



ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT

2021-2022

GEORGINA MARTINA Inc.

Specialist Family Violence Service



Artwork by Colleen Wallace Nungurrayi,
purchased for Martina refuge 2021

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Georgina Martina Inc. proudly acknowledges the First Peoples of Victoria as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waters on which we live and work, and we pay our respects to their Elders.

We acknowledge and respect that First Nations communities are steeped in traditions and customs built on a disciplined social and cultural order that has sustained 60,000 years of existence. We acknowledge the significant disruptions to social and cultural order and ongoing hurt caused by colonisation and note that sovereignty has never been ceded.

We acknowledge the ongoing leadership role of First Nations communities in addressing and preventing family violence and we join them in seeking to eliminate family violence from all communities.



GMI strives to create an inclusive and accessible service that embraces and values diversity in all its forms. We are committed to providing a respectful and safe organisation for all our staff and clients, including those from First Nations, LGBTIQ+ and CALD communities, and those with disability.

As an organisation we create a culture of continuous learning and improvement and actively seek to understand and celebrate perspectives different from our own.

GMI recognises individual needs, empowering clients to make their own choices by ensuring an intersectional and multidimensional practice lens. We believe our inclusive and collaborative culture strengthens our organisation and contributes to successful client outcomes.

-GMI Diversity and Inclusion Statement, 2022

Artwork by Helen Pula
Rubuntja, purchased
for Martina refuge
2021

CHAIR REPORT

Georgina Martina Incorporated (GMI) continues to provide support and emergency accommodation for victim-survivors experiencing domestic and family violence.

The COVID pandemic continued to impact our staff who demonstrated great flexibility to work from home or on site to support clients.

Our 2 large 'core and cluster' accommodation facilities continue to be fully occupied and we continue to work with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) to rectify minor defects.

With funding from DFFH, we have upgraded our 4 Crisis Accommodation Properties (CAP) and from July 2022 they have been fully occupied.

Special thanks to our board member Lara, who facilitated sessions with the board and GMI employees to develop the GMI Strategic Plan 2022 to 2025.

The GMI Strategic Plan is the result of several months of research and planning that included broad environmental scanning delivered by GMI staff, workshops attended by Board members and GMI staff, followed by consultation with key partners and all GMI staff.

It was great to have so many people involved in the development of the plan. The Strategic Plan is implemented with the 2022/2023 Business Plan also developed and implemented.

The GMI Board welcome new members, Cathie & Therese with plans for further recruitment to the board underway.

Cathie was appointed Treasurer in March until the Annual General Meeting which provided Rebecca an opportunity to focus on her family and studies. Thanks, Rebecca, for your contributions as Treasurer where you implemented the batch payment process.

Priyani recently commenced a Diploma of Governance (fully funded via a scholarship from ICDA) and already she is sharing valuable insights with the board.

Our last elected chair, Eleanor Kennedy has taken a leave of absence and we thank her for her contributions during a most difficult time of COVID. A new chair will be appointed at the Annual General Meeting planned for November. During her absence Rebecca and Jo have shared responsibility.

After the development of the Strategic Plan, Lara took a well-earned break to holiday in Italy and is expected to return to the board in September.

Alice made valuable contributions when she joined the board in August, but unfortunately resigned in May this year.

The board will undertake further work on reviewing the Constitution and its own performance, including the implementation of board KPIs.

The board participated in a range of training this year – free Webinars from ICDA, governance training and team building. All board members were provided the opportunity to participate in Intersectional Training to support the Rainbow Tick Accreditation GMI seeks, of which 3 members completed.

Thanks to Huong, Finance Manager for her reporting and contributions to the Finance and Audit Sub Committee.

Lisa, CEO of GMI continued to provide support and a place of guidance for the GMI staff, maintaining an open link between staff and the board. Her leadership supported in the progression of staff and implementation of a new model. We look forward to supporting Lisa in meeting the operational goals set for the coming year.

We look forward to further implementing the Strategic Plan and deliver on our key focus areas.

Rebecca Acuto & Jo Natoli

MANAGEMENT REPORT

Yet another challenging but productive year for GMI. The continuation of the pandemic effected our mode of service delivery at times, but not the increasing demand for Family Violence Services. We learnt to be flexible and adapt to the changing landscape to ensure the safety of our staff, their families, and our clients, whilst continuing to provide a quality service.

GMI acquired two new Core and cluster refuges, each site has 6 individual units (2 x one bedroom, 2 x two Bedrooms, 2 x three bedrooms), a communal multipurpose room, an office and administration hub, with meeting and interview rooms, as well as a lunch space for staff. During the pandemic GMI sold the agency owned property Vida house. We were no longer able to provide communal accommodation and meet the safe distancing requirements. However, we were able to retain our two original refuges, and they are being used as CAP properties to assist with the transition from refuge to community. GMI was also successful in our application to Family Safety Victoria (FSV) for the CAP properties upgrade program.

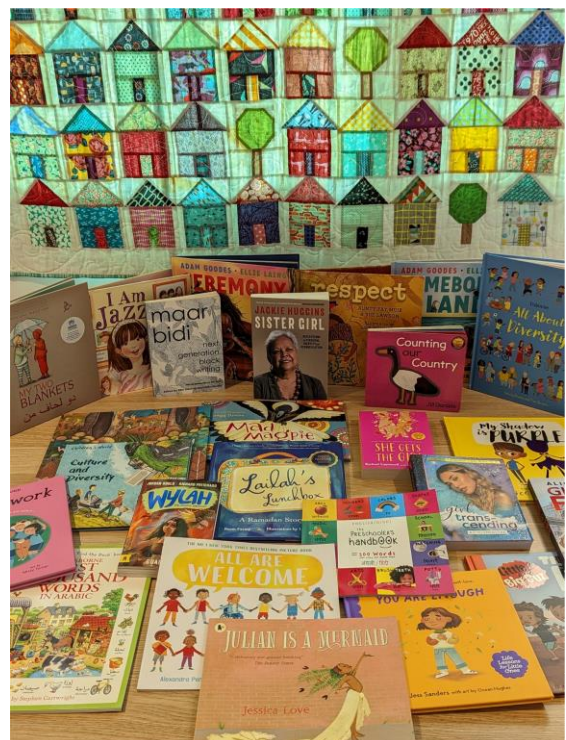


Handover from DFFH of new Georgina Core and Cluster site, 2021

The addition of Operations Manager to the Management Team has been instrumental in providing the necessary ongoing day to day management to Team Leaders and staff across the organisation and to meet the support needs of a larger staff team. The appointment of a Finance assistant to support the Finance Manager in the major changes of the organisation has also afforded an easy transition to a new financial system and shored up GMI finance management.

The appointment of a Projects Manager meant that whilst busy with the pandemic, onboarding new staff and the core and cluster transition, other projects also continued. GMI has committed to enhancing our approach to diversity and inclusion, has an established a working group with staff across all levels of the organisation to progress this work. We released a strong statement on our commitment to diversity and inclusion, alongside GMI's first Reconciliation Action Plan. We are receiving mentorship by Rainbow Health Australia to achieve the Rainbow Tick, which was kicked off this year with a service eligibility review. GMI is also in the early stages of creating a Disability Action Plan with support from Berry Street and Safe and Equal.

GMI saw rapid growth throughout the year and a new structure was fully implemented. The new positions were fully integrated into the organisation, including an Operations Manager, Projects Manager, Finance Assistant, Specialist Children's Practitioner, Housing Support Worker, Senior Practitioners as well as case support staff. An additional pool of casual staff has been established to ensure continuous 24/7 coverage and service delivery. This was a huge recruitment undertaking and has seen the management team recruit and induct ten new staff members throughout the year.



Inclusive books for children, young people, and adult clients at both site, 2022

In amongst this exciting growth and change, GMI was yet again able to pass our accreditation requirements with flying colours, in October 2021. This achievement is a credit to the continuous improvement and quality work achieved by all GMI staff; and the commitment to ongoing quality improvement which is imbedded in practice.

With the ongoing skills shortages across the sector, GMI continues to strive to be an employer of choice and retain and maintain the loyalty of existing staff. We provide above award conditions (as per EBA), extra support via external supervision, training via external and internal processes, and rewarding and acknowledging staff individual contributions. GMI embarked on a whole of agency staff development at Rye, in April 2022. The entire team came together for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic and were afforded many opportunities for informal get togethers. All staff who attended appreciated and enjoyed their time together. GMI have also been involved in a cultural review to ensure that all staff are participating, satisfied, and engaged in GMI decision making and services. This is an ongoing process, in which the Board are also participating.

Looking to the future, our staff and Board came together in August 2021 to participate in the development and implementation of a new Strategic Plan 2022-2025. Following this, GMI released a new Business Plan for 2021-2022. GMI also received new funding targets from FSV, which will commence at the beginning of the new financial year, 1st July 2022. The targets are now not capturing children, rather the adult head of the household. GMI support the rights of children as clients in their own right and are increasing the in-house services by appointing a Specialist Children's practitioner. We note that the shortage of community professionals also extends to those services required by children.

We are proud of our management team and practice staff for delivering on existing targets and ensuring quality services to our clients during an historically difficult and challenging time. There is no doubt that GMI will continue to achieve excellent outcomes and service delivery for clients into the year ahead.

Lisa Dunbar
CEO

Huong Nguyen
Finance Manager

Tracey Edwards
Operations Manager

Heather McIntosh
Projects Manager



GMI hosted a Reconciliation Week Morning Tea with the Northern Refuge Alliance, 2022



Health
and Human
Services



DONATIONS

GMI would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge and thank all those people/ services who have donated to our service over the year, and made a difference to the lives of our clients (both adults & children):

Dangerous Females – social group (Fundraiser & Cash Donation)
 St Kilda Mums (baby equipment, nappies)
 Nappies Collectors (nappies & baby wipes)
 Toiletries (Austin Hospital & Northcote Secondary College)
 Buddy Bags (Allanah & Madeleine Foundation)
 Catherine James (quilts – private donor)

GMI was lucky enough to have Aimee working with us as a Case Manager for a while earlier this year. Aimee was a proud Yorta Yorta woman and kindly shared much of her knowledge and experience with us.

When she left GMI she generously donated an Aboriginal artwork from her collection, 'My Way Home' by Mary Pollard, 2009. It now hangs in the entry corridor at Georgina site for everyone to enjoy.



We would also like to acknowledge the peer support, sharing of resources, ideas and advice of our networks in particular:

Anglicare (Counselling, Family Violence Support Package)
 Berry Street (Peer Support, Support & Safety Hub provider: NE)
 CFVS- Crossroads Family Violence Service (Peer Support, Sharing of resources, member of Northern Alliance)
 Safe and Equal (Peak body)
 Elizabeth Morgan House (Peer Support, Sharing of resources, member of Northern Alliance, secondary consultation)
 Good Samaritan Inn (Peer Support, Sharing of resources, member of Northern Alliance)
 Haven Home Safe (THM provider, housing advice and support)
 Orange Door Heidelberg
 Dr Wendy Bunston
 VACCA and BDAC (Partnering to develop RAP)
 Kara House (Peer Support)
 Intouch (Immigration legal advice, PR assistance, cultural support)
 Women's Housing Ltd. (Peer Support, Sharing of resources)
 Women's Health in the North (Peer Support, Sharing of resources)
 JUNO (Peer Support, Sharing of resources)
 Women's Legal Service Victoria (Skype legal Program, legal training, pro bono legal advice for clients)
 Woman's Liberation House (Peer Support, Sharing of resources)
 McCauley Care (Peer Support, Sharing of resources)
 MOSS (Merri Outreach Support- Children's Program) - (Peer Support, sharing of resources, Partners in Supporting Children)
 Northern Alliance – Family violence refuges in the North, providing peer support, networking opportunities, shared training and resources.
 Northern Integrated Family Violence Network (NIFVS) (sharing, gathering information)
 Safe Steps (FV referrals)
 Family Safety Victoria (advice, consultation, resources, information)
 Rainbow Health Australia (mentoring and training)

...and our GMI Board of Management, thank you!

CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 1

S is a 20-year-old single woman who was referred to our service by Safe Steps after experiencing family violence perpetrated by both of her parents. S experienced many forms of violence including coercive control, financial, emotional, verbal, and physical abuse. S is one of 7 children and being the 2nd eldest, S also had many responsibilities for her younger siblings. S reported that the violence escalated once she began studying her course in psychology, as this went against her parents' wishes who wanted her to remain home and assist with the local footy club. S made the decision to leave the family home, and to live free from the ongoing violence. This has been very difficult for S, who remains on high alert that her siblings are still in the family home. S has advocated courageously to have service intervention for her siblings.

Since entering GMI, S has showed great resilience and growth. Originally, S was fearful of repercussions should she go against her parents. After many months, S finally felt comfortable to disclose the abuse she suffered and begin the process of obtaining an Intervention order. S's main goal was to move to New Zealand where her partner lives and would support her. In March of this year, once borders were opened, S was able to purchase her ticket to New Zealand with financial support from GMI. S identified that she felt moving to New Zealand would be the safest option since her parents continue to breach the IVO. GMI has been able to support S to reach her goals by providing support with brokerage, police support, court support, advocacy with Immigration, access to independent income from Centrelink, safety planning, and referrals to appropriate supports such as Housing, counselling, and Victims Assistance. S has continued to become empowered and plans to continue her study of psychology once in New Zealand.

CASE STUDY 2

E entered refuge with her two children after staying 3 weeks in a motel funded by safe steps. Case Manager supported E through the family circuit court to successfully obtain a recovery order for her 3rd child that had been with their father (perpetrator) for 6 weeks. Facilitated recovery of child 1.5 hrs away from Melbourne as directed by court. All three children are now safely with mum. All children are currently diagnosed with having a disability. NDIS funding and support has been organised. The children are now accessing supports ranging from, Occupation therapy, Speech therapy & other therapeutic interventions. We have built a connection with our local special school in the area for the children to continue to receive education based on their needs. Not only have the children been diagnosed with disabilities but they have all been victim survivors of family violence and are living with the trauma. Since the family entered refuge, we have seen a significant shift in the family due to feeling safe and comfortable. The children are expressing themselves much more openly to staff especially around what has happened in the home. One child who was nonverbal when entering refuge is now starting to communicate and show expressions and interact. E who was never able to make decisions due to her violent ex partners control is now slowly building confidence to make decisions for herself and her children. E entered very anxious to even leave the refuge on her own to now being able to take children to school and appointments. The journey for this family has just begun at refuge and we're already seeing huge progress on their journey to healing and living a life free from violence.



*Microsoft Office stock images used

CASE STUDY 3

AB (26yrs) is a young woman of Maori descent. She and her daughter AS (3) entered GWR refuge 17th July 2021. AB moved to Australia with her family in 2012 with a temporary 444 visa, her family moved back to New Zealand in 2015. Amy met WS in 2015 while living in Perth. AB and WS lived in Perth for some time before moving to NSW and moved to VIC in 2021. Throughout the time AS and WS were together, significant acts of domestic violence were perpetrated against AB by WS.

In 2020 AB left the relationship and went back to Perth with her daughter AS. The perpetrator contacted AB via video call threatening to kill himself, AB and AS then moved back to their family home in Sydney. The family were frequently relocating due to the perpetrator breaching intervention orders on multiple occasions. AB was unable to make connections, wherever the family moved to, as a result AB and AS are extremely isolated. In 2021 the family moved to Melbourne, where acts of domestic violence were further perpetrated against AB and AS that led to AB being hospitalised, and as a result had statutory involvement through police and child protection.

Through the family's journey with GMI, being that the family had previously been dependent on the perpetrator for financial support, AB and her daughter's only source of income now is family Tax Benefit and they are unable to seek other supports funded by the government with AB not being a permanent Australian resident. GMI have supported the family with food vouchers and other funding. The family has also been supported to access material aid from local community charities (The Big Hugg group, 3081Angels) for clothing and nappies for AS, emergency relief funds from the Red Cross. AB has also been supported to enroll at TAFE to study Medical Administration. GMI was able to advocate for AB to access support from InTouch - Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence, who are currently supporting AB through their legal services for AB to have full parental custody of her daughter so that they can return to New Zealand safely. GMI advocated for AB with an independent lawyer



from Romer Maud Family Lawyers who have advised that AB is able to return to New Zealand with AS as they have a strong case of fleeing domestic violence. AB is being supported to obtain childcare for her daughter, this is proving to be difficult as AB suspects the AS has Autism but is unable to obtain NDIS support for her daughter without a formal diagnosis and as she has no PR status. Advocacy and support is continuing around these issues, with the hope that AB can access appropriate childcare and other supports for AS in future.

CASE STUDY 4

H entered Martina's refuge on the 4th of January after spending 10 days in motel accommodation through safe steps. H is 49 years of age and originally from Japan. H has been married for 17 years and has a 16-year-old daughter J.

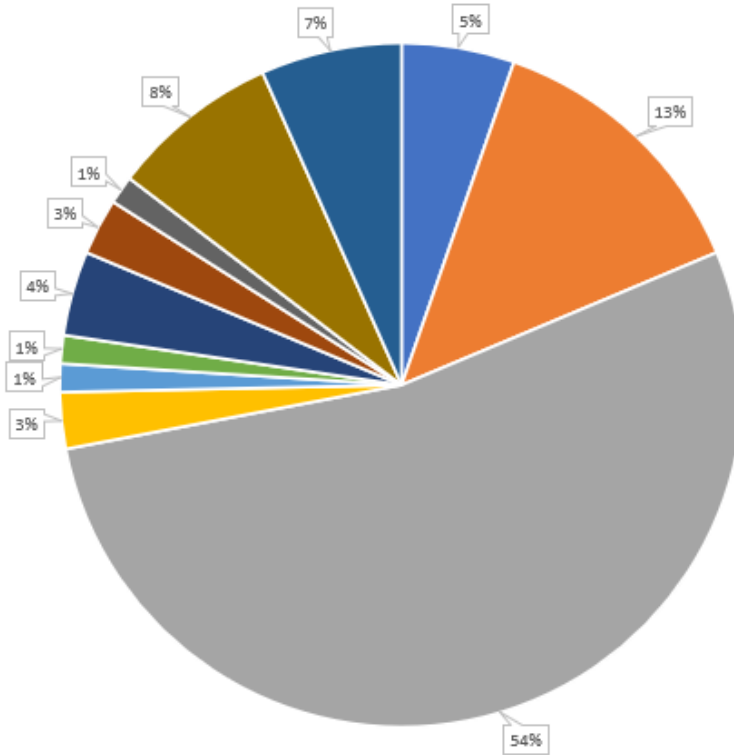
H and her daughter J have experienced family violence for over ten years resulting in the family contacting the police and fleeing their home. H's husband has controlled all aspects of both H and J's lives from the way they dress to all things financial. The most recent incident resulted in police attending due to threats to kill whilst holding a weapon.

H's daughter J has been hospitalised since November due to a suicide attempt. This suicide attempt has resulted in J being physically injured requiring amputation of her arm. J has been subjected to emotional and mental abuse from her father and he has been extremely controlling. Since Covid and her father working from home the control and abuse escalated which deteriorated J's mental health. J is currently being supported and cared for through Monash children's hospital and is in contact with GMI to ensure all supports are in place when J is discharged.

Since H has been supported by GMI we have been able to secure a lawyer for H due to her husband withdrawing a large sum of money from their accounts before fleeing to New South Wales. We also supported H retrieve her car safely with the support of a security IT company who completed checks to ensure no tracking devices had been installed. H's husband works in IT and is very capable of using tracking devices.

The longer-term goal for H is to ensure that she is financially secure and being able to access Centrelink payments until she is mentally and emotionally ready to get back into the workforce. GMI are also supported H get onto the Victorian Housing Registry and hoping to secure long term accommodation for the family so that both H and J can continue their recovery safely.

Languages



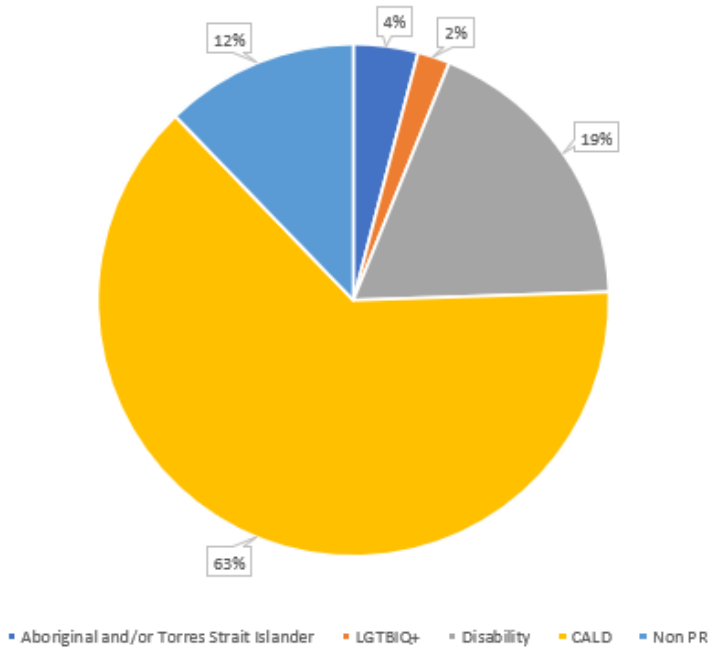
CLIENT DATA

GMI provided holistic and individualised services to 32 adults, and 55 children. Of these families 62% were born in Australia, and 36% were born overseas. 63% of clients identified as CALD and spoke a total of 11 different languages. 12% of these clients did not have permanent residency.

Clients identified themselves as coming from diverse backgrounds (63%), communities. This included 2% identifying as LGBTQI+, 19% with disability, and 4% identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

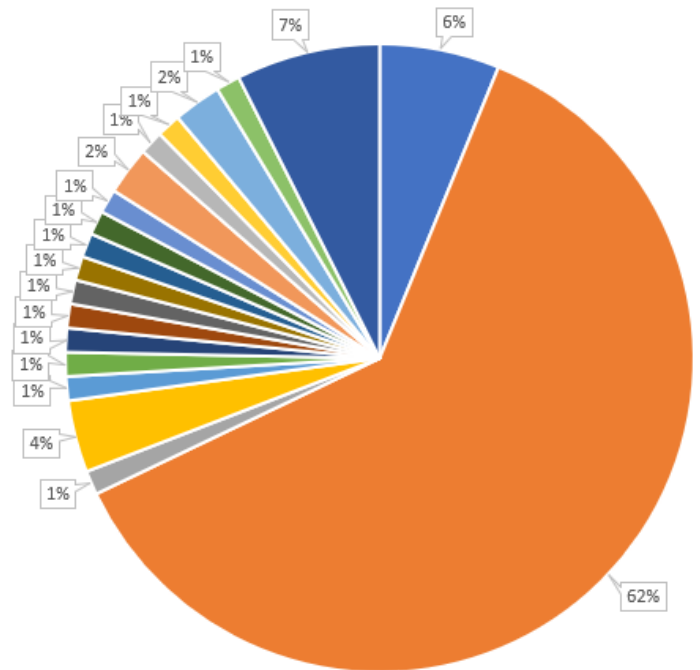
Arabic Dari English Persian Japanese Korean Oromo Punjabi Somali Urdu Vietnamese

Diversity Profile



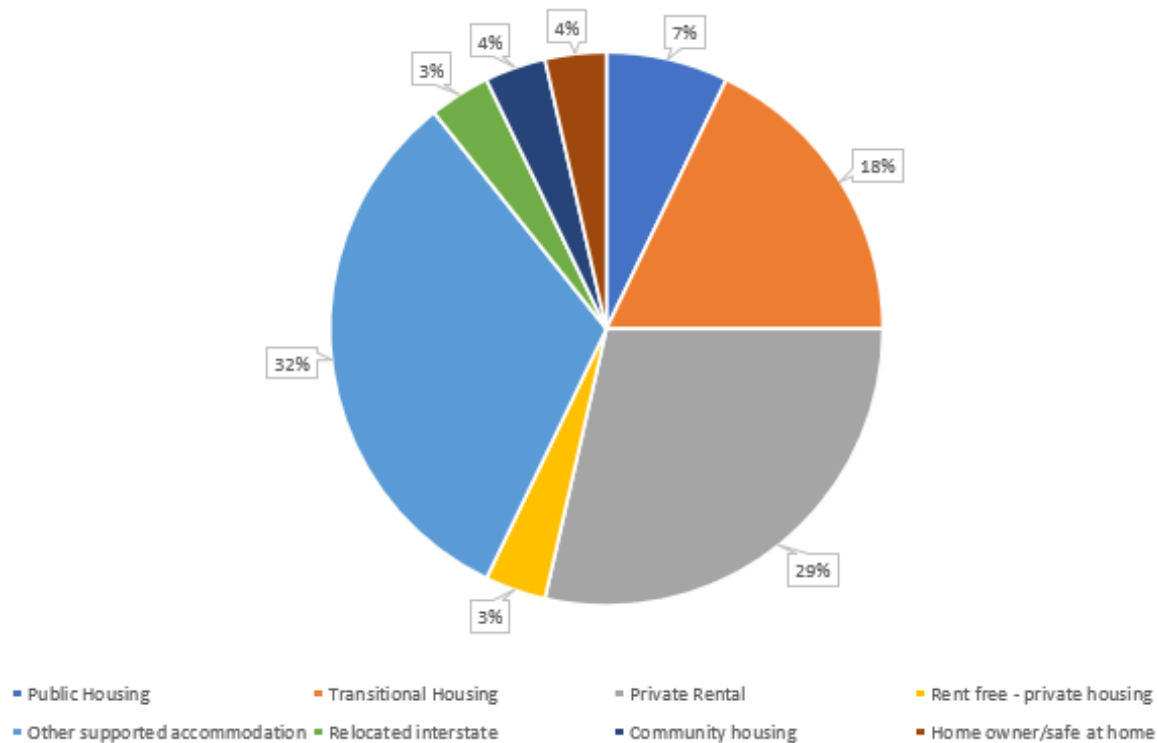
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander LGBTQI+ Disability CALD Non PR

Country of Birth



Afghanistan Australia Ethiopia India Japan Korea, Republic of (South) Lebanon Malaysia Pakistan Iran

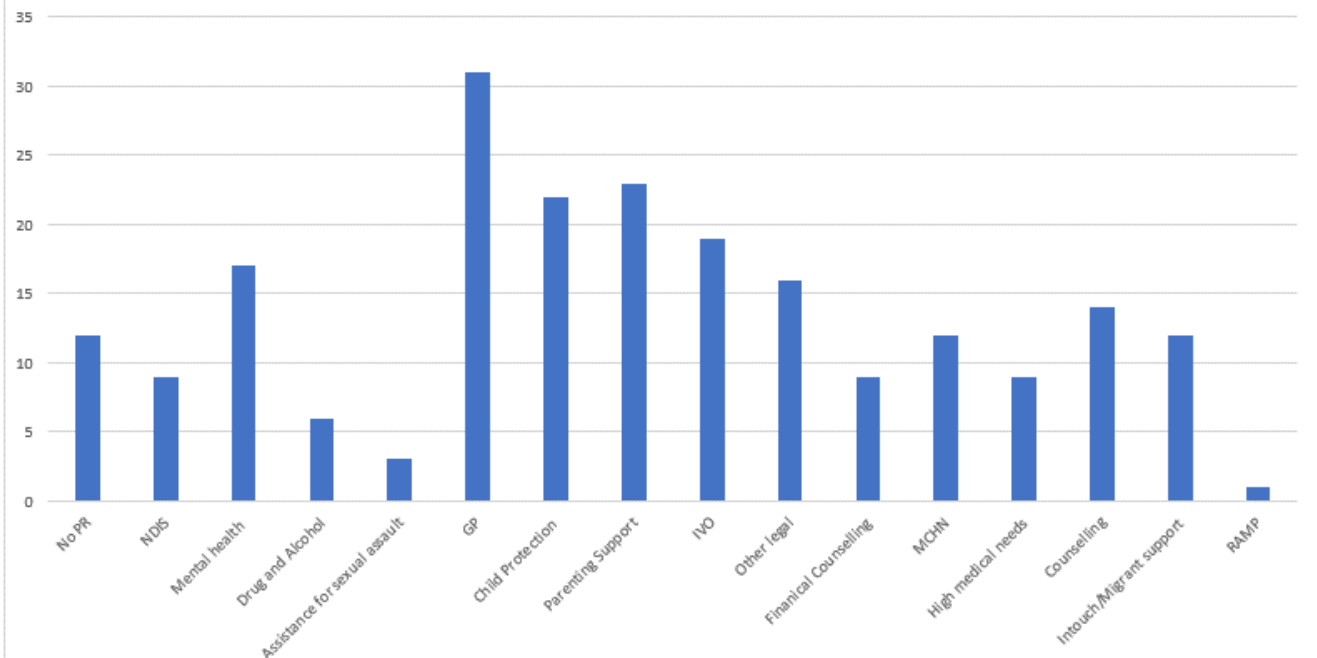
Housing Status at Time of Exit



it data showed that it long term s secured for from refuge. 32% supported i, 18% transitional ublic housing and rivate rental.

eved some great vere linked to many es including rams, assistance obtaining ders, counselling, tic supports.

Additional Support Needs



CHILDREN IN REFUGE

Peek A Boo Club

It is known that family violence can have a direct impact on the parent-child relationship and disrupt the development of secure attachments between infants and their primary caregivers.

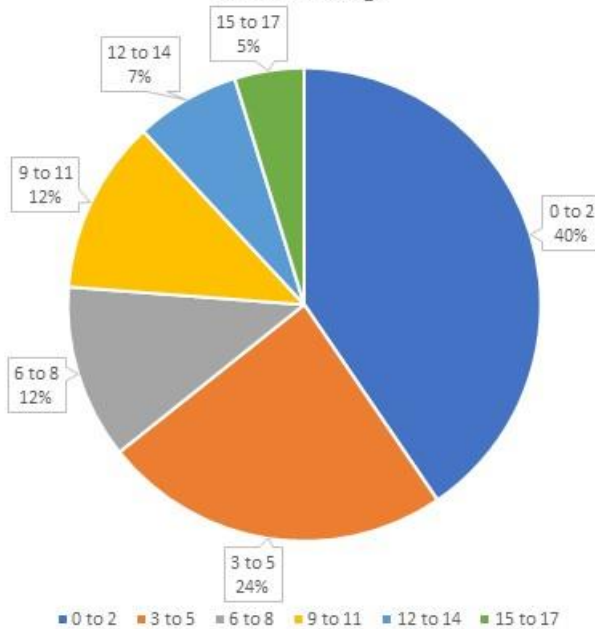
The Peek A Boo Club aims to provide infants with a safe space to explore and engage with their mothers and with each other, whilst facilitators gently support the child's mother to build attunement with their baby and strengthen the parent-child bond.

With the support of Dr Wendy Bunston, a senior clinical consultant and trainer and an associate lecturer with expertise in social work, infant and child mental health, family violence and group work, GMI staff have received training and support to become facilitators of the Peek A Boo Club.

GMI aims to commence the program in November 2022, offering groupwork sessions to parents and their babies aged 0-4 years. Dr Wendy Bunston has offered to provide mentoring, supervision, and support to the facilitators to establish the Peek A Boo club within the refuge environment. As a child-focused organisation, GMI wishes to provide the infants who come into refuge with their mothers a safe and secure environment to explore, engage and play, so that their development can be nurtured and ruptures to their attachment can be repaired within the most important relationship they will have – with their safe parent.

The group will include the use of, singing songs, musical instruments, cushions, and sensory blankets, whilst having everyone sitting on the floor. It will allow the infant to show the adults around them what they are thinking and experiencing, so that the adults can begin to learn to understand the experience of the child. It is hoped the Peek A Boo Club will also enhance the parents' understanding of their baby's experience of family violence, which strengthens the parents' protective capacity and ability to respond to their child's developmental needs; therefore creating an important and life-long protective factor for the child.

Children's Age



Play Therapy

GMI have funded and supported therapists, Laura, Jean and Meg from Playroom Therapy to provide weekly play therapy to families of young children aged 3 years to 12 years within the refuge environment.

For many mothers who are required to reside in refuge, the loss of their home and community, the need to process and recover from the trauma of violence, and the responsibilities that come with trying to secure a safe and stable future for their children impedes the time and space they have, to interact and play with their child. Many of the children who enter refuge are too experiencing loss and trauma and would benefit from the opportunity to build a sense of safety, strengthen connections, and simply have fun.

The uncertainty of living in emergency accommodation can make it challenging for families to engage in therapeutic services in community, due to long waitlists and not knowing where they will be able to live. Play therapy by Playroom Therapy has been able to provide an immediate intervention; a safe space for mothers and their children to focus on their relationship and to rebuild connection, and a safe space for children to express themselves how they do best – through play!

STAFF TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING

As part of GMI's ongoing commitment to diversity and inclusion, we have increased mandatory staff training requirements to include our focus areas of client practice for First Nations, LGBTIQ, CALD and disability.

This year GMI was able to secure face to face, whole of agency training, from Intouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence and Rainbow Health Australia. Staff were also provided the opportunity to complete online First Nations cultural training, and LGBTIQ Inclusive practice modules. We hope to secure training for staff in the coming months around NDIS and disability inclusive practice.

GMI staff also participated in multiple capacity building opportunities, including events such as IDAHOBIT Dress up day, National Reconciliation Week morning tea, and the Yalinguth app cultural walking tour. GMI now incorporates regular capacity building sessions within staff practice meetings, which provide flexible learning opportunities through film screenings, guest speakers, and knowledge sharing. Our senior practitioners also hold regular Practice Development and Critical Reflection sessions with staff to support the transition of learning into practice.

