting in bad relationships and trouble. She was only just starting to understand that herself. She was only just starting to explore the layers of trauma. She hoped that one day, through gaining better insight into her journey and theirs, she could explain it to them. She thought she would never be with a bloke like her Dad. Charming, then abusive, angry, controlling, manipulative. But that was all she knew growing up. She could now, after exploring with professional supports, see the patterns there. She reflected that he had love bombed her initially and there had been good times. They had a pretty good life but then when the children came along the abuse increased and had really escalated with her last child. She had tried to leave him a few times and the last time involved police, AVOs and Child Protection. She had been overwhelmed. She was suddenly homeless. There were waitlists with all the services and no-one could help her. She had spiralled. She met the

wrong guy – again. She needed somewhere to live. That guy accepted her children, or so it seemed. The children didn't like him. They were right. She didn't want to remember that now.

Friends. There had been some great times. Fun times. Her mind flashed back to times when she seemed to have lots of friends. But they were using. They had their own stuff going on. They didn't talk about the stuff when they were together. It felt better to drink. It numbed the stuff. And then the drinking wasn't enough. The effect got less over time and it took too much alcohol to numb the pain of the past. Drugs helped. They were cheaper, faster and more effective.

Things started to unravel. Instead of the drugs easing the pain, they started causing pain. She forgot things. She forgot things for her children. She forgot to pay the rent. Then she didn't have the money for the rent. Or the children's school things or birthdays. Or food. Then her friends needed to borrow money for something but could never pay her back. Then it got harder. Then she needed more drugs. Drugs were fun to start with and relaxed her, distracted her, but then when she couldn't get

them she felt agitated, anxious, angry, confused and then stuff happened. Some stuff she couldn't remember. When she sat in court she honestly couldn't remember some of the stuff they were saying she did. Were they talking about her? They had proof. They had witnesses. And then it all fell apart. Prison.

Her mind went back again to the day she arrived in Bomaderry fresh out of prison. She had no-one to meet her when she arrived. She just had instructions to go to Community Corrections and "check-in". She had no belongings, nowhere to live, no "friends". She went to Corrections and they told her about services that could help her. One of those was ROCC for Women. Corrections gave her some information and

**Client Feedback
a text from client:**

Thanks again for organising that,
you are all so wonderful I don't
know what to say!!! THANK YOU it
means a lot to me.

told her she had a few nights to stay somewhere and then she needed to report back to them on specific days. She remembered walking outside and standing for a moment. She had lost everything. But she was back in her old stomping ground. It was a small town. She knew where to find people and they would know where to find her. Ex-partners. People she owed. She looked at the information that Corrections gave her and went to the local homeless hub and they rang ROCC.

It took a while for someone from ROCC to get back to her. They sounded nice on the phone and she was hopeful they could help but they had a waiting list. Rejection. Everywhere had a waiting list. It was getting hard again. Her resolve wavered. She needed something to calm her nerves. She went to a local hang and ran into an old friend and ended up on her couch. She couldn't remember much of that evening.

She remembered ROCC finally set up an appointment. There was paperwork and story telling and then discussion around what she needed and what she hoped for going forward. ROCC started working with her on her plans. She

knew from everyone that getting housing was nearly impossible in the Shoalhaven and she didn't have a good track record with housing. She had old rental debt and a bad history of damage to property which was another debt. It wasn't her damage, it was that guy that who had done the damage but she couldn't prove it. She hoped he wouldn't find her again. He was trouble.

ROCC said they would get the ball rolling. She needed to get her ID and Centrelink sorted so she could get some money. She needed to go to meetings with ROCC and get to Corrections for their appointments. It was hard at first. Everything seemed like paperwork and it was exhausting, overwhelming, depressing. It was hard telling her stories. ROCC arranged interim accommodation for her. They talked about rehab as an option if needed. They also said they could help with her fines by signing her up for a Work Development Order. ROCC really listened to her and helped her think about how to work out long term plans for mental and physical supports, housing, connecting with her children, family and the community. They said it was one step at a time. ROCC had talked

about choices – her choices. It was the first time she really felt some control and was starting to make informed decisions for her life. It was empowering and gave her hope.

ROCC had invited her to some art classes, a bushwalk, some jewellery making. That had sounded interesting and not paperwork or storytelling. She was tired of talking about her stuff.

She was anxious at first. Strangers. But everyone was OK. They were friendly but not in your face. She laughed a couple of times. She met some nice women. Women who seemed to have had similar journeys. No-one judged her. It didn't matter that she couldn't paint or do all the activities. It was just good to hang out for a couple of hours. Be out of the place where she was existing. Get outside into nature. Take her mind off all the stuff. She relaxed. ROCC told her about other courses in the area and she started learning some skills and meeting more people. Some of the other women started to share what had worked for them. ROCC had talked to her



about rehab and she felt ready now.

It took a long time. There were bumps in the road. She had bad days where it was all too much and she went backwards on her plans and didn't contact anyone for months but the caseworkers at ROCC encouraged her and never judged her when she got back in touch. She felt safe and welcome and heard. They walked beside her and made suggestions. She realised that she had choices. She wasn't reacting as much and was now making healthier choices.

She thought about her youngest daughter. A year after leaving prison, she had been to rehab and when she came back to the Shoalhaven she started working with ROCC towards reconnecting with her daughter who had special needs, was in care and would never be able to live independently without support. She had wanted to be that support for her daughter. She wanted to be the person her daughter could rely on, feel safe around and hopefully love. She had known it was a big call. To build the relationship, to be entrusted with her daughter again and get the government to approve for her daughter to return

to her and then to make sure she could do it and trust herself. ROCC had helped her on that journey. Finding stability, resources to support her and her daughter, advocating for her and collaborating with other services. Helping her find dignity again and courage to move forward when she had bad days or setbacks.

ROCC had helped her with housing and referrals that supported her goals and she could then focus on restoring her relationship with her children.

It was a staged process where she had to demonstrate that she was ready. There had been tonnes of paperwork and meetings but the day had finally come when her daughter came home to her. She had a new life. New hope. She was now her daughter's carer and they were even volunteering together with a local charity. ROCC and other referrals, including mental health supports, helped her to find a path to connect with her other children too and they are now calling and visiting her. Her family is different from what

she planned but all have a place to call home. She pays her rent, maintains her property and is working towards paying off her debts.

She still goes to ROCC outings and programs when she can. She tells them "It really helps with my mental health" and ROCC keeps her informed of other support resources and services.

She will always have trauma, it doesn't disappear. But through the mental health supports and courses she has attended, she has learnt to recognise the triggers most of the time and has strategies for managing herself.

Her lifestyle isn't the one she dreamt of as a child but she is healthier now. She doesn't feel lonely all the time and is better at managing her anxiety and connecting. She feels good when she focuses on her wellbeing and her family.

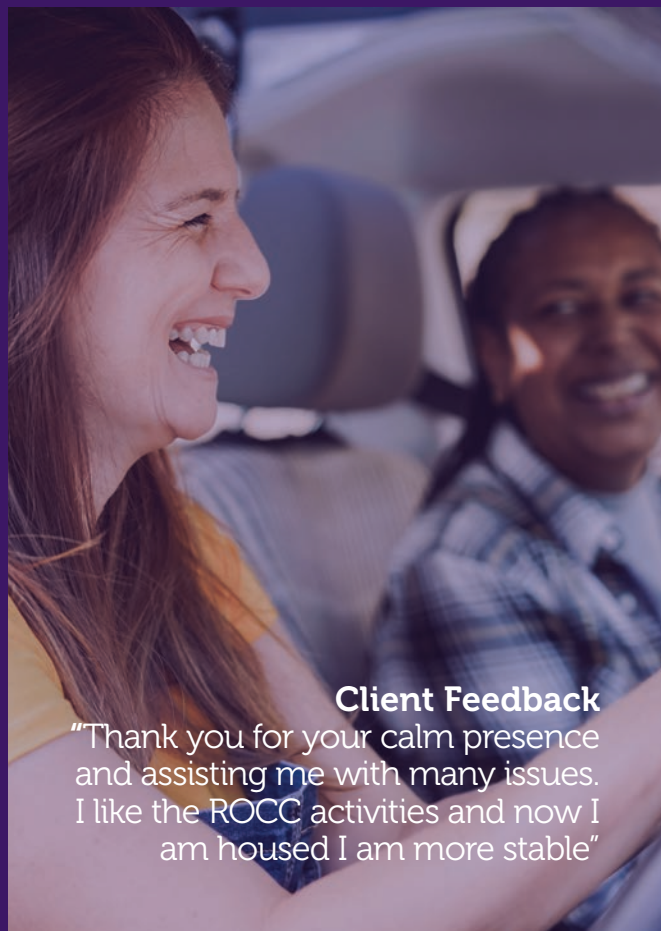
She says ROCC feels like a safe place where she can be for a while and connect with herself and

others, maybe learn something, sometimes create something and sometimes just have a laugh. She still rings her caseworker occasionally to have a chat and reflect on where she is now and talk about her new goals.

It has been a long journey and having a home and staying connected to supports, friends, family and community has been the key to moving forward.

Client Feedback

"Home from Hospital just wanted to thank you for coming in and visiting me the other day it meant a lot to me."



Client Feedback

"Thank you for your calm presence and assisting me with many issues. I like the ROCC activities and now I am housed I am more stable"

Her Story - a journey home

She had always been busy. She had focused on getting her education, getting a job, getting married, getting a house and a mortgage, and then came the children. She sacrificed to make ends meet and then juggled all of it. She then had to find a job where she could work part-time as she juggled daycare, pre-school, school, kids sport, shopping, kids activities, school holidays, school events, birthday parties and outings. She was overqualified but she took the part-time job to support the family. It then became apparent that one of her children had special needs and she was juggling supports for all the children as they navigated their way of life.

She had her animals too. They were her safe place and comfort. They needed her care too and were sometimes financially draining but she didn't begrudge that because they were part of the family and they loved her.

None of it was perfect but she kept it all together for many years and now, with her adult children moved away and her husband gone, she was

facing the fact that she couldn't retire. Her resume was limited by the years of working part-time in low paying roles. She had changed her mortgage to interest long ago and her bills, and stuff around the house, had continued to mount up. Her husband left her with other debts too and a property to maintain which was now old, very expensive to repair and virtually unlivable. She realised that she had spent her life and money on everyone else but had very little to sustain her future. Her superannuation was virtually non-existent because she had been too busy to focus on that and she hadn't earned enough money to invest.

She was told she was redundant. She was redundant to her children – they had moved away. They were embarrassed by her and the shabby house that had deteriorated with age and hoarding. She had stopped leaving the house.

She was redundant to her now ex-husband.

She was redundant to her workplace. Replaced by younger people with more energy and technology savvy.

The bank told her that they were taking the house. She

looked for rentals but the rent was higher than her mortgage payments and she couldn't take her pets.

She was too young for the pension but too old to get work.

She couldn't pay the vet bills that were mounting up and she struggled to feed herself and her pets. The other bills kept mounting with interest increasing the debt. Her electricity was cut-off, her phone was cut-off and she realised she would have to give up her animals.

She had rarely spoken to her neighbours. She had always been too busy and embarrassed by her deteriorating lifestyle and then it seemed too late to start a conversation after all those years.

The bank took her house. She was homeless. She had to find homes for her animals or give them to a shelter. She moved into her car with them. Her anxiety increased and her self esteem and hope plummeted.

She went to a charity to get food, mainly for her pets, and they told her about ROCC.

It was hard to tell her story. It took a few goes at

making an appointment. She didn't have a phone and she didn't have a way of staying in touch initially. ROCC started with the essentials – the paperwork, her case plan, her safety, her wellbeing, communication, her accommodation and finances.

It was clear that having a roof over her head was essential and ROCC focused on temporary accommodation and completing her housing application as a priority and actively advocated for her. The options in the Shoalhaven were very limited and the waiting list was extremely long. It seemed that she would need to move out of the area to secure social housing. ROCC explored options with her and helped her to connect with other services to start the housing process.

ROCC connected her to psychological and medical support so she could improve her mental and physical health.

She hadn't been to a doctor in years and had never been to a psychologist. It became apparent that she had underlying issues that had not been previously diagnosed, including hoarding. ROCC helped her to

navigate the NDIS process and she was eventually approved for support.

ROCC helped her find the courage to address her debts and connected her with financial counselling and legal support for some outstanding issues. It was a lot of appointments and ROCC supported her to plan for the appointments, get there and debrief afterwards as it often felt overwhelming.

ROCC invited her to group programs where she started to build her self-esteem and connection with other women as she realised there were women with similar challenges.

She enjoyed the outings and taking her mind off some of her issues. ROCC told her about other courses where she started to learn new skills and connect. ROCC connected her to TAFE and she was supported to get to a course which built her confidence, she met more people and for the first time in years she started to feel positive about her life and future. She now has a part-time job and gets out

regularly with the new friends she has made.

It took years and it wasn't straightforward or easy. ROCC helped coordinate all the necessary supports that they identified together. ROCC was with her during the disappointments to reflect and plan a way forward and celebrated the successes with her along the way.

She is now housed and still has pets. She connects with ROCC occasionally to catch up, get support with housing meetings which still trigger her anxiety, attend some group programs that help her wellbeing, and address her challenges as they arise to ensure she keeps her housing.

Life will always throw up things that need to be addressed but she knows she can return to ROCC and check in from time to time to stay on track. Through discussions with her caseworker at ROCC, she is also accessing other support services to help her ongoing health issues as she ages, reconnect with her community and family, and maintain her home.

Compliment from South Cross Housing
"Your Caseworker is fantastic"
said to a client"

Client Feedback
"I don't know where I would be without ROCC support"



Jewellery Making



Client Feedback

If I rated ROCC out of 10 I would give you a 20.

ROCC Clients

Service information for 2022 – 2023

- 99 Clients
- 117 Support periods (the following statistics and graphs are based on support periods)
- 13025 Total support days

Shoalhaven Statistics (Homelessness NSW)

Population	108,531	Homeless 426 (2021)
Over 55s	46,510	92
20-54	39,213	226
Under 19	22,808	108
ATSI	6.5%	75
Females	50.5%	44%
Males	49.5%	56%

Street count of homelessness – Shoalhaven

2020	2021	2022	2023
6	20	11	19

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence related assaults: (reported Jan-Dec 2022)	466
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Dwellings in the Shoalhaven 2022

Total dwellings:	58,692
Unoccupied dwellings:	12,794
Unoccupied dwellings as a % of Total dwellings:	21.8% (-158 since 2021)
Social housing as a % of total dwellings:	3.2%

Current weekly median rental:

Shoalhaven	\$510
Shellharbour	\$623
Wollongong	\$633
Sydney	\$1,014

Referrals were received from

Self	Shoalhaven Womens Health Centre	Murra Mia
Waminda	DCJ	Shoalhaven Homeless Hub
Southern Cross Housing	Legal Aid	SAHSSI
Nowra Community Corrections	Link2Home	YWCA
Silverwater Women’s Correctional Complex	Lives Lived Well Nana Muru	Community Health
Dillwynia Correctional Centre	One Door Mental Health	
	The Family Place	
	SALT Care	

Client Feedback

“I have made valuable friendships and social connections with other ROCC clients at ROCC group programs in the past 12 months.”

Client Feedback

“Other services refer people on after specified periods of time which makes clients need to re-tell their story and to start again – which can be re-traumatising. Long-Term Case Management - having one service that walks with you through your trauma and your journey and this has changed my life for the better.”

Client Feedback

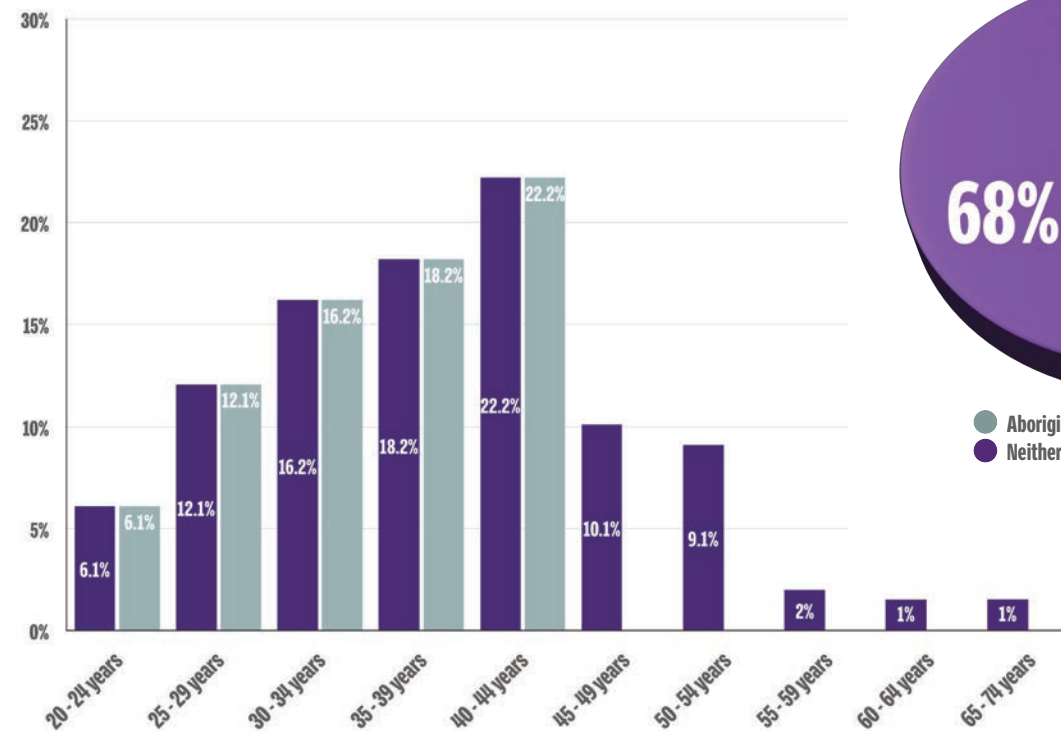
“I am in a much better place than when I first came into contact with ROCC. Thank you for your time and support ”

Reasons for seeking assistance

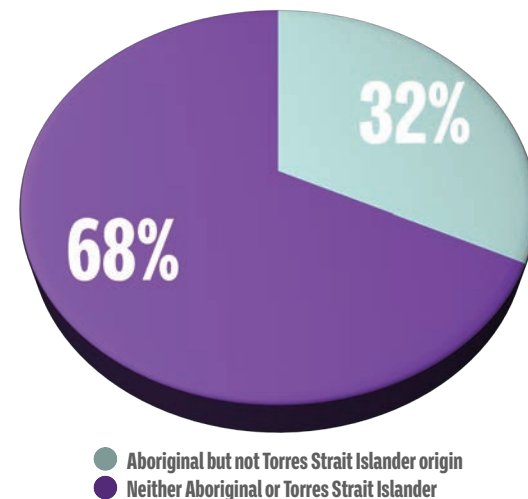
	All reasons for seeking assistance		Main reason for seeking assistance	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Financial difficulties	31	8.4%	3	2.6%
Housing affordability stress	42	11.4%	18	15.4%
Housing crisis (e.g. eviction)	51	13.8%	41	35.0%
Inadequate or inappropriate dwelling conditions	11	3.0%	2	1.7%
Previous accommodation ended	7	1.9%	2	1.7%
Time out from family/other situation	3	0.8%	0	0.0%
Relationship/family breakdown	10	2.7%	0	0.0%
Sexual abuse	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
Domestic and family violence	23	6.2%	6	5.1%
Non-family violence	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Mental health issues	60	16.2%	13	11.1%
Medical issues	16	4.3%	0	0.0%
Problematic drug or substance use	29	7.8%	5	4.3%
Problematic alcohol use	7	1.9%	0	0.0%
Employment difficulties	3	0.8%	0	0.0%

	All reasons for seeking assistance		Main reason for seeking assistance	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Unemployment	5	1.4%	0	0.0%
Problematic gambling	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Transition from custodial arrangements	27	7.3%	23	19.7%
Transition from foster care and child safety residential placements	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Transition from other care arrangements	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Discrimination including racial and sexual	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
Itinerant	1	0.3%	1	0.9%
Unable to return home due to environmental reasons	2	0.5%	0	0.0%
Disengagement with school or other education and training	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
Lack of family and/or community support	29	7.8%	2	1.7%
Other	10	2.7%	1	0.9%
Don't know	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Missing	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	370	100%	117	100%

Age Range



Cultural Identity



AIHW - Return to Homelessness

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) conducted a longitudinal study of people returning to homelessness, compared to not returning to homelessness, in 2019–2020. (It is important to note that these results are restricted to people who received support from an SHS agency and their housing situation was only assessed when they were receiving support. The data does not describe all people who might experience returning to homelessness housing pattern, nor the housing situation of SHS clients when they were not receiving SHS support.)

The longitudinal SHS data for the period 2015–22 examined characteristics and service use patterns of the 2019–20 return to homelessness cohort compared with the 2019–20 non-return to homelessness cohort

Key findings of the longitudinal study of returning to homelessness, compared to not returning to homelessness, in 2019–2020:

- 60% were female.
- 78% had 3 or more support periods during the study period.

- They were more likely to have:
 - mental health issues (64% compared to 40%)
 - experienced Family and Domestic violence (59% compared to 40%) and twice as likely to have problematic drug/alcohol uses
 - exited an institution (12% compared with 5.2%)
 - transitioned from custody (9% compared to 5.9%)
 - a need for services for pregnancy, incest/sexual assault, counselling for problem gambling, family planning support, psychiatric assistance, drug and alcohol counselling.

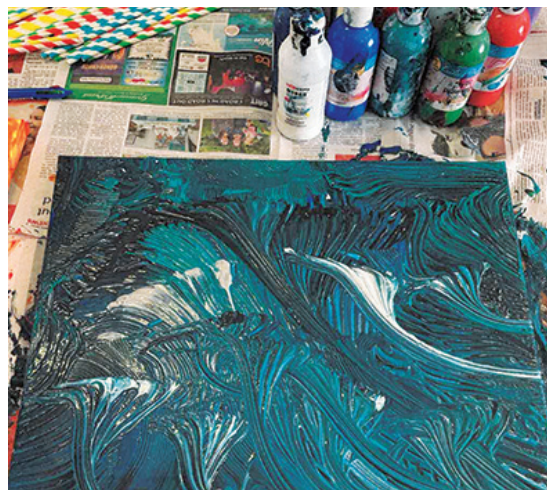
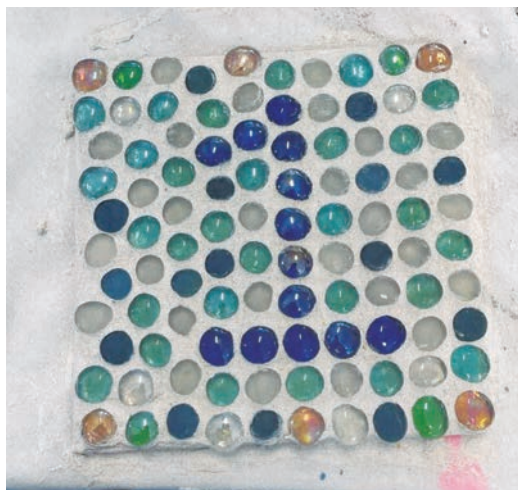
Source: AIHW Specialist homelessness services client pathways: Clients returning to homelessness in 2019–20. AIHW analysis of SHS longitudinal data 2015–22. Last updated: 12 September 2023

Staff Professional Development and Training 2023

Cyber security for small business	Western Sydney Business Centre	Professional and Clinical Supervision for Managers	ACWA / CCWT
Cyber security bootcamp	IT Bootcamp	Establishing a culturally safe environment for Aboriginal staff – team training	CHIA
Psychological First Aid – certificate	Lifeline	Motivational Interviewing – helping people change	ACWA / CCWT
Mental Health First Aid Refresher – certificate x2	MHFA Australia	Building resilience, wellbeing and vicarious trauma for managers	ACWA / CCWT
Workplace Mental Health coaching	Transitioning Well	Advanced case management	CHIA
NGO Information Security	NSW DCJ	NGO Information Security Webinar – subcontracting and third party cyber risk management	DCJ
IT business basics probe	Cyber Heroes	Accidental Counsellor	ACWA / CCWT
Data governance in the community services sector	QCOS	Financial Fundamentals	Enterprise Plus
Cyber security for small business – team training	Enterprise Plus	Trauma Informed Practice (SHS)	CHIA
Leading a mentally healthy workplace	Black Dog Institute	RAP training webinar	Reconciliation Australia
Head coach	Black Dog Institute	Writing case notes and documentation	ACWA / CCWT
Your mental health at work	Black Dog Institute	Trauma Informed Practice Alcohol and other Drugs & Mental Health in Homelessness	ACWA / CCWT
Workplace Laws – what your NFP needs to know	Justice Connect	Pitfalls of credit and debt	Legal Aid
Aboriginal Cultural Awareness – working with clients and communities	CHIA	Skills for Peer Work Facilitators	Lelan
Trauma responsive leadership – self as leader	Blue Knot Foundation	CPR	Business Wise First Aid Training
Managing for team wellbeing	Black Dog Institute		
Cyber security governance for SHS	DCJ		
Building a data driven culture	DCJ		



Maree Lawrence



Client Feedback

"Thank you for staying with me when no one else did and for following through with information and support- I am more confident now and thank you for everything. I don't need any more support"

Client Feedback

"When I thought about where I was 4 years ago- I realised how much my life has improved over the time I've been working with ROCC – thank you for staying with me and always giving me encouragement and support"

Client Feedback

Thank you – you girls are amazing

Client Feedback

"I wouldn't be where I am now if I hadn't been referred to ROCC"

Client Feedback a text from client:

"Thank you so much for all of this Maree We wouldn't be where we are and housed right now if it wasn't for your hard work!"

Client Feedback

"Thank you so much for your help you have been awesome it was great to get to know U and work with you while it lasted I appreciate everything so much you did do heaps for me - I thank u for drumming it into my head not to get rid of this house cause I'm very thankful I listened for once cause now I have my safe zone at my house"

Client Feedback

"Thank you for everything you've helped me with over the years - I don't know where I would be if I hadn't met you- I always feel safe with you"

Finances

SHOALHAVEN WOMENS
RESOURCE GROUP LIMITED
A.B.N. 94 002 660 120
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL
POSITION
AS AT 30 JUNE 2022

Client Feedback

"Thank you for encouraging me to do things for myself"

Client Feedback

"I feel more hopeful that things are moving forward and I may be able to get the housing transfer I need."

	2023 \$	2022 \$
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	199,257	209,572
Trade and other receivables	3,405	3,405
Other current assets	33,038	14,833
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	<u>235,700</u>	<u>227,810</u>
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Property, plant and equipment	18,300	27,461
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	<u>18,300</u>	<u>27,461</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>254,000</u>	<u>255,271</u>
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	55,618	28,024
Short term provisions	42,423	81,323
Other current liabilities	11,821	120
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	<u>109,862</u>	<u>109,467</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>109,862</u>	<u>109,467</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>144,138</u>	<u>145,804</u>
EQUITY		
Retained earnings	144,138	145,804
TOTAL EQUITY	<u>144,138</u>	<u>145,804</u>

SHOALHAVEN WOMENS RESOURCE
GROUP LIMITED
A.B.N. 94 002 660 120
SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
PROFIT AND LOSS STATEMENT
AS AT 30 JUNE 2022

	2023 \$	2022 \$
INCOME		
DCJ Grants Received	617,677	585,475
FRRR Grants Received	3,051	5,410
Donations Received	750	1,000
Management Fees	-	151,769
Less Management Fees	-	(151,769)
Members Fees	22	22
Rental Income	-	269
Interest Received	1,317	301
SSSF Grant	-	13,045
SSTF Grant	-	27,000
Client Contribution- Brokerage	-	838
ASES Grant Funding	8,764	
PHN Coordinaire Grant Funding	24,090	
Cash Flow Boosts	2,000	
	<u>657,671</u>	<u>633,360</u>

**SHOALHAVEN WOMENS
RESOURCE GROUP LIMITED
A.B.N. 94 002 660 120
SUPPLEMENTARY
INFORMATION PROFIT AND
LOSS STATEMENT
AS AT 30 JUNE 2022**

**Compliment
from an agency**
"It's great that
client has you
working with her
as you are a great
support and now she
can continue to go
forward."

EXPENDITURE

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Accountancy and Bookkeeping Fees	31,917	7,300
Accreditation	2,764	-
Advertising	265	-
Board Expenses	-	178
Auditor's Remuneration	7,000	7,000
Bank Charges	170	232
Brokerage	21,794	18,831
Computer Expenses	9,586	10,003
Corporate Overheads	-	9,911
Client Expenses	266	6,382
Depreciation	9,161	9,453
Electricity & Gas	3,352	1,989
Cleaning	1,697	5,363
Cyber Insurance	-	1,875
Filing Fees	92	34
Insurance	12,132	8,486
Leave Provision - TIL	743	-
Leave Provision - Long Service Leave	(37,844)	15,353
Leave Provision - Annual Leave	(51)	3,632
Membership Fees	1,676	2,742
Minor Equipment Purchases	29	22,702

Motor Vehicle Expenses	7,367	7,057
Postage, Printing & Stationery	3,553	3,957
Project Costs	3,695	1,125
Project Management	-	409
Programs and Activities	3,570	-
Recruitment Expenses	1,255	45
Rent- Short Term Operating Leases	52,614	49,380
Repairs & Maintenance	4,524	5,309
Salaries	427,837	459,009
Staff Training & Welfare	3,830	2,186
Strategic Planning	-	5,543
Supervision	3,448	1,798
Superannuation Contributions	39,527	45,169
Telephone & Fax	11,051	10,659
Transitional Housing	18,260	19,654
Travelling Expenses	-	260
Workers Compensation	14,057	5,896
	<u>659,337</u>	<u>748,922</u>
NET DEFICIT	<u>(1,666)</u>	<u>(115,562)</u>

Intergenerational Incarceration

The following is summarized from a presentation at the 2023 Applied Research in Crime and Justice Conference, published by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research:

“Intergenerational Incarceration – a Public Health Problem. Evidence from NSW Correctional Settings”

The Productivity Commission reported that national expenditure on corrective services in 2021–22 was \$5.77 billion including 116 custodial facilities (\$4.44 billion) and community corrections (\$0.8 billion). As at 30 June 2022 there were 40,591 Australian prisoners with the average daily cost of \$295/prisoner.

Prison is traumatic and disrupts parenting and family relationships. The number of, and impact to, children of incarcerated parents is unknown. The children experience trauma, social stigma, financial and housing instability, disruption to community, impact to education, reduced focus on health, separation from culture and supports.

Research suggests that children who have had parents in prison have an increased risk

of imprisonment due to the intergenerational “normalized” pathway together with complex processes such as socio-economic disadvantage, racism, financial stress, housing instability, lack of education, limited life and employment opportunities, poor access to healthcare, family instability, child protection removals, family violence and trauma, gambling, drug and alcohol abuse, gender, younger parental age and marital status. Imprisonment of parents can detrimentally impact on the development of their children.

Of 213 young people in youth justice centres who participated in a survey in 2015, just over one-half reported that at least one parent had previously been incarcerated. Aboriginal participants were almost twice as likely to report that a parent had been incarcerated than non-Aboriginal youth in youth justice centres.

Aboriginal adults surveyed in prison were 2.5 times more likely than non-Aboriginal adults in prison to report that at least one of their parents had been imprisoned. The over incarceration of Aboriginal people is evidenced by the Federal Government’s

priority *to reduce the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults held in incarceration by at least 15% by 2031*. The national age-standardised imprisonment rate per 100,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in 2021–22 was 1897.1 compared with 156.1 for non-indigenous. That is, 12.2 times greater taking age profiles into account.

The research also indicated that a greater percentage of female young people, compared to males, in youth justice centres reported at least one of their parents had been imprisoned and females reported almost twice the proportion of their mother having been incarcerated than males, which suggests a strong correlation of mother/daughter incarceration.

The Presentation noted that the findings suggest:

- a high prevalence of intergenerational incarceration in NSW correctional settings,

particularly for young people in juvenile detention centres and Aboriginal people in custody;

- younger people in the criminal justice system appear more likely to have a parent who has been in prison;
- the rise in female incarceration has had a significant downstream negative impact on families and children with the children of imprisoned mothers more likely to be made homeless, have to move schools, and be separated from siblings;
- incarceration of mothers may have a greater impact on the trajectory into custody of their children, particularly their daughters;
- Policies need to be targeted at both the parents on remand and in prison and their children. This includes increased use of diversionary programs and home detention particularly for women;
- keeping women out of prison and providing diversionary supports could disrupt the intergenerational incarceration for the next generation.

The research supports that a holistic approach supporting women and involving collaboration between corrections, health (mental and physical), housing, education and social services has the potential to improve outcomes for women and children experiencing poverty, disadvantage and marginalization across generations.

Source: "Intergenerational Incarceration – a Public Health Problem. Evidence from NSW Correctional Settings" being a collaboration between The University of Newcastle Australia, Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, Corrective Services NSW presented by Elizabeth Sullivan with acknowledgment to: Marc Remond, Reem Zeki, Erica Breur, Julia Bowman, Jennifer Galouzis, Kelly-Anne Stewart, CSNSW for funding the report and collaborators at CSNSW, Youth Justice, and the Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network.

Client Feedback

"I have made valuable friendships and social connections with other ROCC clients at ROCC group programs in the past 12 months."

Publications:

Report – An Epidemiological Analysis of Intergenerational Incarceration in NSW Prisons and Youth Justice Centres

Ramond M, Zeki R, Austin K, Bowman J, Galouzis J, Stewart K-A, Sullivan E. 2023. Intergenerational incarceration in New South Wales: Characteristics of people in prison experiencing parental imprisonment. Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice no. 663. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.

<https://doi.org/10.52922/ti8863>

As noted in the CEDA report (November 2022) ***Female Incarceration*** and referred to in the ROCC Annual Report 2021-2022, women are often on remand longer than their sentences and for minor offences but the damage to lives and families can be significant.

Research suggests a link between the following factors and the risk of offending:

- Homeless or at risk of homelessness
- socio-economically disadvantaged
- exposed to generational trauma and/or parental offending
- have undiagnosed or unsupported mental health
- have addictions through self-medicating.

Long-term holistic case management can support women to continue to parent their children with access to appropriate resources and build links to stable housing, education, employment and financial strategies, and health supports which can positively impact future generations.

Client Feedback

"Thank you for your support and for everything you help me with – it means the world to me as my stress takes over when things get rough- I appreciate you so much and don't know what I'd do without ROCC"

Client Feedback after returning to work

"So grateful for being housed as it gives me time to get my life on track."

Shoalhaven Womens Resource Group Ltd trading as ROCC for Women

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Tel: 02 4444 1103

www.roccforwomen.org.au

*ROCC for Women is a not-for-profit Specialist Homelessness Service (SHS) with
funding provided by NSW Department of Communities and Justice*

