

**Liberty**  
domestic & family violence  
specialist services

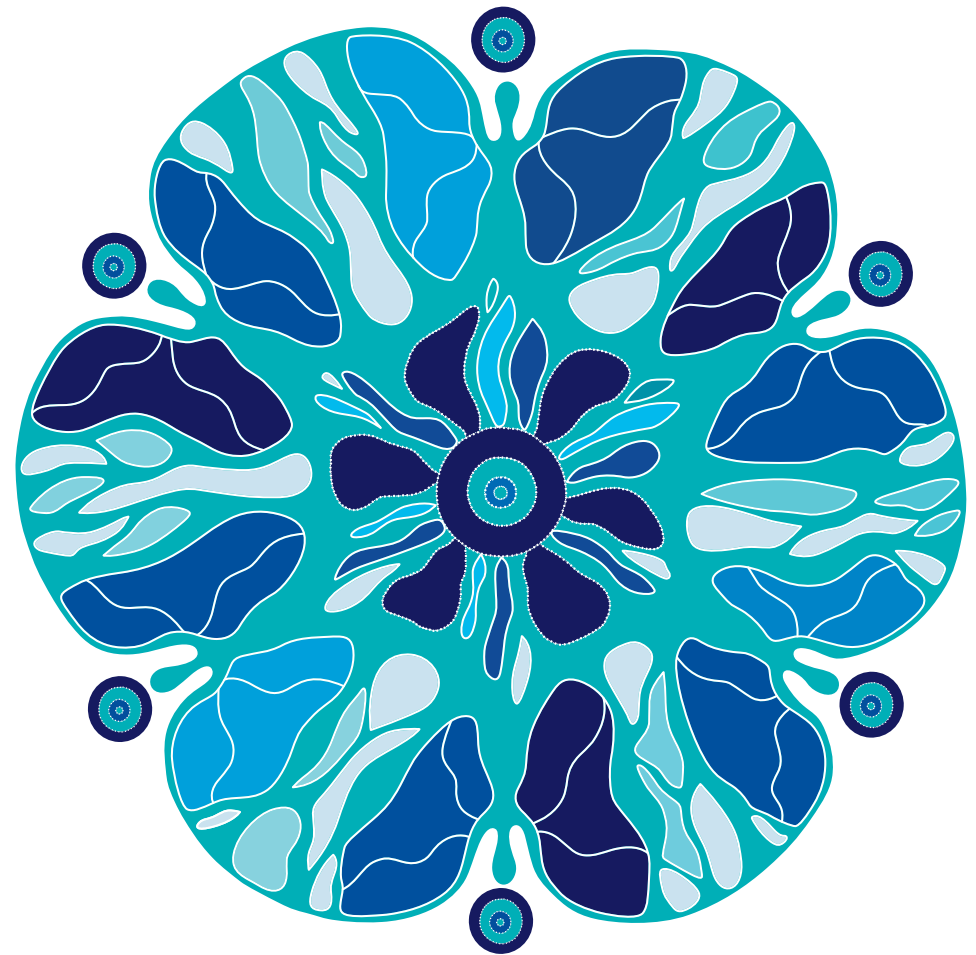
# Annual Report

## 2021-2022

For over 40 years Liberty have worked on the land of the Birpai people.

We pay our respects to all First Nations ancestors, elders, and people in our community.

We acknowledge the enduring wisdom of the world's longest continuing culture, the strength and resilience of First Nations people, and their deep connection to Country for 65,000 years.



**Galbaan Wakulda 'Women As One' by Birrbay Artist Angela Marr-Grogan®**

Galbaan Wakulda is a feminine, nature-based piece, symbolising growth and transformation, strength and unity. The artwork represents Liberty as an organisation, as well as the families we support on their journey to safety.



# Liberty

domestic & family violence  
specialist services

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“

*Every woman has a voice and deserves to be heard”*

# 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.

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
- After-hours responses
- Homelessness/housing support
- 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
- Dusk – support group for women
- Kids Club – support group for children
- Ngathuwa – Aboriginal cultural connection program
- Everybody's Business – workplace training and development and respectful relationships sessions for schools
- Safe Pets – pet accommodation at Galbaanbaa
- Liberty Links – mobile outreach service
- Men's Behaviour Change Case Management Program

# Our Vision, Purpose and Values

## Our Vision

A community where women and children are empowered and safe from domestic and family violence.

## Our Purpose

To lead the community in a whole of family approach to recognise, respond and prevent domestic and family violence.

## Our Values

- Respect – we have respect for self and others and value diversity
- Empathy – we acknowledge the unique experience and feelings of others
- Integrity – we model ethical practice that is honest and engenders trust
- Empowerment – we enable people to make choices and develop personal capacities that will lead to lasting positive change in their lives
- Quality – our systems, standards and supports are current and consistent to deliver positive outcomes for families and community
- Innovation – we lead change and promote flexibility and creativity in all we do

## What does Liberty mean to you?

***lib.er.ty*** noun

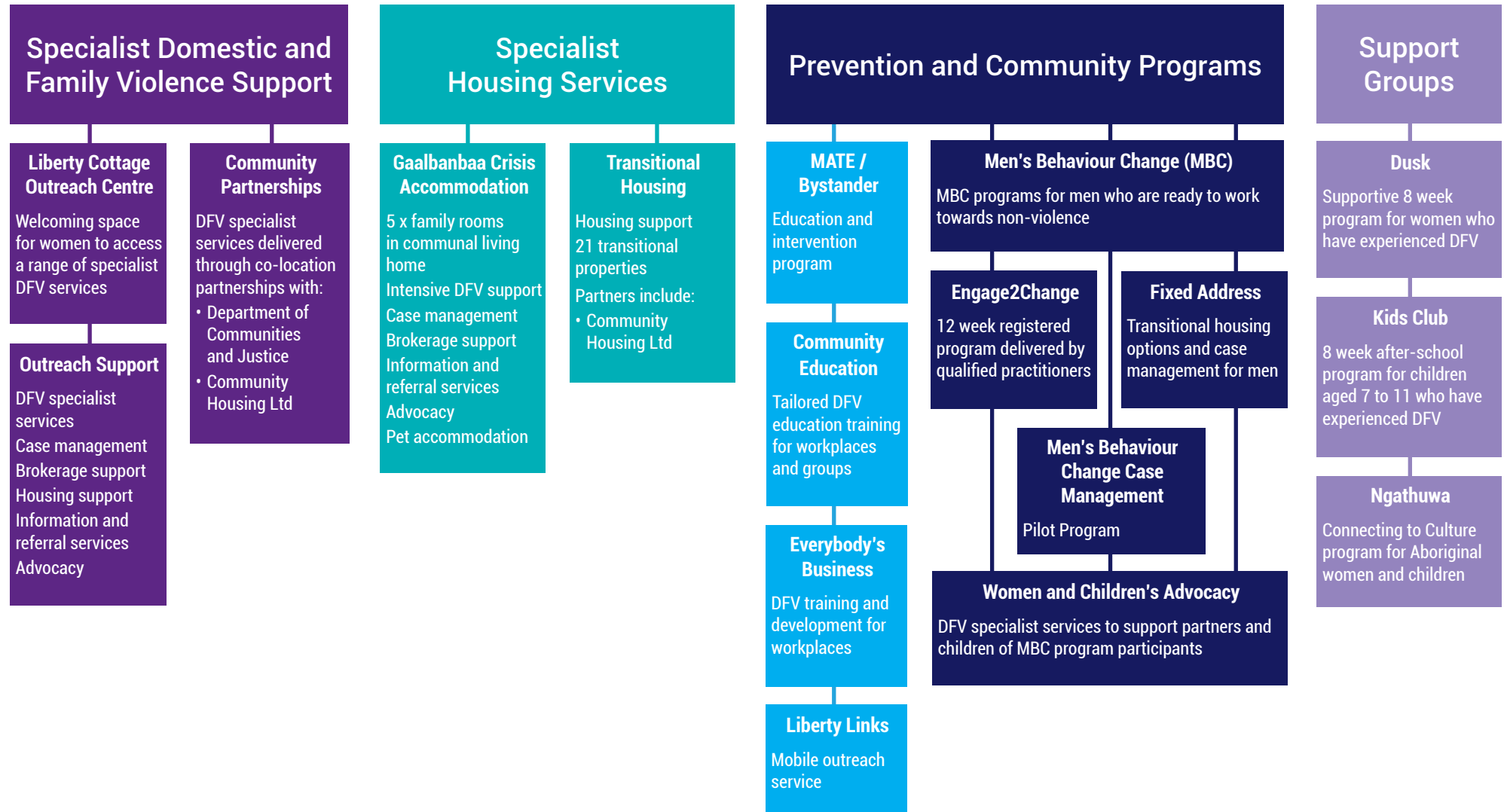
The quality or state of being free:

- 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)



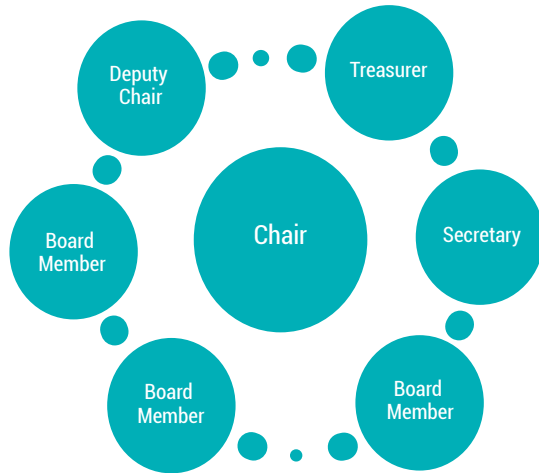
# Service Structure 2021-2022



# Organisational Structure 2022 – 2023

On 1 July 2022, Liberty put in place our new Organisational Structure to better reflect our core work in the community – Responding to and Preventing domestic and family violence.

## Board of Management



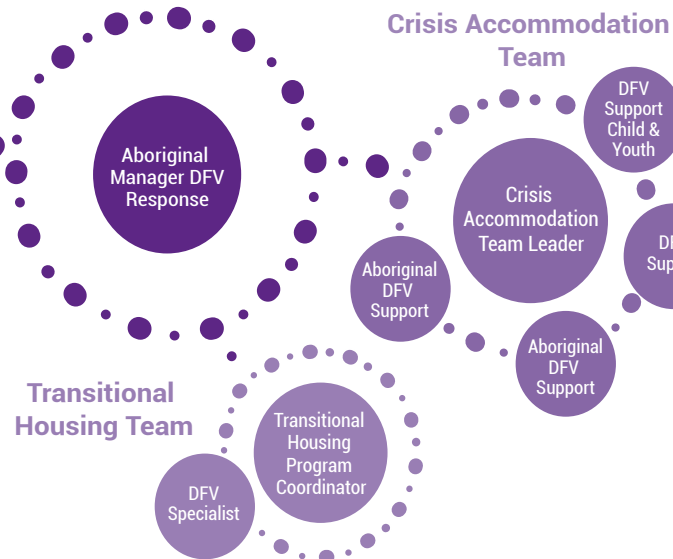
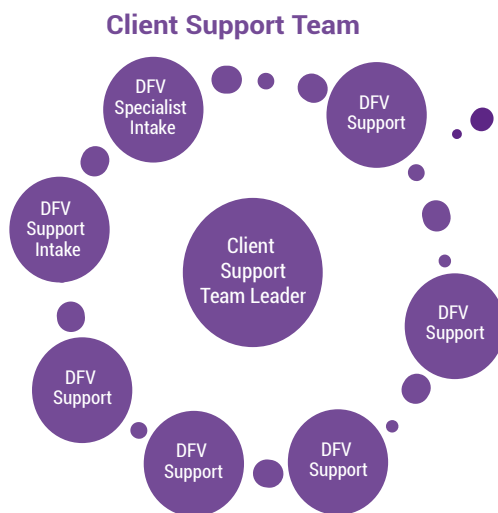
## Executive Leadership Team



## Executive Support Team



## Response Team



## Prevention Team



# Herstory

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

- 1980** Temporary refuge established in a Council property on Savoy St, Port Macquarie.
- 1983** Relocated from Savoy St to another Council property on Murray St, Port Macquarie (Killara House).
- 1984** Department of Housing purchased a property for the Hastings Women and Children's Refuge after Council requested vacation of Murray St property.
- 1985** Department of Community Services provided funding under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program to provide support to women and children escaping domestic violence.
- 1988** Department of Housing approved funds for the purchase of land and design and construction of a new refuge. Block of land purchased.
- 1990** A design for the new Refuge was accepted by the Management Committee.
- 1994** Relocated to a new purpose-built refuge. Department of Housing provided the existing property as medium-term accommodation for the client group.
- 2007** Innovation & Investment Funding Project.
- 2009** Funded under Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Services Program to deliver new a project, Community Partnerships Against Domestic and Family Violence (CPADFV).  
Opened our Outreach Centre – Liberty Cottage on Gordon St.
- 2015** Successfully tendered to pilot Men's Behaviour Change Program – Engage2Change Mid North Coast along with Kempsey Family Support Services and Warrina Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Services.
- 2017** Organisation purchased property in Table St for relocation of Liberty Cottage.
- 2018** 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.
- 2019** Fixed Address Men's Behaviour Change Program launched, with Women NSW Innovation Funding.  
Established Joining the Dots Aboriginal service providers network. Winner of the Greater Port Macquarie Community Services Award.
- 2020** Achieved full registration with the Practice Standards for Men's Behaviour Change Program.  
Implemented Adapted Service Delivery Model to ensure service delivery continuation during COVID-19 and achieved COVID Safe registration. Achieved Australian Service Excellence Standards Accreditation.
- 2021** Launched Safe Pets emergency accommodation for pets at Galbaan House.  
Launched Ngathuwa Connecting to Culture program for Aboriginal women and children.  
Contracted by DCJ to participate in the trial program: DVSTMP – Intensive Case Management for Men, known at Liberty as Men's Behaviour Change Case Management Program.
- 2022** Announced as Winner of Community and Social Services category in the 2021 Greater Port Macquarie Business Awards and Outstanding Community Organisation Finalist in the 2022 Business NSW Mid North Coast Awards.  
Launched Liberty Links Mobile Outreach Service.  
Rebranded Liberty to complement commissioned artwork, Galbaan Wakulda, by Birrbay artist Angela Marr-Grogan.  
Expanded accommodation offerings in addition to Galbaanbaa (Women's Place) to include Djiyaganbaa (Sister Place), Bunabaa (Beach Place) and Murapanbaa (Flower Place).

# Board of Management



Debbie Moore  
**Chair**



Catherine Vallentine  
**Vice Chair**



Sandra Magann  
**Treasurer**



Margaret Carey  
**Secretary**



Wayne Anderson  
**Board**



Julia Shearsby  
**Board**



Jacinta Spry  
**Board**

# Liberty Team

We thank those team members who worked with us during the 2021 - 2022 Financial Year. Meet our team as at September 2022:



**Kelly Lamb**  
**Chief Executive Officer**



**Donna Harper**  
**Aboriginal Manager –  
Domestic and Family  
Violence Response**



**Brooke Maggs**  
**Manager – Prevention  
and Community Programs  
Manager – People and Culture**



**Michelle Parker**  
**Community and  
Communications Manager**



**Tracy Brenton**  
**Finance Manager**



**Kelly Wyatt**  
**Client Support  
Team Leader**



**Melanie Eadie**  
**Crisis Accommodation  
Team Leader**



**Rebecca Farvis**  
**Transitional Housing  
Coordinator**

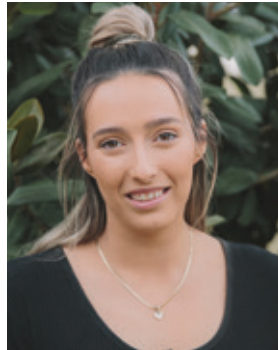


**Cameron McKinley-Rodgers**  
**Prevention and  
Men's Programs Specialist**

# Liberty Team



Abby Mackenzie  
Domestic and Family  
Violence Support



Bree Jones  
Aboriginal Domestic and  
Family Violence Support



Crystal Fowler  
Domestic and Family  
Violence Support



Emily Acheson  
Domestic and Family  
Violence Support



Julie Atkiss  
Domestic and Family  
Violence Support



Maddy Robinson  
Domestic and Family  
Violence Support



Melissa Wiersma  
Domestic and Family  
Violence Support



Penny McKinley-Rodgers  
Domestic and Family  
Violence Support



Sarah Ashley  
Aboriginal Domestic and  
Family Violence Support

# Message from our Chair

**In my fourth year as Chair, I am proud to see Liberty's commitment to working towards a community where women and children are empowered and safe from domestic and family violence has not wavered.**

At a time when the COVID-19 pandemic and the local housing crisis continues to present challenges for our clients, our organisation and our broader community, Liberty has drawn upon its values, particularly of innovation and quality, to deliver positive outcomes for the families we support.

The team continue to lead the Port Macquarie Hastings community in a whole of family approach to recognise, respond and prevent domestic and family violence.

Thank you to Liberty's CEO, Kelly Lamb, for leading the team in the implementation of the Strategic Plan for 2021-2023. The intention of this Strategic Plan is to ensure we maintain high-quality service delivery by building on our strong foundations, investing in our organisation and our people and adapting to the challenges of an uncertain environment.

A key focus area of the Strategic Plan is Strong Governance. Thank you to my fellow board members who continue to bring diverse and specialised skills in areas such as legal, finance, education, health, not-for-profit, and real estate to provide sound guidance and governance for the organisation. We welcomed to the Board Julia Shearsby in August 2021 and Jacinta Spry in October 2021. Together we have made considerable headway towards achieving the stated goal of "Governance systems and processes aligned to best practice."

During the 2021-2022 year, Australia experienced another round of Stay-At-Home-Orders and COVID-19 circulated widely throughout the community with significant impacts on the workforce. I would like to thank the Board for their involvement in Risk Assessment and Management in this area, and commend the team on their ability to adapt to fast-changing rules and regulations relating to the pandemic and their focus on ensuring the safety and health of colleagues, clients and the community.

Domestic and family violence is the leading cause of homelessness in Australia. Liberty's Board of Management is pleased to have endorsed the expansion of Liberty's accommodation offerings and associated service delivery and wrap-around supports to provide housing, safety and wellbeing outcomes for women and their children.

We are also proud of the innovative and place-based programs Liberty has developed and continues to deliver in partnership with our community to address the specific needs of our area, such as the Liberty Links Mobile Outreach Service, Everybody's Business Workplace Training and Development, and Ngathuwa Connecting to Aboriginal Culture program.

I am pleased to see Liberty begin the new financial year with our new visual branding inspired by 'Galbaan Wakulda' by local Birrbay artist Angela Marr-Grogan, which reflects our organisation in its meaning – growth, transformation, strength and unity.

After almost four years on the Board and three years as Chairperson, it is with a heavy heart I have decided to resign. I feel privileged to have led the organisation alongside Kelly and to have been a part of the many achievements and positive changes to the service in the journey towards a community where women and children are empowered and safe from domestic and family violence. I wish Kelly, and the Board every success for the future.



Debbie Moore

# Message from our CEO

In the 2021-2022 Financial Year, Liberty responded to 1210 women and their children experiencing domestic and family violence seeking support. We continue to see an increase in the complexity of violence and many women are reporting abuse for the first time.

Referrals remain high, well above the levels for which we are funded, and we are grateful for the collaboration of our service delivery partners and the support we receive through donations, sponsorships, and in-kind generosity, which enables us to meet the needs of our local community.

While one-off Commonwealth and State Government funding provided much-needed financial resources for Liberty to adapt to the immediate challenges presented by the pandemic and the critical impacts of the housing crisis, our goal remains to secure diverse income streams to enable us to respond to the high demand for specialist domestic and family violence services and to work towards the prevention of abuse over the longer term.

Responding to the local housing crisis and the impact on women and children experiencing domestic and family violence has been a priority for our service over the past year. Providing women and children with a safe and secure place to stay while they access specialist domestic and family violence support and wrap-around services is incredibly important on their journey towards a life free from violence.

With low vacancy rates and high rental prices leaving many women and children without options, Liberty entered new productive partnerships with local property owners and community housing providers to expand our accommodation offerings for clients.

In addition to the crisis accommodation we have provided for more than 40 years, now Galbaanbaa (Women's Place in local Gathang language), we have secured three additional properties – Djiyaganbaa (Sister Place) in November 2021, Bunabaa (Beach Place) in June 2022 and Murapanbaa (Flower Place) in August 2022, which is home to our Over 50s Transitional Housing Program.

Securing this additional accommodation and expanding our support services has made a significant difference by reducing the wait list for women and children requiring case management and crisis accommodation, providing a seamless pathway to access temporary accommodation in the after-hours environment, and supporting women with longer stays as they transition to the private rental market.

In August 2021, Liberty responded to the Stay-at-Home Orders enforced by NSW Health, by adapting our ways of working to maintain continuous quality service delivery. To ensure the safety of clients and community, group work sessions were suspended, COVID Safety Plans were put in place for our various sites and a comprehensive Risk Management Plan was enacted. We took steps to manage workforce capacity issues and redesigned the intake process and triage management.

During the period, Liberty adapted our work in the Men's Behaviour Change space in response to feedback from our stakeholders, the evolving needs of our community, opportunities within the sector, and to ensure the best outcomes for men who use violence and their partners or former partners and children. We are participating in a targeted Men's Behaviour Change Case Management pilot program and are working with Police and the Department of Communities and Justice – Child Protection.

A highlight of the year was the launch of Liberty's refreshed brand during Reconciliation Week in May 2022, designed to complement Liberty's commissioned artwork by local Birrbay artist Angela Marr-Grogan. Our new brand retains the pride of our more than 40 year history and reflects the beauty and deep meaning of 'Galbaan Wakulda' (Women As One).



Kelly Lamb

Another highlight was the official launch of the Liberty Links Mobile Outreach Service in June 2022 by Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence Natalie Ward and Member for Port Macquarie Leslie Williams. Liberty Links provides domestic violence services to outlying communities including Lake Cathie, Kew, Comboyne and Wauchope and aims to address the additional barriers faced by residents of regional communities such as increased isolation, lack of transportation, limited telecommunications, and reduced community services.

To support our expanded services and new programs, Liberty embedded a new organisational structure in July 2022 following a four-month planning process. The new structure is made up of four key groupings - Board of Directors, an Executive Leadership Team (with an Executive Support Team), a Response Team (including Client Support, Crisis Accommodation and Transitional Housing Teams), and a Prevention Team.

Our innovative responses and the hard work of our team was acknowledged recently when we were announced as Winner of the Community Services category of the 2021 Port Macquarie Business Awards and as a Finalist in the Outstanding Community Organisation category in the regional 2022 Mid North Coast Business Awards. This recognition is well-deserved.

I would like to thank the Board for your confidence in supporting our expansion and innovative approaches, and the team for your passion and persistence in securing positive outcomes for the families we work with. I would like to acknowledge our outgoing Chair Debbie Moore for her tireless commitment to our service, and the legacy of achievements made over the past four years.

I am very pleased that Liberty, and lead agency Community Housing Limited, are progressing in the tender process for a Core & Cluster Refuge in Port Macquarie. If successful, this project will involve the significant refurbishment of a large independent living unit block and the provision of onsite wrap-around, client-centred supports by Liberty's domestic and family violence specialists and our service provider partners. This funding forms part of the NSW Government's single biggest investment in tackling domestic and family violence in history. We look forward to securing a positive outcome for our

region, which would mark the most significant expansion of services for Liberty and provide much needed additional crisis accommodation for our growing community.

I'm proud of the deepening connection of our team to Aboriginal culture. It is an incredible privilege to have Aunty Rhonda as our First Nations Cultural Advisor. I look forward to what will come from the connection we build with the Aboriginal Reference Group as part of our Reconciliation Action Plan.

As we head towards the criminalisation of coercive control and the legislation of paid domestic violence leave, the issue of domestic and family violence will continue to be a topic of interest and importance for individuals, organisations and workplaces.






Liberty is ready, willing and able to support our community to know how to recognise abuse, respond safely and refer to specialist services such as ours, and work together to prevent domestic and family violence.



*International Women's Day at Birpai Land Council  
Photo: Port Macquarie News*

# Our Strategic Direction

Liberty's Strategic Plan 2021 to 2023 guides us to maintain high-quality service delivery by building on our strong foundations, investing in our organisation and our people, and adapting to the challenges of an uncertain environment. A Mid Point Review conducted in August 2022 highlighted a number of key achievements towards our goals.

Focus Area	Goal	Objectives	Mid Point Achievements
 Outcomes Focused Service Delivery	Services and programs designed and delivered for outcomes and sustainability	Outcomes measurement framework Building service capacity and integration Safe pets programs Sustainable housing options	Expanded crisis, transitional and temporary accommodation Embedded Personal Wellbeing Index client evaluation Established Over 50s Transitional Housing Program Developed standardised evaluation process for programs
 Team Culture	A capable, satisfied and cohesive workforce	Workforce capacity Team wellbeing and satisfaction Team cohesion	Revised wellbeing and flexible working policies Participated in PERMAH Wellbeing tool trial Completed HBDI team profiling
 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Families	Recognised as a culturally safe organisation	Cultural competency	Commenced Innovate Level Reconciliation Action Plan Convened RAP Aboriginal Reference Group Co-designed Ngathuwa Connecting to Culture Program
 Strategic Stakeholder Relationships	A diversified and increased support base	Partnerships with purpose Sustainable connections and communication Diverse income streams	Implemented stakeholder engagement strategy Launched new fit for purpose website Refreshed Liberty's visual identity with new branding Secured Customer Relationship Management software
 Strong Governance	Governance systems and processes aligned to best practice	Manage risk Decision making Leading practice Maintain compliance with systems and processes	Participated in Social Sector Transformation Fund Governance Health Check Consolidated Board documents to remove data redundancy Revising Constitution against Department of Fair Trade best practice Planning a Board Training Day on Risk Management

# Productive 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.

## **Bearlay Aboriginal Interagency**

Liberty's Domestic and Family Violence Response Manager, Donna Harper, is the Chair of the Bearlay interagency group which seeks to foster collaboration between services helping the Aboriginal community.

## **Communities and Justice**

Our domestic violence specialists are co-located at the Department of Communities and Justice offices to provide immediate support to clients in need of domestic violence services. Our Men's Behaviour Change Program is also co-located at DCJ.

## **Community Housing Limited**

CHL provides transitional housing properties for our clients and partners with Liberty to provide a number of accommodation options for clients.

## **DVNSW**

Liberty's CEO Kelly Lamb is Deputy Chair of the peak body for specialist domestic and family violence services in NSW. Our Manager – Prevention and Community Programs Brooke Maggs is a member of the Sector Development Member Advisory Committee which aims to provide guidance and advice regarding domestic and family violence training and resource development.

## **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.

## **Local Primary and High Schools**

Liberty has formed partnerships with Mackillop Senior College (Years 8 and 12) and St Joseph's Primary School (Years 5 and 6) and delivers tailored respectful relationships education sessions to students.

## **Mid Coast Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service**

Our partnership with WDVCS continues to provide clients with legal, social and welfare supports in the judicial system.

## **NSW Police Mid North Coast Local Area Command**

Liberty continues to work in partnership with Police in the Safety Action Meeting, and has developed a new partnership in working in the Men's Behaviour Change Case Management Program.

## **Port Macquarie-Hastings Domestic Violence Committee**

Liberty is Chair of this collaborative committee including government and non-government agencies who work to raise awareness and prevent domestic and family violence in the Port Macquarie-Hastings region.

## **Port Macquarie Base Hospital**

Liberty is represented on the Mid North Coast Local Health District Aboriginal Advisory Group and is working to form a domestic and family violence response partnership with health professionals and our domestic violence specialists.

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

- Bearlay Aboriginal Interagency
- Child and Family Interagency
- DCJ Interagency Case Discussion Meetings
- District Homelessness Implementation Group
- Hastings Community Networking
- Hastings Homelessness Interagency
- International Women's Day Committee
- LGBTIQ+ NSW DFV Interagency
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Community Inclusion Committee
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Domestic Violence Committee
- Safety Action Meetings

“

*I feel so positive and full of hope, I feel so safe and supported by the Liberty team.”*



International Women's Day Committee



Rotary Giving Breakfast



Kendall Op Shop Donation

# 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.



Port Macquarie Medical Aesthetics Fundraiser



Maureen Cook at Galbaanbaa



Women's Shed Donations

## Special thanks to our major supporters:

- Port Macquarie Medical Aesthetics Clinic
- The Lewis Foundation
- Macdoch Australia
- Investing for Charity
- Maureen Cook
- Ocean Club Resort
- Hastings Business Women's Network and International Women's Day Committee

## Thank you to everyone who supported us:

- Anaconda
- Beechwood Cricket Club
- Better Homes & Development
- Breakwall Caravan Park
- Camden Haven High School
- Camden Haven Quilters
- Chat and Do Group Wauchope
- Circle of Friends Wauchope

- Deadly Science
- Gateway Residences
- Hastings Ladies Social Golf Club
- HEM Property
- Inner Wheel of Port Macquarie West
- Inside Out Café
- Kendall Op Shop
- Lake Cathie Bowling Club
- Lake Cathie Women's Bowl Club
- Laurieton Bonny Hills UCA
- Layton
- League of Kilted Athletes
- Long Point Vineyard
- Mackillop College Legal Studies
- Masonicare
- Natty Knitters
- Newman Senior Technical College
- Oxley Trefoil Guild
- PETstock Assist
- Port City Breakers Junior Rugby League Football Club
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
- Port Macquarie Library
- Port Macquarie Women's Shed
- Postie Fashions
- Presbyterian Church
- Quota Club of Port Macquarie
- Regional Australia Bank
- Ritchies Community Benefit Program
- Rotary Club of Port Macquarie
- Rotary Sunrise
- RSPCA Port Macquarie
- Service NSW Port Macquarie
- Share the Dignity
- Specsavers
- Sports and Spinal Physiotherapy Clinics
- St Agnes' Catholic Parish
- StreetSmart
- Topstitch Curtains and Blinds
- Westport Club
- Zonta Club of Port Macquarie

# Liberty in the Spotlight

Thank you to Member for Port Macquarie, Leslie Williams MP, for being a champion of our cause. Sincere thanks to our local media outlets, including Port Macquarie News, ABC Mid North Coast, Prime and NBN, for helping us shine a light on domestic and family violence in our community.



Media crews at Liberty Cottage



We continued to reach out to our community via frequent social media posts.



@LibertyDFV 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022

Reach **99,376** • Engagement **3,032** • Shares **323**



In June 2022, Liberty launched a new website to support our clients, partners, supporters and community to connect with our service online.



2021 Winners of the Community Services Category of the Greater Port Macquarie Business Awards



2022 Outstanding Community Organisation Finalist in the Business NSW Mid North Coast Regional Awards



# 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** was once again adapted to a COVID-19 safe initiative with people encouraged to walk in white at their own time to limit crowds on Sunday 28 November 2021.

On Sunday 4 May 2022 we paused to remember the 18 lives lost to domestic violence in Australia so far this year, on **Domestic Violence Remembrance Day**.



Liberty took part in the **Homelessness Awareness Week Community Event** on the Town Green.

The annual **International Women's Day** breakfast on 8 March 2022 raised \$12,659 for Liberty and featured a guest video link from Elizabeth Broderick, Australia's Sex Discrimination Commissioner.



# 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.

We are improving our cultural awareness and service to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. 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.

Highlights have included:

- Ongoing engagement with Liberty's First Nations advisor, Birpai Elder Aunty Rhonda (Anjikurri) Radley
- Commencement of our Reconciliation Action Plan at the Innovate Level, including:
  - Establishment of the RAP Working Group
  - Convening the RAP Aboriginal Reference Group
  - Attendance at the National Reconciliation Action Plan Conference in May 2022 on the land of the Gadigal Clan of the Eora Nation in Sydney
- Deepening our connection to place with an On Country Walk with Aunty Rhonda during our Team Development Week
- Sydney Harbour cultural tour with sister service Women and Girls Emergency Centre



*Shelly Beach Walk on Country with Aunty Rhonda*



*Sydney Harbour Cultural Tour*

## Our Vision for Reconciliation

A community that has the courage to know and accept the truth of our shared history and is committed to ending racism and discrimination; where the cultural strength and wisdom of First Nations people is elevated and celebrated; and, where First Nations peoples' rights to self determination are upheld as we walk together towards a just, equitable and safe future.

## Our Purpose for Reconciliation

We acknowledge the ongoing impacts of colonisation, the stolen generations, racism and discrimination within the context of our work to recognise, respond to and prevent violence experienced by First Nations women and children.

We commit to being a culturally safe, aware and competent organisation for our clients, team members and the broader community, underpinned by a deep respect for First Nations' cultures, histories and achievements.

We will honour the knowledge of local First Nations communities, elevate the voices of First Nations peoples, and embrace First Nations culture into our ways of working as we actively contribute to lasting change.

- International Women's Day luncheon at Birpai Land Council
- Continuing cultural education for team including Aboriginal Cultural Awareness and Aboriginal People and Strengths Based Practice training with Felicity Ryan of Big River Connections
- National Reconciliation Week celebrations including a yarn over a feed of johnny cakes, curried sausages and lemon myrtle tea
- Donna Harper's participation in the 2022 NAIDOC Flag Raising Ceremony in her capacity of Chair of the Bearlay Aboriginal Interagency
- Unveiling of our new visual branding to complement our commissioned Aboriginal artwork, Galbaan Wakulda – Women As One – by local Birrbay artist Angela Marr-Grogan
- Continuation of our Ngathuwa (I Am) Connecting to Culture program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, co-designed with Aunty Rhonda
- Adopting Gathang language place names for properties including Galbaanbaa (Women's Place), Djiyaganbaa (Sister Place), Bunabaa (Beach Place) and Murapanbaa (Flower Place)
- We look forward to connecting with the local Aboriginal community during the postponed NAIDOC and Nyiirun Djiyagan Wakulda Women's Festival celebrations in October



*National Reconciliation Week*



*NAIDOC Flag Raising Ceremony*



*Murapanbaa – Flower Place in Gathang*

# Specialist Domestic Violence Support & Housing Report

The woman and children who walk through our doors are the heart of Liberty. The stories shared each day reflect the journeys of resilience and resistance of violence that many women and children take. We walk beside our clients as they find the strength to take each important step forward towards a life free from violence.

Liberty continues to strive to meet the needs of our community regardless of all the challenges that arose, such as COVID-19 and the housing crisis. The team at Liberty faced all of this head on and continue to find ways to support women and children in crisis due to domestic and family violence.

During the 2021 – 2022 year we continued to respond to the health advice and regulations and adapt to the changing needs of our community during the pandemic.

As restrictions lifted, Liberty eagerly stepped back out into community to deepen our connections with service provider partners and work towards improved outcomes for clients. We have reconnected with Police, health

professionals at Port Macquarie Base Hospital, the court support team at the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, housing coordinators at Community Housing Limited and many others as we lead our community to recognise the signs of abuse, respond safely and refer to specialist services.

Personally, I have been immensely proud to continue my involvement as Chair of the Bearlay Aboriginal Interagency, Chair of the local NAIDOC event committee and as a member of the Mid North Coast Local Health District Aboriginal Advisory Group.

The team at Liberty have demonstrated their capability and commitment over the past year, working hard to support the organisation's expansion as we added a range of crisis, transitional and temporary accommodation options for clients.

To the whole team at Liberty, I thank you for constantly showing up to meet the needs of the women and children we support. Your advocacy, strength, and reliability is a true reflection of Liberty's values and vision. It is an absolute pleasure to work alongside you every day as we aim to assist in creating a world where women and children can live free from violence and abuse.

Thank you to all of the women and children who have stepped through Liberty's doors this year. It is our honour to meet you where you are at and be guided by your needs on your journey. Each and every one of you has shaped our service in some way and a piece of your story will remain with us forever. You are the reason that we continue to do the work and will continue to do so for many years to come.



Donna Harper

“

*I really appreciated the support that was available at a time in my life where I felt I had not much control over my situation. Knowing that there are women who are knowledgeable, willing to listen and offer informed advice is amazing.”*

## Galbaanbaa Crisis Accommodation

Galbaanbaa (Women's Place) is the true heart of Liberty, it is a beautiful nurturing space for women and children. The 5-bedroom, communal living home provides for a relaxing safe space with beautifully appointed bathrooms and kitchen. The playroom is set out for children to unwind and engage in play whilst being in the comfort and safety of the rest of the house. Galbaanbaa is kept with upmost care and attention, nothing short of what the families deserve.

The amazing staff at Galbaanbaa ensure a smooth entry through the door and allow opportunities to explore every woman's hopes and dreams for herself and her family, being mindful of the trauma and her journey that has brought her to Galbaanbaa. Watching women grow in strength and belief in their own self-worth is a true honour. Galbaanbaa staff believe in working in partnership to achieve each unique goal created by the women. We are always nurturing relationships to support positive outcomes for all the women and children accommodated.

Galbaanbaa has a balance and feeling of security, safety, ease, and a place to call home. We have watched many young people grow alongside the support from the child and youth worker who engages in case management suited to each individual child. Children's voices are heard and practical case management with the family allows for bonds to be strengthened in the family.

A large percentage of women and children who stay at Galbaanbaa are Aboriginal and staff take pride and care when aiming to hear and understand the culturally sensitive stories to meet the needs of everyone. We take great pride in saying Galbaanbaa allows a space for connection and has a blend of culture throughout. Galbaanbaa has successfully supported women including those with disabilities, culturally and linguistically diverse and those within the LGBTIQ community. The case management is always guided by the women and we meet them where they are at, person centred, and client driven to meet her desired goals in a whole of family approach.



# Workplace Training and Respectful Relationships Education Report

Liberty continued to build the capacity of our community to recognise, respond and prevent domestic and family violence through the delivery of our tailored domestic and family violence training program – Everybody's Business – to more workplaces and community groups looking to improve the support they provide to staff, clients and volunteers experiencing domestic and family violence. These conversations have matured over the last year, with more leaders committing to the development of safe, equal and respectful workplace cultures.

Our collaboration with local service providers continued into 2022. The Conversations in the Chair education program, which we co-host as Chair of the Port Macquarie Domestic Violence Committee, expanded to include Allied Health and Dental professionals. Similarly, our Respectful Relationships education program for schools broadened to include more class groups.



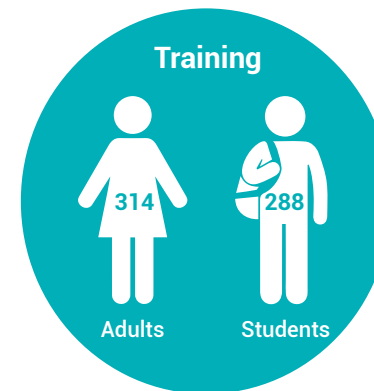
DV Awareness Session for Allied Health Professionals

We now deliver age-appropriate programs for Years 5–12.

I am encouraged by the diverse range of organisations who have engaged with us over the last year to do their part in creating a community where women and children are safe and empowered. Together we can stop violence before it starts.



Brooke Maggs



“

*I will now be able to refer clients appropriately and begin conversations around domestic and family violence.”*

*- Allied Health Professional*

# Prevention and Community Programs Report

A highlight for the last financial year was the launch of Liberty Links, our mobile outreach service providing domestic violence services to outlying communities in the region including Wauchope, Camden Haven, Comboyne and Lake Cathie. We are grateful to be partnering with local community groups to have a safe, private space to meet with women. We had the pleasure of hosting the Hon. Natalie Ward, Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence along with Leslie Williams and our program partners at the Liberty Links launch on the 3rd June 2022. This is an example of how Liberty has innovated and adapted our services to improve access and to meet the changing needs of our community.

Following the easing of COVID restrictions, we were once again able to deliver our Dusk support and education group for women who have experienced domestic and family violence. We've enjoyed connecting back in with our clients and supporting them on their healing journey. In 2022, we refreshed our Kids Club program and look forward to welcoming children aged 7-11 in Term 4.

In 2021/22, Liberty continued our work with men who use violent and controlling behaviours towards their partners and children, with the aim of improving the safety and wellbeing of their partners, former partners and children. Our Men's Behaviour Change Case Management Program saw us working alongside NSW Police to identify men who have caused hurt and harm in their relationships and are wanting to change their behaviour to become safer partners and parents.

“

*Liberty Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Services do an amazing job in our community supporting women and families during extremely challenging times.”*

*– Member for Port Macquarie Leslie Williams*

“

*The Liberty Links program will support victim-survivors at a critical time and I am proud to be supporting this important service.”*

*– Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence Natalie Ward*

I would like to acknowledge the wisdom and efforts of Carla Davis, who led the Prevention and Community Programs team until the 14th March 2022. Her legacy continues to guide our work in upholding the dignity and promoting the safety of the women and children we support. We remain committed to working collaboratively with local services and the broader community to meet the needs of the families that connect with us, ensuring their voices are heard and their choices are respected. It's a privilege to do this work, even on the most difficult days, and I'm thankful to the everyone who works alongside us and supports us to create a safer community.



Liberty Links launch. Photo: Ruby Pascoe, Port Macquarie News



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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.

**[libertyservices.org.au](http://libertyservices.org.au)**

