



the **northern** centre
care. connect. grow.
our community



THE NORTHERN CENTRE **ANNUAL REPORT 2020**



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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 202045



Our VISION

Thriving local communities
where everyone belongs.

Our MISSION



To collaboratively support and build
connections to help grow resilient and thriving
families, individuals and communities.



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Client Feedback

“ Anna was very professional, efficient, kind and considerate of my position. She always treated me with the greatest respect. I was very surprised such a great service with such a high calibre of professionals was available to assist people with urgent needs. I was very grateful to be referred to Beecroft House (by The Northern Centre). It has been a surprisingly pleasant experience. I am very comfortable here. I am also grateful to Anna for getting me placed so quickly. Under my circumstances, I hope not to be requiring any more help. It is very comforting to know if I ever do, these great services are available. Thank you. Beecroft House is a very good solution for my immediate needs. Again my thanks for your efficient service and for helping me in my hours of need.”

“ How are you and the incredible team at TNC?

The new school year starts tomorrow (2 Sept) – daughter starts her first day, joining big sister at the Steiner School - where they either bring home most of the playground (sand) or the forest (mud). :)

I saw this course thought of you & your team - it's free. :)

I have so much gratitude for you & the team - we were truly privileged to undertake the courses - it has changed our lives. We now know how to manage daughter's anxiety & create an attached foundation... one little stone at a time.

Sending a couple of pictures of the tweedles - yes you can tell they thought it hilarious that I wanted them to eat a healthy lunch... but look ever so angelic in dresses that swirl.

Big hugs to you all!”





TNC Staff take on COVID-19

HOW HAS COVID-19 IMPACTED THE WAY YOU DELIVER SERVICES AND PROVIDE SUPPORT TO YOUR CLIENTS?

"In terms of my individual work it (COVID) hasn't had much impact because a lot of my work was done on the phone already. But I have been really excited to see the way TNC have embraced the use of digital technologies to enable us to continue to serve our clients throughout the pandemic. In the future, digital technology will be a useful part of TNC's suite of responses to client need, helping to reduce barriers to accessing services."

"COVID-19 has impacted service provision and clients in both positive and negative ways. Some families have found it easier to connect via telephone and ZOOM, rather than having to attend the service in person. Others have found it more challenging to find the space and privacy at home to have what are often difficult conversations. Many families have reported an increase in their stress levels due to changes in the way they work, the responsibility of home schooling, financial impacts of loss of work, no down time away from parenting, and social isolation. Yet others have reported a sense of calm descending on their household as busy schedules have emptied out, allowing time and space for connection, and a few have found the temporary increase in Centrelink payments to have alleviated some of their immediate financial stress. As a staff member, changes to service provision have provided an opportunity to experience working remotely from home and also providing services via telephone and ZOOM. Though not without their challenges, these changes have on the whole been a positive experience."

"During this time we have been offered increased clinical supervision, had daily all staff meetings, weekly Family Team meetings to discuss practice, we were asked by management for our input on how to manage COVID-19 and the workplace, and there has been transparency around the decision making."

ON A MORE PERSONAL NOTE - WHAT HAVE BEEN YOUR EXPERIENCES DURING THIS TIME?

"I have felt really well supported by TNC throughout the pandemic - great communication, great information - it's okay to put up your hand and ask for help. Feeling valued and supported is such an important part of being able to do your job well. I'm so very grateful to be working for TNC at this strange time in our world."

"For the past few months, I had noticed that my anxiety level was higher than before. I guess one reason was that it was quite full on when I worked from home all the time in terms of caseloads, the demands from clients and the imbalance between the work and personal life. The anxiety level is reduced dramatically when I start the roster as I get the essential support from the social interaction with colleagues."

Our Board

CHRISTOPHER HELLMUNDT – PRESIDENT

Chris is a General Manager at the Commonwealth Bank, where he has worked in various operations and transformation roles for the past five years. Previously Chris worked with the NSW Commission for Children in various research and community outreach roles, and the City of Ryde Council leading the community hub model implementation. Chris has been a member of our Management Committee since 2014 and has been our President since 2015. He also volunteers at an LGBTQI network and advocacy group. Chris enjoys travelling to new places, spending time at the beach and walks with his two dogs.

PHILIP BICKERSTAFF – VICE PRESIDENT

Philip worked for 37 years in the NSW public sector; eight years with the Public Service Board and almost 29 years with NSW Treasury. He then retired in 2005. Philip has been a member of our Management Committee since 2004. He served as Treasurer from 2004 – 2010 and President from 2010 – 2015. Philip enjoys playing tennis, watching cricket, spending quality time with his family, and doing voluntary work for North Ryde Community Aid and Information Centre. This year, after 16 years, we farewell Philip from the Board.

DANIEL BOFINGER – TREASURER

Daniel joined our Management Committee as Treasurer in June 2016. He has several years of experience working in financial services, particularly in superannuation and strategy, and also with other not-for-profit organisations. He currently works in a risk and compliance role at Colonial First State. Daniel holds a Bachelor of Applied Finance, an Advanced Diploma of Financial Planning and is currently studying a Diploma of Law.

MARGARET O'HEARN – PUBLIC OFFICER

Margaret has worked as a Registered Nurse for NSW Health for many years, and is currently a Child and Family Health Nurse in the Northern Sydney Local Health District. For the past 27 years, Margaret has been working in Early Childhood Service in the Ryde LGA. Margaret has been a member of our Management Committee since 2008 and holds the position of Public Officer. Margaret also enjoys spending quality time with her family of two adult children.

ANNE-MARIE MAXWELL

Anne-Marie Maxwell most recently worked for Save the Children Australia as Team Leader of Ryde Community Hub, having worked in this position for the past 10+ years. Prior to her work in this role, Anne-Marie spent 15 years living overseas, including 13 years in South Africa, where she was Director of a preschool in inner-city Johannesburg, and worked in curriculum development and teacher training. Anne-Marie has almost completed her PhD with Macquarie University, focussing on the popular Circle of Security parenting program. Anne-Marie has three daughters and it was her experience of becoming a parent (to twins!) in a foreign land that emphasised to her the importance of support structures for families with young children. Anne-Marie is delighted to be working in this field with Save the Children Australia and to be supporting TNC in providing more intensive services to families by serving on the Management Committee. Anne-Marie also enjoys cooking, walking, travelling and spending relaxed time with family and friends.

SERENA CHEUNG

Serena has worked in the ageing and disability fields for over 30 years as a Social Worker and as a government officer. She has also worked in the non-Government sector as both a community worker and family worker, and has a strong interest in multicultural affairs. Serena has most recently worked within the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Serena holds post-graduate qualifications in Community Management and accreditation in parenting training. She has been a member of our Management Committee since 2011 and is involved in an advisory capacity with other disability service providers. She enjoys being a scribe or reader to people with a disability. Serena is married with two children, attends the Macquarie Anglican Church, and enjoys reading, dancing, walking and tutoring English as a second language.

BARRY APELBAUM

Barry graduated from Monash University with a Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Science majoring in Psychology. He worked as a solicitor specialising in family law for just under 10 years and was then called to the bar. He has since practised as a barrister in New South Wales, specialising in family law including parenting disputes and property matters. His work also includes appearing in cases involving allegations of serious domestic violence and child abuse. Barry has a long history of community service, particularly the provision of legal advice through community programs for the disadvantaged. He was a volunteer at the Coburg Brunswick Community Legal and Financial Counselling Centre in Melbourne, and the Family Law Assistance Program in Melbourne. He was a deputy supervisor at the Springvale Monash Legal Service in Melbourne and a volunteer at the Inner City Legal Centre in Sydney. Barry was also the founder of the Women's Family Law Clinic in West Ryde. The clinic, which is hosted and run by The Northern Centre, specialises in providing support for victims of domestic violence and persons undergoing separation.

ALEX XENOS

Alex is a Senior Associate with Hunt and Hunt Lawyers and deliver our weekly pro bono Women's Legal Clinic. Alex helps his clients to achieve the best results for their family, in what is often a difficult time in their lives. Alex's practice primarily involves family law including married, and de facto relationships. He provides advice to clients and assists them to achieve settlement through conciliation conferences and mediation. His areas of family law related work includes: Property settlement / Spouse maintenance issues / Parenting cases / Allegations of child abuse / Child support disputes / Divorce / Financial agreements / Consent orders.



About Us

The Northern Centre (formerly known as Ryde Family Services), established in 1982, is a non-government organisation and registered charity. We work collaboratively with families and individuals of all ages to support and help build healthy lives.

We offer a range of services to all people in our community that helps build their capacity, confidence and resilience. We work with children, young people, parents, families, carers and other community members and we operate across the local government areas, including: Ryde | Hunters Hill | Lane Cove | North Sydney | Mosman | Willoughby | Ku-ring-gai | Parramatta (Epping).

We engage a team of professional staff to support the work that we do including Social Workers, Case Managers and Counsellors.

Our Achievements in 2020



Commenced implementation of CORIS 2.0

- Enhancing data collection and reporting, including interface with DEX



Finalised DCJ TEI recommissioning

- Contract agreed with until June 2025



Completed Childsafe Policy development & implementation

- In line with Mission Australia contracting requirements



Increased co-located partners

- After TNC moved to their new and larger space, we now welcome the Multicultural Gambling Service and Odyssey House to our colocated partnerships (as of 1 July 2020)



Increased CALD workforce capacity in frontline services

- 0.8 FTE Korean Family Worker (to commence 1 July 2020)



#NoExcuseForAbuse



President's Report

There is no doubt that this year has been a challenging one – a health crisis most haven't experienced in their lifetime, an economic recession for the first time since 1991, wide-range natural disasters, and the pervasive sense of uncertainty.

When COVID-19 first hit and Ryde was a hotspot, I remember clearly how our teams responded together to care for our clients and each other – we changed our service delivery to remote almost overnight without any impact to service delivery effectiveness. The team created weekly check-ins to connect and share experiences, and we ensured a minimal onsite presence to ensure we continued to provide our face-to-face services. I can't think of a better demonstration of our values of innovation and collaboration, and I'm so grateful to our team for how they responded with such care to the situation at hand, and continued to achieve together under the exceptional leadership of Cate Sinclair, our Executive Officer.

Throughout this time, our focus as an organisation and Management Committee has been fixed on how we can best support our people and the community we serve, and in particular how we can further support those facing domestic and family violence. Those seeking domestic and family violence support has been growing – through our family support, homelessness prevention and pro-bono legal clinic – which is an awful outcome of the strict measures put in place during COVID-19 that are aimed to protect. This growth has also been validated by Police and other service providers. We have continued our focus to do more, using our voice to advocate for evidenced based,

sector-wide approaches, and creating new partnerships of likeminded organisations. I've been humbled with the support received, and hope it will lead to improved outcomes in the future.

I would like to thank my fellow Management Committee Members – Daniel Bofinger, Margaret O'Hearn, Anne-Marie Maxwell, Alex Xenos, Barry Apelbaum, Serena Cheung and Philip Bickerstaff for their ongoing generosity and counsel. Philip will be retiring this year after 16 years on the Management Committee. Philip's impact on the organisation and Management Committee cannot be understated – the care and commitment he brings to our people, clients and Management Committee members is extraordinary. I've appreciated his approach to build consensus, ensuring all voices are heard and that we remain focused on outcomes of care, connect and growing our community. His curiosity, respectful challenge and approach to active listening are attributes to be emulated, and have driven sound decision making throughout his many years of service. I can't think of anyone more generous and respectful as Philip, and he will be missed from our organisation. Thank you Phillip and I wish you every happiness.

Finally, a big thank you to all our partnership organisations and funders, whose support is pivotal to our work. We can be very proud of how we have delivered together for our clients and community, and I look forward to another successful year.

Christopher Hellmundt
President

Executive Officer's Report

What a year of learning, adaptation, trialing and testing and some incredible insights that will complement how we serve our communities in the future. I am sure that every person who sits to write their report for FY20 will reflect on a most interesting year; a year of learnings, of opportunities and of challenges during periods of deep concern and uncertainty.

During this period, in partnership with The Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), we recommissioned our commitment to the TEI reform and finalised our five-year contract. The recommissioning process is an important step in achieving the NSW Premier's priority of protecting our most vulnerable children, by decreasing the proportion of children and young people re-reported at risk of serious harm (ROSH) by 20% by 2023.

With a focus on targeted early intervention (TEI) and support, we will provide targeted services at the point where they will have the most impact, and deliver the best investment for our communities within the Ryde, Hunter Hill and Kur-ring-gai LGAs.

Over the next five years, our TEI focus will be:

1. To work with families, children and young people ensuring that their needs are met early to prevent the escalation of vulnerability
2. To ensure that families are able to access support early in the lives of their children and young people
3. To minimise the risk factors that lead to child abuse, neglect and domestic and family violence are addressed early
4. That all young people, families and communities have access to timely, effective, accessible, and culturally safe support and services.

Another priority of the NSW Premier is reducing homelessness; reduction of street homelessness across NSW by 50% by 2025. Subcontracted by Mission Australia, our team work hard to support people at risk of homelessness. There are so many factors that contribute to becoming homeless, and our focus is on working with clients early to manage and support them in an early intervention and prevention case management approach. A big piece of work completed in line with this contract was the implementation of the suite of ChildSafe policies across this organisation.

Our holistic partnership approach continues to support accessibility to the right services at the right time in one location. We can demonstrate that this approach creates dynamic and positive outcomes where the performance of our combined colocated services as a whole are more than just the sum of the partner members.

We would like to thank the following organisations for their commitment to partnering with TNC for our community:

1. APM Employment Services
2. Catholic Care Financial Counseling
3. Catholic Care Emergency relief
4. Elizabeth Lee Counselling
5. headspace
6. Hunt and Hunt Lawyers Women's Legal Clinic
7. Indonesian Welfare Association
8. Mindtalk Counselling Services
9. Wesley Mission ParentsNext

The TNC values continue to underpin the work that we do – Care, Connect and Grow. We are committed to providing the best services to our community, we are generous with one another in supporting individual and team achievements and outcomes, we are respectful of each person's abilities, and we know that collectively we create greater impact. We are passionate connectors – with one another and within community.

Before COVID-19 we were successful in trialing our late Thursday openings, other week nights and weekends. Our Saturdays were busy with parenting programs, DADSnubs playgroup and Chinese Grandparent Mingles, Elizabeth Lee and Mindtalk Counselling services, and now look forward to offering these services in a face-to-face capacity in the coming months.

We continue to work to achieve high professional standards in how our staff engage, serve our communities and maintain their professional development objectives. This year, we continue to employ a rigorous schedule of professional development opportunities to ensure that we are empowering our teams to be the best that they can be. During COVID-19 we increased the frequency of external clinical supervisions from six-weekly to monthly, monthly operational supervisions and peer supervisions.

On behalf of our team, I wish to extend a massive thank you to the Management Committee for their continued support in creating a culture and environment of humility, proactivity and opportunity at TNC.

Finally, the success of TNC is our team. I thank everyone for their commitment, passion and humour in how we work together every day to support our community.

We look forward to the next 12 months where we will continue to work successfully, despite the challenges that we may face as the year rolls out.

Cate Sinclair
Executive Officer

Treasurer's Report

TNC has supported the community through family, housing, and parenting services against the unprecedented backdrop of a pandemic and the challenges that it has brought. As every year, I am extremely grateful to the staff who work with skill and passion to make these programs possible, and particularly this year in the face of increased challenges and community need.

Stewardship of finances is important as it enables sustainable help to reach those who need it. Our auditors, RSM Bird Cameron, presented the financial statements for the financial year ending 30 June 2020 to the Management Committee of TNC. The President and I, on behalf of the Management Committee, have approved these statements. These statements indicate:

- Total income of \$1,343,039 in FY20, which follows \$1,170,236 in FY19 and \$1,125,060 in FY18
- Expenses of \$1,210,748 in FY20, which follows \$1,143,355 in FY19 and \$1,132,948 in FY18
- A resulting surplus of \$132,291 in FY20, which follows a surplus of \$24,006 in FY19, a minor deficit of \$7,888 in FY18, and a surplus of \$47,100 in 2017

The significant surplus was primarily due to a windfall gain relating to JobKeeper payments of \$72,000 and a related cash flow boost of \$62,500. It is important to note that despite this significant surplus, the two major grants were fully acquitted. Smaller grants which were delayed due to COVID-19 have approved extensions to June 2021, and these are currently recorded as liabilities on the balance sheet.

The balance sheet at the end of the period showed total assets of \$598,861, of which \$388,006 are cash and cash equivalents; reflecting a strong liquidity position. Total liabilities for the period were \$257,061, and as a result net assets at 30 June 2020 were \$341,800.

The service had two primary sources of income during the period: NSW Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) for the EIPP Program (Family Services); and Mission Australia for the Northern Sydney District Early Intervention and Prevention Program (Homelessness Early Intervention). TNC performed the services associated with each of these programs with substantial over-performance of key performance indicators.

Once again, I would like to extend my thanks to the staff and Management Committee of TNC for their continued dedication in supporting the community.

Daniel Bofinger
Treasurer



Specially for Amy,

Thank you so much for being friendly, approachable, kind, caring and patient with all the littlies.

We cannot thank you enough for always making them feel happy and comfortable.

Thank you so much for your efforts.

I have been wanting to write to let you know that your hard work does not go unnoticed.

We will never forget the way you treat and take care of our littlies.

I just wanted to let you know how much we value your professionalism.

Thank you for being so helpful.

Thank you so much for keeping the littlies happily entertained and loved.

I appreciate you for being the most fun-loving playgroup leader any child could have.

We really appreciate your time & information you shared with us.

Hope you and your family enjoy this Christmas and festive break!"



Core Programs Report

Family Support (EIPP) & Housing Support (NSDEIPP)

Our Housing Caseworkers and Family Workers have once again shown their genuine commitment to supporting community members to be safe, empowered and connected through their tireless efforts. Being responsive to meet complex needs requires agility and flexibility in how we engage, and work towards sustainable change and positive outcomes, which is reflected every day in our office. There is a sense of comradery amongst the TNC team, which allows us to adapt in this changing world we find ourselves in this year. This was more obvious than ever as we responded to COVID-19 quickly and quietly to reduce the impact on our clients and service delivery. Each of us felt supported and self-motivated by our commitment to TNC, to continue our work both on an individual and team level.

How did all this hard work translate into numbers?

Our Housing Team supported 243 people in the following ways to ensure secure and sustainable housing:

Advocating with housing providers, Real Estate Agents and other organisations as needed:

- Assisting to work towards finding more affordable and sustainable accommodation
- Making appropriate referrals for your immediate needs
- Working to explore what options might best work in individual circumstances
- Focusing on wrap-around case management that supports individuals while they are trying to resolve their housing situation

Throughout FY20, there was a high demand for the range of services that the Family Support team deliver.

387 families from across the Ryde, Hunters Hill and Ku-ring-gai LGAs either self-referred or were referred from a range of organisations spanning from health, education and other non-government organisations. Services continue to be in high demand, which meant we needed to be more creative in how we delivered our family support; for example, when a Family Worker identified that they were working with a few families with similar needs, they suggested to combine support into a small group setting, which was welcomed by the families and allowed for them to build their own circle of support to fall back on. Or when a particular need or theme within in our community became apparent (such as childhood anxiety), Family Workers designed and delivered Morning Tea Information Sessions to connect, support and educate our families.

We continue to build and maintain strong connections with key stakeholders in the community and raise awareness of our services to ensure those seeking support know where to come to. Seeking help doesn't come naturally to everyone, hence our 'no wrong door' approach brings hope and 'next steps' to anyone who connects with TNC.

COVID-19 has brought many changes to our lives this year and on a positive note, we have found that as a result of moving our service support online, we have reached more families due to the flexibility that a digital platforms provide.

It has been a privilege for me to support the TNC team and I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to each of them for their ongoing commitment to Care, Connect, Grow.

Rowena Stulajter
Programs Manager

TNC FAMILY SUPPORT CASE STUDY: A 48-year-old mother with an Asian cultural background was referred by LINK housing for housing support, as she was living in an unaffordable rental property. During Intake, it was identified that the client was also experiencing a number of challenges with her teenage daughter (school refusal, drug taking episodes, shoplifting), and the client agreed to also connect with individual family support. The client reported that she had also experienced family violence and was currently dealing with her own addiction to gambling.

The client actively participated in her individual family sessions and the Family Worker was able to support the client with a number of relevant referrals to support her efforts in being the best parent she could be. Referrals including: financial counselling; emergency relief; housing support; and a youth mentoring service. As the period of support moved forward, the client shared that she also had a significant legal matter before the courts that could potentially end with her being incarcerated. It was at this point that the Family Worker was not only supporting the client around her parenting and strengthening the relationship between mother and daughter, but also case management in relation to the legal matters. The Family Worker was able to write support letters and attend hearings in the District Court. With great relief the client received a Community Service Order and part of the plan moving forward is for the client and Family Worker to continue their work on building the family capacity. The client recently told her Family Worker that "TNC is like a charming gardener who makes her soul bloom".

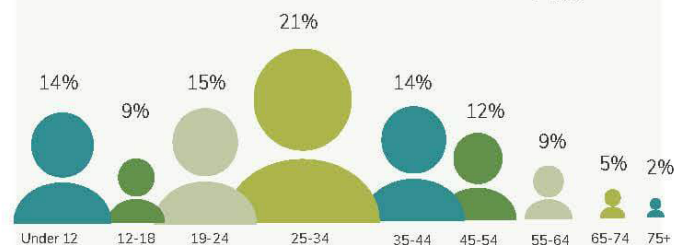
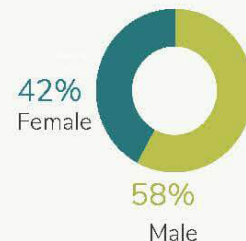
Homelessness Australia

Homelessness in Australia has risen **30% in the past decade**.¹ Every day, **261** people are turned away from homelessness services due to a lack of housing & resources.²



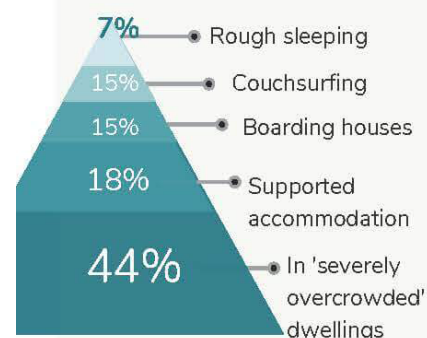
Who are they?¹

- People under 25 make up 37% of Australia's homeless population.
- There has been a 49% increase in people aged 55 and over experiencing homelessness in 10 years



Despite only making up 3.3% of the Australian population, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people represent 22% of the homeless population^{1,4}

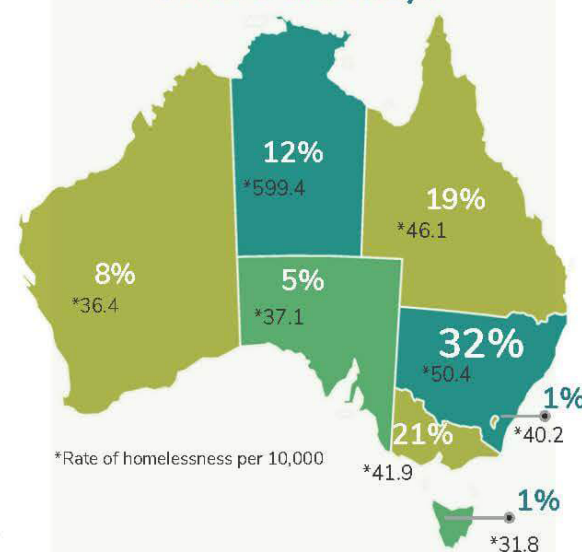
Where do they stay?¹



The vast majority of homelessness is hidden from view. People who sleep rough make up only **7%** of the homeless population¹

On Census night 2016
116,427
Australians were experiencing homelessness¹

Where are they?¹



The Northern Territory has by far the highest rate of homelessness: **599 per 10,000** people

Why are they experiencing homelessness?³

- 45% Lack of housing
- 26% Escaping family violence
- 12% Money/income issues
- 8% Relationship/family breakdowns
- 3% Mental/physical illness and/or addiction
- 6% Other

References:

1. ABS Census, Estimating Homelessness, 2018
2. AIHW, Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, 2017
3. CHP analysis of AIHW Specialist Homelessness Services Collection, 2017
4. ABS, Census of Population & Housing: Details of Overcount & Undercount, 2016

That's **27,683** kids without homes



Children and young people make up **2 in 5** of all people experiencing homelessness in Australia.

On Census night, **116,427** Australians were experiencing homelessness of some form. **58%** were male and **42%** were female.



TNC SINGLE MALE CASE STUDY: A 39 year old male, living in a friend's garage, connected with our Housing Team after submitting his NSW Housing application on his own and was rejected for Priority Status. With assistance from the Housing Case Worker, a First Tier Appeal was lodged. The Appeal was successful and the client was placed on Priority (Homelessness) and he was approved for a two bedroom home, which would allow him access to his son. Not being able to see his child, due to inadequate housing, was heavily impacting his wellbeing. Having access to secure and affordable housing is a crucial first step towards the client building a more stable life. The client did receive and accepted his first offer for housing and has settled in well. The Case Worker referred him to St Vincent de Paul for support with furniture and whitegoods, and TNC was able to support him with additional brokerage to purchase other essentials to establish his tenancy.

Homelessness in Australia has **increased 13.7%** in 5 years.



TNC FEMALE WITH FAMILY CASE STUDY: Single Mum (47) and son (13) were referred to our service as they shared one small room in a boarding house. Both mum and her son have complex mental health and physical health conditions. Mum has limited English due to Korean heritage. The family was supported to submit an application for social housing. Extensive advocacy was provided with community housing providers to expedite housing assessment and gained two offers of social housing within months. The family accepted the second offer and was supported to settle into the property. Case worker supported the family with acquiring furniture for the new property and removalist costs covered by TNC. Case Worker provided case coordination and liaised with other services involved including school, mental health services and DCJ. The stable housing situation will hopefully have a positive impact on other aspects of the family's life moving forward.

Rough sleepers represent just **7%** of all homelessness nationally. They are the tip of the iceberg.



There has been a **28% increase** in Australians aged 55+ experiencing homelessness. They are a rapidly growing age bracket.



Statistics source: Homelessness Australia

From the Intake Desk ...

Smooth transition to service access is a priority for our clients and our full-time intake gateway is generally the first point of contact that a client has with our service. Every client is met with empathy, respect and unconditional positive regard; allowing them to feel listened to, understood and hopeful that there is a way forward out of their current situation.

Our holistic approach at intake ensures that every client receives the individualised support that they need as quickly as possible, while allowing us to triage their urgent needs when necessary. During the intake process, clients are also referred to other services that may be useful to their situation and needs; financial counselling; women's legal clinic; mental health supports; victim's services, as examples.

We are particularly proud of the connections that have been forged with other service providers in our support footprint, such as: DCJ; NSW Health; Family Referral Service; local School Counsellors; and other community organisations. Community workers will often get in touch with our Intake Coordinator to discuss the needs of a potential client, whether The Northern Centre can provide support, and what other referrals might be useful to a client's situation. This collaborative approach provides the best outcome for clients and strengthens TNC's referral pathways into and out of other services.

This has been a most challenging time for many in our community due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have seen a significant increase in the number of clients calling for assistance who have never had to seek help and navigate community support from services before. And we are seeing a dramatic increase in domestic and family violence (DFV) related issues, with over 11% of clients entering the intake gateway primarily for DFV. We are also seeing DFV weave through over 50% of client presentations, even if it is not the primary reason for seeking help and/ or clients are not ready to address their situation. This is a necessary area that we are actively seeking to influence though funding moving forward.

The Intake Coordinator role is crucial to our service model. Being able to communicate with clients in a timely, relevant, empathic and responsive way goes a long way in diffusing what can be a period of crisis and trauma for individuals and families.

Claire Sexton
Intake Coordinator



Our Parenting Programs

TNC are well credentialed in the delivery of a wide range of parenting programs. In most cases, we provide childcare so that parents can attend these programs. We also have programs running in the evenings and Saturdays. Removing barriers to access services is of primary importance.

TUNING IN TO KIDS

(6 WEEK PROGRAM : 4 - 10 YEAR OLDS)

An evidence-based parenting program that focuses on the emotional connection between parents and children. The program teaches parents specific skills in emotion coaching, which is to recognize, understand and respond to children's emotions in an accepting, supportive way. This approach helps the child to understand and manage their emotions.

Delivered in English (July) and Korean (October) and Booster in Korean (May).

CIRCLE OF SECURITY

(8 WEEK PROGRAM : 0 - 5 YEAR OLDS)

At some point all parents will feel lost or struggle to know what their child might need from them. The Circle of Security program is based on decades of research about how secure parent-child relationships can be supported and strengthened. We work with parents to understand their child's emotional world by learning to read their emotional needs, support their child's ability to successfully manage their emotions, enhance the development of their child's self-esteem and honour the innate wisdom and desire for their child to be secure.

Delivered in English (October) and Mandarin (August).

1-2-3 MAGIC

(3 WEEK PROGRAM : 3 - 6 YEAR OLDS)

The 1-2-3 Magic and Emotion Coaching program aims to teach parents how to deal with their children's difficult behaviour by using an easy-to-learn and easy-to-use signalling system. The signalling system requires the parent to use less talk and less emotion, which in turn encourages the development of children's ability to manage their emotional reactions to parental boundaries (or emotional competency).

Delivered in English (September).

TUNING IN TO TEENS

(6 WEEK PROGRAM : 11 - 18 YEAR OLDS)

A parenting program that focuses on emotions and is designed to assist parents to establish stronger relationships with their teenage children. The program provides parents with a greater understanding of their teen's emotional experiences whilst teaching specific skills that can assist in being supportive, empathic and staying connected with the young person. It further aims to improve parent's emotional awareness, regulation and communication style and provide them with an opportunity to reflect on their own emotion and socialisation experience. Tuning in to Teens endeavours to prevent problems developing and enhance emotional and behavioural functioning.

Delivered in English (October) and Korean (October), and Booster in English (May).

PARENTING EVENTS

Gain Strategies to Manage Your Child's Emotions (primary school aged children)

Delivered in English (November)

New Kindy Parents

Delivered in Mandarin via Zoom (June).

Understanding Your Child's Development

Delivered in Mandarin (October) and English via Zoom (July)



Our Supported Playgroups

We had a brilliantly successful and playful year with three diverse playgroups happening at TNC.

- **Mini-Maxi** is a 12-week supported playgroup held on Thursday mornings from 10:00am to 12:00pm for parents with children aged up to five years. The Mini-Maxi Supported playgroups aim is to reduce social isolation and connect vulnerable families to the community they live in. Mini-Maxi also supports parents with information and guidance about issues they may be experiencing with parenting. We have run four 12-week programs under our EIPP Program funded by DCJ.
- **Culture Drop** weekly on Friday mornings targeting parents with children under five whose second language is English. The objective of the group is to connect with other parents and community, and support vulnerable families with parenting challenges in the Australian context. We have run four 10-week programs under our EIPP Program funded by DCJ.
- **DADS&bubs** Weekly on Saturday mornings targeting Dads/carers and their children 0 – 5 years old. The objective of this weekly playgroup is to explore the importance of play, learn about child development, build on Dads parenting skills and enable the Dads/carers to build their confidence in parentings and develop sustainable social networks. We were fortunate to receive funding from the City of Ryde to run two 12-week programs.
- **Celebration of Chinese Grandparents** TNC hosted a playgroup for Chinese grandparents to celebrate how wonderful they are! Grandparents attended a two-hour session over five Wednesdays (initially the group was to run for 10 sessions, but due to COVID-19 ceased) for a fun morning of play and activities with our Mandarin speaking Family Worker and a childcare worker.
- **Chinese Grandparents Weekly Mingle** An 8-week group held on Saturday mornings for grandparents who are the main caregiver to their grandchild/ren. The objective was to support them to foster stronger connections with their community to reduce isolation, understand grandparenting in Australian context, strengthen their emotional attachment with their grandchild/ren, and explore shared interests with one another. The group is specifically for grandparents, not their grandchildren and was funded by the ACCF.
- **Sensory Play Parties**
 - September – Music and Movement
 - January – Obstacle Course Fun
 - January – Gross Motor Fun
 - April – Nature Fun
 - April – Storytelling Fun

Key highlights

All the groups offered support and development of strong parent-child relationships and positive parent-child interaction. We provided parents and their children the opportunity to socialise and through modelling behaviour management strategies helped support families with their interaction and bonding with their child. A key focus for many of our sessions was how important play is in a child's life. We shared ideas for activities and well as resources and where to find information at home.

- 49 families participated this year in Mini-Maxi
- 48 families participated this year in Cultural Drop
- Our playgroups are culturally safe place for all our families. The families developed skills for communication and interaction and became more comfortable sharing with the group
- We emailed a newsletter each week with added resources about community supports and services, especially those that related to their children's health and development
- We had a number of guest speakers from Playgroup NSW, GP Liaison Nurse NSW Health, Cerebral Palsy Alliance – Speech Pathologist, West Ryde Librarian, Early Child Director of Early Childhood Centre

Feedback from the families reflected that their confidence in parenting had increased. They felt that their interaction with their children was more strengths-based and positive. This then had a positive effect on their children's social and emotional development.

We have assisted many of our families to transition to community-based playgroups that allows them then to build their own connections within their own communities.



Community & Sector Engagement

Due to face-to-face community engagement activities being cancelled during COVID-19, we changed the focus for our activities, marketing and communications to principally online events, which have been well received.

We continued to work with the sector to coordinate the Transition to School Seminar for the CALD community, providing support and preparedness for children and parents from a variety of cultural backgrounds to ensure school readiness. The seminar involved 90 people, including nine organisations, two local schools and over 70 community members. The success of the event allowed us to further raise our profile within the sector and the CALD community in Ryde LGA.

In the second half of FY20, all community sector events and festivals have been cancelled due to COVID-19, and it has affected our community engagement activity plans. However, TNC has quickly learnt and adapted by developing new strategies that support and engage with our venerable communities. This response included the development three fortnightly eNewsletters that contained a variety of information and resources. The content for parents and kids focussed on age groups 0-5, 5-12 and 12+. This approach has helped support our community during these uncertain and isolated times.

Amy Joo
Community Engagement Coordinator

TNC is an active participator in the following sector meetings:

Multicultural Networks	Lower North Shore
	Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai
	Ryde Inter-cultural Network
DV Networks	Sydney Region Korean Network
	Lower North Shore
	Ryde Hunters Hill DV Committee (Chair)
Child and Family	Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai
	Lower North Shore
	Ryde Hunters Hill
Youth Networks	Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai
	Lower North Shore
	Ryde Hunters Hill
Homelessness Networks	Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai
	Northern District Homelessness Interagency
	Northern Sydney Housing & Homelessness Services
Other	Economic Development Advisory Committee (City of Ryde)
	Social Inclusion Advisory Committee (City of Ryde)
	NSLHD CALD Community of Practice
	DV Community of Practice
	The Sector Executive Group (Chair)
	FAMS CEO Forums
	FAMS Worker Forums

Community engagement activities and Support:

- 2019 Ryde/ Epping/ Macquarie Park 'Thriving Communities'
- Transition To School Seminar (Korean)
- Transition To School Workshop (Chinese)
- Greenway Wellbeing Expo
- Granny Smith Festival
- Ryde Multicultural Festival
- Blaxland Road Community Hub Info Morning Tea
- No Excuse For Abuse March

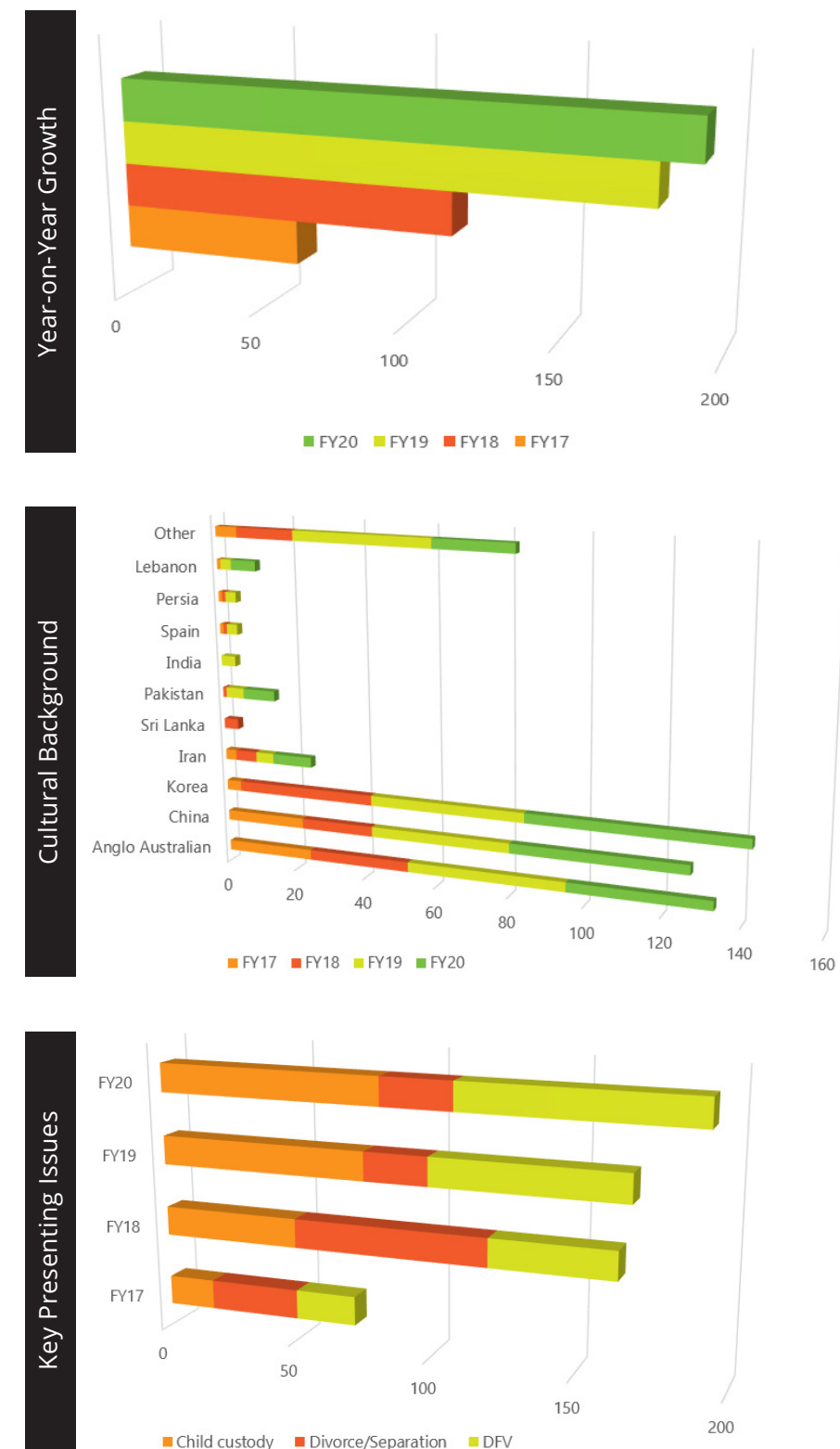
Women's Legal Clinic

Hunt and Hunt continued to provide their generous probono support in delivering the weekly Women's Legal Clinic. Alex Xenos, Senior Associate at Hunt and Hunt (and TNC Management Committee member), continued to demonstrate understanding, patience, empathy and incredible generosity in supporting the women and their families; focusing on areas relating to child custody, divorce, separation, and domestic and family violence issues. In the past financial year, Alex has supported 192 women – an increase of almost 7% year-on-year.

The Clinic is well marketed to the community in English, Chinese and Korean languages. A couple of our core promotional partnerships that drive awareness of DVF and the Clinic are Ryde District Mums, plus the Hanho Korean Daily newspaper who provide editorial support directly into the Korean market. Our collocated partnerships also increasingly refer clients directly into the Clinic, supporting the TNC holistic service delivery framework.

The Clinic is held on Thursdays weekly at TNC between 2.00pm and 5.00pm, and is by appointment only. We provide childcare to help support mums with young children seeking help.

The Management Committee and staff at TNC wish to express their deep gratitude to Alex and the Partners of Hunt and Hunt Lawyers for their indispensable support.



Our Team Training

TNC acknowledges the value of training and professional development for all staff through the provision of an annual training budget and allocated days to attend formal training, workshops and forums. It is essential that all staff keep pace with current information, developments and standards within the sector. We ensure that our team maintain and enhance their knowledge and skills to deliver quality services. Training is an opportunity to make meaningful contributions to our TNC team, the organisation as a whole to deliver positive community outcomes.

This past year the staff attended:

- Group Therapy Facilitator Training
- First Aid & CPR Course
- Introduction to Play Theory
- Supporting Children with Complex Needs
- Child Aware Supervision
- Introduction to Vicarious Trauma (Online)
- Caring for Young People Who Self Harm
- Calling Out Coercive Control (Domestic Violence)
- Power Threat Meaning Framework Workshop
- Homelessness NSW Conference
- Domestic Violence & Tenancy
- AHURI – Housing: the Foundation for Mental Health

To ensure we remain up-to-date with services and resources that are available and relevant for our clients, we often invite other organisations to introduce themselves and their services to our team. Where relevant, we extend the invite to attend these sessions to the other organisations based here at the West Ryde Community Centre. These include Centrelink, and the Sydney Drug Education and Counselling Centre.

As part of our partnership with Ryde District Mental Health Practitioner Network, TNC provided space for their quarterly network meetings. The Family Support Team attended sessions focussing on: Perinatal and Infant Mental Health; Working with Eating Disorders and the New Eating Disorder Treatment Plan; and Autism in Girls.



Domestic & Family Violence Committee Report

As Chair of the Domestic & Family Violence Committee, our role is to manage and coordinate meetings, and to ensure that we develop meaningful, relevant and action-based projects that are aligned with our strategy and goals.

COVID-19 has seen meetings move to online platforms, and this has helped in meeting participation.

The committee works collectively to address domestic and family violence (DFV) issues at the local community level. We continue to be grateful to our member organisations, including: DCJ; NSW Police; Relationships Australia; Catholic Care; Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (WDVCAS); Centrelink; City of Ryde; The Benevolent Society; Settlement Services International; Lisa Harnum Foundation; NSW Department of Health; and Manly Warringah Resource Centre.

The Committee acknowledges that 'all individuals have the right to be free from violence, in particular, women and children have a right to live safely and free from fear within their own homes and all forms of violence are unacceptable in any group, culture or creed'. (Lawlinks NSW: Domestic Violence Interagency Guidelines – Framework for action p1, 2013).

During FY20, we were unable to deliver many community based initiatives however, prior to COVID-19 we were able to facilitate a number of CALD court visits at Burwood Local Court, with the aim of diffusing the barriers to help seeking by specifically CALD women who may

be experiencing DFV, or know people in their community who are victims. Typically, and traditionally, DFV is not addressed in many cultures and often goes unreported due to fear, lack of trust in the system and/ or a general lack of awareness of services available in the Australian context. The purpose of the court visits is to break down these barriers to access and supports.

In November 2019, in collaboration with the City of Ryde, we held our inaugural NO EXCUSE FOR ABUSE march in Macquarie Park precinct. While well attended in its first year, a focus of the Committee moving forward is to build this into an annual signature event within the precinct and greater Ryde/ Hunters Hill LGAs, to build awareness of DFV and encourage the corporates and residents to take a stand against abuse.

All organisations who participate in the RHHDVC have reported increased results and presentations of DFV especially during the peak of COVID-19. As a committee we are working to shine a light on these devastating stats in working with local, state and federal departments to address this issue.

Thank you to our active and dedicated Management Committee. We look forward to another year ahead of working with our community to combat DFV.

**The Northern Centre
Chair of the Ryde Hunter's Hill
Domestic & Family Violence Committee**

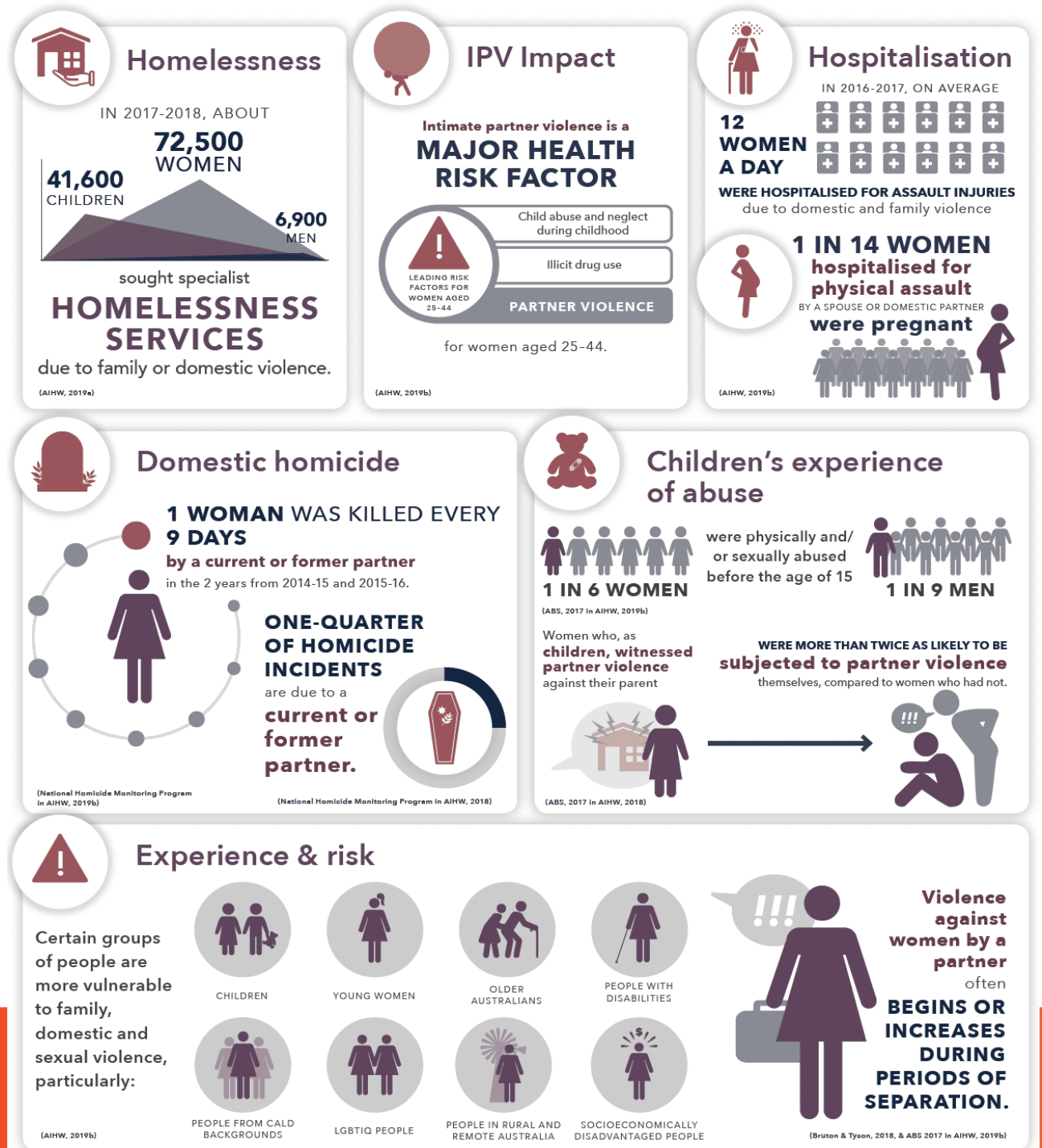
Domestic and Family Violence is the number one reason why people present to specialist homelessness services, with 55% of female clients citing this reason and a total of 25% of all clients (AIHW 2012).

From April 2019 to March 2020 (early COVID-19) rate of domestic assaults against women in the Ryde LGA was 233.00 per 100,000 population vs. state average of 393.8; intimidation, stalking and harassment up 22.9%; and abduction and kidnapping 2.4 vs. state averages of 2.5 (BOCSAR).

BOCSAR data at 30 June 2020 reports an increase in the DV related assaults by 10.76%.

The Ryde LAC reported a 30% increase in DVF reports in the Ryde LGA.

Impacts of family, domestic and sexual violence



Source: ANROWS 2019

The Next 12 Months

Build domestic and family violence dedicated support services

Grow revenue streams

Continue to strengthen and consolidate our CALD workforce and access service capacity

Increase sector collaboration for service development

Increase relevant colocated partnerships

Leverage technology learnings from COVID-19 optimise to service delivery



Partnership Acknowledgements and Thank You

We acknowledge the support of our partnerships through the year. Thank you for the opportunity to collaborate and leverage greater outcomes for the community.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Australian Chinese Charity Foundation
- Bendigo & Adelaide Bank
- Brendan Kerin
- Bridge Housing
- Burdenkin Association
- Catholic Care
- Christian Community Aid
- Community Migrant Research Centre (CMRC)
- Elizabeth Lee
- Hunt and Hunt Lawyers
- Indonesian Welfare Association
- Integricare Supported Playgroups Northern Sydney
- The Korean Daily Hanho Daily
- Ku-ring-gai Neighbourhood Centre
- KYDS
- Link Housing
- Lynne Tripet
- Macquarie University – PACE program
- Mindtalk Counselling
- Mission Australia
- Myer Macquarie Centre
- New Horizons headspace
- North Ryde Community Aid
- North Ryde Ladies Golf Club
- Phoenix House
- Relationships Australia
- Ryde District Mums
- Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club
- Save the Children
- St George Community Housing (SGCH)
- Streetwork
- Taldumande Youth Services
- The Benevolent Society
- The Salvation Army
- United Way Australia
- University of South Australia
- West Ryde Neighbours Children's Centre
- Wesley Mission

GOVERNMENT

- City of Parramatta Council
- City of Ryde Council
- Department of Communities & Justice (DCJ)
- Department of Health
- Eastwood Public School
- Kur-ring-gai Council
- Lane Cove Council
- NSW Police
- Primary Health Network
- Ryde Public School
- Ryde Secondary College
- St Ives High School
- Turramurra High School
- West Ryde Public School

SOCIAL WORK PLACEMENT

- Philip Craig – University of Western Sydney





the northern centre
care. connect. grow. our community

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