

# Welcome

*We wish to thank Swinburne University of Technology, Box Hill Lions Club, Rotary Club of Mont Albert & Surrey Hills, Reece, Silent Arrow, Impact for Women, The Thornbirds, and Dulux Group for their generous support.*

## Hello and welcome

2018 saw Kara House commemorate 40 years of highly secure crisis accommodation and outreach services for Victorian women and their children experiencing family violence. During 2018 Kara House helped 354 women and 199 children by providing temporary refuge accommodation, transitional housing, outreach in the community, emotional support and client advocacy services.

Our core support services are government funded but we actively work to provide a comfortable, inviting and safe environment for our clients enabling them to re-direct their energy towards re-establishing their self-worth, providing a stable home for their children and rebuilding a new life. We rely on support and donations from the community and charitable organisations, and this year we benefited from the kindness and focus of many: Swinburne University of Technology, Box Hill Lions Club, Rotary Club of Mont Albert & Surrey Hills, Reece, Silent Arrow, Impact for Women, The Thornbirds, and Dulux Group amongst others. Kara House is grateful for every donation.

To coincide with our 40th Anniversary DHHS announced that they will be building a second location for Kara House. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to grow our service and provide support to a greater number of women and children, especially larger families and those with special needs.

As change rolls through, we will work to keep our supporters updated and on the journey with us and will remain an active part of the Whitehorse Community. We value the relationships we have built over our 40 year history, and look forward to growing and evolving throughout 2019 and beyond.

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

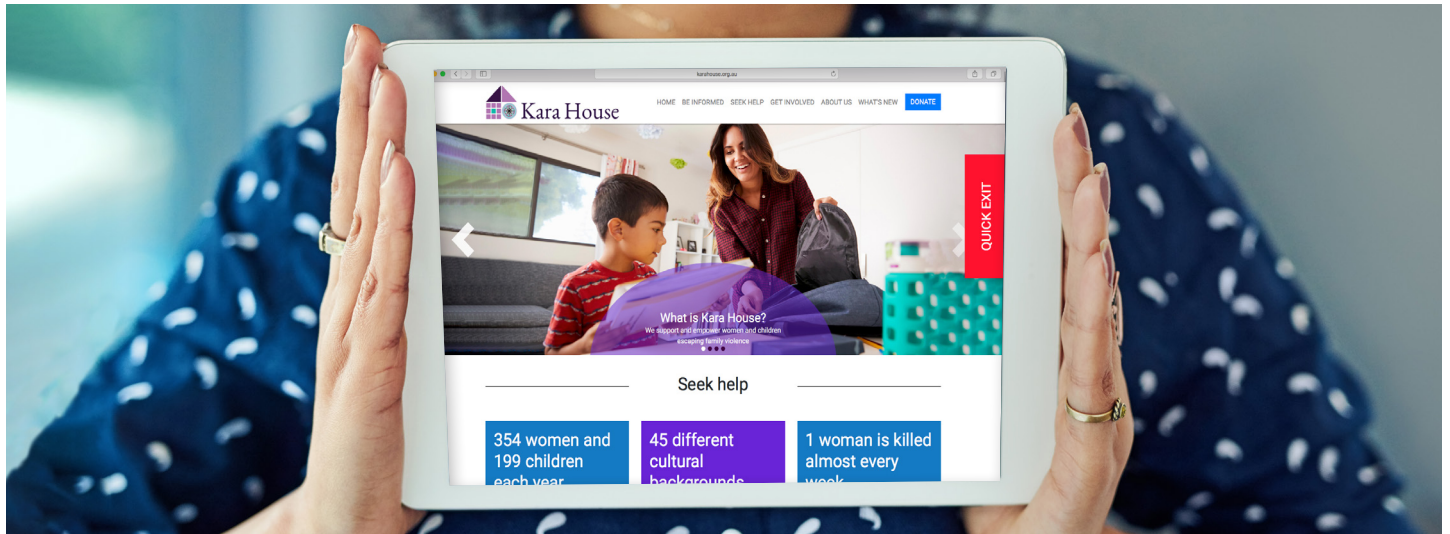
**Catherine Lockstone – Chair  
Kara House Management Committee**

## Our fundraising wish list

- **Art therapy in the refuge.** Art Therapy is a relaxing therapeutic outlet for the women and children and provides an opportunity for discussion and one-on-one chats. We would like to continue offering this in 2019.
- **30 Fresh Linen Packs.** Moving from the refuge to alternative housing can be emotionally and financially stressful. The Fresh Linen Packs will provide bedding essentials like doonas, pillows, towels and sheets.
- **Larger fridge for bed-sit.** Our bed-sit accommodates small families of up to five. We would like to replace the current bar fridge with a larger family size fridge.

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

# Take a look at our **new website**



*Thanks to students, lecturers and everyone who contributed at Swinburne University of technology.*



In late December 2018, the new Kara House website went live thanks to the generous support of the **Swinburne University of Technology**. The Kara House website was selected as the graduating project for diploma students studying ICT and design. The project involved totally re-developing our outdated website into a website that would help and inform the community.

The Swinburne team comprised six students and lecturers Janet Bott, Graham Bridge and Olga Lavouasier. From the initial brief, the students were engaged with the communication problems facing Kara House and how a new website would make a difference to the women and children we work with. The students developed innovative solutions that met the brief, a stand out design, coded the site from scratch and were incredibly professional throughout the whole process.

After 3 months of dedicated work, on December 19 the students handed over the website. David Coltman – Deputy Vice Chancellor, Simona Jobbagy – Director of the Department, attended the formal presentation. The result is simply amazing. The functionality and ease of use is beyond our expectations and we are fully aware of the value of a website project of this size in the wider market.

The Kara House website is the keystone to our communication with our clients, industry colleagues, community and supporters. The new website will play a pivotal role in providing information to those seeking help and those wishing to help the women and children we work with. We were very excited to hear that the Lecturers involved went on to win the Vice-Chancellors Award for Excellence. Thanks to everyone who contributed at Swinburne.

**[Go online to check out our new website >](http://karahouse.org.au)**



## Summer cooling has made a huge difference at the refuge

Thanks to **The Rotary Club of Mont Albert and Surrey Hills**, air-conditioning was installed in the refuge just in time for summer. Previously, only the communal area was air-conditioned leaving the bedrooms hot and uncomfortable, especially for women with young children.

We put the call out and once again The Rotary Club of MASH came to our need. Generously they donated and installed four new air-conditioners for the bedrooms. This summer has been incredibly hot and the new air-conditioning means the women and their children can relax in the privacy of their bedrooms and get a good night's sleep.

Last year Rotary MASH funded the renovation of the refuge kitchen installing a brand new kitchen. To complete the new kitchen in October they donated a new table and chairs. The table was purpose built to fit the tight area and made out of sturdy wood, meaning it will last for many years to come. The new kitchen is now an inviting environment for the women and children and will greatly improve their experience while in our care.







## Kara House celebrates 40 years

On October 16, Kara House celebrated 40 years of empowering and supporting women and children escaping family violence. To mark the important occasion we held an evening event at Box Hill Town Hall and were delighted to be joined by current and past staff, former Management Committee members, our donors and supporters and as well as members of the local community. CR Andrew Davenport Mayor of the City of Whitehorse, Robert Clark MP for Box Hill, CR Tina Liu and CR Bill Bennett all came to lend their support.

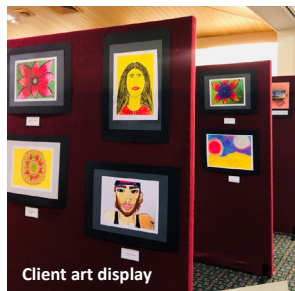
Master of Ceremonies, Comedian and Heath Advocate Nelly Thomas kept those attending laughing while beautifully expressing the sentiment and the importance of the work of Kara House. The keynote speaker was Associate Professor Suellen Murray author of the book "From Margins to Mainstream: the Domestic Violence Services Movement in Victoria".

We were honored to have former client Liang\* to

\*name changed

speak of her time and association with Kara House. She told her painful story and how, with the help of Kara House, she is now enjoying a great future.

We were delighted that so many supporters, colleagues and the local community were able to join in the celebration!



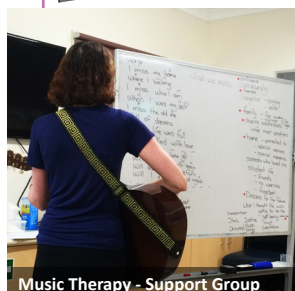
Client art display



Margaret Morrissey: former Chair of Kara House



Whitehorse Spring Festival



Music Therapy - Support Group

### Annual General Meeting

The Kara House Annual General Meeting was held November 28th. We honored our out-going Chair Margaret Morrissey who retired after 8 years' service on the Management Committee. She has been instrumental in driving the direction of Kara House and making it the success it is today. Catherine Lockstone was nominated as the new Chair and we welcomed new committee members Dr Ilsa Evans from Chisholm and Dr Angela Spinney from Swinburne.

[Go online to see the Annual Report >](#)

## What's been happening

**The Whitehorse Spring Festival** brings together all sorts of local organisations and individuals in the community. This year the theme was art so we displayed the brilliant artwork created by the women and children we work with. It was a great opportunity to connect with the local community and spread awareness of the support that Kara House can provide.

**Working in the community to support children.** We are currently collaborating in the local community to provide support to children and their families. We work with the Whitehorse City Council to run the "Small Talk" supported playgroup. We also co-facilitate the "Mother Goose" supported group with Eastern Health and Whitehorse City Council.

**MOVING ON – Family Violence Support Group** has started again in 2019. This free group supports women and children who are experiencing or have experienced family violence. Positive feedback included "feeling safer" and "talking to others who understand". A community grant from the City of Whitehorse will allow us to continue the group through 2019.

# We rely on your generous donations



Christmas tree by Lucy Walsh

Through the year, we received incredible Material Aid donations from organisations and individuals in the community. They make a huge difference in improving the experience of the women and children while they are in our care.

In July, **Silent Arrow** Lingerie donated 1000 pairs of basic underwear perfect for our clients. In September, **The Rotary Club of Boronia** donated 10 large boxes of linen for families.

The focus for Christmas 2018 was toys for kids. Our wonderful supporters **Lucy Walsh** and Alex and their colleagues and friends donated three boot loads of toys and gifts for the children. The Hawthorn Football Club's ladies group

**The Thornbirds** held an event and delivered an incredible amount of toys and gifts for children.

Members of the **Zonta Club of Melbourne's East** and the HR team at **DuluxGroup** donated toys and gifts to put a smile on the children at Christmas.

Our long-term supporters **Impact for Women** delivered over 50 "Bags of Love" for both our women and children.

The **Full Gospel Assembly Melbourne** put together wonderful hampers filled with food and staples to help our clients through the festive season. From **Knitting for the Needy**, we received beautifully knitted toys and blankets that were greatly received by the children.



Impact for Women

## We joined in the **Reece Ladies Day Event**

In October last year, Kara House was invited to speak at the Reece Ladies Day event. Reece invites their most valued customers to join them on a day of fun, which includes breakfast then a winery tour. Part of the day is a silent auction of products donated by Reece and their suppliers and all funds raised were kindly donated to Kara House. Thank you Reece, the suppliers and those who attended the event – it was a great day.



## Thanks to **Box Hill Lions Club**, Home Packs will ease the stress of moving

Thanks to the Box Hill Lions Club, we will be able to provide 15 of our clients with New Home Packs in the coming year. Often women arrive at our service with nothing, having left everything behind to escape family violence and they have to start all over again. The New Home Packs include kitchen basics like a dinner set, cutlery, saucepans, and small electrical appliances.



Zonta Club Of Melbourne's East

## What's new in the sector

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2019. As we move into 2019, Kara House continues to embrace the changes that the implementation of the Royal Commission into family violence has brought to the family violence sector.

Family Safety Victoria is the Government Department implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission and leading the engagement with the sector. Reforms underway that impact on Kara House include a review of case management processes, a recognition of the unique needs of children who have witnessed family violence, information sharing between services for the safety and protection of women and children and the move away from the communal style refuge.

For Kara House this means that we are looking forward to a new development that will provide a larger space that will aid our service delivery to women and children who have relocated to refuge because of their experience of family violence. The continuing implementation of the Royal Commission recommendations is also seeing unprecedented service growth. Kara House has fully experienced, dedicated and qualified staff but across the sector there are shortages of skilled workers. Family Safety Victoria is delivering the 10-Year Family Violence Industry Plan to build workforce capacity in partnership with the sector to address this shortfall. Kara House is proud to be a part of the specialist family violence sector and to share in the new and innovative developments underway this year.

**Veronica Coleman – Manager Kara House**



Health  
and Human  
Services

We would like to thank the Department of Health and Human Services who provide our operational funding under the Funding and Service Agreement and to the staff in the Eastern Region who have assisted with their donation collections and ongoing support. Kara House is a child safe and child focused organisation.

## Interested in finding out more?

Please contact **Ruby Lampard – Development Officer**  
Email [ruby.l@karahouse.org.au](mailto:ruby.l@karahouse.org.au) or phone **1800 900 520**

