

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



GOOD SAMARITAN INN

MAKING A HOME FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Contents

Snapshot	1
From the Chair	2
From the Executive Director	4
Our People	6
Banyule Update	7
Direct Service Report	8
Children and Families Program	10
GSI Impact	11
Mikaela's Story	12
New Partnership & Program at GSI	13
Garden Therapy	14
Women in Work	15
Student Journey	16
Volunteer Program	17
Fay's Story	18
Mary, Leigh, Jerome and baby Joseph's Story	19
Acknowledgements	20



GOOD SAMARITAN INN

MAKING A HOME FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN

2021/2022 Financial Year Snapshot



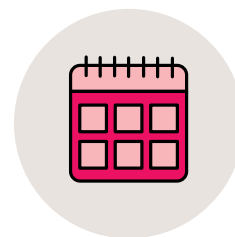
73 WOMEN
SUPPORTED
WITH CRISIS
ACCOMMODATION



45 CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE
SUPPORTED



2,848 BED
NIGHTS



AVERAGE LENGTH OF
STAY OF 24.89 NIGHTS



\$44,514
DONATIONS



5 STUDENTS
PLACEMENTS
SUPPORTED



20 WOMEN
SUPPORTED
THROUGH WOMEN
IN WORK



3533 HOURS OF
CASE WORK



\$1,591,203
GOVERNMENT
FUNDING AND
GRANTS



97 COUNSELLING
SESSIONS

From the Chair

From *Little Things Big Things Grow* has become an iconic Australian protest song, paying tribute to the Gurindji people, and becoming symbolic of the broader movement for Indigenous equality and land rights in Australia.

The song was co-written by Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody and is based on the story of the Gurindji Strike (also known as the Wave Hill walk-off) and the role of the Gurindji leader of the strikers, Vincent Lingiari. It describes how the Gurindjis' claim their traditional lands back from the cattle station on which they worked. It sparked the Indigenous land rights movement.

Just like those workers, the women who come to GSI are seeking to claim back their rights, their freedom, their life.

This song was written at the same time the Good Samaritan Inn (GSI) was established. Two Good Samaritan sisters saw a need and responded. They demonstrated the courage and fortitude of Vincent Lingiari. The Good Samaritan Inn has, through its work, dissented against the effects of family violence. It has continued to believe in the power of relationships, therapeutic care, and advocacy to ensure that every woman who comes to GSI leaves with a sense of renewed possibilities. GSI empowers women to take their next steps.

Paul Kelly wrote the words of *From Little Things Big Things Grow* believing in the power of one small step. GSI has taken many small steps over the last 26 years, and this has led us to a time where we are now able to expand our services to include a longer-term accommodation service for women and their children.

I hope that when I write the 2023 Annual Report, I will be able to inform you of the near completion of a facility that will accommodate 10 women and their children in self-contained accommodation for up to twelve months. This facility will enable GSI to expand our therapeutic program, our employment program and our case management services.

This new facility would not have been possible without the support and hard work of many. I acknowledge the passion, commitment, and perseverance of our Executive Director, Felicity Rorke, who lobbied governments – state and federal – for financial assistance. In May this year we were notified that the State Government will part fund the build and provide ongoing operational funding.

I also extend my appreciation to the staff and volunteers. Central to our ability to support and care for the women and children are the staff who work with them on a 24-hour basis.

Their dedication and commitment to making a difference are at the heart of who we are and what we do.

The GSI Board comprises a diverse group of people who come together with a common purpose - to steer GSI towards a sustainable future by adopting sound, ethical, and legal governance, and strong financial management practices, to ensure GSI has adequate resources to advance its mission. I am fortunate to lead and work with highly committed Directors whose expertise is generously offered and gratefully utilised. Finally, my thanks to the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne and the Trustees of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan.

In conclusion, I wish to acknowledge the challenges that we all have faced in these last two years during the pandemic. These challenges have been very real for GSI as we learnt to manage new ways of operating while we lived with COVID. We were able to keep the facility open during this time. We knew this was critical given the increased trauma women and children were encountering as they grappled with increased isolation, violence, and fewer avenues to seek help.

In reflecting on life in the next phase, I am drawn to the words of Mary Fugate, Punxsutawney. Her words featured in the New York Times.

As we look ahead to life after the pandemic, many people are wondering what will be different in our lives. Will we go back to living the way we did before? And what if we do? Do we risk losing something we have learnt from one long and terrifying time? For some the ordeal brought inner reflection about the meaning and shape of life. An awakening I don't think I can go back to a 'before'. I don't think I fit onto that life anymore.

These words resonated with me personally as I reflect on life and what it holds in store for me and others. But I also thought about the women who come to GSI. I hope their time at GSI is a time of 'awakening' – that they don't go back to a 'before', that they don't fit into that life anymore and that they find a new way of living.

Patricia Bergin
Chair of GSI Board

From the Executive Director

Family violence continues to make headlines across Australia with the recent conviction of Chris Dawson for killing his wife who “disappeared” more than 40 years ago. There is no doubt that the original investigation into Lyn’s “disappearance” was undertaken in a culture of consistent male privilege that allowed Dawson to behave in ways that would seem almost incomprehensible now. As a school teacher who regularly groomed schoolgirls, to the incredible omissions made by the police in believing his stories of having had contact with his wife post her “disappearance”. Whilst there have been many changes to the ways in which we view men’s treatment of women, we know that we still have a long way to go. Our work in schools, engaging with students and teachers to raise awareness of gender inequality and its correlation to family violence, is important to enable our staff to not only work on the response end of family violence but to also engage in activities that support preventing it before it begins. We hope to continue to grow this work and engage with more Catholic schools in supporting their Respectful Relationship programs.

We welcome the federal government’s new National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children and their endeavour to end such violence within a generation. Whilst I don’t think this is realistic it is a testament to the depth of the problem within Australia.

We are fortunate to have the support and skills of Jo from Kind Heart Counselling, who visits GSI weekly to provide counselling sessions to the women and increasingly, to their children. Many reported that it was their first experience of counselling. These experiences of counselling, for many women, may well be the first step in their healing and recovery from trauma or related mental health issues.

We have also been fortunate to have a practitioner from Berry Street co-facilitate a Parenting After Violence group at GSI, supporting families to learn how their experiences of violence have shaped their ability to parent and to identify new ways of engaging with their children.

Another new program is a weekly women and girls ‘football clinic’ program conducted by the Darebin Falcons. Aasta, their new Access and Inclusion Manager, visits GSI to create a space for women and children to have fun outside and learn new skills to use their bodies in ways that they may not have before or for some time. Staff members are also joining in to fulfil the Falcon’s mission to engage more women and girls in physical and or sporting activities.

GSI is part of the Victorian Women’s Housing Alliance which aims to influence government and raise awareness of the need for more crisis, short and long-term affordable housing for women and their children. The Alliance recently held a forum called *A Gendered Lens on Women’s Housing*, bringing together politicians, an economist, and people with lived experience of violence, to speak of the need to have more dedicated housing for women. The forum brought together philanthropists, government officials, sector workers and others. We were able to showcase the Alliance’s *100 Homes for 100 Women* as a project to create a multi-agency and multi-faceted approach to locating and maintaining long term appropriate housing for 100 women and their families who would otherwise experience significant barriers to access housing.

Despite the incredibly difficult past few years that schools have experienced, we continue to have strong support from Parade College. As I write this, 10 staff are preparing to volunteer to spend a day undertaking maintenance and carpentry work, cooking GSI staff and guests a meal and preparing meals to freeze to support us on their *Pay It Forward Day*. I would especially like to thank Sally, Tanya, Mario, Arthur and Andy for their ongoing support.

Whilst we have not been able to have a full complement of volunteers back onsite, we have been able to welcome back a small group working on the garden, cooking Sunday lunches and doing maintenance through Sally’s careful planning. The dedicated group of gardeners have allowed Anne, our Garden Therapist, to focus on engaging children and women in the Garden Program. See the beautiful pictures of the work of the volunteers and Anne in this report. We look forward to having more volunteers back in dedicated roles soon.

The Sisters of the Good Samaritan continue to provide us with sustenance in a number of ways not least in their regular grant to support GSI's administrative infrastructure. Their insights, concern and support in our formation based on their rich legacy of social justice, provide us with a foundation and a pathway to continue to innovate and explore ways to improve how we deliver critical services to those experiencing family violence and homelessness.

The GSI Board and Committee members bring a deep vein of knowledge, skills and personal compassion that creates a strong infrastructure on which to continue building our services on. We are going through a very significant growth spurt with the Banyule Project and the careful considerations of each step we take is testament to the robust governance that we benefit from.

We have farewelled several staff members over the past year including Brenda, Georgia, Isterlin, Nga and Regina and we thank them all for their service to GSI. We have also welcomed Erin, Hannah, Sarah, Serap and Vanessa. Our staff team is diverse, passionate, and talented and each member brings a range of attributes that build a creative, connected and agile workforce.

Unfortunately Laura, our Hardworking Finance & Risk Manager, has decided to remain at home with her baby Henry into the foreseeable future. We thank Laura for her years of dedicated service to GSI and we will miss her greatly. In her maternity leave absence we have been fortunate to have Donna join us and coordinate all our financial and risk management responsibilities. Donna has also taken on the role of Company Secretary, proving herself to be an incredible asset to the Board as well as to the staff team.

Whilst we have continued to deal with the ramifications of COVID-19, we have become accustomed to wearing masks, regular testing, and gently but consistently supporting those staying at the service to get vaccinated and keep as healthy as they can.

One of the most important issues we will be working through over the next 12 months is the attainment of the Rainbow Tick. This is the quality framework that supports health and human services organisations to show that they are safe, inclusive, and affirming services and employers for the LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, trans, intersex and queer) community. These standards are designed to create inclusive practices and to constantly remind us of the importance to consider how we can continually improve the way we design and deliver our services.

Whilst all our staff, volunteers and Board members will be part of the conversations and work required to attain the Rainbow Tick, we have dedicated two days a week for the next year for one staff member to lead this work. We look forward to continuing to build an inclusive environment that sees everyone treated with dignity and respect and recognises the many layers of often complex experiences that people bring to our workplace, as either an employee or a service user.

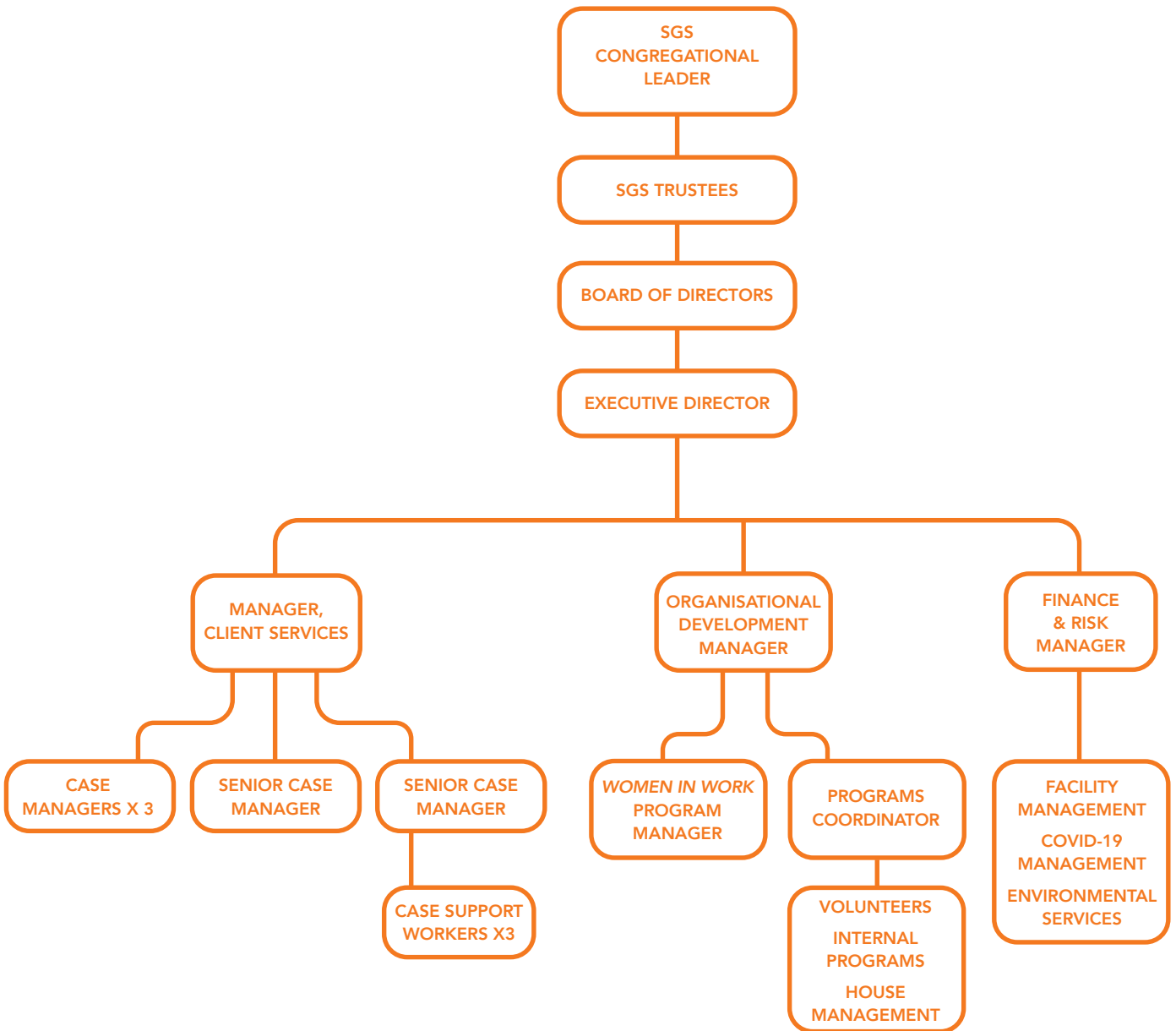
The other very important issue that GSI is focusing on is creating an environment that is culturally safe for First Nation clients. Approximately 16% of the people we support identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and we have recently welcomed a new employee who identifies as a First Nations person. We are working on our first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and hope to have this completed over the next 6 months.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the managers and staff at GSI. Everyone contributes in their own way to ensure that all those who enter the service are welcomed and respected and are provided with a range of supportive responses that enable them to take the critical next steps in their pathway to a life free from violence, abuse and homelessness. It is the reason we all do what we do. I am privileged to work with such passionate, creative and hardworking people.

Felicity Rorke
Executive Director



Our People



Banyule Update

GSI has been working on a project to provide longer term accommodation to support women and children to recover from the trauma of family violence and homelessness. GSI was provided with partial funding in the May State Budget to be able to progress the project.

This has meant that the Good Samaritan Inn is able to grow our service footprint and support more victim survivors of family violence for longer periods of time. This is an historic opportunity for the organisation, and we sincerely thank the State Government, especially the officers in Family Safety Victoria, for their ongoing support. We also thank the encouragement and unwavering belief in the project from Fr Bill Edebohls and the Parish Council.



The development of the Banyule Project will support women and children with high levels of disadvantage and will provide longer lengths of stay, more independent accommodation, and specialist support. The Project will prioritise women and families without Australian permanent residency including from migrant and refugee backgrounds.

The project will see the construction of 10 new self-contained accommodation units for victim survivors of family violence and their children.

Our aim for this project is to enable women to regain their ability to make choices that will lead to self-sustaining and fulfilling lives for themselves and their children. GSI will work in partnership with other local services to ensure that these families are connected to all the appropriate specialist and generalist services that they need including eventual access to long term, sustainable housing and employment.

We are currently working through the planning and designing of both the physical and the operational structures of the Banyule Project. We have been fortunate to procure the talents of GKA Architects and the G2 Urban Planning team to get us to the building permit stage from Banyule Council. We are identifying ways in which we can create an environment that has input from those with lived experience to ensure that we develop a service and a facility that is trauma-informed and is in all ways possible, a place of healing and recovery.

Direct Service Report

During the 2021 – 2022 period GSI reduced the capacity of its crisis accommodation in line with the COVID 19 risk in the community. Being able to reduce numbers of families accessing accommodation allowed GSI to implement safety measures to ensure risk was mitigated to both guests and staff. Due to the length of continual lockdowns and restrictions, GSI held women and children for longer stays. Staff continually monitored exposure sights and held meetings with guests to ensure continued information sharing on risk. As the COVID restrictions eased in Melbourne, GSI slowly returned to full capacity.

GSI's accommodation includes options of supporting 3 single women, including a downstairs room for any women with mobility issues, and 5 family rooms with capacity to accommodate a total of 8 women and as many as 15 children and young people at any one time. This has seen GSI at full capacity regularly since re-opening all rooms post COVID restrictions lifting.

Case management is provided 7 days per week offering a range of responses including crisis interventions, case planning and goal setting to assist women and families manage the myriad of issues requiring attention post leaving a violent relationship. Case Managers assist the guests in connecting to other specialist services for support during and post their stay to ensure continuous wrap-around support is provided. Case Support Workers follow-on in the evening shift ensuring the emotional support needs of the guests are fully met and any emergency is promptly dealt with. The Case Support Workers often bring the entire household together not only for meals but also by providing fun and therapeutic activities that create and build-on a sense of community.

While being accommodated at GSI counselling and therapeutic group programs are available to guests. The programs focus on the healing and recovery of guests and sometimes for physical activity and just for fun.

Programs that have been successful at GSI include the Lort Smith Pet Therapy Program where two four-legged friends have been warmly welcomed by women and children alike. We were also fortunate to have the Sing n Grow Program running at GSI for a term. This was very popular and timely for the children bringing music and singing to the Inn and in particular drawing out those small people who were struggling due to their experiences of loss and grief. Our Therapeutic Garden Program, facilitated by Anne, still proves popular with women and in particular with the children. We regularly welcome back women and children who have stayed with GSI in the past, because they have enjoyed this activity and want to continue taking part in this activity.





GSI continues to require a minimal criterion for access to its service, ensuring fair and equitable supported accommodation for all women, young people, and children. As a service GSI remains a leader in the Family Violence sector in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their families, CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) women and their families, including women with no permanent residency, as well as women being released from prison or discharged directly from hospital into our accommodation.

The continued success of the specialist partnerships GSI have forged in the sector ensure the women, young people and children feel they are supported to begin their recovery and healing processes.

Parenting After Family Violence has been a new program supported by Berry Street and GSI staff members. The Program has given women the opportunity to work therapeutically with Kirsten from the NHARP Program at Berry Street. She has provided supportive guidance to women on their parenting, giving them confidence and critical insights to re-connect with their children after family violence.

Children and Families Program

GSI has welcomed and connected with 39 children and their families and several young people without their families over the last 12 months. During this time we have focused on creating an environment that is conducive to healing through a range of activities that are playful, educational and calming.

We have developed and built our resources, equipment, furniture, education and sensory supports for children and families.

The introduction of new educational furniture and toys has been exciting for the children and families, with a play kitchen, storage, book display area, as well as toy cooking appliances such as a cake mixer, cash register, toaster and tea set. These quality resources are well known by educators, parents and teachers for their safe and educational appeal.

Children have engaged in imaginative and creative play activities which are important for healing from trauma. 'Dramatic and imaginative play also encourages children to become more confident and develop a stronger sense of identity' (MTA, Modern Teaching Aids). A highlight was being invited by *Amir, a previously shy 6 year old boy, to 'order lunch at his café'. He was offering sandwiches, cake, fruit and coffee, and charging \$2- \$6 for the items, to be processed in the wooden toy cash register. *Amir talked proudly about how he was going to have his own shop one day, and make coffee, make money and make people happy. The imaginary role play he engaged in demonstrated a freedom, happiness and hope for the future.

The introduction of gumboots and a gumboot storage rack made by our gardener Anne, have encouraged much play and fun in the outdoor area. One of our 4 year old guests even insisted on wearing his to bed after playing in them all day.

Outside play has been a significant feature of children's experiences at GSI, with some teenagers engaging in sandpit activities. A teenage boy and his 6 year old brother connected during a mission to construct a water system in this area, providing much needed joy and release. They were not able to attend school during this time due to safety issues, so the sense of purpose and fulfillment was meaningful.

Connection to literacy has been a developing aspect of the support we provide children and families at GSI. We have implemented a book display area, increased



the diversity, supply and quality of children's books, as well as talk with families about reading. *Sam developed a routine with her children where she read every night, selecting from the variety of books available. We aim to continue to grow and develop this area, with reading programs that extend beyond our guests stay at GSI. Watch this space.

Connection with families through play, conversation, observations and training has taken place across the year consistently. We feel and see the safety that children experience over their stay, through their increased comfort in eye contact, talking, play, reaching out to staff for help or sharing toys or food. There are many knocks at our office door by little hands, just wanting to just say hello to the staff.

We aim to listen, care, ask questions and amplify children's voices.

We encourage creativity and adventure, as well as quiet time and routine. We are curious and open, welcome surprises and storytelling. We nurture mother and child relationships, attachment and confidence, affirming the parent's strengths and value.

A typical day at GSI could include a lemonade stall made by an 8 year old, meeting a newborn baby, painting with a mother and child, watching a toddler's first steps, hearing a child find their voice after weeks of silence, or watching a mother's joy at her child's newfound safety and security.

Mostly we appreciate the opportunity to care and nurture families who are fleeing distressing circumstances to find safety. It can at first be a challenge for families to adapt to the communal living space, however we mostly find that guests find comfort and warmth in the supportive homely environment, where they cook, share meals, play, sleep, rest and process, until they find their way to the next chapter in their lives.



68% OF WOMEN WERE AGED BETWEEN 26 – 45 YEARS



51% OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WERE AGED UNDER 5 YEARS



60% OF GUESTS IDENTIFIED AS CULTURALLY & LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE (CALD).



14% OF GUESTS IDENTIFIED AS ABORIGINAL AND/OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER.

GSI responds to the needs of diverse communities and provides inclusive services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people living with a disability, and people who identify as LGBTIQ.



38% OF TOTAL GUESTS DID NOT HAVE PERMANENT RESIDENCY IN AUSTRALIA.



22 GUESTS REQUIRED AN INTERPRETER TO SUPPORT THEIR COMMUNICATION AND ENABLE INCREASED ADVOCACY.



42% OF GUESTS SPOKE LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH AS THEIR PRIMARY LANGUAGE AT HOME



25 NIGHTS IS THE AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY



2,848 SUPPORTED NIGHT STAYS WERE PROVIDED THIS YEAR

GSI is often one of the first places victim-survivors stay after leaving family violence. As such, the physical and emotional safety and wellbeing of guests is our priority.



109 GUESTS WERE ACCOMMODATED THIS YEAR, COMPRISING OF 70 WOMEN AND 39 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



13 WOMEN REFERRED TO 'WOMEN IN WORK' ENABLING THEM TO ACCESS TRAINING, EDUCATION AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES



20% OF WOMEN WERE SUPPORTED TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE HOUSING



96% OF GUESTS WERE NEW CLIENTS. 4% HAD STAYED WITH GSI PREVIOUSLY



24/7 STAFFING, SECURITY CAMERAS AND NON-DISCLOSED ADDRESS AT ALL FACILITIES



THERAPEUTIC PROGRAMS INCLUDE COUNSELLING, SENSORY GARDEN THERAPY, ART THERAPY, PET THERAPY AND ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS THAT FOSTER POSITIVE FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS



6 WOMEN HAVE SUCCESSFULLY GAINED EMPLOYMENT AND COACHING



GSI aims to ensure that all interactions with guests are respectful, empathic, non-judgmental and convey optimism. We meet each woman with hope and the belief that change is possible.

Mikaela's Story



Mikaela entered GSI in 2021 after an urgent request from Drummond Street Services. Mikaela was supported in planning a safe escape from her ex-partner and transported to GSI. Mikaela was assessed as a high-risk client requiring immediate protection, largely due to the violent and criminal history of her ex-partner who was on the run from the police.

Mikaela has two children who were taken into Child Protection's care due to the family violence perpetrated against them at the hands of her ex-partner. On entry into GSI, Mikaela did not engage with workers and barely made eye contact with anyone. The Manager of Client Services implored Mikaela to trust GSI to support her in the reunification with her children, Mikey and Charlotte.

Mikaela slowly began to open up to GSI staff. Both day and night workers monitored her risk and safety ensuring she and GSI were safe from being tracked by her ex-partner. Beyond the physical safety, strong emotional and psychological support was required of all staff to ensure Mikaela did not give up. Staff recognised her life-long traumas and responded to her needs while reflecting her resilience throughout her journey of healing and importantly, to encourage her for the journey ahead.

GSI supported Mikaela to engage with her DFFH Child Protection worker and the childrens' carers' eventuating in regular weekly contact with Mikey and Charlotte. Seeing her children regularly strengthened Mikaela and she became focused in persevering with all court orders including engaging with regular support services. This was critical as part of her case plan developed by

the Childrens Court Order as well as with GSI, to ensure her children return to her care. Some of the support services included engaging in the Parenting After Violence Program facilitated by Berry Street and hosted and co-facilitated by GSI every Friday morning, Alcohol and Other Drug counselling, mental health management through a Mental Health Care Plan and in-house therapeutic counselling that GSI offers each week.

GSI worked tirelessly alongside Drummond Street Services with the focus of full reunification of the children back to Mikaela's care. After six months of advocacy through weekly Care Team Meetings with Child Protection and other services, Mikey and Charlotte were reunited with Mikaela at GSI.

For the next two months, GSI staff assisted in supporting the family to re-establish their family bond after years of disruption. Not dissimilar to their mother, Mikey and Charlotte, now aged six and four respectively, had been observers to significant abuse and constant change all their lives. As such, the importance of creating stability and safety as they reunited for the first time in years, was extremely important. Whilst not without its challenges, GSI staff created an environment ensuring Mikaela knew she was supported through this change and able to 'pick herself up' after every hurdle.

After reunification, GSI continued to advocate for the permanent care of the children with Mikaela whilst searching for long term housing in which the family could re-start their lives together. GSI was successful in securing long-term housing through Haven Home Safe, to which the family moved into in mid 2022.

New Partnerships & Programs at GSI

Darebin Falcons

The Darebin Women's Sports Club has partnered with the Good Samaritan Inn to provide weekly "Footy Fun" sessions for women and children.

The Darebin Women's Sports Club provides sporting opportunities for girls, women and gender diverse people to play Australian rules football, soccer and cricket. The Club, known as the Darebin Falcons, has a strong commitment to giving back to the community by helping to break down barriers to grow more diverse participation in sport. To support this, the Falcons have recently received Vic Health/Jump Start funding to appoint an Inclusion and Diversity Manager, Aasta O'Connor, to take their love of physical activity and its health and wellbeing benefits to community groups who might otherwise not engage with sport. Aasta will be a familiar name among AFLW followers having played for both the Western Bulldogs and Geelong, and brings a wealth of sporting, engagement and leadership skills to the role.

The primary aims of our partnership with the Darebin Falcons, are to get our residents moving, to give them activities to enjoy, to gain confidence in their physical



power and strength - and to simply have some feel good, lighthearted, fun. Having started on August 24th, so far we can say the project is hitting the mark.

Santa Maria

GSI has partnered with Santa Maria College in providing their students with 'walk in their shoes' workshops. The workshops align with the ethos of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan, which commits to social commentary, advocacy and solidarity; as well as providing an understanding of the prevalence and impact of family violence, the social and community services system and the primary prevention of violence.

In 2022 GSI has successfully partnered with Santa Maria, St Monicas and Sacred Heart Colleges,

"Thanks and appreciation to you all for taking time out of your busy day to share aspects of your work with us".

delivering presentations and workshops to teachers and students on the drivers and prevalence of family violence and how, as a community, we can contribute to the ending of violence against women and children.

Sensory Garden Program

Acknowledgement

The Sensory Garden Program at Good Samaritan Inn aims to honour the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation on whose un-ceded lands it is situated, by respecting and caring for Country.

The Garden Program

The Sensory Garden Program aims to create a garden and garden program that supports connection to the natural world for the people who stay at GSI as well as for the people for whom GSI is their work place. The program is informed by research that demonstrates that time in nature is related to decreased blood pressure and heart rate and reduced production of stress related hormones such as cortisol. The program is focused on children and is person led, trauma informed, culturally responsive and evidence based.

So far this year the Sensory Garden Program has offered activities engaged in by 20 different children over 29 sessions. Some children were involved with a single session while others were attended over weeks and months. Children engage in activities like planting, harvesting, caring for worms, garden craft, sand and water play. Children often report that they enjoy the program, saying things like; 'I am having a happy day', 'what are we going to do today', 'I love the worms' and 'I want to plant something that we can eat'. Children demonstrate a sense of belonging and mastery by saying things like 'where are my gloves?' and 'I know where the worms are'.

Mothers engaged with their children in the activities for 14 of the sessions. Building shared experiences of garden activities can support the parent child relationship and can lead to these activities being carried into the lives of the family beyond GSI. Mothers of child participants have often given positive feedback about the program in comments such as: 'he loves the garden', while some women report that their children care for plants and watch them closely between sessions. Seven other women took an active role in caring for the garden. Some of the ways women value the garden are reflected in their statements: 'I love the garden', 'I am not happy if I cannot garden' and 'it helps me to water the plants'.

Volunteer gardeners

In 2022 volunteers are playing an important role in the garden program. Their work allows more attention to be paid to the therapeutic and sensory elements of the garden and garden program. The veggie beds are thriving and new season plantings including a flower garden are planned. Currently there are four regular volunteers who are making the garden feel healthy and cared for.

Future directions for the Sensory Garden program

We are very pleased to have received generous funding from the Good Samaritan Foundation for a garden to be developed at the new Banyule facility being planned for 2023 and look forward to working with women and children to co-create a therapeutic garden in that space.



Women In Work

Women in Work (WiW) is an employment program within GSI focused on finding employment for women who have experienced family violence. WiW targets victim survivors of family violence who require support to become financially independent, in particular extremely marginalised women from migrant and refugee backgrounds, living in metropolitan Melbourne.

In 2022 we expanded our partnership with businesses to create employment opportunities across retail, administration and cleaning. Business partners include Decjuba, Myer, Danihers Facility Maintenance and other small cleaning providers. These businesses have successfully employed women and have supported them in their journey to financial stability.

Through WiW, GSI has been able to employ two cooks to prepare evening meals during the week for our guests. This has allowed a variety of culturally diverse meals to be prepared with the new roles acting as an 'extra pair of hands' for the Case Support Workers during the busy hours of the evenings. During the year, WiW continued to partner with multiple referring agencies that include inTouch, Georgina Martina, Flat Out, Juno, Southeast Community Links and WIRE. Clients who have been referred include migrants, refugees and asylum seekers who often experience multiple layers of discrimination, barriers and challenges including limited access to services and the lack of financial support.

Alongside finding employment, WiW delivers a 6-month one on one coaching program for participants. The coaching program has been designed using EMPATH, a world-wide Economic Mobility Pathways Model, with a family violence lens. The aim of the coaching model is to build executive functioning skills that have been lost or inhibited due to trauma. With increased executive functioning skills the participant can become increasingly self-sufficient and make informed decisions across their own and their family's life. Family Violence specialists deliver the trauma-informed coaching program whilst the participant is employed. The program builds on participants' skills and resilience alongside addressing barriers to support and motivate participants towards sustainable change..

Support, motivating and empowering women in setting goals and incentives sets the foundation of the coaching model. WiW aims to have each participant move at least one phase towards "self-sufficiency" in at least one pillar stipulated by The Bridge which is the Model drawn in the shape of a bridge to demonstrate movement across the pillars.

Pillars of The Bridge:

- Family - stable housing and relationships
- Wellbeing - strength in health and networks of support
- Financial Management - secure finances, savings, and only planned debt
- Education and Learning - career goals and training plan that supports these goals
- Employment - stable employment, full access to entitlements and potential income

In 2022, we saw participants who were coached for 6-months move across the phases of each of the pillars in the majority of the pillars. The coaching model aims to build the executive function skills of the participants (that have been affected by trauma) so participants can set goals, make decisions and move forward in their life.

Snapshot of what has been achieved in FY21/22

- **New partnership with Decjuba to deliver a rolling 6-month employment-based position**
 - **6 participants gained employment (Cooking, Cleaning, Retail, Customer Service & Administration)**
 - **Total income earned for program participants by the end of FY 2021/2022 was \$56,494**
 - **3 participants received EMPATH Coaching**
 - **3 trained EMPATH coaches within GSI**
-

Student Journey



Marika joined GSI as a student in 2020. Marika was looking forward to her direct service placement where she would embark on a learning journey gaining skills, in the provision of case management within a refuge. The world dramatically changed when COVID-19 hit Australia and students, like Marika, were forced to complete their final student placement online. With grace and patience and a lot of determination (with the online world), Marika was able to successfully complete her placement at GSI and graduate as a Social Worker. Marika decided not to end her journey with GSI and applied for a casual Case Support Worker role with the organisation.

Whilst interviewing Marika, reflecting on her student journey and now as a staff member, she mentioned that her placement was *“challenging as it was at the start of the pandemic and all online. However, I was well supported by Cym and the team. My biggest learning was how the Family Violence Sector works from a service point of view”*.

As Marika began her casual shifts as a Case Support Worker, she told us that she was very excited and a little nervous. *“It was my first real Social Work job. It was great to see GSI in real life and understand better how it runs...”*

“I remember thinking on my first week knowing that working in Family Violence is what I want to do”.

Having gained the skills rapidly as a casual staff member, Marika applied for a position at GSI as a Case Manager. She mentioned to us that after seeing the amazing work the Case Managers did on a daily basis, it was what she wanted to be a part of.

We asked Marika what the most enjoyable part of her work as a Case Manager is and she passionately replied, *“being able to positively impact someone’s life and keeping women and children safe was by far the most enjoyable and rewarding elements of the role”*. Marika also mentioned the reality of the work and the challenges it brings *“The most challenging aspect of the role is that even though the state of Victoria is leading the way in family violence policy and practice, we are still limited in how we can help due to a lack of funding and services such as more refuges and affordable housing”*.

Marika has recently been appointed a Senior Case Manager and continues to take on more responsibility and advocate for positive outcomes for women and children. Marika uses her advocacy skills and presents to schools on the drivers of family violence and works to educate and empower young people to increase equality and bring violence to an end. She hopes to ‘change the story’ for more women and children in Victoria and see a society that is equal and safe for all.

Volunteer Program



189 HOURS VOLUNTEERED



10 ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS

The last twelve months have been afflicted by lockdowns, work from home rules, vaccine and mask mandates amidst a strong desire to continue providing the range of supports that volunteers bring to GSI. Potential volunteers continue to engage with GSI via the website and are provided with an initial information video, previously done face to face. If those interested are keen to pursue volunteer opportunities, they are invited to apply to GSI. Once all of the compliance checks are undertaken, opportunities include Sunday Cook, Gardening, Donations Room Support, Art & Craft Support, Book Time Reader, school age and other Tutors, Maintenance, Pet Therapy, Sing & Grow (music for children), Cook Book development are considered and discussed. More potential roles are being developed.

In between lockdowns, volunteers provided tuition to school age students, worked in the garden, cooked Sunday Lunch, provided maintenance support and advice, offered music sessions for children through Sing & Grow and with the support of their owners, brought Pet Therapy dogs, through Lort Smith, to engage staff and guests.



In March, an outdoor celebration was finally arranged for Kirsty Manning, the previous Volunteer Coordinator, for all available staff & volunteers. It was a wonderful opportunity to finally thank Kirsty for her many years of service to GSI and enabled everyone to wish her well.

Another opportunity to celebrate was enjoyed by a small group of volunteers to recognise National Volunteer Week in May.

We hope that with the summer approaching we can once again welcome back volunteers to complement the work at GSI.

Fay's Story



Before arriving at GSI, Fay had long experienced violence and abuse from a previous partner. He would physically and verbally abuse her and often threaten to end her life. His abuse was so significant that eventually he was arrested and sentenced to 9 years in jail in NSW.

Fay's ex-partner had continually blamed her for his imprisonment and threatened that he would "make her pay". Upon learning that he would be released from jail after serving only 4 years, Fay was understandably fearful and reached out to Merri Outreach Support Service for help. Merri Outreach assessed Fay to be at serious risk and in need of immediate protection and subsequently referred her to GSI.

Upon arrival to GSI, Fay informed workers of her diagnosis of epilepsy. In order to ensure Fay felt safe and comfortable, workers accommodated her in the downstairs bedroom with an assessable bathroom and close proximity to the office. Workers engaged with Fay to better understand her triggers for epileptic seizures, her seizure safety plan and provided her with a medical ID bracelet.

After a few weeks at GSI, Fay was informed by a mutual friend that, since being released from jail, her ex-partner had returned to Victoria. GSI staff and Fay worked together to monitor her safety and to swiftly ensure the Intervention Order against him was extended.

Fay is an Aboriginal woman originally from Tasmania. After learning that her ex-partner was in Victoria, she identified the safest option for her was to return to Tasmania. GSI applied for funding and was able to provide Fay with the cost of her flight. Returning to Tasmania was not only the best option to ensure she stayed safe, but also an opportunity for Fay to reconnect with her adult children, community, culture, and country.

Mary, Leigh, Jerome and baby Joseph's Story



Mary met her ex-partner when she was in her early 20's. They had been together for over 10 years and had 3 children together. Throughout their relationship, Mary's ex-partner perpetrated family violence against her. Mary was subjected to coercive control, physical violence, emotional and financial abuse as well as obsessive behaviours, all increasing over time. Mary was becoming more and more frightened of him and feared for the safety of herself and her then two children, Leigh 6 and Jerome 2. In 2021, Mary made the decision to leave the relationship. Shortly after fleeing the relationship, Mary learnt that she was pregnant with baby Joseph. They had been relocated to a new house unknown to her ex-partner and were re-establishing their lives.

However, after Joseph was diagnosed with a terminal illness, Mary's ex-partner breached a court order and presented at the property. Child Protection had grave concerns for Mary and the children's safety and urgently referred them to GSI. Workers supported Mary in providing palliative care to Joseph. Mary is strongly connected to her Filipino heritage and found comfort in being able to speak her native language, Tagalog, with one of the Case Managers, Hazel. After noticing Mary and the children praying, workers inquired about her faith. Mary identified finding comfort in her Catholic faith and said that she wanted to have Joseph baptised as soon as possible. Accompanied by Sister Kerin and Hazel, Joseph was baptised at Sacred Heart Church that Sunday.

Sadly, a week after their arrival and a few days after his baptism, Joseph passed away in Mary's arms. Even throughout immense grief, Mary was a protective, loving and engaged mother. At the request of Mary, Cym and the GSI team organised the funeral arrangements. GSI continued to support the family over the next few months with bereavement counselling, day-to-day practical and financial assistance, and emotional support. Leigh and Jerome participated in programs that were facilitated onsite, such as, Sing and Grow and Garden Therapy. This allowed Mary to have some respite, while knowing her children were safe and cared for. GSI assisted Mary to re-enrol Leigh into primary school and purchased him a brand new uniform.

Over time, Mary began to be ready to return to her home. GSI advocated to Child Protection for the family to return home once adequate safety measures were put in place. GSI applied for funding for Mary's house to be fitted with CCTV, assisted her in planning to return home including an extension of the Family Violence Intervention Order. Eventually, Mary and the children were able to safely return home. GSI have continued to provide the family with outreach. Mary and the children regularly come onsite for programs and most recently GSI were able to assist Mary in advocating for the closure of the Child Protection Order.

GSI staff organised a photo book of Joseph's baptism which was a precious reminder of her baby and the important event that the family were able to share together whilst Joseph was still alive.

Acknowledgements

Trustees of the Sisters of the Good Samaritan

Sr Patty Fawkner sgs
Sr Marella Rebgetz sgs
Sr Catherine McCahill sgs
Sr Veronica McCluskie sgs
Sr Meg Kahler sgs

Grants and Foundations

Alannah & Madeline Foundation
Archbishop's Charitable Fund
Australian Government - 2021 Volunteer Grants
Darebin Council
Department of Families, Fairness & Housing (DFFH)
Family Safety Victoria
Family Safety Victoria - Family Violence and Sexual Assault Traineeship Program
Fr Kevin Broderick Memorial Trust
Good Samaritan Foundation
MF Foundation
CCI Giving
Tank Foundation

Parishes, Community Groups and Individuals

Adele McBride
Airport West Rosary Group
Andy Kuppe
Archdiocese of Melbourne
CFMEU Vic/Tas,
Construction & General Division
Blessed Sacrament Fathers
Bridge Church
Buttercups
Chris & Di Dixon
Country Women's Association (CWA) - Alphington branch
Craig Reeves

Farmwall
Fr Aloysius Nato
Fr Bill Edebohls
Fr John McCarthy
Frank & Pauline O'Brien
Ged Kearney MP
Marist Brothers, Fitzroy
Rotary Club of Central Melbourne
Sacred Heart Parish, Preston
Sally Ryan
Sisters of the Good Samaritan
St Bernadette's Parish, Ivanhoe
St Bernard's Parish, Coburg East
Stewart Midgely
Within Reach Integrated Network

Businesses

Alpha-Form Constructions
Architects Without Frontiers and service partners
ARKit
Ask the Mrs
Caroma
Chris Power, PowerProjects
Danhers Facility Maintenance
Decjuba
GKA Architects
Good 360
Hayball Architects
Individual Design and Construction
Myer Melbourne
The Nappy Collective
Neami National
Reliance Constructions
SNAP printing, Preston

Schools

Lourdes Hill College, Hawthorne
Mater Christi College, Belgrave
Parade College,
Preston & Bundoora

Sacred Heart Primary School, Preston
Santa Maria College, Northcote
St Columba's College, Essendon
St Joseph's College, Ferntree Gully
St Monica's College, Epping

Partners

Berry Street Northern Specialist Family & Domestic Violence Service
The Bridge – Preston & Thornbury Catholic Social Services Victoria (CSSV)
City of Darebin
Darebin Information Volunteer Resource Service (DIVRS)
Elizabeth Morgan House Aboriginal Women's Services (EMH)
Flat Out
Georgina Martina Inc.
Haven; Home Safe
inTouch Multicultural Service Against Family Violence
Juno
Kind Heart Counselling
Lort Smith
McAuley Community Services for Women
Northern Integrated Family Violence Service System (NIFVS)
Rize Up
Safe and Equal
Southeast Community Links
safe steps Family Violence Response
The Orange Door – NEMA
Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA)
VincentCare
Vinnies
WIRE
Women's Health in the North (WHIN)
Women's Housing Alliance
Women's Liberation Halfway House
Women's Services Network (WESNET)



"Thank you for listening to me today, it's been good talking to you"



"I'm more hopeful for the future and will try to take things one step at a time"



"Learning how to breath properly has helped me stop feeling so stressed"





The Good Samaritan Inn

T: 0435 779 064

www.goodsamaritaninn.org.au

The Good Samaritan Inn acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.

