



**Liberty**

domestic & family violence  
specialist services

*Helping local families for 40 years*

# ANNUAL REPORT 2019 - 2020

Liberty Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Services acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge and pay our respects to the traditional custodians, the Birpai people, on whose land we walk, work and live. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present. We are committed to honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships with the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.



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Violence Specialist Services**

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# Who We Are

Liberty Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Services provides specialist support and housing services to women and families affected by domestic and family violence and homelessness in the Port Macquarie Hastings region.

The organisation was formed in 1980 as the Hastings Women and Children's Refuge Inc. and has since evolved and expanded to provide a wide range of services to those in need of domestic violence and homelessness support.

Our specialist support team help families through all stages of their journey towards safety. From helping a woman in the peak of crisis secure a safe place to stay, through to supporting her as she navigates the various services available.

We also work towards eliminating domestic and family violence by providing prevention and education programs in the local community and running men's behaviour change programs.

At Liberty we take a whole-of-family and whole-of-community approach - while remaining focused on our central goal of keeping women and children safe.

## Our Services

- Specialist domestic and family violence support
- Emergency supported accommodation
- Transitional housing
- Safety planning for women and children escaping domestic and family violence
- Case management/case coordination planning for women and children
- Brokerage and links to other services
- Information and advocacy relating to domestic and family violence and/or homelessness
- Homelessness/housing support through Specialist Housing Support Project co-located with Community Housing Ltd
- Domestic and family violence support co-located with Department of Communities and Justice
- Education programs and support groups
- Men's Behaviour Change Programs - Engage2Change and Fixed Address
- Everybody's Business domestic violence workplace training
- Liberty Links Mobile Outreach Service
- Pet accommodation for Galbaan House



# Our Vision, Mission and Values

## Our Vision

A safe community where women and children are empowered to achieve their potential

## Our Mission

To lead a community and whole of family response to eliminate domestic and family violence and homelessness

## Our Values

- Respect – Respect for self and others and valuing diversity
- Empathy – Acknowledging the unique experience and feelings of another to empower change
- Integrity – Modelling ethical practice that is honest and engenders trust
- Empowerment – Enabling people to make choices and develop personal capacities that will lead to lasting positive change in their lives
- Quality – Standards and supports that are current and consistent to deliver positive outcomes for families and community
- Innovation – We promote flexibility and creativity in all we do



## What does Liberty mean to you?

*lib.er.ty* noun

The quality or state of being free:

- the power to do as one pleases
- freedom from physical restraint
- freedom from control
- the positive enjoyment of various social, political or economic rights and privileges
- the power of choice

[www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/liberty](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/liberty)



*"I feel so very positive, like I can do anything. I have worth."*

# Service Structure

## Specialist Domestic and Family Violence Support

### Liberty Cottage Outreach Centre

Welcoming space for women to access a range of specialist DFV services

### Outreach Support

DFV specialist services  
Case management  
Brokerage support  
Housing support  
Information and referral services  
Advocacy

### Community Partnerships

DFV specialist services delivered through co-location partnerships with:

- Department of Communities and Justice
- Community Housing Ltd

## Specialist Housing Services

### Galbaan House Crisis Accommodation

5 x family rooms in communal living home  
Intensive DFV support  
Case management  
Brokerage support  
Information and referral services  
Advocacy

### Transitional Housing

Housing support  
18 transitional properties  
Partners include:

- Community Housing Ltd
- Mission Australia Housing
- Centacare Housing

# Service Structure continued

## Advocacy and Prevention

### MATE / Bystander

Education and intervention program

### Men's Behaviour Change (MBC)

MBC programs for men who are ready to work towards non-violence

### Community Education

DFV education training for community groups and workplaces

### Engage2Change

12 week registered program delivered by qualified practitioners

### Fixed Address

Transitional housing options and case management for men

### Everybody's Business

Tailored DFV training and development for workplaces. Launched July 2020

### Women & Children's Advocacy

DFV specialist services to support partners and children of MBC program participants

### Liberty Links

Mobile Outreach Service to commence Feb 2021

## Programs

### Dusk

Supportive 8 week program for women who have experienced DFV

### Wellness Program

Wellbeing programs and activities to build confidence and connection

### Kids Club

8 week after-school program for children aged 8 to 12 who have experienced DFV



*"You saved my life, you truly did."*

# Herstory

In 1980, a group of local women created a safe place for women and children affected by domestic violence in the community. Now, 40 years later, Liberty provides a broad range of specialist domestic violence and homelessness support services.

This is our proud history (we prefer to call it our 'herstory') of four decades of working to secure funding to provide crisis accommodation and support services for women and children in need.

<b>1980</b>	Hastings Council allowed the temporary occupation of a Council property at 45 Savoy St, Port Macquarie for a temporary Refuge	<b>2007</b>	Innovation & Investment Funding Project
<b>1983</b>	Relocated from Savoy St to another Council property at 23 Murray St, Port Macquarie (Killara House)	<b>2009</b>	Funded under Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Services Program to deliver new Project Community Partnerships Against Domestic and Family Violence (CPADFV)
<b>1984</b>	Council requested the property at 23 Murray St be vacated by September 1984	<b>2009</b>	Opening of our Outreach Centre – "Liberty Cottage"
<b>1984</b>	Department of Housing purchase a property in Port Macquarie for Hastings Women and Children's Refuge	<b>2015</b>	Formed consortium with Kempsey Family Support Services and Warrina Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Services for successful tender to pilot Men's Behaviour Change Program in Coffs Harbour - Engage2Change Mid North Coast
<b>1985</b>	Department of Community Services agree to provide funding under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program to provide support to women and children escaping domestic violence	<b>2017</b>	Organisation purchases outreach property in Table St for Liberty Cottage
<b>1988</b>	Department of Housing approved funds under CAP for the purchase of land and design and construction of a new Refuge	<b>2018</b>	Liberty Cottage relocated to specially-renovated premises in Table St Organisation launched its new name, Liberty Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Services, and refreshed logo
<b>1988</b>	Block of land purchased through Murray Turnham Real Estate (1266sqm)	<b>2019</b>	Fixed Address Men's Behaviour Change program launched, Women NSW Innovation Funding Established Joining the Dots Aboriginal service providers network
<b>1990</b>	A design for the new Refuge is accepted by Management Committee	<b>2020</b>	Achieved full registration as compliant with the Practice Standards for Men's Behaviour Change Programs Implemented Adapted Service Delivery Model to ensure service delivery continuation during COVID-19 and achieved COVID Safe registration
<b>1994</b>	Letter sent from the Committee to Department of Housing requesting the property purchased in 1984 soon to be vacated (relocation to new purpose-built Refuge) be provided back to the Refuge as medium-term accommodation for the client group		
<b>1994</b>	Relocate to new purpose-built Refuge		



# Board of Management



Debbie Moore  
**CHAIR**



Catherine Vallentine  
**VICE CHAIR**



Sandra Magann  
**TREASURER**



Caron Dyball  
**BOARD**



Angela Marr-Grogan  
**BOARD**



Felicity Ryan  
**BOARD**

*"The way you have treated me has given me the inspiration to stand on my own two feet when I was down on the floor. Every second of help and support has empowered me, given me hope, strengthened my spirit and opened the door for me to follow my own path."*

Thank you to Board Members who vacated their positions during 2019-2020:  
Michelle Vassallo, Chair | Jo Marchingo, Board | Dianne Sales, Board



# Liberty Team



Kelly Lamb  
CEO



Jenna Bamborough-Lahey  
SPECIALIST DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE MANAGER



Ulla Inki-Gilbert  
ADVOCACY AND PREVENTION  
MANAGER



Donna Harper  
ABORIGINAL SPECIALIST  
HOUSING TEAM LEADER



Tracy Brenton  
FINANCE MANAGER



Michelle Parker  
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER



Care Amor  
DOMESTIC AND FAMILY  
VIOLENCE SPECIALIST



Andrea Burns  
DOMESTIC AND FAMILY  
VIOLENCE SPECIALIST



Carla Davis  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR



Jessica Denham  
DOMESTIC AND FAMILY  
VIOLENCE SPECIALIST



Rebecca Farvis  
DOMESTIC AND FAMILY  
VIOLENCE SPECIALIST



Kate Lambert  
DOMESTIC AND FAMILY  
VIOLENCE SPECIALIST



Brooke Maggs  
PREVENTION AND AWARENESS  
SPECIALIST, TRAINING AND  
DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR



Cameron McKinley-Rodgers  
MEN'S BEHAVIOUR CHANGE  
SPECIALIST



Alison Neale  
DOMESTIC AND FAMILY  
VIOLENCE SPECIALIST



Melissa Wiersma  
DOMESTIC AND FAMILY  
VIOLENCE SPECIALIST



Sharon Wilson  
WOMEN AND CHILDREN'S  
ADVOCATE



Kelly Wyatt  
DOMESTIC AND FAMILY  
VIOLENCE SPECIALIST



Laura Weston  
DOMESTIC AND FAMILY  
VIOLENCE SPECIALIST

Bonnie Blythe  
DOMESTIC AND FAMILY  
VIOLENCE SPECIALIST

# Message from our Chair

I was pleased to have stepped into the role of Chair in January 2019. This certainly was a year of celebration and challenge.

In 2020 we mark 40 years supporting local families. Since the temporary refuge was set up in Savoy St Port Macquarie in 1980, the organisation has evolved to provide a broad range of domestic and family violence services and we continue to innovate and expand into exciting new areas.

We also celebrated a significant fundraising milestone, having received over \$100,000 in donations from International Women's Day events over the past 10 years. The support we receive from local community groups and organisations continues to grow each year and reflects the strength of our relationships and reputation for providing high quality support.

In the later part of the 19/20 financial year, COVID-19 changed the world as we knew it. The pandemic brought with it added challenges for domestic and family violence services including increased difficulty for clients to access support, increased incidence and complexity of cases, and new working conditions. Liberty adapted quickly to ensure continued service delivery at a time when it was needed most. I would like to commend the entire Liberty team, under Kelly's leadership, for responding to the unprecedented circumstances presented by COVID-19 and for keeping the wellbeing and safety of colleagues, clients and the community paramount.

I would like to thank all Board members for their ongoing commitment during a difficult year. As champions of the organisation, the Board have also played an important governance role and have undertaken a comprehensive risk management and policy and procedure review.

We extended a warm welcome to our Aboriginal Board members Angela Marr-Grogan and Felicity Ryan whose contributions have improved and enhanced the diversity of our Board and provided valuable cultural guidance. I would like to acknowledge the work of outgoing Chair Michelle Vassallo and Board members Jo Marchingo and Dianne Sales.

I am pleased that feedback from the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES) accreditation process reflects the varied professional skills of Board members and acknowledges our strong, values-driven ethos. During the 19/20FY a lot of work went into preparing for ASES, and I am pleased to report that we have since received a perfect score of 100%. Congratulations to the Board, management and team for this outstanding achievement.

With a dedicated Board, capable leadership team, skilled management and a committed team, Liberty is well positioned to face the longer-term impacts and ongoing challenges of COVID-19 and continue to work towards a safe community.

*Debbie Moore*



# Message from our CEO

This year not only presented challenges, it also presented opportunities. Opportunities for us to show our resilience and responsiveness in providing high quality support. Opportunities for creative thinking about how we deliver adapted service in a changing world. Opportunities to formalise our expertise as a specialist support service. Opportunities to start conversations in our community about how domestic violence is everybody's business and lead real change.

Towards the end of 2019 our community was affected by the terrible bushfires. Not long after that, the devastating COVID-19 pandemic touched all our lives. Coronavirus brought the issue of domestic and family violence to the forefront, as many women and children faced the challenges of staying home when home may not be safe, and many families felt the added pressure of job losses, financial stress and increased isolation.

I am incredibly proud of how quickly and calmly our team adapted to the new working arrangements as we moved to an essential workplace operating model for Galbaan House and a remote and flexible workforce. We embraced new technologies to stay connected, offered new self-care options for team, and communicated in new ways with our community to ensure women knew support was available.

We all worked hard to prepare for our safe return to the workplace, as reflected by our attainment of the COVID Safe tick. COVID-19 Government funding supported our efforts to adapt all our service streams including the recommencement of group work after a brief pause during lockdown.

Liberty's external Training and Development program for workplaces was adapted and relaunched as Everybody's Business in July after successful delivery of the program to 500+ Port Macquarie-Hastings Council staff. As more organisations take up this offering, we are better able to deliver on our mission to lead a whole-of-community approach to eliminate domestic and family violence.



Our commitment to continuous improvement remained a priority throughout the year and we continue to gather feedback from clients, team members and external stakeholders to guide our decision making to ensure the best outcomes for everyone we work with and support. The team worked hard to prepare for accreditation with the Australian Service Excellence Standards, which has since come to fruition. In March, Liberty became a Registered Provider compliant with the Practice Standards for Men's Behaviour Change Programs.

I was pleased to be appointed to the Board of our peak body, DVNSW, in December 2019. Having a seat at this table ensures issues of importance to Liberty, the Mid North Coast and regional NSW are heard within our sector via DVNSW's advocacy, partnerships and the promotion of good practice.





The impacts of COVID-19 are far from over, and we will continue to do as we have always done – to support women and children to live free from violence, to work with families and focus on prevention, to educate the community and challenge gender inequality and the drivers of violence.

Thank you to the Board of Management, the leaders and management team, and each and every Liberty team member for your dedication and unwavering commitment through it all. The work we do has never been more important.

*Kelly Lamb*

# Our Strategic Direction

Our Strategic Plan focuses on four key areas that drive us to grow and develop as an organisation to provide the best responses to those impacted by domestic and family violence in our local community.

Focus Area	Goal	Objectives
<p>OUTCOMES FOCUSED SERVICE DELIVERY</p> 	<p>By 2021 Liberty will provide services and programs that are designed and delivered for outcomes</p>	<p>Client centred, outcomes focused services Community safety Productive partnerships Growth linked to outcomes</p>
<p>CULTURE AND TEAM</p> 	<p>By 2021 Liberty will attract and retain a highly skilled and satisfied workforce that will be empowered to deliver high quality specialist services</p>	<p>Cohesive culture and resilience Leader development Team development</p>
<p>COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS</p> 	<p>By 2021 Liberty will have a clear alignment between our purpose and brand and be better known and understood by all its key current and future stakeholders</p>	<p>Branding and strategic communications Mutually beneficial stakeholder relationships</p>
<p>QUALITY SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES</p> 	<p>By 2021 all Liberty systems and processes will be fully compliant</p>	<p>Quality framework Improved information technology Policy and procedure</p>

# Partnerships

We are committed to maintaining strong networks with other service providers, both government and non-government, within our community to improve outcomes for clients. Over the past year, Liberty has strengthened existing relationships and formed a number of new productive partnerships.

## Mid North Coast Consortium

Our Memorandum of Understanding with Kempsey Family Services and Warrina Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Services in Coffs Harbour continues to provide benefits. The Consortium members work together to deliver the Engage2Change and Fixed Address Men's Behaviour Change programs, as well as providing a supportive and collegial network of specialist DV services across the Mid North Coast.

## Department of Communities and Justice – Community Corrections

Liberty signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Community Corrections in November 2019, detailing a collaborative working partnership that supports an integrated service response regarding our Men's Behaviour Change programs.

## Community Housing Limited

CHL provides transitional housing properties for our clients and offers us an interview space for meetings with the men we support in our Men's Behaviour Change programs.

## Lifeline

Our partnership with Lifeline Mid North Coast continues to provide clients with safe and respectful access to goods, while helping us manage our received donations.

## Department of Communities and Justice – Child Protection Team

Our DV specialists are co-located at Department of Communities and Justice offices to provide immediate support to clients in need of domestic violence services.

## RSPCA

Our participation in the RSPCA's Safe Families Framework will soon see Liberty offering a pet inclusive crisis accommodation.



*"You are a respected, valued and professional service doing very good things to support women in our community."*

**Our team is actively involved with numerous interagencies and committees including:**

- Bearlay Aboriginal Interagency
- Hastings Community Network
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Domestic Violence Committee (Chair)
- Homelessness Awareness Committee
- Hastings Child and Family Interagency Group
- Child Protection Network Subcommittee
- Local Implementation and Co-ordination Committee
- Hastings Homelessness Network
- People with Disability Australia Community of Practice
- Pride in Diversity Community of Practice
- Domestic Violence Response Enhancement Subcommittee
- District Homelessness Implementation Group
- NSW Men's Behaviour Change Network
- Aboriginal Advisory Committee, Mid North Coast Local Health District
- Local Coordination Point Safety Action Meeting
- Pride ACON LGBTIQ DFV Regional Interagency group
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council Community Wellbeing Subgroup



*Jenna Bamborough-Lahey after speaking at the "Stop the Violence" morning tea at Port Macquarie Base Hospital*



*Kelly Lamb and Member for Port Macquarie Leslie Williams MP announcing COVID-19 funding for domestic and family violence specialist services*

# Community Support

Liberty is an active and integral part of our local community and we are fortunate to receive generous donations and in-kind support from craft, sporting and community groups, schools, businesses and organisations. Thank you to our wonderful supporters.

- Arthouse Industries
- Blokes Notes
- Bunnings Warehouse
- Busways
- Centrelink Call Centre
- Charles Sturt University
- Commonwealth Bank
- Constable Printing
- CWA NSW Port Macquarie Branch
- Delish Beans
- Emerald Downs Golf Club
- Encore Pep Band
- FFF Social Club (Human Services)
- Friends of Mrs York's Garden
- Golden Vintage Pirates
- Greenmeadows Health Centre
- Harry and Marion Dixon Foundation
- Hastings Business Women's Network
- Heritage Christian School
- Ingenia Gardens
- Inner Wheel Club of Port Macquarie
- International Women's Day Committee
- Investing for Charity
- Kennards Hire
- Ladies Probus Club of Hastings
- Lake Cathie Women's Bowling
- Laurieton Art
- Little Glimpses Photography
- LUSC Friendship Quilters
- Mackillop College
- Makinson D'Spice Lawyers
- Maureen Cooke
- Marine Rescue
- Morgans Foundation
- Mt Seaview Springwater
- NSW Fire Brigade Social Bowling Club
- NSW Fire and Rescue
- Oxley Trefoil Guild
- Oxley Region Amateur Radio Club
- Port Anglican Church Ministry
- Port Macquarie Gymnastics Club
- Port Macquarie Hastings Council
- Port Macquarie Library
- Port Macquarie Lions Club
- Port Macquarie Tennis Club
- Port Macquarie Women Golfers
- Probus Club of Tacking Point
- Him in Heels Participants and Supporters
- Red Shed Hire
- Rotary Club of Port Macquarie
- Rotary Club of Port Macquarie - Sunrise
- Share the Dignity
- Snap
- Sienna Grange
- Soul Surfing
- Specsavers
- Sports and Spinal Physiotherapy
- St Agnes Parish
- St Columba Anglican School
- StreetSmart Australia
- Sublime Events
- Sunset Framing and Gallery
- TAFE NSW
- Timeless Quilters
- The Kendall Craft Co-op
- Veducci
- Wauchope Veteran Lady Golfers
- Wauchope SES



Thank you to Member for Port Macquarie, Leslie Williams MP, for being a champion of our cause. Thanks also to Mayor Peta Pinson, for ongoing support of our service, to former Port Macquarie-Hastings Council General Manager Craig Swift-McNair for working with us on a number of projects, and to Acting GM Jeffery Sharp for his continued support.

Sincere thanks to our local media outlets, including Port Macquarie News, Prime and NBN, for helping us shine a light on DFV in our community.

www.portnews.com.au

## Walk for change

BY CARLA MASCARENHAS

ON SUNDAY, December 1 the community is being encouraged to wear white and take steps towards a safer community by joining the Coastal Walk Against Domestic and Family Violence in Port Macquarie.

CEO of Liberty Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Services Kelly Lamb said domestic violence continues to be a 'real issue in the community'.

Referrals for the support service have increased by almost 30 per cent over the past year.

Last financial year Liberty supported 865 women and children experiencing domestic violence," Ms Lamb said.

"During October we received referrals for 52 women and 66 children - that's half our funding quota in one month alone.

"On one hand it is positive that women are reaching out for help, but on the other hand, it is shocking that so many women are experiencing violence right here in our community."



Melinda Scriven, Commonwealth Bank, Kelly Lamb, Liberty, Mayor Peta Pinson, Kate Wood Fove, Charles Sturt University; Kathryn Macfarlane, Charles Sturt University.

"Mrs Lamb said the service is always in need of donations that might help people escaping domestic violence.

"It is lovely to be able to give them a package of personal items, nice clothing, some vouchers that they can get to access services and purchased goods," she said.

"Our community is very generous in that regard."

"Mrs Lamb said Christmas can be 'pressure point' when it comes to domestic violence.

"We find during Christmas time our women and children are more likely to want to stay at home and have a happy Christmas with their partners and obviously that is absolutely their choice and it is about keeping themselves safe."

Participants can do the full 11km starting at Light-house Beach at 8:00am, 3km starting at Flynn's Beach at 9:00am, or 2km starting at 10am beach at 9:30am. Free buses will run from Westport Park to Lighthouse



## Recognise the signs of domestic violence

A NEW training and development program will help local organisations understand their responsibilities to staff who may be experiencing domestic and family violence, learn how to recognise the signs, and respond and refer safely.

Developed by Liberty Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Services, "Everybody's Business" provides tailored training to support the safety and wellbeing of team members and assists managers to put policies and procedures in place to uphold their duty of care

for staff.

Liberty CEO Kelly Lamb said COVID-19 has created an unprecedented situation with increasing rates of domestic violence coupled with increasing numbers of employees working from home or returning to the workplace after a period of remote working.

"For many, home is not a safe place," Mrs Lamb said.

"We know that domestic and family violence can become more frequent and severe during times of crisis and that public health measures, such as self isolation



**SUPPORT:** Liberty CEO Kelly Lamb said COVID-19 has created an unprecedented situation with increasing rates of domestic violence.

and working from home arrangements, can increase workers' exposure to domestic violence. Financial pressures, increased stress and disconnection from support

networks can also be contributing factors."

According to SafeWork Australia, employers 'must ensure workers and others are not exposed to risks to their health and safety, including from family and domestic violence in the workplace. This includes where the workplace is a worker's home.

Mrs Lamb said, "while this program is particularly relevant during COVID-19, it is important that employers understand they always have a role to play in ensuring the safety of staff experiencing

domestic violence."

Everybody's Business Domestic Violence Workplace Training is designed to build the capacity of businesses, universities, schools and community groups to comply with National SafeWork guidelines for a CovidSafe workplace, identify the signs of domestic violence and understand the impacts on individuals, relationships and workplaces.

The program helps organisations establish an inclusive, supportive workplace, built upon values of dignity and respect.

Liberty Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Services  
27 April

Please share this post. You never know who might need to see this message right now. Local domestic violence support is available. Call Liberty on 6583 2155 when it is safe to and we can help you put a safety plan in place.

**Domestic Violence Support  
Call Liberty on 6583 2155**

STAY WELL  
STAY SAFE

HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED  
**HARM OR FEAR**  
IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS?

Call Liberty for  
help and support  
**6583 2155**

After hours domestic and family violence  
crisis accommodation also available

libertyservices.org.au

This year, to overcome the challenges of lockdown and increased isolation, we increased our efforts to connect with our community via social media campaigns and in other ways, such as posters in shopping centres and doctors offices, and on Shop A Dockets across six stores in the region.

**f** 27 April to 30 June | **👤** 30,959 | **❤️** 1520 | **🔗** 310

**Are you safe?**  
Call us today for a  
confidential conversation

**Liberty**  
domestic & family violence  
specialist services

Port Macquarie Hastings  
**f** 6583 2155  
libertyservices.org.au



# Events and Activities

We initiate and lead community events that increase awareness of domestic violence and the services available and take part in other events that contribute to a safer community.

The annual Coastal Walk Against Domestic and Family Violence on 1 December 2019 saw around 500 people walk together in white to take important steps towards a safer community. This year we held an after-walk community gathering and heard from domestic violence survivor and advocate Rachel Natoli. Thanks to our sponsors and supporters who helped bring the event to life – Port Macquarie Hastings Council, Charles Sturt University and Commonwealth Bank and more.



**International Women's Day** in March 2020 marked 10 years celebrating local women and surpassed the fundraising milestone of \$100,000. *Dreamlife Photography*

As Chair of the Domestic Violence Committee, we jointly hosted a COVID Safe **#SeeingRed**, which brought people across local workplaces together online to say no to violence.



# Improving Inclusion

Liberty has been working hard over the past few years to improve our capacity as an inclusive, culturally aware and safe organisation by creating an environment of diversity, involvement, respect and connection.

## Cultural Competency

We are improving our cultural awareness and service to Aboriginal families, who make up more than half of our transitional housing clients and a quarter of crisis accommodation clients. As part of our Cultural Competency Improvement Plan, Liberty seeks to empower our clients and their families to achieve their potential, whilst embracing the culture, beliefs and heritage that form the foundations of who they are. We have:

- signed and adopted the Redressing Aboriginal Homelessness Accord
- implemented cultural awareness training for our team
- built our Aboriginal networks and established the Liberty-led 'Joining the Dots' Aboriginal network
- established two Aboriginal positions and employed an Aboriginal work placement student
- increased our involvement in NAIDOC community celebrations and the local Aboriginal Women's Festival

## Improving Accessibility

Liberty has partnered with People with Disability Australia for the 'Building Access' project, which aims to increase the accessibility of DFV services for women and children with disability. So far we have:

- undertaken an accessibility audit with PWDA
- commenced work on a Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- joined the PWDA Community of Practice

## Pride in Health and Wellbeing

We have joined ACON's Pride in Diversity LGBTIQ social inclusion program for workplaces. Liberty is represented on the LGBTIQ DFV Regional Interagency group. We have committed to:

- incorporate best practice workplace diversity into our policies and procedures
- develop a strategy to improve the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ people involved with our service
- join the Pride in Health and Wellbeing Community of Practice
- expand our services to include women of diverse sexualities and gender identities



# Specialist Domestic Violence Support & Housing Report

Taking the time to reflect on the stories of women and their children means they are so much more than a statistic. They are the driving force of Liberty. They teach us more through their experiences, their resilience and their resistance of violence than they could ever comprehend. In an everchanging service system, they remain our true north.

With 474 women and 566 children supported across the Specialist Homelessness Service and Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Strategy funding streams, our service continues to strive to meet the needs of our community.

To our community, who believe so passionately in what we do, assisting by any means possible through donation, support with projects and inviting us into your spaces to speak to our service provision and gender inequality. Your support means the world to both the staff and the individuals we support.

To each and every member of our team; thank you for your commitment to improve the safety and lives of women and children. Your tenacity, advocacy, strength and reliability are valued daily. It is a brilliant experience to work

amongst a skilled, passionate, diverse and dedicated team.

To the individuals who trusted us to join them on part of their journey; thank you for the privilege of walking alongside you, you are the reason we continue to strive for a community safe from violence. You are heard and recognised for the strength and courage it takes to make a stand and to take steps toward change.

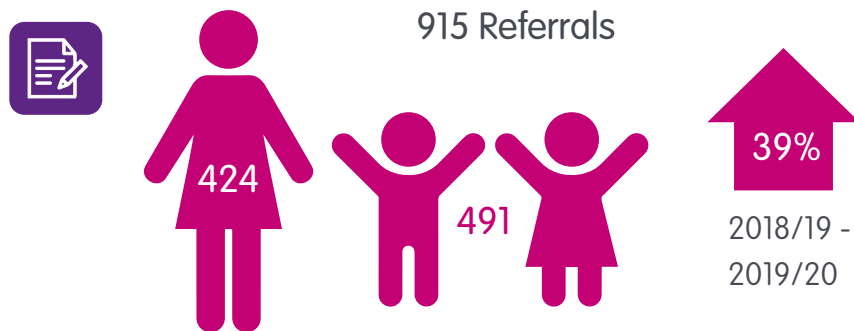
*Jenna Bamborough Lahey*

Specialist Domestic Violence Manager

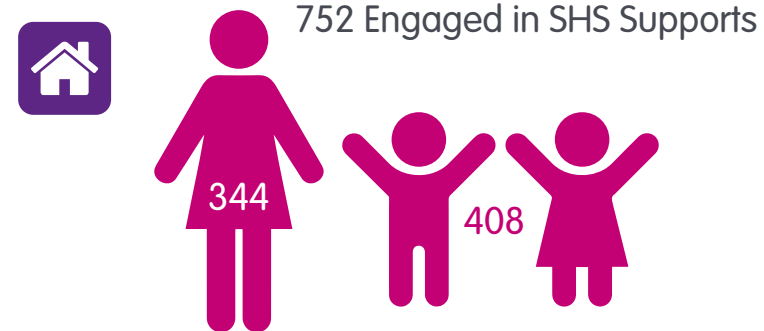


# Assessment and Intake Report

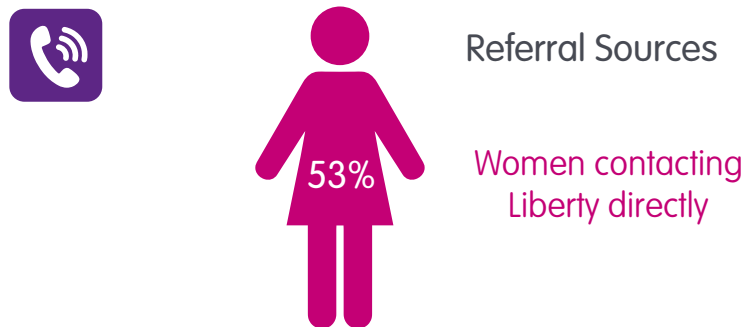
Liberty works to ensure that women who access our services experience a seamless and warm entry to accessing support, without the need to repeat their story, nor their goals. This approach ensures equity in access to supports whilst still allowing the service to respond to crisis as a priority. Women are met at a time, place, and forum which suits them, with responses and services tailored to their needs.



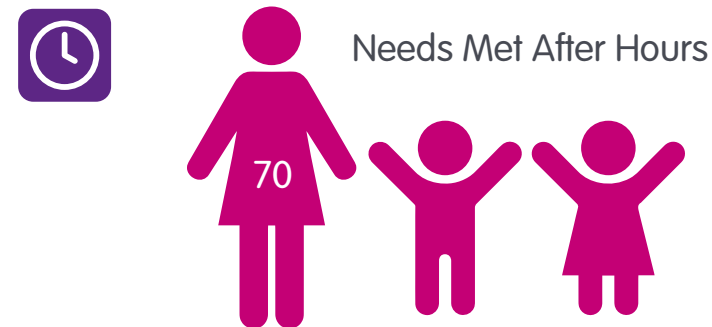
As awareness of domestic and family violence and its far-reaching implications on the health and safety of individuals grows within the community, so too does the demand for services.



Through our Department of Communities and Justice Specialist Homelessness Services funding program areas of Galbaan House, Transitional Housing and Outreach.



As well as self-referrals, we receive referrals from a diverse range of services and support agencies within the community.



Through the provision of Domestic Violence Response Enhancement Funding (DVRE) our team respond to calls throughout the night, providing emergency accommodation, supporting women at the police station or hospital and restoring dignity through the provision of basic essentials and comforts such as food, clothing and care packs.

## Liberty Cottage

From Liberty Cottage - our Outreach Centre - we operate a variety of programs such as the Outreach Program, Community Partnerships Against Domestic and Family Violence and the Advocacy and Prevention Programs.

Women and children of all stories of life, cultural backgrounds, sexuality and gender diversity who have experienced domestic and family violence in their relationships or homelessness are warmly welcomed by the team. Women and children are supported in their unique journeys toward healing, empowerment and regaining physical and emotional safety and wellbeing. The voices and stories of women and children are upheld, validated - and believed. The choices and right to self-determination of women and children are respected and treated with dignity.

Although Liberty Cottage can become busy at times, it is often described as a haven for women to meet with our staff for a talk over a cup of coffee. The Liberty Cottage team is also flexible in safely meeting women in the community.

## Outreach Report

The Outreach Team provide support to women and their children to plan for safety and wellbeing through the provision of advocacy, support and safety planning. Underpinning the Outreach Program is ensuring women feel heard, respected and are offered the opportunity to meet their goals.

The Outreach Team engage with women who may be homeless by assisting them to navigate the housing system, at risk of homelessness to sustain a tenancy or to assist women to make a plan to relocate safely and avoid homelessness. This makes the work of the Outreach Team incredibly diverse as they honour placing the client at the centre of all decision making.

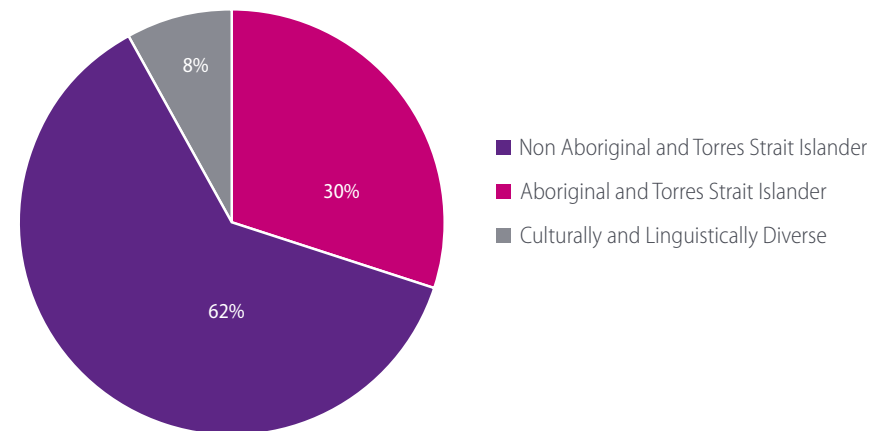
In 2019/20, our Outreach Team supported a total of 285 women and 329 children.

The service overall, encompassing all Specialist Homelessness Service program areas, i.e. Galbaan House, Transitional Housing and Outreach provided case management and supports to a total of 344 women and 408 children accounting for the following diversity:

### Outreach Team Supports



### Diversity



## Community Partnerships Against Domestic and Family Violence Report

Community Partnerships is funded by the Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Strategy through Department of Communities and Justice. The program seeks to promote safety for families experiencing domestic and family violence through a range of responses matched to client need and outcomes of risk assessment.

Safety is most commonly increased through referral, case coordination and comprehensive case management services. Community Partnerships utilises multiple strategies to support women and increase their safety including coordination of security audits and upgrades, homelessness prevention and prioritised access to specific targeted professional support to address their needs.

Community Partnerships co-location and partnership with Department of Communities and Justice continues to grow and strengthen in providing integrated responses to women and children who have experienced violence and men who have used violence in their relationships.



Supported through referral, case management or case coordination services in 2019/20.



Community Education sessions

Exploring the dynamics of domestic violence, the underpinning cause of gender inequality and navigating the bystander space.

## Galbaan House Report

Galbaan House is the heart of Liberty - a beautiful, warm, relaxing, culturally safe and nurturing environment created for women, and their children requiring short term, crisis accommodation. The 5-bedroom, communal living layout includes newly renovated kitchen and bathrooms, and well-appointed playroom just for fun. A great deal of effort and community investment ensures the building reflects the level of care and comfort we believe our residents deserve.

Galbaan House staff strive to ensure every woman walking through the door is given the opportunity to explore her hopes and dreams for herself and her family, connecting with the person behind the trauma that brought her here, rather than being defined primarily by her current situation.

Witnessing the growth in women and children, as they connect with their inner strength and belief in their self-worth is a privilege enjoyed by the staff working within Galbaan as they work in partnership on every unique goal set by the client.

37 women and 46 children were accommodated at Galbaan House this year. The overwhelming reason for single women and women with children securing accommodation at Galbaan House was domestic and family violence, with 33 women (90%) seeking refuge from the violence and abuse they experienced. Homelessness caused by other factors accounted for 4 women (10%). This reflects widely accepted research findings citing domestic violence as the leading cause of women's homelessness in Australia.

With short term crisis accommodation consisting of 8 week stays, the following housing outcomes show how intensive support and working in partnership with social housing providers and other services produces options for women to resolve homelessness. Many of the women we work with face significant hurdles to access the private rental market, with TICA database listings and security needs not matching affordability.

## Housing Outcomes



Social  
Housing



Transitional  
Housing



Private  
Rental



Temporary  
Accommodation



Caravan  
Park



Returned  
Home



Returned  
Home Safely



Family/  
Friends



Relocated Out  
of Area

## Services for Children and Young People

The impacts of trauma on children and young people living with domestic violence and homelessness are acknowledged and recognised at Galbaan House. Children need to feel supported in order to explore their feelings, family dynamics and structure, as well as navigating residing in a communal living environment. Children's voices are heard and practical case management with the family is offered by our Child and Youth Support Worker, for bonds to be strengthened in the family.

In order to address the complex and varied behavioural issues that come with experiencing trauma, staff assist families to find the most appropriate positive parenting styles that suit their family. Families are encouraged and resourced to take these strategies into their homes beyond their stay in Galbaan House. We endeavour to assist families to connect to their community and build in meaningful support services to address isolation and improve future outcomes once they have established their new residence.

The playroom is open for daily use and has a variety of activities for children of all ages to access and further develop their fine motor, cognitive, creative, social/emotional and gross motor skills.

From imaginative play for younger children in the cubby house, home corner, dress ups, craft supplies to the basketball hoop, Playstation, Wii and Wifi for older children and young people.



## Transitional Housing

Transitional Housing provides a bridge from domestic and family violence and homelessness to a safe and stable living environment. It offers medium term accommodation with the goal of securing self-sufficient permanent accommodation at the end of the tenancy. Many clients are unable to secure immediate long-term accommodation for a multitude of reasons such as low income, debt, no rental history or discrimination in the rental market, or significantly reduced income due to shared care arrangements.

Effective case management to support the growth of families is vital to the success of Transitional Housing. Case management offers the client the opportunity to successfully move forward with as much or as little support as they require. They are offered advocacy and emotional support to help achieve self-sufficiency, and assistance to create a sustainable network of support.

Support by caseworkers is provided to reach employment or educational goals, achieving comfort in living independently, financial assistance and budgeting, or liaising with real estate firms to find housing solutions.

Liberty continued our housing partnerships with providers Community Housing Ltd, Mission Australia Housing, and St Agnes Care & Lifestyle. We supported 21 women and 33 accompanying children in Transitional Housing properties in 2019/20.

*"You are like family to me that heals my scars."*



# Advocacy and Prevention Report

The past year has been challenging for many families who we support and who have experienced the different forces of nature and more recently the restrictions of COVID.

Here at Liberty we identified how these additional challenges impacted on families' safety and wellbeing, adding to the web of effects of domestic and family violence and coercive control. We also identified Liberty's role in upholding our own accountability by reaching out to families and working in flexible ways to promote women's and child victim-survivors' safety and freedom from this web - and yet locating the responsibility of harmful and controlling behaviours on the partners and fathers, whom had chosen to be abusive. Although we all have been touched by these challenges, Liberty's message is "there is no excuse for abuse".

Understanding patterned based abuse and risks related to families experiencing domestic and family violence requires a whole of family and community approach. Following Liberty's mission we kept men in view; we listened to and validated women's acts of resilience; we were always mindful of creating a space for children's voices and invited participants attending education and awareness sessions to explore the intricate nuances of the dynamics of domestic and family violence. This all required a deeper connection with people – "walking the talk".

Keeping up these connections, no matter what, brings us closer to eliminating domestic and family violence and a safe community.

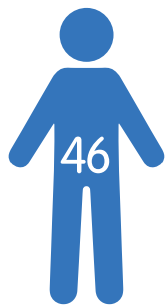
While our group work program, Engage2Change, was paused briefly due to COVID-19 restrictions, our team maintained close contact with our clients throughout the lockdown and then adapted our service delivery to restart group work in a COVID Safe way.

A big thank you to the Advocacy and Prevention Team for holding Liberty's mission close to heart, especially during most challenging times.

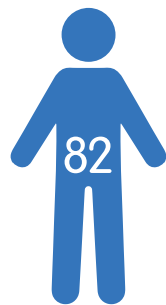


*Ulla Inki Gilabert*

Advocacy and Prevention Manager



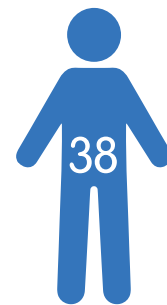
Engage2Change



Engage2Change Referrals



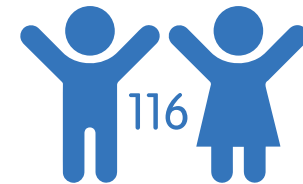
Fixed Address



Fixed Address Referrals



Women and Children's Advocate



## Engage2Change

Engage2Change facilitators were delighted to implement face-to-face groupwork interventions with 29 men and provide case management for 17 men. In our 12 week program men are invited to name and claim their behaviours and to make some real change. Men are also invited to step into the shoes of people they have hurt and harmed, to step off the cycle of violence, and to think about what they need to stop doing and start doing for real change and safety for others.

In order for a change journey to begin, Engage2Change facilitators discovered the unpacking of unhelpful attitudes, beliefs, masculinity, patriarchy and gendered norms was the starting point. We asked men “what is the role of a safe man?”

Engage2Change received full accreditation in implementing NSW Men’s Behaviour Change Practice Standards. In the new year we continue to develop best practice in assessing risk and understanding the complexities around coercive control by implementing NSW Risk, Support, Safety Framework and Practice Guidance.

Men are invited to explore the values of respect and empathy and commit to working towards non-violent behaviour. In this journey of change we say, “where there is no shame, there is no honour”.

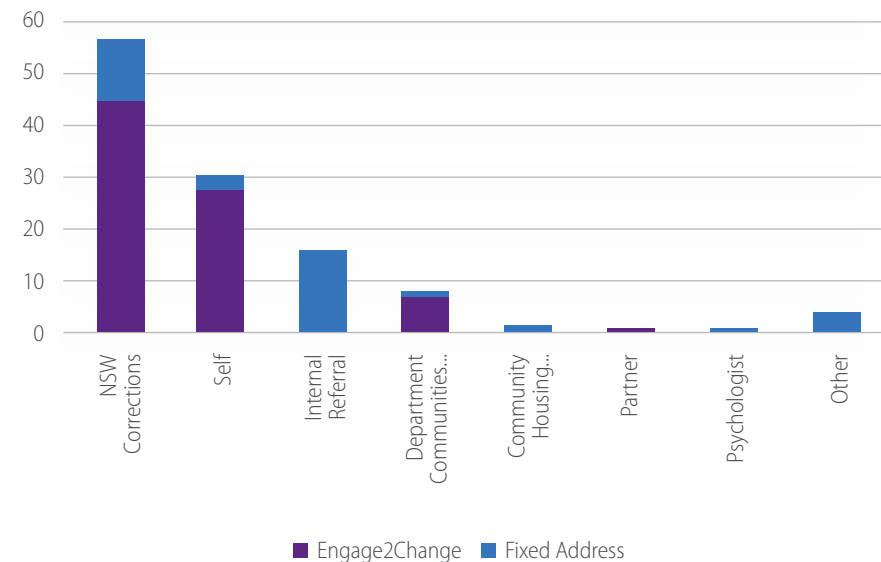
## Fixed Address

Fixed Address, Liberty’s other Men’s Behaviour Change program, follows the Risk, Need, Responsivity principles focusing on the man’s individual and most often multiple needs and lifestyle factors contributing to abusive behaviour. In Fixed Address, the man’s case plan identifies the goals he requires support in on his journey toward non-violent and non-risk behaviours. In Fixed Address’ case management and transitional housing model, while focusing on the man’s

holistic needs, priority lies in inviting men to hold themselves to account – accountability and personal responsibility is the glue in holding the man’s plan together. Once again, we say – “there is no excuse for minimising or justifying abusive behaviour.”

Liberty was privileged to be invited to showcase the Fixed Address Program in partnership with our Mid North Coast Consortia colleagues from Kempsey in the two day Working with Men to End Family Violence Conference in June. It was an important forum to share current best practice with the wider Men’s Behaviour Change sector and Peak Bodies.

Referral Sources



## Women and Children's Advocacy

Women and Children's Advocacy support for women and children whose partners or fathers are participants in the Engage2Change groupwork and Fixed Address program is paramount. Women and children are supported in their own right in their journeys toward healing and recovery.

Upholding women's dignity and agency are the core essences of the Women and Children's Advocate's responses to women experiencing domestic and family violence. In everything we do and every conversation we have in the Men's Behaviour Change space, we bring women and children's voices and experiences to light.

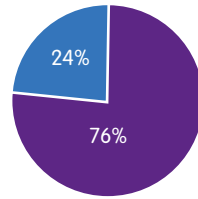
## Community Education and Awareness

Eliminating domestic and family violence requires a whole of community response. In the past year Liberty has engaged with the community by providing domestic and family violence education and awareness sessions to a wide range of organisations and schools such as Rotary Sunrise, TAFE, St Columba Anglican School, MacKillop College, Country Women's Association and ETC Youth Group. Taking leadership in saying no to domestic and family violence is the starting point for influencing social justice and change - and safety for all. In total 447 participants engaged in education and awareness sessions. Liberty is very proud of our local community taking a stand against domestic and family violence.



*"The whole team thought your presentation was dynamic and we all gained so much from it. Well done!"*

## Cultural Identity



- Non Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

## Everybody's Business

Domestic and family violence does not discriminate. It has widespread effects – not just behind closed doors in our homes but in our workplaces.

Liberty's Everybody's Business Workplace Training and Development program was born in response to our vision to inspire and motivate leading organisations to respond to domestic and family violence in line with the primary prevention priority of the Forth Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022.

Liberty identified the importance of supporting organisations to become aware of their responsibilities around domestic and family violence, to recognise and effectively respond to staff experiencing domestic and family violence and in creating a culture where workplaces have the tools and confidence to challenge violence-supporting attitudes and beliefs to make our communities safer places.

Liberty was honored to partner with Port Macquarie-Hastings Council in delivering training sessions to over 500 Council staff members and we are excited to continue partnering with others to change the story of domestic and family violence from being no one's business to everybody's business.



# Program Report

The Program Director role is a newly appointed position to Liberty this year.

Liberty programs continue to develop with the changing needs of the families we support and the research invested striving for group intervention outcomes. We have commenced the next iteration of the group work practice manuals, building on the foundations of what we have delivered for many years.

Liberty's Dusk and Kids Club programs are extensively referred to by our stakeholder partners in addition to the internal referrals. Both of these group programs are oversubscribed and we are working towards innovative solutions to meet the demand.

During the 19/20 FY, Dusk and Kids Club were both paused due to COVID-19 restrictions. We worked to maintain contact and support with clients during lockdown and implemented a Covid Safe adapted service delivery model in order to restart group work as soon as we could.

Offers of support from many local business and community groups are abundant to provide services for the families we support. The Wellbeing Program will consolidate this generosity to offer a suite of options that will improve our client's capacity to tackle future challenges.

We are driven by our vision and are confident that the Wellbeing Program will serve our remit to identify clients' underlying needs and to develop realistic plans to connect them to services and to build their engagement with family, community, education and employment, focusing on improvement across the following areas:

- engagement with health services
- relationship with family and support networks
- connection to community
- connection to education and employment

With a strong connection with community, our wholistic approach in providing support means we can learn and grow together towards a safer and brighter, more hope-filled future.

*Carla Davis*

Program Director



Dusk and Kids Club Groups



Dusk



Kids Club



## Dusk Domestic Violence Support Group

Dusk is an 8 week group program for women who have experienced domestic and family violence. Dusk, our Domestic and Family Violence Support Group for women, has remained a sought-after program this year. Dusk continues its development and growth to ensure content is current, evidence based, and relevant to the needs and outcomes of the women attending. Implementation of ongoing program reviews ensure the program structure and content continues to be delivered in the most appropriate way to reach identified desired outcomes for women.

Dusk is a journey of connecting women with other women, to acknowledge and discuss strengths, resilience and validation of each unique woman's expertise. Creating a safe space together to Discuss and Understand our Shared Knowledge (DUSK). Bringing together the unique individual expertise through exploring the similarity of the patterns and cycles typical of domestic and family violence. This leads to validation and a deeper understanding of how to move forward stronger and with safety towards a brighter more desired future for self and family.

## Kids Club

Kids Club is an 8 week program for children 8-12 years of age. Kids Club has continued development of the program structure and content, along with the implementation of ongoing program reviews, to ensure the program continues to be delivered in the most current, evidence based and appropriate way for children. With such a firm foundation, the safe space can be created where children can come together to explore and support each other to further develop their existing expertise in a fun environment.

Developing our Kids Club Code together each term to guide us, we explore and discover together the unique physical and mental world of emotions. As we identify these, we realise we have the courage to bravely manage worries safely. Children support each other as they discover and uncover the superpowers they

*"Kids Club is loads of fun!"*

each have within them, those strengths and amazing abilities they can use anytime they need to no matter how big or small they are.

Kids Club had the privilege of 14 participants this year who expressed their joy and appreciation for the time and space, feeling happier, stronger and more super than ever.

## Wellbeing Program

The Liberty Advisory Group and Yarning Circle provides another opportunity for Liberty clients and for the community to contribute to the structure and delivery of identified opportunities to access and develop wellbeing.

The Wellbeing Program has been involved in connecting women to activities such as surfing lessons, generously donated by Soul Surfing. Wellbeing is so important as it is the basis of balancing physical and mental wellness. With many developing ideas yet to come to fruition, the coming year for the Wellbeing Program is a very exciting one.

*"There's adults we can trust."*



*"You make new friends and meet different people."*

## A Woman's Story

You made me feel it was all my fault  
That you were above the blame  
If I didn't do this, you wouldn't do that  
I believed it as I was ashamed.

Now I know, I understand  
The problem was never with me  
You brought me down and controlled me  
Because of your insecurity.

So I raise my head and smile  
From the ashes of the girl I became  
I smile because I know now  
I was not to blame.

And the scars have all healed over  
But I still think of you every day  
Not with love or with hatred  
But that I was lucky to get away.

My life is where I want it  
I'm happier than ever before  
I am confident in the fact  
You have no power over me anymore.

If I ever saw you down the street  
I would smile and walk away  
For leaving you gave me the strength  
To be who I am today.



*An excerpt from a Liberty client's powerful poem about her lived experience.*

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### Contribute to Liberty

We are grateful for our generous and supportive community.

If you would like to donate to Liberty, please call us first on 6583 2155 so we can let you know how you can best support our families. Financial donations are always gratefully received.

Find out more at [libertyservices.org.au](http://libertyservices.org.au)