



Kara House

Kara House is a specialist family violence service and part of the Victorian Women's Crisis Accommodation service system. Our qualified and skilled workers understand the needs of women and children who are victims of family violence.

NEWSLETTER MAY 2018



Hello and welcome to our newsletter

*We wish to thank
The Rotary Club
of Mont Albert
& Surrey Hills;
The Rotary Club
of Monash;
Whitehorse
Rotaract Club;
DuluxGroup; and
The Albert Tucker
Foundation
for their generous
support this year.*

As we are hurtling towards the middle of 2018, I believe an update on the activities of Kara House is due.

A large proportion of the clients we support are 'outreach' clients, which means they may be in their own homes, if it is safe to do so, or with family/friends, or accommodated in motels. Kara House provides case management support to these women but also supplies them with basic necessities such as toiletries and clothing, as they often leave their home with little or none of their own belongings. Thanks to our generous donors, who provide us with both monetary and material aid, we are able to support our clients in this very practical way.

Early this year, Kara House successfully achieved accreditation against the HSS and QIC standards. Accreditation is recognition by an independent body that a service meets the quality and performance defined by set criteria or standards and is evidence that the service is committed to improvement and excellence in governance and service provision.

Following the Royal Commission into Family Violence delivering its report in 2016, the Victorian Government has moved very quickly to implement the findings. These implementations will have a significant impact on all women's refuges state-wide, including Kara House. Our Manager Veronica Coleman, is very busy attending all meetings to ensure Kara House is across these changes, and for our team to be in a position to manage them efficiently as they occur.

I will keep you, our supporters, updated on the effects that these changes may have for Kara House.

On behalf of the Management Committee, thank you for your continued support and interest in Kara House.

**Margaret Morrissey – Chair
Kara House Management Committee**

Our fundraising wish list

- **Air conditioning for the bedrooms in the refuge.** The need for air conditioning in bedrooms became apparent when two pregnant women stayed in refuge in summer when the temperature was in the high 30's, during their third trimester and after birth.
- **25 Fresh Home Start Packs.** These are always essential and gratefully received, as the packs provide basic home necessities for families when they move from the refuge into transitional housing.
- **Renovate bed-sit kitchenette in refuge.** The bed-sit accommodates small families and the circa 1970 kitchenette is in urgent need of refurbishment
- **Sensory garden.** The installation of a water feature and garden at the refuge will provide a healthier environment and respite for the women and children.

If you'd like to support projects like these, please contact **Ruby Lampard** at ruby.l@karahouse.org.au, phone **1800 900 520** or make a donation at <https://www.givenow.com.au/organisation/public/3570>

New kitchen through the kindness of **Rotary**



“The new kitchen creates a contemporary facility that will enable women and children to recover and heal in a quality and safe environment.”

Shia Smart
District Governor Nominee,
of Rotary District 9810

In January this year, we were able to install a brand new kitchen in the Kara House refuge thanks to a generous donation from the **Rotary Clubs of Mont Albert & Surrey Hills (MASH), Monash** and the **Whitehorse Rotaract Club**.

The kitchen is the central point of the refuge where our clients cook food, feed their children and meet with others in similar circumstances. The old 1970's kitchen was in disrepair and we believed a new kitchen would greatly improve their experience while in our care.

Every year Rotary MASH partner with the local community to assist or raise funds for local projects. Last year we approached Rotary MASH with our wish to replace the old kitchen at Kara House. Rotary MASH was immediately on board and approached other Rotary Clubs and the Rotaract Club to participate in the project.

When the Rotary Club of Monash and the Whitehorse Rotaract club both agreed to be partners, it was then decided to approach Rotary Australia

World Community Service (RAWCS) to obtain a Dick Smith Compassionate Grant to match the amount of money donated by the three clubs. This was sufficient to provide the entire funding to install a new kitchen. Shia Smart, District Governor Nominee of Rotary District 9810, said **“As Rotarians, and local community members, we collaborate together and with community leaders who want to get to work on projects that have a real lasting impact on people’s lives. Kara House is one such project. The new kitchen creates a contemporary facility that will enable women and children to recover and heal in a quality and safe environment.”**

With this donation, we were able to provide an up-to-date kitchen with new cupboards, bench tops and brand new appliances including a dishwasher.

The new kitchen at Kara House has created an inviting and safe environment for the women and children who seek refuge and will assist to improve their long-term outcomes.



Celebrating International Women's Day

To mark International Women's Day on 8 March, Kara House attended the Women In Rotary Breakfast at the Box Hill Town Hall with a group of our favourite supporters and advocates. Those in attendance were Lucy and Alex from Donvale Chiropractic Centre, who have gifted us toys and clothing at Christmas year after year, and Joy Gibson and Kelly Quirk from Box Hill Institute whose staff fundraised over \$14,000 for Kara House last year. Dr Angela Spinney and Christine Hayes also attended from Swinburne University who advocate and provide corporate volunteering for Kara House.



When asked what was the most positive thing about accessing the pilot group the women responded – building confidence and talking to others.



Building hope and strength for the future

MOVING ON – Family Violence Support Group is an initiative of Kara House to provide additional support to women who have experienced family violence, living in the Whitehorse area. In August last year we successfully applied for a grant from The Albert Tucker Foundation to run this program. Early this year we ran a pilot group in which 5 women and their children participated and the results were very positive. The grant will enable us to run another two 6 week support groups in 2018.

The primary aim of a support group is to provide family violence education through facilitated group discussions and improved well-being via relaxation activities such as tai chi, music and art therapy. It's a safe place where they meet other women who experienced family violence, share stories and develop strategies to move forward. The groups are facilitated by specialist family violence support workers with experience in

counselling. The support groups are free for participants and childcare is provided which allows the women to concentrate on their well-being. The Family Violence Support Groups conducted this year will provide us with feedback from all stakeholders and anonymous case studies for going improvement. We are seeking ongoing donor support to fund MOVING ON in the future.

If you would like to find out more about MOVING ON email admin@karahouse.org.au or call 1800 900 520

Healing through art

As part of The Albert Tucker Foundation grant we also received funding to provide facilitated Art Therapy sessions to the women and children at the refuge once a fortnight throughout 2018. These sessions provide the children and their mothers a few hours of respite and fun. There is much evidence on the benefits of art therapy to encourage participants to use their imagination and creativity to explore current challenges and start discussion around healing.



What's been happening

The Midsumma Festival is the premier LGBTI event in Melbourne and we joined in the fun on 14 January with a stall in the community hub. The Kara House team handed out gift bags containing information, brochures, pens, badges and wristbands to spread awareness of family violence within the LGBTI community and the support that Kara House can provide.

Walk Against Violence turned the streets of Melbourne into a sea of orange on 22 November. The team from Kara House joined countless other organisations and individuals who came together to march through the CBD, finishing at Federation Square for speeches and entertainment.

Well-being activities in the Refuge. Being in refuge can be a lonely and isolating experience. To help improve the experience at Kara House our support workers have been facilitating creative well-being activities for our clients, including building terrariums and learning how to make Vietnamese rolls.

We rely on your generous donations



Last Christmas we were overwhelmed by the kindness of our donors and supporters. Your generosity enabled us to bring smiles to the faces of the women and children we work with.

As they do every year, **Donvale Chiropractic Centre** and their clients donated an extraordinary collection of toys, vouchers and gifts. From **Impact for Women** we received the "Bags of Love" filled with gifts and surprises. **The Full Gospel Assembly** donated wonderful hamper bags filled with festive foods and staples for Christmas Day.



Throughout the year the **Doncaster View Club** has generously collected much needed toiletries, towels, linen and other essentials which are a great help to the women and children who stay at Kara House.



Local organisation, the **DuluxGroup**, is one of the industry leaders in introducing paid Family Violence Leave for employees. As part of the education process, Kara House was invited to speak to staff and educate them around family violence in the community and workplace. To increase awareness, the DuluxGroup held an event to celebrate International Women's Day in March. Staff generously made monetary donations as well as giving essential items like toys, children's clothing and toiletries. In all, 10 large boxes were collected which we distributed to the women and children at Kara House.



The **Halal Food Bank - Melbourne** has provided Kara House with up to 15 Halal Boxes each month which contain essential basic food staples help to assist our clients when they first arrive.

To celebrate International Women's Day **Nino Early Learning Centre** in Blackburn North held an International Women's Day breakfast for their parents and friends during which they contributed a gold coin donation as well as donating toiletries, children toys, pyjamas. These we're passed on to the clients at Kara House and the donated money was used to by new linen for the refuge.

From the **Knitting for the Needy** we received beautifully knitted dolls, teddies and blankets which provide comfort to the children and women.

What's new in the sector

Kara House is part of the first tranche of organisations, known as Information Sharing Entities (ISE's), to be authorised to use the new Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme, created through the new Part 5A of the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (FVPA).

The Royal Commission into Family Violence recognised that the sharing of information between services plays a vital part in the protection of women and children. The new amendment to the Act, allows permitted services to share information to ensure the safety and protection of those experiencing family violence.

For Specialist Family Violence Services such as Kara House, this new legislation will enhance the assessment and safety planning processes and inform workers as to the full scope of risk a women and her children may face. The changes remove the requirement under current privacy legislation, that there is a serious risk to life, health, safety or welfare. Instead, information may be shared by ISE's for the purposes of family violence risk assessment and protection purposes.

There are different categories of ISE's and the information they can request varies. As part of the first tranche, Kara House welcomes the ability to request access to broad information to assist us to accurately assess and protect the women and children we serve.

How can you help?

Interested in finding out more?

Please contact **Ruby Lampard** – Development Officer

Email ruby.l@karahouse.org.au or phone **1800 900 520**



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