

Annual Report

2017-2018



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In some instances, names have been changed and stock images used to protect the privacy of the women and children we help.

Our vision is to eliminate family violence

safe steps Family Violence Response Centre is Victoria's statewide first response service for women, young people and children experiencing family violence. We are committed to ensuring all women and children are able to live free from abuse, and our ultimate goal is the elimination of family violence.

We work towards this through a respond-recover-prevent framework, which is underpinned by our three strategic pillars of empowerment, influence and sustainability.



RESPOND

We empower women, young people and children experiencing family violence and secure their safety through our 24/7 phone response and specialist support services.



RECOVER

We support survivors to overcome trauma so they can thrive in their communities and continue to live free from violence. **safe steps'** core values inform all that we do.



PREVENT

We work towards a community free from family violence through education, system reforms and by fostering social change initiatives.

We are:

- **Courageous**
- **Feminist**
- **Empowering**
- **Ethical**
- **Respectful**
- **Reflective**

What is Family Violence?

- Family violence can happen to anyone, regardless of age, culture, sexual identity, ability, ethnicity, religion or socioeconomic status.
- It involves an ongoing pattern of threatening and violent behaviour in a current or former domestic, intimate or family relationship.
- It includes not only physical assault, but also threats, verbal abuse, emotional and psychological abuse, abuse of systems, economic abuse and control and social abuse and isolation, cultural or spiritual abuse - all of which cause a person to live in fear.
- Family violence is most likely to be perpetrated by men towards women and children – this makes family violence a gendered form of violence

Our History

From grassroots beginnings in the 1970s, **safe steps** Family Violence Response Centre has grown to become a leading response service in Victoria for women. The specialist family violence sector in Victoria has evolved considerably since **safe steps** was formed, with a number of significant reforms to responses in family violence.

In 2015, we saw a significant increase in public and community attention to violence against women, with many years of work from the women's movement bearing fruit. The Royal Commission into Family Violence created unprecedented opportunities to investigate and evaluate Victorian systems, strategies and programs that respond to family violence.

As a result, **safe steps** has grown exponentially and been intimately involved with several recommended reforms. We continue to offer our expertise to ensure all systemic improvements are informed by survivor experiences and fully meet the needs of women and children impacted by family violence.

Today, the heightened awareness that family violence not only impacts individuals but affects society as a whole, has increased the community desire to end family violence. **safe steps** is excited to be part of this growing change, and we working hard to achieve safety, security and wellbeing for women and children in Victoria.

Chair Report

Candy Broad



The past year has seen momentum continue to build in the struggle against – and support for those affected by – family violence in our community. However – in spite of a significant and welcome investment by the Victorian Government – the data confirms just how widespread the problems really are.

As you will read in the report that follows, 2017/18 again saw a sharp spike in the number of calls made to the 24/7 Family Violence Response Line – climbing to 104,189 for the year – a jump of 14%. It is all too easy to get caught up in analysis of whether this represents an increase in violent incidents, in reporting, or both. Regardless, it provides ample evidence of the extent of the problem of family violence within our community, and of the moral imperative for everyone to play their part.

Against this backdrop, the work of **safe steps** and the entire family violence sector remains of paramount importance.

In 2017/18, **safe steps** undertook a review to streamline its response to phone calls from specialist service partners to improve the call experience for clients and service partners. The telephony enhancements are scheduled to be completed early 2018/19 and will allow us to further provide comprehensive support to women in need.

Also in the past year, **safe steps** entered into a collaborative agreement with the Federal Government's 1800RESPECT

service. Through this agreement, **safe steps** delivers specialist telephone-based trauma counselling nationally.

Other key initiatives throughout the year included:

- Introduction of Flexible Support Packages to assist women and children leaving family violence without going to refuge;
- Development of a new 'core and cluster' purpose-built refuge program for women and children. This initiative will see families being housed in separate units, promoting a stronger holistic therapeutic response. It is envisaged the new facility will house up to ten families, a 70% increase on our current Safe House capacity.
- Working with Domestic Violence Victoria to develop a sector-wide response to the Birru Report aimed at increasing therapeutic responses to children and young people housed in emergency accommodation;
- Successful completion of a two-year pilot program with the Melbourne Magistrates' Court allowing women in remote areas to provide courtroom evidence via video-link from a safe, confidential location;
- Development of the Family Violence Accommodation Register to better match women and children experiencing, or at risk of family violence, with appropriate places of safety; and
- Contributing to meaningful change through advocacy and policy development at both a State and Federal level.

The Board acknowledges CEO Annette Gillespie, who has resigned since the end of the reporting period, for her contribution during her time at **safe steps**.

Challenges

At **safe steps**, we are confronted by the challenges of family violence on a daily basis, including:

- the challenge faced by women resolving how to confront abusive, often violent, relationships;
- the challenge of providing access to timely and meaningful support; and
- the challenge of those on the front line delivering support services so desperately needed by our community's most vulnerable.

As an organisation, **safe steps** has also confronted its own challenges.

Since the end of the reporting period, the Department of Health and Human Services has finalised its performance review of **safe steps** and briefed the Board on its findings.



While the review acknowledged the commitment and expertise of **safe steps**' front line staff, it also identified a number of issues with our service provision and culture requiring immediate attention. An interim CEO, Suzanne Dvorak, has been appointed and, on behalf of the Board, Suzanne will be implementing a series of process and cultural improvements across our organisation.

A priority for Suzanne is to work with the Board to finalise the development of a transformation plan to strengthen our processes and systems and ensure everyone has access to better quality supervision and support.

The changes will be implemented in priority order – meaning those that are impacting on how we deliver our services and how staff are supported will be prioritised.

safe steps commits to working closely with the Department, Family Safety Victoria and other stakeholders to strengthen its relationships with sector partners and ensure our approach is effective and collaborative.

Thank you

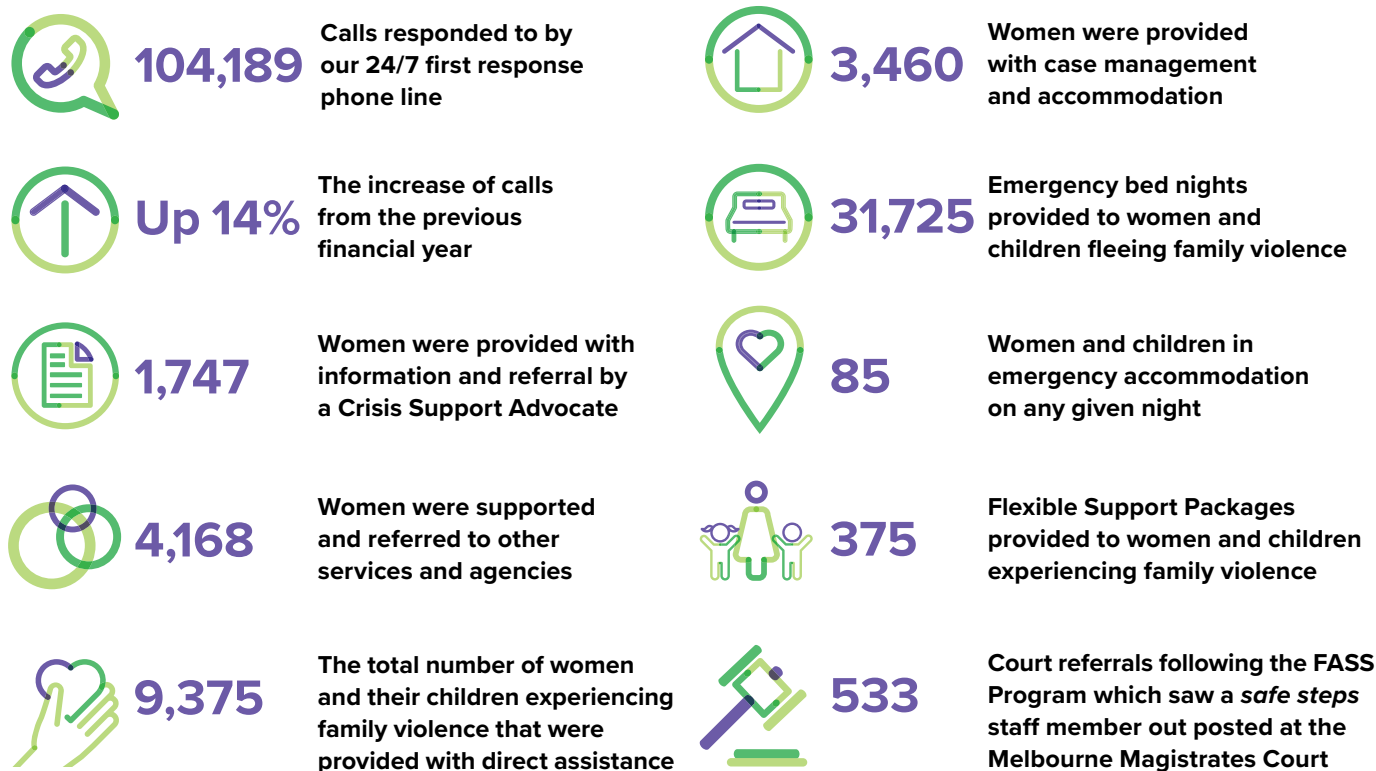
On behalf of the Board, I take this opportunity to pay tribute to our tireless staff for their dedication to what is surely one of the toughest jobs.

Thank you also to our supporters, funders and partners whose generosity – with money, time and other resources – has directly contributed to countless women and children being protected from harm.

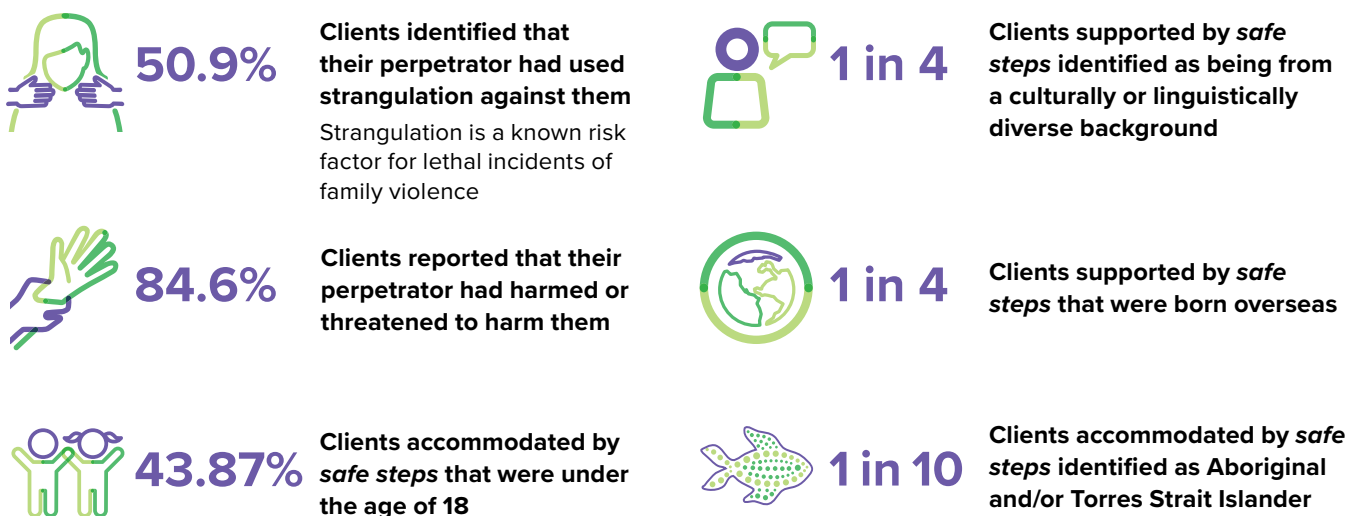
And finally, thank you to the brave women who find their voice to contact **safe steps** in their time of desperate need. We do not underestimate the enormous courage and resilience required to take that first step – and we thank you for placing your trust in us. We strive to repay that trust and deliver the best service possible to meet your needs.

2017/18 at a Glance

safe steps 24/7 1800 015 188 phone line:

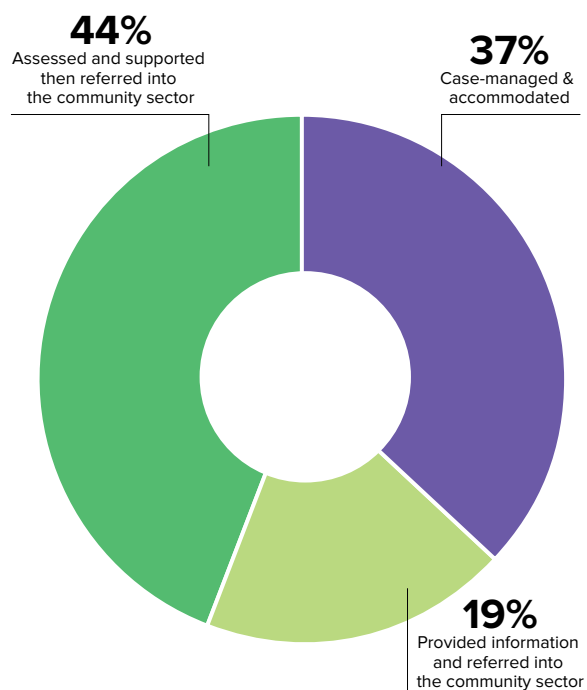


Our Clients



Women and children assisted

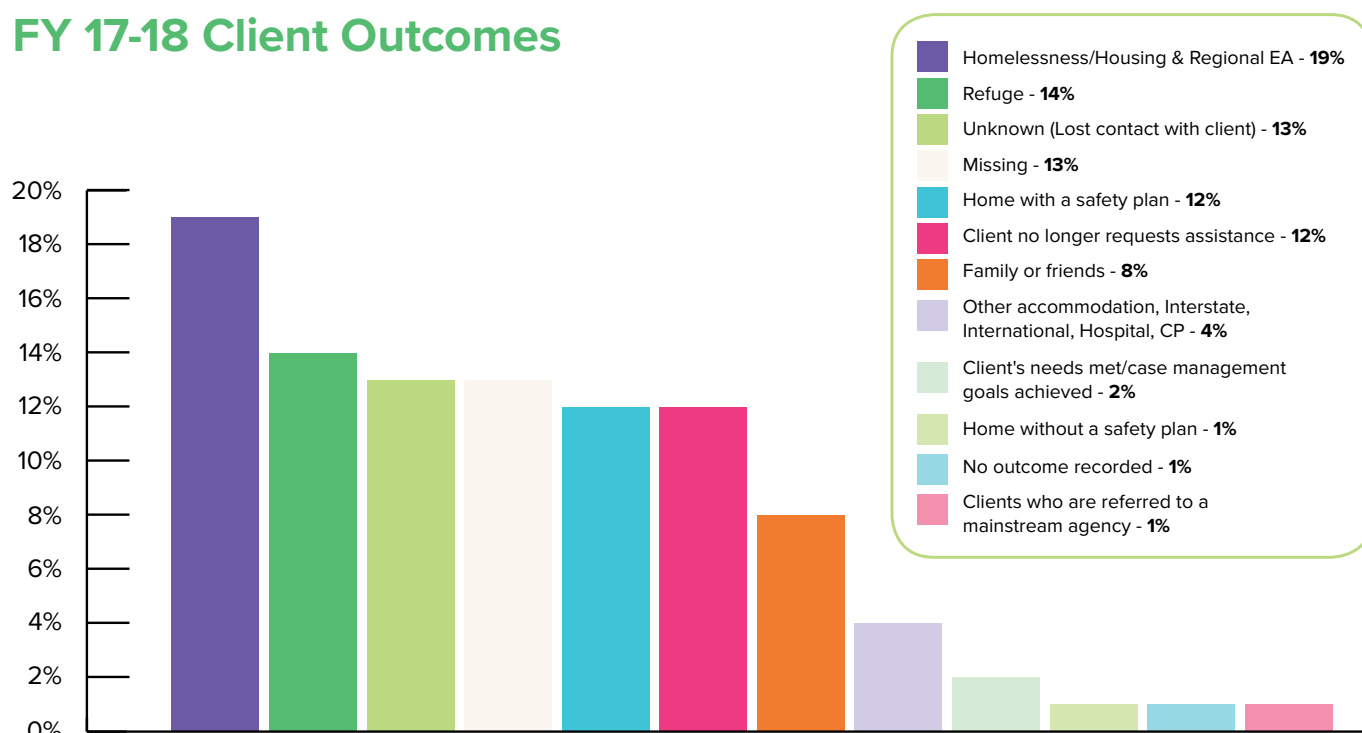
FY 17-18 Family Violence Response



Age of those supported

0 - 2 years	9.80%
3 - 5 years	10.18%
6 - 8 years	8.23%
9 - 11 years	7.04%
12 - 14 years	5.25%
15 - 17 years	3.37%
18 - 20 years	2.98%
21 - 25 years	6.51%
26 - 35 years	19.96%
36 - 45 years	16.53%
46 - 55 years	6.96%
56 - 65 years	1.70%
66 - 85 years	0.69%
> 85 years	0.03%
Not Specified	0.77%
TOTAL	100%

FY 17-18 Client Outcomes



A Year in Review



safe steps continued to provide life-saving services to women and children experiencing family violence, in an environment of new initiatives, policy reform, service growth and increased volume in service demand.

Services

Our services are funded primarily by the Department of Human Health Services (DHHS) and provided to single women, women with children and anyone who identifies as female or transfeminine and their children across Victoria.

24/7 Statewide Family Violence Response

The **safe steps** first response has been designed as triage response consisting:

- **Rapid Risk** where each call is assessed by a specialist family violence worker and assisted or directed to the appropriate team. In 2017/18, 104,189 calls were made to the 24/7 Family Violence Response Line, representing

a 14% increase in number of calls from the previous year. These calls also include calls from our partners including Victoria Police, hospitals, specialist family violence refuges and services involved in the logistics of ensuring women and children's safety and wellbeing.

- **Assessment** where specialist family violence workers undertake risk assessments with each woman leaving family violence, this process may take several calls informed by the level of risk, getting the women and children to safety and working with the woman at her pace, understanding she is traumatised.
- **Case-management:** where specialist family violence workers develop case-plans with each woman and maintain contact with the woman entering **safe steps**. The specialist case-managers maintain contact and continue updating their safety plans that are informed by their risk assessment.

Telephony Upgrades

In 2017/18, a review was undertaken in order to streamline response to phone calls from specialist service partners to improve the call experience for clients and service partners. The telephony enhancements are scheduled to be completed early 2018/19 and will allow us to further provide comprehensive support to women in need.

1800 RESPECT

In October 2017, **safe steps** entered into a collaborative agreement to provide the specialist trauma-informed counselling component of the 1800RESPECT.

1800RESPECT, the national sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling service, is delivered by

Medibank on behalf of the Federal Government Department of Social Services as part of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022.

1800RESPECT provides specialist counselling via a panel of expert non-profit sexual assault, domestic and family violence support service including:

- **safe steps** Family Violence Response Centre
- DVConnect
- Women's Safety Services SA.

This partnership is integral to ensuring a high quality service, while meeting the significant number of contacts to 1800RESPECT.

1800RESPECT service overview FY 2017/18

Total Calls Offered To 1800RESPECT	Nov - 17	Dec - 17	Jan - 18	Feb - 18	Mar - 18	Apr - 18	May - 18	Jun - 18
	7550	7735	7560	7364	8819	9081	10711	10737
Total Specialist Counselling Calls Answered	Nov - 17	Dec - 17	Jan - 18	Feb - 18	Mar - 18	Apr - 18	May - 18	Jun - 18
Warm Transfers Answered	2111	2405	2357	2140	2682	2805	3523	3553
DVCONNECT	35%	33%	37%	37%	37%	42%	37%	38%
SAFE STEPS	38%	31%	29%	27%	27%	27%	33%	33%
WASSA	27%	36%	34%	36%	36%	31%	30%	30%

Projects

Our project work involves strong collaborations within the sector, and initiatives developed with women, young people and communities.

Flexible Support Packages

These packages were introduced as an innovative way of meeting the increased demand of women and children leaving family violence. The packages can assist women and children to establish new lives and homes away from violence without going to refuge. Safety and security upgrades, rent, home furnishings, safe cultural connections, education and pathways to employment expenses, clearing credit card and other debts. The packages are informed by the family's case-plans and are very flexible in enabling each application to best meet the needs of each woman, and family member.

This year we provided 345 packages to women and children including to our partners, McAuley Community Services for Women (MCSW), Eastern Domestic Violence Outreach Service (EDVOS) and Women's Health West (WHW).

Overarching Royal Commission Recommendation 15

The Victorian Government support service providers in phasing out the communal refuge model [by 31 December 2020] and replacing it with accommodation that promotes safety, is accessible to people with disabilities, provides private units and enables connections with the community, work and school (core and cluster model). To facilitate the transition, the Victorian Government should provide a capital fund to assist service providers with business case development, design options and implementation (including construction of redesigned accommodation) and fund interim arrangements to avoid loss in service delivery during refurbishment or redevelopment.

A Year in Review

Core & Cluster

safe steps is excited at the prospect of our new core and cluster purpose-built refuge for women and children being developed after the long journey of securing a site. **safe steps** is among the first five specialist family violence services to be approved for this development in response to Recommendation 15. The core and cluster will provide a separate administration facility, with families being housed in separate units, promoting a stronger holistic therapeutic response. It is envisaged that under this new facility, will house up to ten families - a 70% increase on our current Safe House capacity. The previous communal model was identified as unsuitable for housing multiple high risk families with complex needs under the one roof, negotiating for kitchen time, bathrooms and remote controls. There will be an emphasis on strengthening the therapeutic response to children and young people staying with us. We look forward to reporting back with more detail on this exciting development as it progresses.

Birru Report - Responding to RCFV Recommendation 21

safe steps and Domestic Violence Victoria, developed a sector response to the FSV commissioned Birru report, responding to RCFV Recommendation 21 on increasing therapeutic responses to children and young people staying in emergency accommodation. The sector decided to formulate their response to Birru Report to better reflect their experience and commitment to providing a therapeutic response to children and young people. The sector response has been adopted by Family Safety Victoria along with the accompanying recommendations, including children and young people with intersectional experiences of family violence, and ensure consultation with relevant specialist family violence and cultural services on the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

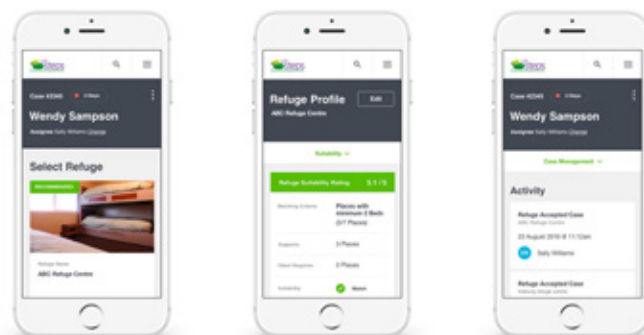
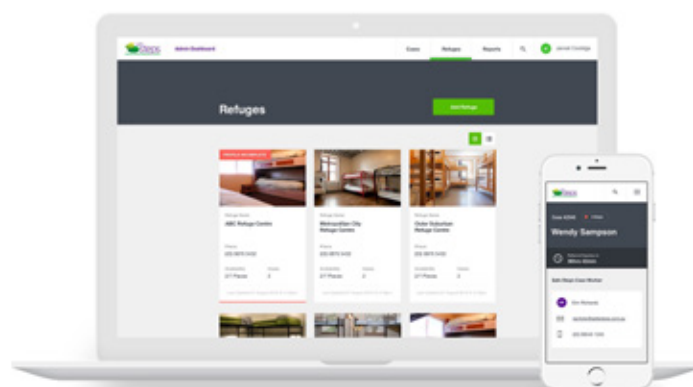
Remote Witness Program

safe steps and Melbourne Magistrates' Court completed a two-year pilot program where survivors of family violence can provide evidence in a remote room in a confidential location with a video link to the Court. On the day of the hearing, survivors are supported by a specialist family violence worker who guides them through the process, including providing referrals to other services for further specialist assistance. For many of the women who come to **safe steps** for remote witness, this is the first time they've

ever been exposed to family violence support and many of them were not aware of the services and support available to them. This program is open to all survivors of family violence attending this court, not only **safe steps** clients. Since its inception, **safe steps** has worked with at least one woman per week.

Family Violence Accommodation Register

The Family Violence Accommodation Register (FVAR) was developed to better match women and children experiencing, or at risk of family violence, with appropriate places of safety. Used internally by case workers, the Family Violence Accommodation Register allows instant access to real time data about what room availability each refuge in Victoria has on a given day. The development of a highly secure platform that expedites the referral process assists in relieving anxiety for women and children during this time of crisis. Since July 2017, the FVAR has supported the placement of approximately 500 women and their children. The designers of FVAR, Conduct HQ, also won a gold medal in the 2018 Melbourne Design Awards in the category of Government Services.



Case Study: Overcoming Indigenous Family Violence Conference

Trish O'Donohue, **safe steps'** Chief Projects Officer was a guest presenter at the Overcoming Indigenous Family Violence held in Darwin earlier this year.



Pictured: Jane Nungarrayi Blunden, Chair of Committee Indigenous Advisory Committee, Marietta specialist family violence worker from West Arnhem Land Safe House and Trish O'Donohue

This conference is held annually and organised in different Australian capital cities ensuring access with all Indigenous communities. Each conference's program is designed by an Indigenous Advisory Committee of local elders and experts, with Chair Jane Nungarrayi Blunden. Indigenous Family Violence will always require a dedicated specialist response with holistic family responses in culturally safe settings. The intergenerational impact of colonisation and the Stolen Generation has affected the First Nations People across Australia. These conferences facilitate discussions, and provide an opportunity for various communities to showcase their work and initiatives.

The highlight of this year's three-day conference was the trip to and workshop held on Bathurst Island, that belongs

to the Tiwi Islands. We met with local elders, visited local social initiatives including the screen printing workshop and art gallery. We enjoyed a presentation from local women working at the Safe House who spoke about the challenges of working in and living in a remote area providing a specialist family violence response, often organising flights off the island for women and children at high risk. We heard from local men working with Relationships Australia providing programs in schools and the importance of role models for young men. They expressed their pride in Islander and Essendon footballer Anthony McDonald Tipungwuti. Among the conference participants were the West Arnhem Land Safe House Co-ordinator Bernadette and staff member Marietta.

A Year in Review

Policy and Advocacy

safe steps continued to influence change by contributing to family violence reforms and participating in consultations regarding a variety of policy and legal issues.

On a state level, we drew on our extensive practice knowledge to provide constructive input and advice to reforms in Victoria, including:

- The Family Violence and Child Information Sharing Reforms
- The Support and Safety Hubs
- The new family violence risk assessment and management framework (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework, or 'MARAM')
- Meeting the needs of children and young people in refuge and crisis accommodation via Recommendation 21 of the Royal Commission into Family Violence
- Proposed changes to the Victims of Crime Assistance Scheme.

On a Federal level, we provided feedback to inform potentially wide-reaching changes to the family law system, including as part of the Australian Law Reform Commission's review, as many of our clients come into contact with the family courts and family law. Our submissions have been guided by the voices of these survivors, who generously shared their stories with us and provided positive and insightful ideas for change to assist women accessing the system into the future.

safe steps' recent advocacy work has included a focus on women without permanent residency experiencing family violence. As part of this work, we sit on a newly formed national advocacy group for women on temporary visas experiencing violence, and have been undertaking a project exploring sustainable housing pathways and improved support and services for these women and their children.

Our Submissions in 2017/18:

- Submission made as part of SafeNET to the Family Law Amendment (Family Violence and Cross-Examination of Parties) Bill 2017 (July 2017)
- Victorian Law Reform Commission Review of the Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1996 (October 2017)
- Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee – Inquiry into the Delivery of National Outcome 4 of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children (1800RESPECT) (November 2017)
- Submission to Family Safety Victoria: Family Violence Information Sharing Reforms (October 2017)
- Inquiry into the Family Law Amendment (Parenting Management Hearings) Bill 2017 (February 2018)
- Inquiry into the Family Law Amendment (Family Violence and Other Measures) Bill 2017 (February 2018)
- Treasury Review of the Early Release of Superannuation Benefits (March 2018)
- Submission to the Australian Law Reform Commission's Review of the Family Law System – Issues Paper (May 2018)



Asma's Story



Asma first came to **safe steps** in 2018 to seek help following family violence that put her life and the life of her five-year-old daughter at risk.

A few years earlier, Asma had found herself ostracised from her Muslim community following a failed relationship and was without any support for herself or her daughter. Asma reconnected with Abdel, her high school boyfriend, and thought she was embarking on a new chapter of love, happiness and safety.

It wasn't until they married that the relationship became volatile. Abdel was prone to outbursts. He was controlling and irrationally jealous – always demanding to know where she was going and who she was seeing. Eventually he became violent with her and Asma knew she had to leave him for both her and her daughter's safety.

After initiating divorce proceedings, Abdel began stalking Asma and her daughter - often waiting outside their new home and even placing a GPS device on her car to track her movements.

Asma and her daughter connected with a **safe steps** case manager who provided counselling and support in

accordance with her Islamic background. After being in and out of emergency accommodation for a month, they were given the assistance they needed to start a new life.

With the support of **safe steps**, Asma was provided long-term transitional accommodation in a safe and protected environment, away from her perpetrator. The support she received from **safe steps** allowed her to start a new life and begin the journey of recovery from the trauma of family violence.

The impact **safe steps** had on Asma's life was even more evident when, a few months later, she referred her cousin to the service and thanked her case manager for her help in setting another woman on the path to a life free from violence.

Asma is now living in safety with her daughter, now 6 years old, and both are thriving in their new lives together.

In the Community

Survivor Advocate Program

This initiative is designed to empower women who have a lived experience of family violence to safely share their stories publicly. Underpinned by a mission to counter misconceptions about family violence and survivors, the Program has trained over 120 Advocates in the past 10 years.

Their voices – once shrouded in silence – have proudly resounded through all forms of media, community/ corporate speaking engagements, and government and judicial consultations. They have even influenced several recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

In 2017–2018, our Survivor Advocates engaged with media across our state and spoke at a range of venues, including:

- The Australian Financial Complaints Authority to raise awareness of financial abuse
- The Royal Women's Hospital to support Strengthening Hospital Responses to Family Violence (SHRFV)
- Stepping Up, Speaking Out: Ten Years of Amplifying Survivors' Voices at ACMI
- A Sydney conference "Working with men to end family violence".

During the year we continued to train more Survivor Advocates – giving them valuable modules on family violence, gender inequality, and media and public speaking training – to make an even greater impact on the community.



Survivor Advocate Program 10 Year Anniversary

Events

Every year, **safe steps** organises and participates in a number of events in the community to raise awareness about family violence. Other events are designed to raise funds to support our vital work helping women and children escaping family violence.

Walk Against Family Violence

safe steps joined forces with the Salvation Army, Emerge Women & Children Support Network, cohealth, Family Life, Ashurst, City of Melbourne, City of Kingston, City of Port Phillip, City of Stonnington and the Victoria State Government to organise the 9th Walk Against Family Violence. Over 3,000 people took to the streets of Melbourne CBD and marched in solidarity to send the message that we will no longer tolerate family violence Square on Friday 25th November. Moving speeches were made by Victoria Police's Assistant Commissioner Dean McWhirter, MP Natalie Hutchins and anti-family violence advocate and former Australian of the Year, Rosie Batty.



Walk Against Family Violence



Walk Against Family Violence



Survivor Advocate Program 10 Year Anniversary

Survivor Advocate Program 10 Year Anniversary

Coinciding with 16 Days of Activism, this special afternoon tea was a chance to commemorate a milestone of the **safe steps** Survivor Advocate Program, and to celebrate the courageous contributions of all family violence survivors. The event was attended by members of the Victoria Government, community groups and **safe steps** Survivor Advocates. The proceedings included a speech from Kerry Robertson, an Advocate on behalf of her daughter Rekiah – who was lost to family violence. A panel discussion took place from three of our advocates – sharing their stories, experiences and the importance of being an Advocate.

In the Community

Candlelight Vigil

safe steps' annual Candlelight Vigil was held on Wednesday 2nd May at Federation Square in remembrance of lives lost due to family violence, as well as to bring the community together. The Vigil was attended by more than 1,000 people who heard powerful speeches from Kerryn Robertson, family violence survivor Ashlee and former Chief Justice of the Family Court, the Honourable Diana Bryant AO. Shaynna Blaze served as MC, while the Melbourne Contemporary Choir provided a beautiful musical tribute to conclude the evening's proceedings. A minute's silence was observed and an honour roll shown in remembrance of women and children tragically killed as a result of family violence. Victoria Police Pipe Band marked this poignant moment with an emotional bagpipe tribute.



Candlelight Vigil



Candlelight Vigil



Candlelight Vigil



SAFEtea for Women

SAFEtea for Women

The third annual SAFEtea for Women was held at the RACV City Club on Sunday 25th June. Over 120 attendees were treated to an afternoon tea and an array of silent auction items generously donated by sponsors. Martine Harte, award-winning journalist and founder of popular women's blog Engaging Women was the MC for the event. Media personality and former **safe steps** client, Sarah Roza bravely shared her own personal experience with family violence and guests were further moved by an emotive musical performance by The Voice's Kelsie Rimmer.

Partnerships

safe steps continued to build strong, effective and mutually beneficial relationships with community groups, corporate organisations, and key stakeholders to support our services and raise community awareness.

Yarra Trams Community Partnership Program

safe steps' "You Can Live Free from Family Violence" campaign was featured across the Yarra Tram network as part of the Community Partnership Program which gave eight community groups a share in \$1 million worth of free advertising. The three-month campaign sparked an increase in calls, donations and online enquiries.

Brookfield Multiplex

Leading international construction contractor Brookfield Multiplex announced **safe steps** as their charity partner for the development of 405 Bourke Street building. As part of the partnership, Brookfield Multiplex staff will be fundraising for **safe steps** over a two-year period.

Trusts & Foundations

safe steps is incredibly grateful to the trusts and foundations that support our work in helping women and children escape family violence. In 2017/18, we received a total of \$248,428 through philanthropic trusts and foundations.



New Day Box Initiative



Yarra Trams Community Partnership Program

New Day Box Initiative

safe steps was thrilled to once again partner with Envato on their New Day Box initiative where thousands of shoe box sized boxes filled with pamper items and toiletries for women are delivered to **safe steps** to be distributed. Not only to our own clients and Safe House, but to refuges all over Victoria. This year we were able to distribute over 2500 boxes to 25 different refuges and facilities, as well as our own, supporting women escaping family violence this holiday period.

Gift In Kind

In 2017/18, **safe steps** received over \$665,000 worth of material aid from individuals, community groups and corporate organisations. Items donated included a range of basic necessities such as sanitary items, toiletries, food, and clothing. These items were regularly distributed to women and children living in crisis accommodation by **safe steps** resource workers.

About Us

Board Directors

safe steps Family Violence Response Centre is an Incorporated Association governed by a Board of Directors responsible for determining the strategic direction of the organisation.



Candy Broad (Chair)



Gayle King (Treasurer)



Jen Allen



Christine Gibbs



Gayathri Paramasivam



Joan Richardson



Wendy Steendam



Cora Clough



Pam Newton

The Board's primary function is to work closely with the Chief Executive Officer to ensure the activities of **safe steps** are aligned with its values and directed towards achieving its mission to be the voice for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and children. The Board ensures this mission is achieved in the most efficient and effective way possible.

The Board Members of **safe steps** bring extensive knowledge and wide-ranging skills to support the Chief Executive Officer to implement the strategic plan and monitor organisational performance against budget.

About Us

People & Culture

The management and staff of **safe steps** Family Violence Response Centre is a group of talented, hardworking and committed women who are passionate about implementing effective family violence responses that support women, children and communities to be free from all types of family violence and abuse.

safe steps recognises the importance of a positive and encouraging workplace culture to ensure staff are well equipped to provide the level of care required to the women and children we support.

The past year has seen us combine our office spaces of direct services and business services onto one level to further foster communications and collaboration.

Team Reflections

"After every shift, I go home feeling rewarded that I had contributed something small to a woman's journey towards a life free of family violence."

– Inotoli, Crisis Support Advocate

"I have learnt so much in my role at Safe Steps' Safe House, both from the women and children who we work alongside every day, and from the team of skilled, dedicated family support workers who spend their days hard at work to achieve the best possible outcomes for our clients. Working face to face with women and children who have lived experience of family violence has taught me what real strength and resilience looks like, and I feel privileged to lead a team who advocate for victim-survivors, and who help them to recover, rebuild and regain their self-efficacy in the wake of complex trauma."

– Ellen, Senior Practitioner

"As someone who has come from England and from a family violence background, I found the challenges to be very similar where family violence is considered to be only specific to one culture whereas in reality, family violence is an issue across the board. Working at safe steps helps me to empower women, treat them how every woman should be treated and respect how every woman should be respected."

– Farzana, Case Manager

"The most rewarding thing about my role is supporting counsellors in their professional journey."

– Maeve, Senior Practitioner



"I'm Keeley, the delighted Program Leader here at 1800Respect safe steps. I gratefully accepted this position to assist in the formation of the new 1800Respect Specialist Counselling Contract, and take great pride in the input we have all had in provision of service delivery. I am committed to the work that we do in this program, and I come to work every day looking forward to spending time with my bubbly, quirky and passionate team. This is an exciting National Partnership to be a part of, working alongside Medibank and two other established Women's Service providers – DV Connect and Women's Safety Services. I look forward to getting to know each of you better, as we shape this wonderful program and develop a more responsive support network."

– Keeley, Program Leader Counselling Services

"I was new to the family violence sector when I started, and I have learned so much from our support workers in the telephone team and at our Safe House, who impress me every day with their resilience and unwavering commitment to helping and empowering women and children experiencing family violence. Not to mention the strength of victim survivors themselves, whose voices inform our advocacy and policy positions, and inspire us to keep working to eliminate violence against women and their children."

– Lucie, Policy Officer

"From my short time working at safe steps, I have seen a group of people who feel strongly about getting stuck in and tackling the epidemic of family violence. My colleagues' drive to help Victorian women and children live free from violence has galvanised me in my own role, and I feel proud to be part of an organisation that is making a real social impact in the lives of so many."

– Belinda, Grants & Submissions Writer

Leona's Story



Leona had been in a relationship with her now ex-husband, Peter, for 15 years when she first made contact with **safe steps**.

Leona was in a vulnerable situation – she is blind, had mental health issues and previously struggled with alcohol abuse. Research has found that women with a disability are more than twice as likely to experience violence, and Leona was an unfortunate statistic.

Peter had been to prison several times for aggravated assault and had subjected Leona to years of physical and emotional abuse. In addition to physical abuse, Peter manipulated her, targeted her insecurities, stole her medication and even injected her with illicit drugs. Unfortunately years of living with Peter had derailed Leona's self-confidence and rendered her totally dependent on him.

After Peter refused to leave the family home, Leona contacted police who referred her onto **safe steps**. Following a risk assessment, it was identified that Leona was in a high-

risk situation and would immediately need to leave her home for her own safety,

Due to Leona's significant vision impairment, communal accommodation wasn't appropriate and she needed to wait for more suitable accommodation to become available. During this time, **safe steps** placed Leona in a motel where she stayed for 60 days, and provided her with clothes, toiletries and other necessities.

Leona was supported by outreach workers, an alcohol counsellor and other agencies, including Vision Australia. She was moved into a suitable property when available and supported by **safe steps** and Vision Australia in her transition.

As a result of the experience she had with **safe steps**, Leona recently contacted the service to advise that she is pursuing a career in the family violence sector to help women like herself live a safe life free from violence.

Financial Summary

Summary of Statement of Comprehensive Income

for year ended 30 June 2018

	2018 (\$)	2017 (\$)
Total income	11,926,575	10,533,970
Expenditure		
Client Direct Relief	4,583,318	3,274,378
Operating costs	7,257,548	5,113,944
Total expenditure	11,840,866	8,388,322
Total comprehensive income for the year	85,709	2,145,648

Summary Balance Sheet

as at 30 June 2018

	2018 (\$)	2017 (\$)
Current assets	6,081,724	5,282,022
Non-current assets	259,841	239,114
Total Assets	6,341,565	5,521,136
Current Liabilities	1,560,644	848,581
Non-current liabilities	39,707	17,050
Total Liabilities	1,600,351	865,631
Net Assets	4,741,214	4,655,505
Equity		
Retained earnings	4,741,214	4,655,505
Total retained earnings and reserves	4,741,214	4,655,505

Independent Audit Report

safe steps Family Violence Response Centre Inc. ABN: 86 138 521 643

Independent Audit Report to the Members of **safe steps** Family Violence Response Centre Inc for the Year Ended 30 June 2018.

Report on the Summary Financial Report

The accompanying summary financial statements, which comprises the Summary Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2018 and the Summary Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year then ended, are derived from the audited financial report of **safe steps** Family Violence Response Centre Inc for the year ended 30 June 2018.

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on that financial report in our report dated 20 September 2018.

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and the *Australian Charities and Not for profits Commission Act 2012*. Reading the summary financial statements, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial report of **safe steps** Family Violence Response Centre Inc.

Management Responsibility for the Summary Financial Report

Management is responsible for the preparation of the summary financial report.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the summary financial statements based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standard ASA 810 Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements.

Auditor's Opinion

In our opinion, the summary financial statements derived from the audited financial report of **safe steps** Family Violence Response Centre Inc for the year ended 30 June 2018 are consistent, in all material respects, with that audited financial report, on the basis described in Note 1.



Peter Shields

Partner

Saward Dawson Chartered Accountants

Blackburn VIC

20 September 2018.



Monica's Story



Monica first came to **safe steps** seeking support after her partner became physically and sexually abusive a few months into the relationship.

Monica met her partner, Scott, in her apartment building. This meant that when Scott's behaviour towards her became controlling and abusive, she was isolated and unsafe in her own home. Monica had been cut off from family and friends and ended up suffering daily physical and sexual abuse at the hands of Scott.

Following one particularly brutal assault, Monica was hospitalised. After her physical recovery, she was referred to a service designed to address imminent threats to women deemed to be at the highest risk of death from family violence.

A **safe steps** support worker was assigned to Monica's case, and developed a safety plan for Monica to leave her

apartment as soon as possible. As Monica was living in a social housing property, the transfer process unfortunately involved a lengthy wait, meaning she would have to remain living on the same level as her perpetrator in the interim.

To ensure her safety during this time, **safe steps** arranged for surveillance cameras to be placed at her property and for her locks to be changed. In addition, they advocated on her behalf to the housing office to speed up her transfer and arranged emergency accommodation when needed.

Thanks to the support of **safe steps**, Monica has now moved to another property far away from Scott, and today lives free from family violence.

Acknowledgements



The continued support of government, community, donors, volunteers, schools, businesses and corporations is fundamental to **safe steps'** ability to deliver much needed quality services to women and children. We would like to sincerely thank all of those who have generously contributed to **safe steps**.

We would like to acknowledge the following supporters for their ongoing commitment against family violence:

- Aesop
- Australian Chinese Charity Foundation
- Australian Communities Foundation
- Break up Boss – Zoe Foster Blake
- Bunnings
- Charles David Fund
- City of Melbourne
- Commonwealth Bank
- Envato
- Fair World Foundation
- Financial Ombudsman Service
- Grill'd
- Hesta
- IMPACT for Women
- Jetstar
- Korowa Anglican Girls School
- Lord Mayer's Charitable Foundation
- Mantra
- Marcus Thomas Family Foundation
- Myer
- Myer Community Fund
- NAB
- Optus
- Pandora
- Pfizer
- Pierre Fabre Australia
- RACV
- Rado Family Foundation
- Ralph Lauren
- Sandown Greyhound Racing Club
- Shaynna Blaze
- Sidney Myer Fund
- Telstra
- The Body Shop
- The Chrysalis Foundation
- Victoria Police
- Westpac
- Westpac Foundation

“Our vision is to eliminate family violence.”

For confidential support and information call
1800 015 188 at any time.

To find out more about *safe steps*' programs to help
women and children affected by family violence,
please visit **www.safesteps.org.au**

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Family Violence
Response Centre