

KARA HOUSE INC.



ANNUAL REPORT

2012 - 2013



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Kara House Management Committee and staff, on behalf of our women and children, wish to thank the numerous individuals, and the other agencies and individuals that have contributed to the support work to assist the survivors of domestic violence have a positive future. To those who contribute in so many ways to our staff continuing to provide professional and successful interventions for the varied needs of our women and children - whether they are in kind or as direct contributions, Kara House thanks you.

We also take this opportunity to acknowledge the funding of the services provided under the Funding and Services Agreement from the Department of Community Services (Vic) that provides our core funding. To the staff of the Department, who have provided direct support for the work of Kara House through the year, we also convey our thanks.

Also, we acknowledge the many and varied efforts of other services and individuals, though collaborative partnerships for women and children, these have also supported the staff and Management Committee in this work and the outcomes achieved.

Later in this report we will acknowledge individuals and organisations that have very tangibly facilitated the continuing work of Kara House. Without this funding, collaborations and individual efforts, and the direct work of the staff and Management Committee volunteer members the work, for and on behalf of our women and children, could not be achieved.



INTRODUCTION

Kara House is a not-for-profit registered Incorporated Association, and registered also as a deductible gift recipient under taxation law as a charitable institution.

Kara House is funded under the Funding and Service Agreement (FASA) with the Department of Human Services. This funding ensures service provision from one refuge locations for short term crisis accommodation, and also outreach support the access to other transitional accommodation for the use of women and children who need longer accommodation. Kara House also provides support for women and children in other forms of accommodation, and in transitional accommodation before they achieve their longer term permanent accommodation either in the private or public sector.

Kara House is accredited under the Housing Assistance and Support Services (HASS) standards, and also the Quality Improvement and Community Services (QICSA) standards in 2009 and again in 2012. This accreditation is for three year period following review of evidence of continuous improvement in the standards of quality service and organisational practices.

Kara House is part of the Victorian women's refuge service system which aims to provide safe and secure accommodation and support to women (with or without accompanying children) who have experienced the effects of domestic violence and are in need of relocation and secure accommodation from where they usually reside for safety reasons. This may include secure accommodation removed either for the short term or permanently. Services are provided to provide support to address their experiences of violence, with direct or indirect assistance with their individual and family needs.

As a state-wide high security women's refuge Kara House provides women, and children as individual clients with –

- Case management with crisis intervention as necessary, including liaison with specialist and professional services
- Cultural support through secondary consultation, and specialist support services

- Risk assessment and safety planning with women and children coming to the service
- Holistic assessment, information and advocacy, and active referral to other services and professionals for continued specialist assistance and service
- Secondary consultation and case management with the mainstream services regarding the provision of appropriate and effective support to both women and children
- Support is provided to children as separate individuals with separate needs and wants
- Partnership with relevant stakeholders as part of the integrated responses to domestic violence are valued, including working relationships with providers of similar services
- Community education and training with other community services to improve the community understandings of violence and the effects of violence at an all the individual, family, community and society levels
- Advocacy at an individual, service system, and broader structural level





OUR MISSION

*Kara House support the rights of women of children to live in safety and without fear
- using professional practice informed by feminist, human rights and social justice principles*

OUR VISION

Kara House is committed to providing a physical and personal environment which optimises the privacy, value and strength of the individual

OUR PHILOSOPHY

All women and children should have the right to live free of domestic violence, harassment, discrimination and abuse.

Kara House:

- Primarily and historically has provided services to women and their children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds
- Founded in, and operates from a feminist perspective
- Managed and run by women for women and their children
- Acknowledge that family/domestic violence predominantly affects women and children and is understood to occur because of the power imbalance between individuals which is condoned and supported by dominant social attitudes and structures

Kara House encourages and empowers women to take control of their lives and works towards eradicating all forms of abuse perpetrated against women and children through:

- Providing short term crisis accommodation
- Providing outreach support
- Educational activities which encourage change in individuals and community attitudes, and
- Strategies that challenge service providers and government to adopt responses that are non-tolerant of violence, and provide support to women and their children.

THE KARA HOUSE HISTORY

In 1978 CO.AS.IT. – an Italian welfare organisation - encouraged by the Women's Movement, received government funds for the establishment of a women's refuge. After lengthy discussions and negotiations it was decided that CO.AS.IT would relinquish any responsibility to a new body to be run solely by women. Kara House was established and continues today to provide services with a specific commitment to women, and women with children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. In 1988 the Women's Refuge became an Incorporated Association known as Kara House.



In 2000 Kara House responding to further community need, introduced a further service, the Kara House Domestic Violence Outreach program to support women and their accompanying children through the provision of information, support, assistance and referral to enhance their ability to live free from violence and abuse. In August of the same year the staff moved off site from the refuge where the office was previously located, to a rented dedicated office space to be shared with another domestic violence service.

In 2002 continuing the expansion of the outreach service Kara House set up an outreach service specific to meet the needs of lesbian/same sex attracted women experiencing domestic violence. Kara House continues to provide a sensitive environment recognising the complexity of lesbian violence and social issues today.

In June Kara House moved office space, again into rented space with another larger welfare service. Also, in 2010 Kara House was fortunate to received funding from the Department of Human Services from the Australian Governments Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan for the A Place to Call Home (APTCH) program. This new initiative provides an opportunity for women and children to have intensive case management in a transitional housing property which will, after twelve months become their long term public housing. Kara House has retained this program after the initial funding period of the instigation of the new program for a further twelve months, until June 2014 and will seek to continue providing this funding targeted funding initiative for families.

Over the past thirty years of service to the community Kara House has continued to provide secure refuge and outreach support, and has quickly expanded its original focus from Italian women escaping violence to supporting women and children from all cultures and diverse backgrounds.

Kara House today continues to follow its foundation ethos of serving the culturally and linguistically diverse background of women and children.



CHAIRPERSONS REPORT - *Margaret*

On behalf of the Committee of Management of Kara House I am pleased to present the Annual Report for the 2012-2013 financial year.

This has been an eventful and quite exciting year. The addition of a new Committee member Carmen has brought new skills to add to our current Committee. I sincerely thank my Committee Colleagues for their support and particularly quick responses when decisions are required with minimal notice.

We also said goodbye to Andrea and past Chairperson Lina. Lina was by far our longest serving Committee Member with no less than a 22 year association with Kara House. This started back when Kara house was still Co.As.It. an Italian welfare organisation. She saw it expand to meet the needs of a wider community and eventually evolved to become the now Kara House Domestic Violence Refuge and Outreach Service. Lina is commended on her role and achievements with Kara House and we wish her well as her role of “Nonna”, to her increasing number of grandchildren, takes over the next phase of her life.

Kara House has achieved a number of goals this year that the Committee and staff have been working towards over the past few years. Another 3 year Accreditation and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with a sister Organisations are just 2 of the more significant goals. Following on from this we will move towards co-locating to suitable office space, in order to collaborate and share resources to ensure the ongoing and improved service of both Organisations.

Our core business of providing assistance and support to women to live free of violence and abuse by provision of information, referral and crisis accommodation is increasingly challenging

Finding suitable accommodation for our women and children is becoming more difficult as the incidence of domestic violence has increased substantially. According to the Victorian Police Commissioner, family violence has increased by 21.6 percent in the last year. Whilst not all this increase is directed towards violence against women, it is an indication of the escalating severity of the problem in the Community.

Kara House also supports a number of women, some with multiple children from culturally diverse backgrounds. These women who traditionally have been reticent to report violence, are now seeking support. It would appear that as the Community

develops an increased awareness of the responsibility to report abuse within domestic violence and of the services available, women of all cultures and ages are being encouraged and supported to seek help.

Kara House is extremely proud of its reputation as a crisis and outreach service, and the skills and dedication of the staff. The professional, caring and holistic manner in which the staff support the women and children through a very difficult and emotionally trying time is admirable. Of course this could not occur without the excellent professional and very experienced management team lead by Desally, ably supported by the Team Leader Veronica and financial assistant Laura.

The Committee of Management are sincerely grateful to the staff of Kara House for their professionalism and support throughout this financial year and look forward to working together for the next 12 months in this necessary and essential service.





MANAGERS REPORT – *Desally*

On behalf of the staff of Kara House I am pleased to present my report which highlights some of the achievements of the organisation throughout the financial year. This provides the framework for the ongoing services and practice enhancements, made to value add to the work with and for survivors of domestic violence, our clients the women and children who enter our service.

The Annual Report provides an overview of the organisational activities and accountabilities for the financial year. The Report also focuses on the commitment to the work of Kara House, and further outlines the development and major achievements including our continued contributions to the quality outcomes and service environment.


But so much also takes place that cannot be heralded here in the very private and intangible personal stories arising from our work on a day-to-day basis later in the report. We have added voices to the Report by means of case studies with names, country of origin, and locations changed to protect the safety and privacy of the individuals. These voices help to demonstrate the stories of courage and recovery from violent pasts to add a personal perspective to the day-to-day service delivery of the organisation. We have also added the pictures and words of children to add their voices to their experience of family violence.

The end of the last financial year in 2012 saw the completion of the continuous quality frameworks being completed with the QICSA and we look to the continuing search for improvement in the next cycle.

Unfortunately, Kara House at the close of this financial year is seeking another office space. This is due to the impending sub-lease coming to an end with the large welfare agency. A property to relocate is being sought to provide continuing services in the same sub-regional area, with the major aim to maintaining easy access for women and children.

We are encouraged by, and thankful for, the continuing linkages and referral pathways available for our clients to enhance recovery and wellbeing, with direct access to professional consultations and linkages in the service environment.

To our sister domestic violence organisations - we thank them for their ongoing collaborative efforts and direct assistance; we consider these relationships a very tangible asset.

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There are many other organisations and government departments, particularly the Department of Human Services, that have assisted Kara House this year. To the individuals in these departments, and to other individuals which will not be mentioned, we extend our thanks for your collaborative efforts.

To the staff - they contribute of themselves each day in so much time and individual effort to all facets of the organisation, and particularly to the work with our women and children, we celebrate their contribution. I personally add my personal thanks and gratitude for their efforts, without whose efforts the substantial evidence in change both for the organisation and clients would not be achieved.


Women and children are, unfortunately, spending longer in the refuge and other crisis options. This is before their longer substantive housing and other support needs are being accessed prior to transitional or permanent housing options. Kara House refuge is maintained in the most homely manner because of this immediate need and we have been fortunate again this year to be able to enhance the external environment and continue the efforts of landscaping and sensitive plantings of the external areas, with the assistance of our gardener and handy person.

Affordable housing exits are again very hard to access for primarily low income women as mentioned earlier. Lack of transitional accommodation and other private exits are hard won, and take time and effort to achieve. Assisting, supporting and acknowledging the real effort of clients, with support assistance, to access particularly, private rental options, is a time consuming and unfortunately, in many instances, unrewarded process.

This year we have continued this sustained effort of assisting clients in accessing the private rental market by continuing our project funding for a private rental worker to assist clients in the search. The provision of this intensive service provision, transport, linkages made and formal resources, with direct advocacy brings about individual skill enhancement for the formal aspects of application and funding needs.

Kara House has more generally sought to enhance the opportunities of our women and children to access their physical needs, to and enhance their wellbeing while being involved with the organisation. To those who have not been mentioned earlier, who provide donations and other assistance, we have as a thank you provided a list later in the report as a thank you.

I have mentioned earlier our commitment to continuous quality. Our are continued efforts which make change an accepted and valued process within the organisation in every facet of practice. I will take this opportunity to outline one example of this effort for change management.



Record storage, particularly of case files and other records is, and continues to be, a major issue for safe storage to be created, maintained, and controlled by organisations – and legislated requirement for records, storage, privacy and handling to be - not just good practice. This includes the administrative functional documentation as well as for client services including client case files.

As part of the client management practices the case file records have historically been completely stored in hard copy case files. Storage and retrieval of hard copy records have increasingly become a huge impost on storage facilities at Kara House.

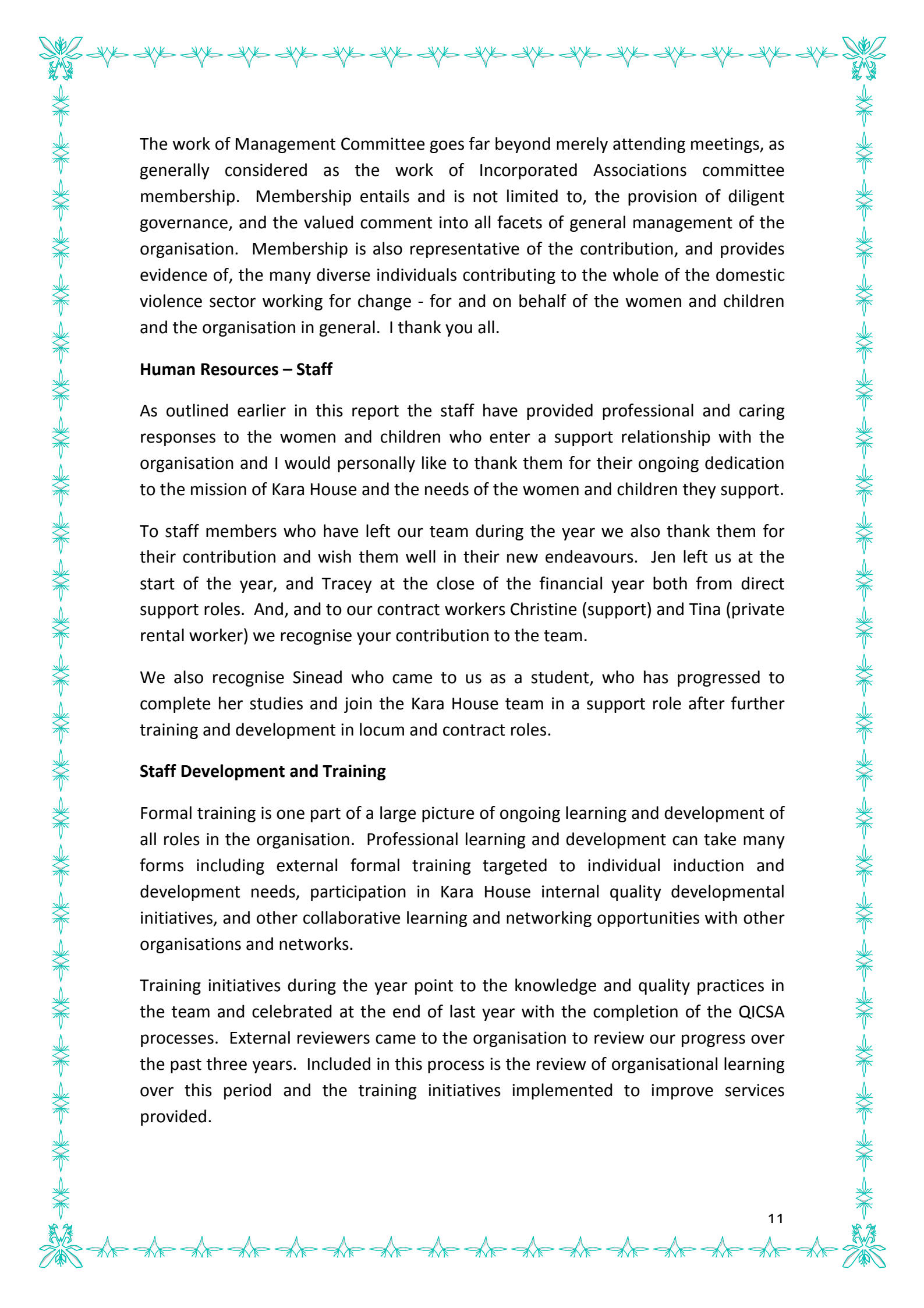
Electronic records are becoming more common place for client records, whereby access is more accessible than huge file boxes or hard copy files, with the associated costly storage needed in real terms. The decision was reached to facilitate the storage of these hard files progressively in electronic form and this major project has now been completed after concerted effort this year to scan the records, monitoring of electronic records storage, then secure disposal of the previous hard copy documents.

Congratulations to all concerned for this concerted effort to achieve this milestone. This achievement will facilitate minimised storage requirements at the new office location, and minimise the effort which would have occurred in the safe removal of files to this office.

Human Resources – Voluntary Management Committee Members

The Chairpersons Report will acknowledge the work of the voluntary Management Committee whose efforts during the year are varied and are noted here on behalf of the staff and women and children who benefit for their commitment and dedication to the work of Kara House. We thank the members that continue their work, and thank our outgoing members Lina and Andrea, and welcome Carmen as our newest member.

To Lina our Chairperson departed Kara House Management Committee at the last Annual General Meeting in November. On behalf of the staff past and present I wish to express our thanks for the massive contribution to Kara House. Lina contributed a total of over twenty years on the Management Committee, guiding Kara House through many transitional phases of change as part of the committee in a variety of roles including Chairperson. The Kara House Management Committee and the current staff farewelled Lina and wished her well for her future endeavours at the last AGM, with her husband and daughter present to celebrate her personal contributions.

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The work of Management Committee goes far beyond merely attending meetings, as generally considered as the work of Incorporated Associations committee membership. Membership entails and is not limited to, the provision of diligent governance, and the valued comment into all facets of general management of the organisation. Membership is also representative of the contribution, and provides evidence of, the many diverse individuals contributing to the whole of the domestic violence sector working for change - for and on behalf of the women and children and the organisation in general. I thank you all.

Human Resources – Staff

As outlined earlier in this report the staff have provided professional and caring responses to the women and children who enter a support relationship with the organisation and I would personally like to thank them for their ongoing dedication to the mission of Kara House and the needs of the women and children they support.

To staff members who have left our team during the year we also thank them for their contribution and wish them well in their new endeavours. Jen left us at the start of the year, and Tracey at the close of the financial year both from direct support roles. And, and to our contract workers Christine (support) and Tina (private rental worker) we recognise your contribution to the team.

We also recognise Sinead who came to us as a student, who has progressed to complete her studies and join the Kara House team in a support role after further training and development in locum and contract roles.

Staff Development and Training

Formal training is one part of a large picture of ongoing learning and development of all roles in the organisation. Professional learning and development can take many forms including external formal training targeted to individual induction and development needs, participation in Kara House internal quality developmental initiatives, and other collaborative learning and networking opportunities with other organisations and networks.

Training initiatives during the year point to the knowledge and quality practices in the team and celebrated at the end of last year with the completion of the QICSA processes. External reviewers came to the organisation to review our progress over the past three years. Included in this process is the review of organisational learning over this period and the training initiatives implemented to improve services provided.



WORKERS REPORTS

Team Leader - *Veronica*

The last 12 months have been challenging for Kara House. We have again gone through accreditation, have had staff changes, staff illness and most recently the search for new rental premises. All of these combined have compelled us to work a little harder and spend more time than we would prefer in the office or in front of our computer screens. As team leader, my role can sometimes encompass multiple areas of accountability and this year has seen me challenged to balance increased responsibility and demands on my available time.

As the worker responsible for the delivery of the A Place to Call Home Program (APTCH) I have the privilege of working with families for over 12 months. This is a departure from the norm for a support worker in a crisis service and affords a unique opportunity to work more closely with and gain a greater understanding of issues affecting women and children escaping domestic violence.

Kara House manages the APTCH program for the Domestic Violence services in the Eastern metropolitan region and families are selected to participate in the APTCH program on the basis of a referral from a member of the DV East domestic violence services. Referral is limited to: families with intensive needs, approved for public housing, residing in DHS owned transitional properties, that have a desire and willingness to remain linked to the area or are prepared to relocate. Clients accepted into the APTCH program are intensively case managed for a period of 12 months. At the end of the 12 month period the property is signed over to long term public housing and the property becomes the family's permanent home.

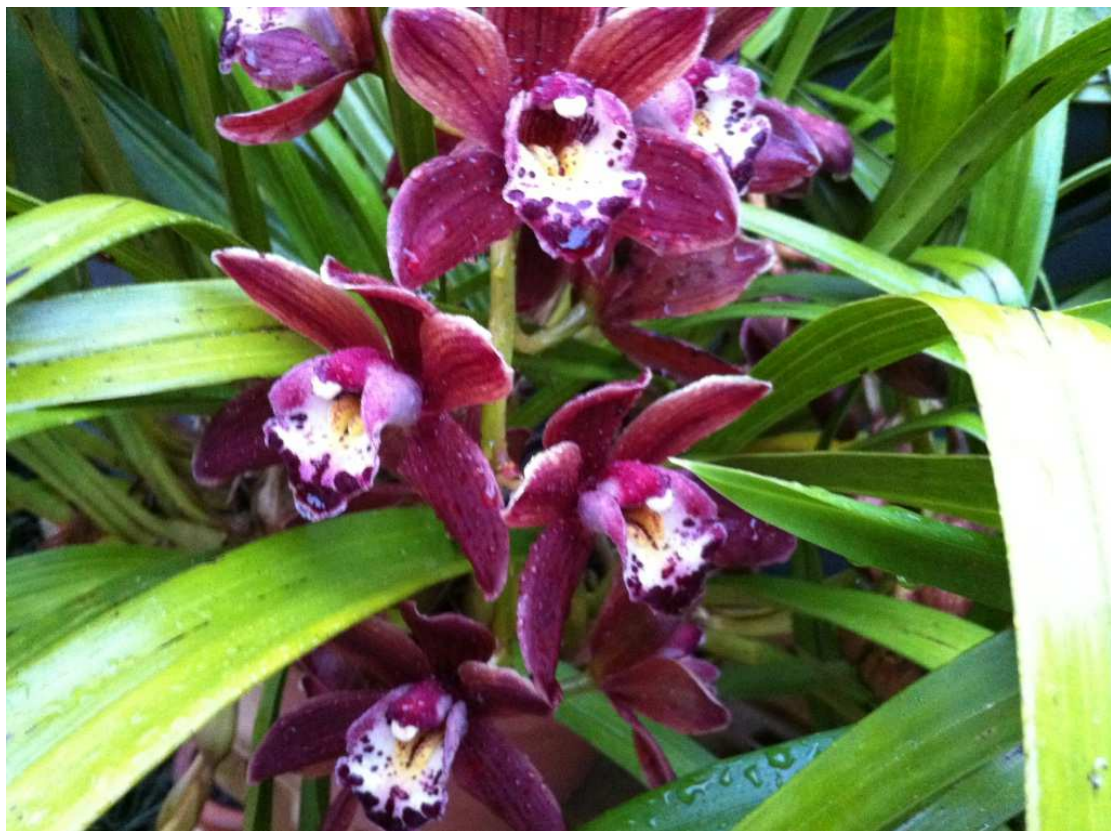
At the start of the program families are naturally pleased to have accommodation, although there is still a sense of reservation and wariness, that, perhaps their good fortune may be short lived. As time progresses, however, universally families in the program report the benefit of the stable accommodation to their emotional wellbeing and the development of their children.

The provision of the A Place to Call Home program has encouraged me as a worker to engage with workers from other family violence services and to build rapport and understanding of our different approaches to a common problem of complex need clients needing long term stable accommodation with support. Likewise, I also have a greater interaction with various workers from the Department of Human Services

than other support workers at Kara House and an improved knowledge of the challenges they face.

Kara house along with her sister services, is heading into a new era for our service sector. Our core business remains the same; to provide crisis accommodation and ongoing support to women and children, however we are expanding our partnerships and exploring new more effective ways of service delivery. As we go to print it is likely that we will be in the process of moving to new premises and heading towards the busy Christmas time of the year. We look forward to our new office and the rare opportunity to spring clean, rearrange resources more efficiently and move into the New Year refreshed.

Personally I would like to thank our close knit staff team at Kara House for providing me with encouragement and support; a great benefit when balancing roles. The day to day interaction with the dedicated workers of Kara House is the difference between being consumed by the stress and challenges of work in the family violence sector and being inspired by it.



Senior Domestic Violence Support Worker - *Eline*

There have been some changes with staff this year. Some were long term and others short term. In all Kara House has managed to survive regardless.



Kara House has given me the opportunity this year to take on a new role as Senior Domestic Violence Support Worker. This is an opportunity to take on more responsibility and assist my Team Leader and Manager. It is an ongoing learning curve, and I have learnt to appreciate the tasks associated with managing Kara House.

I have a lot to learn in this journey, and look forward to the challenges ahead. In executing my new role I sometimes have to hand out directives to colleagues and have learnt that you need to be aware of what's going on with your colleagues and the reasons for things not being carried out immediately.

The biggest challenge for me is "PATIENCE" and to quote QICSA - CQI (Continuous Quality Improvement).

Clients are remaining in refuge longer due to no exit points. Kara House assists clients to look for private rental if appropriate and we find that clients can be successful in rentals and shared accommodations when working together and staying on track.

Every year I always like to acknowledge the services that work alongside with Kara House. To name a few: Community Housing Limited and EastCare Hawthorn for assisting with rent in advance for clients that become successful for private rental, our removalist, Zoran and his crew for never letting us down when moving clients, and Eastern Emergency Relief for supplying our clients with furniture, linen, cutlery, pots and pans etc. I have also come to know and work closely with workers from a huge number of services and would like to acknowledge the mental health services and tenancy workers involved.

During the last year there have been several projects underway at Kara House. One of them has been the process of scanning archived client files onto our IT system. Finally the client files are now on the system and the shredding process complete; this has been the longest process ever, commencing all the way back to when I was a student (6 years) ago.

I would like to thank our Finance Worker Laura for always paying us on time and making sure we submit our salary sacrifice.

Last but not least to my colleagues for putting up with "ME" 😊



Domestic Violence Support Worker - Mem

It is my third year of employment at Kara House as a Domestic Violence support worker as well as the Children's Resource worker backup role. I have gained in experience and increased my skill through training and working with clients on a day to day basis.

Working in a Domestic Violence service gives me satisfaction that my role is to deliver the best service to clients and their children, to achieve the good outcomes. It is challenging to work with complex clients and keep them engaging with services. It takes lot of patience and understanding to work with vulnerable clients, but the result is priceless. The women and children I work with are from various background, cultures and nationalities. It is a delightful opportunity to learn from the different perspective of each client.

The highlight of my role is when my client is accepted for long term housing, either private rental, social Housing or Office of Housing. It brings so much joy to see our clients are settling in safe, long term and affordable housing. From my experience most clients commence moving on with their lives after their housing has been sorted. We make sure our clients are well supported with the process of moving and ensure they are informed and aided to access financial assistance, for example; rent assistance payment assistance Centrelink, Housing Assistance Fund assistance, private rental brokerage, Bond, and also second hand furniture and white goods from Eastern Emergency Relief if required.

As Children's Resource Worker back up worker I fill in when the primary worker is not available. I enjoy working with children, attending meetings and undergoing additional training as required. It is extremely important to acknowledge the impact of domestic violence and homelessness on children's development and wellbeing and to bring this knowledge back to the other team members. We conduct assessments on children coming into Kara house and it is carefully discussed with the mother of the children, or children themselves, to identify their own needs.

These days technology has become an important part of our life and we benefit in so many ways, yet we are also putting ourselves at risk of our privacy, identity and security being violated. In June this year I attended Smart Safe mobile technology and family violence training. As a service provider in the family violence sector, safety of the victim is a high priority. It is necessary for all workers to educate our clients about how to keep themselves safe and reduce the risk of becoming a victim

of abuse of mobile technology and social networks. I have to admit it was terrifying to know that if someone wants to find out your location, or your activities, it isn't that hard at all. Google your name and see what comes up!

Over all, working in a crisis service means that everything does not always goes as planned. There are unexpected things you have to deal with on a day to day basis and also maintaining ongoing tasks. My day at work could be overwhelmed with crisis and emotions but end of the day I have great colleagues to support me to get through difficult times.





Domestic Violence Support Worker – *Sinead*

I started as a student at Kara House in 2012 as I was at the end of completing my Diploma of Community Services at Swinburne. What an experience. It amazed me to see how much could be achieved in a small organisation. Professionalism was something that stood out to me and the level of dedication each worker had to their clients. I knew then I was in the right place to do my placement.

I started slow, helping out with assisting with client file management project and then I started to move on to participating in case plan meetings with workers and attending court with clients and workers. It was great learning through observing how much workers do with their clients.

After I had finished my placement, I was sad to go. As hectic as a day could be, I really enjoyed helping out as a student. Later on I was offered Locum Support Work in 2013.

When I began working, that is when I realised how organised you have to be - going to court, dealing with crisis, finding long term accommodation, and linking clients with other services. Every day was busy but every day was different. There would be days in the office where it was quiet and people could catch up where needed and other days it would be all hands on deck and workers would have to deal with crisis.

In May, 2013, I was offered a twelve month contract as a Domestic Violence Support Worker. I felt privileged to be offered this and to work in a supportive team. I continue to learn and work with women and children of all different backgrounds and experiencing different levels of violence. It can be hard some days, but it's always interesting and I am constantly learning.

I think it is important to encourage women to achieve their highest level of independence to empower them. Kara House give women the tools and information to move forward positively in their lives without violence.

Children's Resource Worker



Kara House refuge can house up to 8 children at any one time. In addition we support women with children in transitional housing, families in the A Place to Call Home program and outreach clients. At times we may be supporting more than 60 children across our programs at any time.

It is the role of the Children's Resource worker at Kara House to support the caseworker assigned to the family to identify issues and ensure dedicated support and advocacy is provided to children as separate clients of Kara House. The primary responsibility of the role is to monitor and ensure Children's rights are prioritised and maintained and that their voices are heard in case plans.

Within the refuge environment the Children's Resource Worker's role is to initially assist case workers with children during intake and to conduct timely assessments on children entering Kara House to determine immediate needs. This may involve anything from liaising with Child Protection to providing clothing, material needs or a substitute for a treasured toy left behind. Wherever possible and with the mothers permission, the worker will speak directly with children to gain their perspective.

During a child's stay in refuge the Children's Resource Worker will directly facilitate Maternal and Child Health Care and medical appointments, childcare, kinder and school enrolment and provide activities and age appropriate toys or educational activities. Behaviour or trauma related issues identified by the child or mother or observed by case workers or the Children's Resource Worker will prompt team discussion and referral to appropriate medical or counselling services. The worker also has the responsibility to monitor the children's play area and the external environment of the refuge for Occupational Health and Safety issues.

When the family moves to Transitional or permanent housing the Children's Resource Worker assists the case worker by making contact with new schools, childcare, kinder and other services that may be required and resources the mother and caseworker with information as requested and observed.

The worker also attends meetings and training around children's issues and looks for opportunities to liaise with services that provide opportunities and brokerage for our children to engage in recreational activities.

A lighter side of the role is the maintenance of a budget and purchasing children's needs which may be the purchase of prams, child car seats, books and toys for

distribution of movie and zoo tickets. At Christmas time the worker co-ordinates the provision of age appropriate toys and gifts for the children supported by Kara House.

At the end of this financial year our Children's resource Worker Tracey left Kara House for other employment. We look forward to our new worker commencing and the new knowledge and enthusiasm she will bring to the role.

Team Leader - *Veronica*



CASE STUDIES

APTCH Case Study – Team Leader *Veronica*

This case study has been de identified to protect the privacy of the family.



A Place to call Home (APTCH) is an initiative of the State and Federal government aimed at families who have experienced homelessness. Families are selected to participate in the APTCH program on the basis of referral from a member of the DV East domestic violence services. Kara House is entering the 4th year of managing the APTCH program for the Domestic Violence services in the Eastern metropolitan region. The families that enter the APTCH program have varied issues.

Catherine and her 6 children were referred to the APTCH program. Catherine and her family were living in transitional housing but the property was too small and they were overcrowded. Catherine has a cultural background and basic, conversational, English language skills. Catherine and her family came to Australia 5 years ago. The 2 youngest children were born in Australia. Catherine's 2nd youngest child is autistic. Catherine is in poor physical health and tiredness. Catherine is struggling to manage her autistic son and the needs of her other children.

Catherine was assisted to move to a Department of Human Services refurbished 4 bedroom property in an area close by her current links. Catherine's children were able to continue with the school and childcare they were enrolled in.

Catherine was encouraged to have a medical examination and was identified as having a vitamin deficiency and serious back problems. Catherine was prescribed medication and referred to physiotherapy for her back. Catherine was encouraged to complete school forms and documents and assisted to understand what was required. Informal discussions improved Catherine's understanding of school and parenting requirements in Australia and additional English language classes improved her reading and comprehension.

Brokerage was obtained to encourage enrolment in extracurricular activities for Catherine's teenage sons and to assist with school expenses. Liaison with special school occurred to identify problematic behaviours of Catherine's autistic son and strategies were put in place in the home to address behaviours such as wandering. The provision of stable housing assisted Catherine in maintaining routine and the establishment of activities for her autistic son in the local area. Catherine was linked to the local council for the establishment of respite care.

Today Catherine has completed one area of study at TAFE and has commenced another. She is fiercely ambitious, for not only her future, but that of her children.

Case Study – Team Leader *Veronica*

This case study has been de identified to protect the privacy of the family.



As a crisis service Kara House rarely gets to hear how our clients are going in the longer term when they leave our service. Sometimes however clients return for a visit to let us know their progress.

One such client was Mary. When Mary came to Kara House with her son from a previous relationship she was heavily pregnant and had just been discharged from hospital due to high blood pressure exacerbated by stress.

Mary had met her husband, Paul, online and had married him 3 years before. Paul had travelled to Mary's country to meet her parents and had impressed them with his devotion to Mary and her young son. After the marriage Paul returned to Australia and commenced the process of obtaining the Visa's to allow Mary and her son to join him in Australia.

When Mary and her son arrived in Australia they lived with Paul's parents and sister. Paul's sister and mother would often criticise Mary and especially her young son. Mary noticed changes in Paul and suspected he may be using drugs. Paul denied this and swore at Mary for questioning him. Paul started coming home later at night. Paul and his parents went to family and work functions and left Mary at home. Mary had no friends or family, felt isolated and lonely.

Mary became pregnant and spoke to Paul again about the family getting their own place. Paul shouted at Mary and threatened that he would return her to her country. One night Paul's sister became involved and they both abused and threatened Mary. Paul's sister pushed Mary causing her to fall down. Paul abused and swore at Mary, calling her names and telling her she was useless. Shocked Mary and her son went into their room and stayed there. The next morning Paul's parents told Mary that she could no longer stay in the house. Mary was crying and left the house with her son. In the afternoon Mary was wandering the street with her son and nowhere to go when a woman approached her, found out what had happened and contacted the Police.

Mary went into premature labour the day after she came into refuge. Kara House workers were privileged to be able to support her and Mary placed her trust in workers she had known for only a few short hours. Mary came from a culture where extended family was involved in the raising of children and initially struggled with parenting the new baby and juggling her young son.

Kara house workers supported Mary to take out an Intervention Order and apply for permanent residency and Centrelink income. Shortly after the baby was discharged from hospital Mary was assisted to relocate to a transitional property. Despite her low income and limited English, Mary thrived in her new home. She made linkages with a local church, was assisted to put her children in childcare and was soon studying. Mary saved up and undertook driving lessons and purchased a car.

Mary's ex husband instigated Family Court and was granted access to his child. Mary was resolute at court and bargained to be allowed to take her baby home to visit her parents.

Today Mary is securely housed with her children. Mary works part time and has a new boyfriend. Understandably Mary is cautious and wary of placing her trust in her new relationship. Mary's children are attending school and childcare and are happy and well adjusted.

From time to time Mary drops in to Kara House to show the baby off to his "aunties" and relishes our attention. For the workers of Kara House, Mary's story has had the best of outcomes. We met a frightened young woman without resources who is now strong and independent.



Children's Voices

Many children come through refuge and are affected by violence. Here are some of the things that children have said about the violence and their experience about it;

'Sometime's my heart doesn't listen to my brain. It beats and beats faster and faster like it's going to come out of my chest. It's a bad guy'

– M, aged 5

'Mum said we were going on an adventure. It's not a fun adventure. I want to see my dad' – J, aged 8

'My step dad was always angry. He always didn't like me. He always picked me up by my ear and twisted it. Promise me that I won't have to see him again?'

– T, aged 9

'My dad and mum fought a lot and I watched. They didn't see me though'

– K, aged 4

Mother's observations of the children have been that they have not spoken at home and scared and anxious. When they come into refuge, the mothers have observed that their children have come out of their shell. Talking, laughing and playing with other children. The children have been more relaxed even though their future is unknown and they are staying in crisis accommodation. Sometimes it's not about what the children say, but what they show in their behaviour.

Next page: - *'This is a picture of a party at night, where everyone gets drunk'*

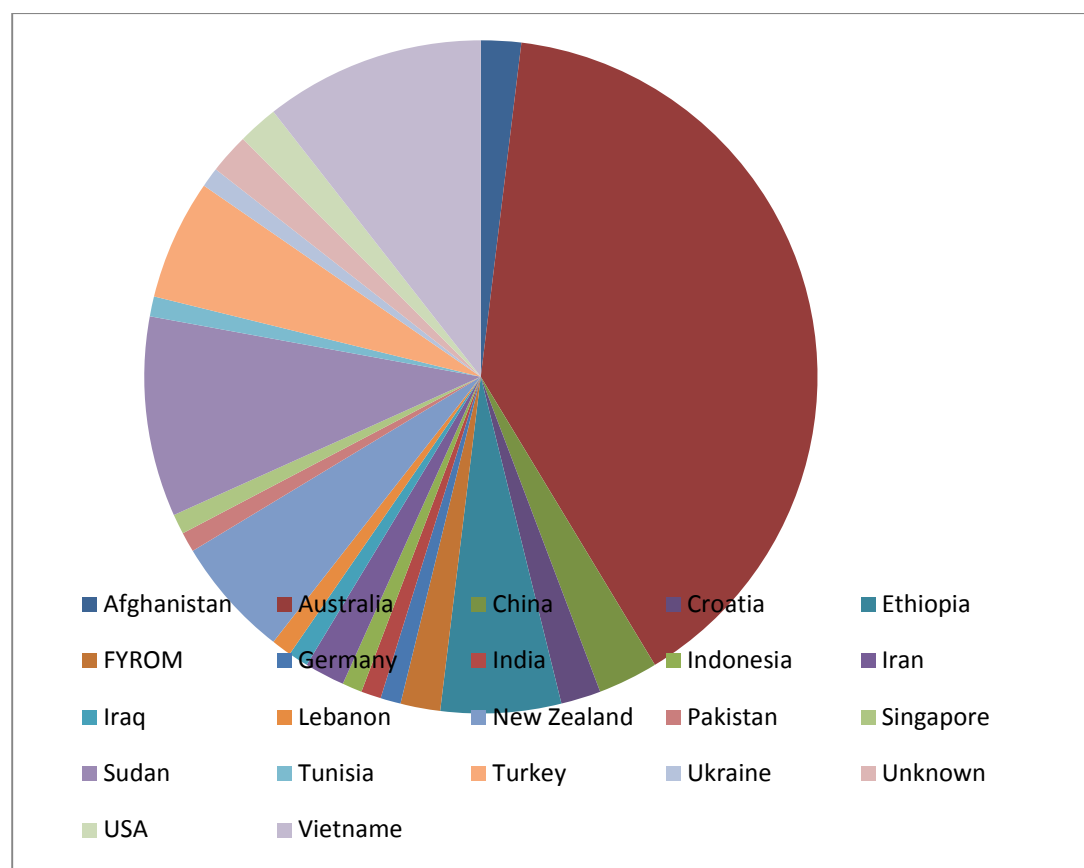
– J, aged 8



STATISTICS – (Including APTCH clients)

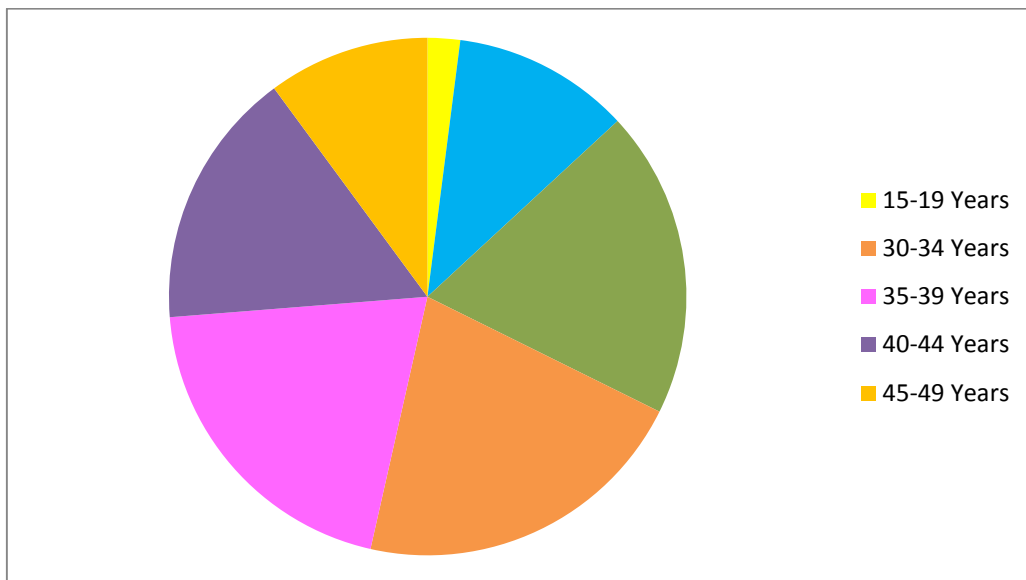
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	NUMBER OF CLIENTS	PERCENTAGE %	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	NUMBER OF CLIENTS	PERCENTAGE %
Afghanistan	2	1.9	Lebanon	1	1.0
Australia	41	39.4	New Zealand	6	5.7
China	3	2.9	Pakistan	1	1.0
Croatia	2	1.9	Singapore	1	1.0
Ethiopia	6	5.7	Sudan	10	9.6
FYROM	2	1.9	Tunisia	1	1.0
Germany	1	1.0	Turkey	6	5.7
India	1	1.0	Ukraine	1	1.0
Indonesia	1	1.0	Unknown	2	1.9
Iran	2	1.9	USA	2	1.9
Iraq	1	1.0	Vietnam	11	10.6
Total	104				

Chart of Country of origin



SOURCE OF REFERRALS	NUMBER OF CLIENTS	PERCENTAGE %
Self	2	1.9
Family and Friends	0	0
Health Services	0	0
Other Govt. Departments	10	9.6
Other Non Govt. Departments	5	4.8
SAAP Agency	20	19.2
Telephone/Crisis Agency	67	64.5
Total	104	100

Chart of Source of Referrals



WOMEN'S AGES

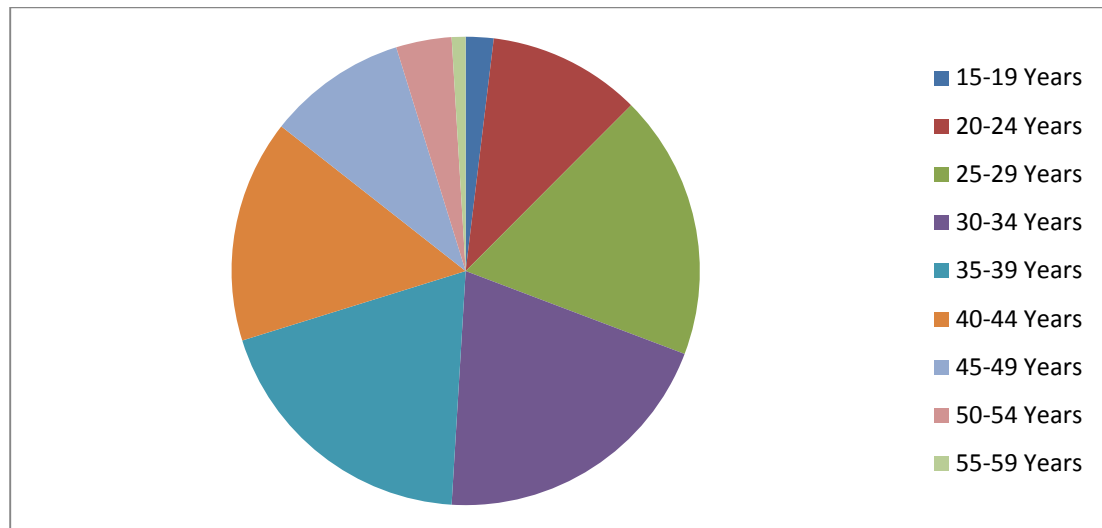
NUMBER OF CLIENTS

15-19 Years	2
20-24 Years	11
25-29 Years	19
30-34 Years	21
35-39 Years	20
40-44 Years	16
45-49 Years	10
50-54 Years	4
55-59 Years	1

Total

104

Chart of Women's Ages



APTCH DATA

**NUMBER OF APTCH
CLIENTS**

NUMBER OF APTCH BOYS

NUMBER OF APTCH GIRLS

15	31	29
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Finance / Administration Worker – Laura



This has been my third financial year with Kara House. Our cash at bank is a bit higher than last financial year and we are in a healthy financial position. Our finances for the 2012-13 financial year have been audited.

We have submitted our Organisation certificate, Annual financial Indicators Statement and Independent Auditor's Report to DHS by the required date.

Under the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (Consequential and transitional) Act 2012 we have to complete an Annual Information Statement and submit it to the ACNC, in order to continue to receive charity tax concessions. We have already filled out the form but we haven't submitted it yet, as we do not have to submit it until December 2013.

In 2012-13 financial year we have run two projects; the private rental project and the Archive program.

- The private rental project is to assist clients to enter the private property rental market.
- In the archive program we scanned all the previous clients' documentation onto the computer, to move from paper based records to an electronic recording system.

At Kara House I have had the pleasure of working with a team of friendly people who have made my job more enjoyable, and their expertise has assisted me in continuing to understand the community sector environment. I would like to extend my thanks to Kara House Manager Desally and Team Leader Veronica in particular for their continued support throughout the year.

The auditor's report is as follows.

THANK YOU



- " DV East Member Organisations
- " DV Vic
- " Domestic Violence Resource Centre (DVRC)
- " Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service (WDVCS)
- " InTouch
- " The Migrant Resource Centre
- " Department of Human Services – Centrelink
- " Department of Human Services – Child Protection
- " Department of Human Services – ER
- " Department of Human Services – Office of Housing
- " Citizens Advice Bureau
- " Eastern Victims Assistance and Counselling Program
- " DIMIA
- " The Salvation Army - EastCare
- " Community Housing Ltd (CHL)
- " Women's Housing Ltd (WHL)
- " Yarra Housing
- " Wesley – Resilient Kids Program
- " Eastern Emergency Relief Network (EER)
- " Keith Rooney
- " Impact for Women
- " Zonta of Waverley
- " Knitting for the Needy
- " Street Smart
- " Holeproof
- " AGL
- " National Bank of Australia
- " Commonwealth Bank of Australia
- " Don Martin and Partners
- " Jeanette Elkner
- " Susan Broadby
- " Jennifer Drew
- " Connecting Up (formerly DonorTech)
- " Telstra



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