



Family Violence Legal Service
Aboriginal Corporation (SA)

ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23



Family Violence Legal Service Aboriginal Corporation (SA)



Family Violence Legal Service Aboriginal Corporation (SA) acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which we live and work. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. FVLSAC is committed to honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the longest continuing cultures on Earth, in our work.



FVLSAC acknowledges those who have survived family violence. Our work is inspired by the courage, strength and resilience shown through their shared experiences.

We also acknowledge the practitioners, services and organisations who walk alongside survivors on their journey to safety and recovery, and those whose work is to prevent violence before it occurs.



We would also like to express our appreciation for the continued support provided through 2022-23

- The National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA)
- Corporation Members • Board Members (past & present) • Staff



Contents

Reconciliation Statement & Our Vision	4
About Our Service	5
FVLSAC Directors	6
Chairperson's Report	7
Chief Executive Officer's Report	8
Service Delivery Report	9
Community Legal Education and Early Intervention Activities	10
Law Reform and Advocacy	11
Forums and key meetings attended by FVLSAC	12
Legal Matters	14
Financial Reports	15
2022 - 2023 Highlights	16

PORT AUGUSTA

26 Jervois Street (PO Box 2087)
PORT AUGUSTA SA 5700
P (08) 8641 2195
F (08) 8641 2348
FREE CALL 1800 111 052
portaugusta@fvlsac.org.au

PORT LINCOLN

89 Liverpool Street (PO Box 750)
PORT LINCOLN SA 5606
P (08) 8683 1896
F (08) 8682 4825
FREE CALL 1800 309 912
portlincoln@fvlsac.org.au

CEDUNA

17 McKenzie Street (PO Box 319)
CEDUNA SA 5690
P (08) 8625 3800
F (08) 8625 3200
FREE CALL 1800 839 059
ceduna@fvlsac.org.au

ABN 56 370 326 897 • ICN 7499

Incorporated under the Corporation (Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander) Act 2006

Reconciliation Statement

Family Violence Legal Service Aboriginal Corporation (SA) acknowledges the traditional owners of the lands across Australia and particularly acknowledges the traditional owners in Port Augusta, Port Lincoln and Ceduna, the lands on which our offices are situated. We pay our deep respects to Elders, past, present and future.

Our vision for Reconciliation is an Australia where all Australians recognise, respect and advance the intrinsic rights, cultures and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

The Family Violence Legal Service Aboriginal Corporation joins with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and the broader Australian community on the journey towards Reconciliation. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original custodians of this land and encourage all Australians to be proud of our unique connection to the world's oldest living culture. We recognise the unique status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through our governance, management, planning, service delivery and the relationships we build.

We commit to continue to strengthen our service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are victim-survivors of family violence and/or sexual assault and to provide social and cultural support to assist our clients to obtain equitable access to the legal system.

We strongly believe Reconciliation is everybody's business and all Australians should walk the Reconciliation journey together.

Reconciliation is a shared journey which sees Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples working together with all other Australians to make communities safer so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples enjoy the same level of physical, emotional and social well-being as all other Australians.

We will ensure Reconciliation is alive within the Family Violence Legal Service Aboriginal Corporation (FVLSAC) by:

- Continually increasing our understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures;
- Providing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to work for and contribute to our organisation;
- Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim-survivors of family violence and sexual assault to realise their legal rights;
- Continually reflecting on our progress.

We acknowledge we will only succeed if we are guided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations.

Our Vision

An equitable and safe society for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.
To eliminate family and sexual violence through quality holistic legal services, education and community partnerships.

Our Purpose

We will deliver high quality and culturally appropriate legal assistance, to help vulnerable people facing disadvantage to navigate the legal system.

Our Underlying Principles

We acknowledge and respect those who fought for the establishment of family violence prevention legal services to support our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and we continue to build upon their work and dedication.

We recognise the lasting effects of intergenerational trauma and violence and pay respect to the resilience and strength of our communities.

We work in partnership with the community because we respect that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people own their futures.

We believe that client safety and trust is created when we keep confidentiality at the centre of everything we do.

Our Values

- Community
- Culture
- Respect for people
- Trust
- Compassion

About Our Service

Family Violence Legal Service Aboriginal Corporation (FVLSAC) is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation whose predecessors have been established in our communities for a number of years. Those services were regionalised in 2011 to form FVLSAC.

Our service is funded to provide legal advice, legal representation, policy and law reform, client support, community education and assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim-survivors of family violence and sexual assault.

An essential component of FVLSAC's service delivery model is the provision of our specialist, holistic culturally safe and wrap-around legal and non-legal client support service which also encompasses community legal education and activities. Our service delivery approach differentiates our service from much of the domestic violence and legal service sector. Our focus on client-centred assistance to victim-survivors also separates FVLSAC from others in the sector that provide gender-based or perpetrator focused services.

Our FVLSAC Staff live and work in the communities that we service. This allows for increased engagement with our communities as well as collaborative relationships with other local stakeholders and service providers. Being local assists us to build trust within our communities.

FVLSAC provides a free service to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victim-survivors of family violence and sexual assault requiring assistance in the areas of:

- Family violence
- Child protection
- Intervention orders
- Family law
- Victims of crime compensation
- Other legal problems arising from family violence

We also provide support and referrals to our clients should they need to engage with other services such as counselling, drug and alcohol services, housing and family support services.

FVLSAC services regional South Australia with three offices based in Ceduna, Port Augusta and Port Lincoln. Our three offices service the following communities:

- Ceduna, Koonibba Community, Yalata Community, Maralinga Tjarutja (Oak Valley) Community, Scotdesco Community;
- Port Augusta, Davenport Community, Leigh Creek, Nepabunna Community, Umoona Community (Coober Pedy), Dunjiba Community (Oodnadatta), Whyalla;
- Port Lincoln.

FVLSAC office are open Monday to Friday from 9:00am until 5:00pm. The offices can be contacted on the following free call numbers:

- Ceduna ~ 1800 839 059
- Port Augusta ~ 1800 111 052
- Port Lincoln ~ 1800 309 912

FVLSAC Directors

Current Directors

Lahn Mickan

(appointed September 2019)

Katryne Miller

(appointed November 2019)

Joy Reid

(appointed 5 May 2021)

Board Appointed Directors

Angela Johanna Boylan

*(appointed September 2014
and reappointed)*

Natasha Budimski

*(appointed November 2018
and reappointed)*

Ben Watson

(appointed February 2022)

Chairperson's Report

I am writing this report as the interim Chairperson for Family Violence Legal Service Aboriginal Corporation. Lahn Mickan, Chairperson since 2020, stepped down from the Chairperson's role in May 2023 due to increasing work commitments, however she continues to play an important role in her position as a Community Director.

Lahn's leadership has been significant during her time as Chairperson and led the Board through uncertain and unsettling times in the 2020 -22 period.

The FVLSAC Strategic Plan contains four key areas of strategic focus:

- Our people
- Our service delivery
- Our Organisation
- Our Advocacy

These four areas of strategic focus link the organisation effort so that the service delivered to the community is the right service delivered in the right place by the right people. The FVLSAC Board continues to receive reports based on the Strategic Plan that guides FVLSAC's work and this will be reviewed again in September 2023.

Amendments were considered by the Board and changes were made to the Strategic Plan in July 2022 to ensure the plan was still relevant given changes to the environment in which FVLSAC operates. This has allowed the organisation to focus on these areas and target the effort that staff are working towards.

After the challenges of COVID 19, along with other organisations in the Community Legal Sector, attraction of Solicitors has been a significant challenge and the organisation has had to be flexible and innovative to continue service delivery.

As always, organisations such as FVLSAC would not be able to operate without the support and assistance of a number of other organisations. In particular I wish to acknowledge the National Indigenous Australians Agency who fund FVLSAC activities and provided additional expansion funds. Funding is secure until June 2025 by which time the National Legal Assistance Program (NLAP) review will be completed. This review will include whether the FVPLS sector will transition to NLAP or remain a separate entity answering direct the National Indigenous Australians Agency.

FVLSAC continues to be actively involved with the national FVPLS forum and with increased funding and registering with ASIC, FVLSAC welcomes the continue support coming from this national body. The collective voice of like services from across Australia ensures our voice be heard on issues affecting our clients and services.

I wish to thank the staff of FVLSAC for their tireless work during the 2022 -23 financial year and their enduring commitment to preventing and responding to violence. It has been pleasing to see the core group of Management be maintained and acknowledge the contribution these staff make on a daily basis.

I would like to thank Lahn Mickan, Joy Reid, Katryne Miller, Johanna Boylan and Ben Watson for their continued support as Directors. The current Directors are looking forward to working with new Board members following the AGM.

Natasha Budimski
Interim Chairperson

Chief Executive Officer's Report

The 2022 - 23 year has been as unpredictable as when COVID impacted on our service delivery in the period 2020 to 2022. It is pleasing to see that Family Violence Legal Service Aboriginal Corporation (FVLSAC) has managed to continue to service our clients and communities from across the region over the past year despite a range of challenges.

The FVLSAC is the only Aboriginal Family Violence Legal Prevention Service in South Australia and the only Community Legal Service based wholly in regional South Australia.

By being located in regional South Australia our service is localized and with 50% of our staff being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander we have an extensive understanding of the communities which we service.

Despite covering almost a third of the geographical area of South Australia, FVLSAC is only able to provide this specialized service to approximately 20% of the total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community of South Australia. This is due to the area FVLSAC is funded to operate within.

Like many of the Family Violence Prevention Legal Sector services across Australia, FVLSAC has been hampered by the challenges associated with recruiting staff especially Solicitors. This has a flow on effect with the number, frequency and reach that we are able to provide to our communities. The ability to provide face to face services to very remote communities has been disrupted however use of technology has meant that these services can be delivered if required.

FVLSAC is working in conjunction with the National Family Violence Prevention Forum and the South Australian Attorney General's Round Table, the National Regional, Rural, Remote and very Remote working group in addressing the issues associated with recruiting and retaining Solicitors in non-metropolitan regions. Also impacting on the recruitment of staff is ensuring the staff engaged by FVLSAC are the right fit for delivering services to our clients.

The mix of staff located across the region changes as a vacancy occurs and an example of this is locating two Client Support Officers in Ceduna.

There are provisions for 6 staff in Port Augusta and Port Lincoln as the main administrative hub (and also location for Solicitors) has provisions for 12 staff. Staff from the Port Lincoln Office travel to both Ceduna and Port Augusta to assist with Programs and to provide legal services.

Our Sista 2 Sista events made a return following the interruption due to COVID with large numbers of women attending the events across the region. Planning and holding events has been difficult with the ever-changing requirements for holding public events. With regular scheduling of events, feedback from attendees to our programs has been very positive.

Despite the challenges of service delivery since we have been living with COVID and reduced Solicitor numbers, with thanks to the staff involved, FVLSAC has managed to deliver the targets set by funders. Staff have implemented changes to the way we manage new referrals, prioritising at risk clients and careful scheduling of programs and events has resulting in our service continuing to be delivered.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to FVLSAC's Board, and the senior staff team of Atheana Bitmead, Tosha Sambo, Lisa Abinett, Julie Detchon and Jackie Footner for the continued effort and commitment to the organisations. In addition, the staff in Port Augusta and Ceduna offices for continuing to play an important part in maintaining the local presence for FVLSAC throughout the year.

Despite a high turnover in staff, 6 staff have been with FVLSAC over 4 years. This contribution to the organisation ensures that the corporate knowledge is maintained and that there is consistency with approach to the service. This results in better service delivery for our clients and communities.

Things are bright for FVLSAC with 2 years of guaranteed funding, committed staff and the appointment of a new CEO in the near future.

Kate Clarke
Chief Executive Officer

Service Delivery Report

The Family Violence Legal Service Aboriginal Corporation (SA) has continued to deliver legal and non-legal services to clients throughout our region as well as to provide early intervention and community legal education programs. We have also engaged in advocacy and law reform work. Demand for our help has continued to be strong and, despite facing some challenges, we have been able to innovate and adapt to meet demand.

The challenges we have faced have largely been related to the difficulties of recruiting and retaining suitably qualified solicitors. This is an issue for many regional legal services nationally and has been one of the focuses of our advocacy work as we ask governments and the university sector to consider initiatives that will support the recruitment and retention of solicitors to regional areas.

We have also made some changes, with our initiatives including employing a legal assistant and contracting a senior solicitor based in Adelaide to support us with our caseload where necessary. These initiatives were very successful and show that innovation and flexibility can assist us to deliver services while maintaining our strong connection to the communities we work and live in.

We also experienced an uptake in demand for services with new intakes remaining steady from the return of business after holiday closure in December 2022. We have reviewed and adapted our intake process to ensure appropriate triaging of client matters. This has helped us to maintain our trauma informed service delivery model despite the significant challenges faced by our legal practice.

Our regionally based solicitor team is currently comprised of the Principal Legal Officer and a junior solicitor who commenced with us at the end of the 2022/23 year in addition to the contracted Adelaide based solicitor. We continue to recruit for solicitors to grow our team.

We have an amazing team of skilled and dedicated non-legal staff. These include our client support officers who are integral to our model of providing trauma informed, culturally appropriate services and the staff who help manage the day to day work of running our business including our reception, intake and business support staff as well as our management team.

The delivery of early intervention and community legal education programs remains an important part of our work. We thank the community for their generosity in coming along to our events and making them a success.

Finally, we have had an increased focus on advocacy and law reform over the last year as we wish to ensure that the needs of our communities, and particularly our clients, are considered when government is making policy and legislation.

Community Legal Education and Early Intervention Activities

Yarning Cards Launch

In the 2021/22 year, we worked with the eSafety Commissioner to develop materials around Technology-Facilitated Abuse. This year we were very excited to hold an event to officially launch this fantastic resource at the Port Lincoln Women's Safety Centre. We were honoured to have Artists Susan Betts and Delise Sampson present at the launch.

Sista 2 Sista

This year we had a record number of participants at our Sista2Sista days, with a total of 344 people attending across Port Lincoln, Ceduna, Port Augusta and Whyalla. Participants had the opportunity to learn about technology-facilitated abuse through our Yarning Cards and had a great day of food, pampering and craft activities.

Mini Sista2Sista

FVLSAC had the opportunity to deliver a unique program in conjunction with the Port Augusta Secondary School. A group of 20 female high school students participated in a session covering Healthy Relationships and Technology-Facilitated Abuse. The day included all the fun of a large scale Sista2Sista with food and pampering for the ladies.

Healthy Relationships

In partnership with Yarredi Services and local secondary schools, we presented sessions on Healthy Relationships to Year 8 – 12 students in Port Lincoln.

Love Colours

This program is designed for small groups to explore respectful, safe and healthy relationships while doing an art activity. Love Colour workshops were held in Port Augusta and Ceduna this year with a total of 16 participants taking part.

Presentations

FVLSAC provided Legal information sessions to the following groups:

- Uniting Country Port Augusta
- SAPOL Port Augusta
- Interagency Meeting Port Augusta
- Elders Group Port Lincoln – this session also included additional education around Wills and Advance Care Directives.

Other Community Activities

FVLSAC were involved in many community information days including:

- Ochre Ribbon
- Safer Internet Day
- Sober Walk
- NAIDOC Week Activities
- Reconciliation Week

Law Reform and Advocacy

This year FVLSAC made submissions or participated in other consultation processes for a number of reviews, plans and proposed legislative changes.

These include:

- The National Action Plan To End Violence Against Women and Children 2022 -2032
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Action Plan To End Violence against Women and Children
- Disability Advocacy and Complaints Service of South Australia
- Criminalisation of coercive control draft legislation
- Review of the Children and Young People (Safety) Act 2017

Inquiry by Commissioner Lawrie into the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle

April Lawrie is the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People in South Australia. FVLSAC was involved in a number of consultations run by Commissioner Lawrie regarding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle and how it is applied in South Australia, and we also made a written submission.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle was designed to recognise the importance of safe care within family and culture to the best interests of children and to ensure that actions that caused the Stolen Generations are not repeated. Its elements span both prevention of entry to out-of-home care and reunification to ensure culturally connected placements and enable the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities in child protection decision making.



Forums and Key Meetings Attended by FVLSAC

National Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Forum

The National FVPLS Forum was established in May 2012 and is the national peak body for Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS) around Australia. All FVPLS provide culturally safe and holistic services to First Nations people affected by family violence – predominantly women and their children. The National FVPLS Forum provides expert national advice in areas of policy, planning and law reform, and advocates for safety and justice for First Nations people affected by family violence.

SAACCON

The South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation Network (SAACCON) is a representative body made up of South Australian Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and peak bodies. SAACCON supports member organisations by working with the Coalition of Peaks and engaging in partnerships with Government to shape policy and legislative developments on Closing the Gap.

SA Legal Assistance Forum

FVLSAC is a member of the South Australia Legal Assistance Forum (SALAF). This body supports the National Strategic Framework for Legal Assistance by promoting an integrated, efficient and effective legal assistance sector focused on improving access to justice for disadvantaged people and maximising service delivery within available resources.

Collaborative Services Planning Forum (CSP)

FVLSAC is a member of this forum which is chaired by the Attorney General's Department. This forum provides an opportunity for the actions identified in the Legal Assistance Strategy and Legal Assistance Action Plan 2022 -2025 to be monitored. FVLSAC was involved in the development of the strategy and action plan.

Attorney General Round Table and associated Rural, Regional and Remote Working Group

Kate Clarke attended working group meetings to identify strategies to recommend to the Attorney General regarding recruitment and retention, legal need and collaboration between CLC sector. A subcommittee has been formed and our CEO is co-Chair of this group which meets monthly.

Community Legal Centres SA

FVLSAC is a member of the peak body for community legal centres in SA. This group meets monthly to discuss issues of relevance to the sector, and to engage with stakeholders such as state and commonwealth government.

Attorney General Kyam Maher

The FVLSAC Principal Legal Officer and Deputy CEO met with the Attorney General for South Australia, Mr Kyam Maher. We talked to Mr Maher about the unique role of FVLSAC as the only FVPLS in South Australia and some of the challenges we face.

South Australian Law Society – Indigenous Issues Committee

This committee meets every two months to discuss issues of relevance to Aboriginal people in relation to the law. The committee is frequently asked to make submissions on issues and legislation.

Rural, Regional, Remote and Very Remote Committee

This group is comprised of representatives of community legal services across Australia who work outside of metropolitan centres. The group has a focus on advocating for governments and universities to work with us to find ways of increasing access to justice for those communities.

Boodliridi Court Port Lincoln

FVLSAC was included in the consultation process for the establishment of a Nunga Court in Port Lincoln. The Boodliridi Court, which has now commenced, provides Aboriginal defendants the opportunity to be sentenced in a culturally appropriate manner and draws on the involvement of Elders and local services.

Commissioner for First Nations Voice

Our Deputy CEO attended at the community consultation held in Port Lincoln with the South Australian Commissioner for First Nations Voice, Dale Agius. The SA Voice has now been enacted by Parliament.

Family Law Pathways Indigenous Roadshow Subcommittee

Judge Kelly from the Family and Federal Circuit Court of Australia is coming to yarn with community members about how the family law process can be an option to help keep children safe. FVLSAC is involved in the planning, with the first regional event scheduled to take place in Port Augusta in March 2024.

Port Lincoln Women's Safety Hub

FVLSAC has an active involvement with the Port Lincoln Womens Safety Hub and shares office space in this facility in Port Lincoln. This space offers a confidential and easily accessible area where staff can meet with clients away from the main Port Lincoln Office. This facility is also used for small group presentations and meetings.

Knowmore and the National Redress Scheme

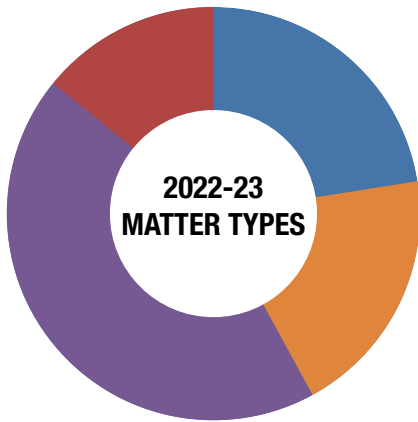
FVLSAC staff met with a team from Knowmore. This service offers free legal advice and support to survivors of institutional child sexual abuse particularly in relation to their options to obtain redress and compensation. We discussed collaborative approaches to ensure our clients can access this assistance.

Julie Detchon
Principal Legal Officer

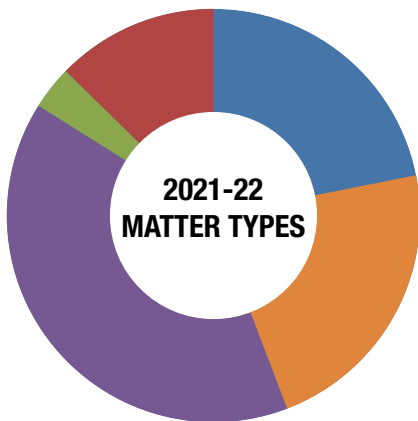
Lisa Abinett
Data and Records Coordinator



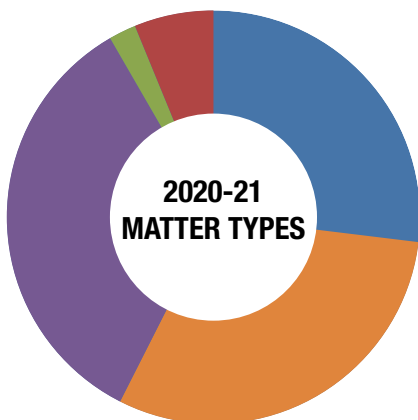
Legal Matters



FAMILY OR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & INTERVENTION ORDER	22%
CHILD PROTECTION	20%
FAMILY LAW	44%
INJURIES COMPENSATION	14%
TOTAL	100%



FAMILY OR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & INTERVENTION ORDER	22%
CHILD PROTECTION	22%
FAMILY LAW	40%
OTHER	3%
INJURIES COMPENSATION	13%
TOTAL	100%



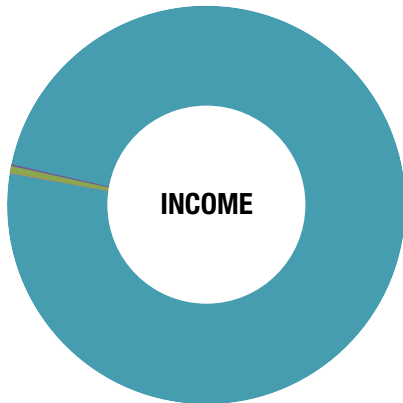
FAMILY OR DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & INTERVENTION ORDER	27%
CHILD PROTECTION	30%
FAMILY LAW	35%
OTHER	2%
INJURIES COMPENSATION	6%
TOTAL	100%

Financial Reports

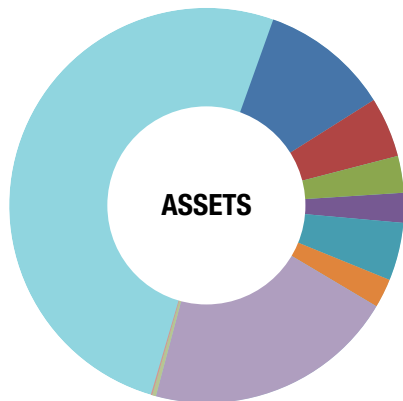
as at 30th June 2023



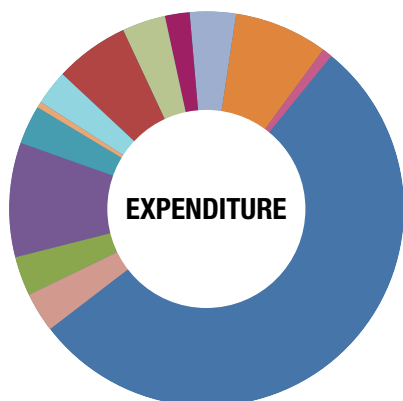
Marnie Smith
*Client Business Support
 Services - Manager
 Rowe Partners*



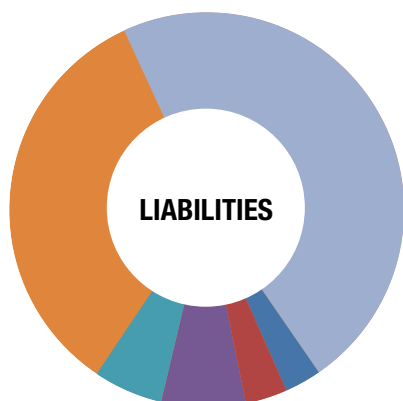
GOVERNMENT GRANTS: \$2,634,521
SUNDRY INCOME: \$2,777
INTEREST: \$10,665
PROCEEDS ON SALE OF ASSETS: -\$277



BUILDINGS WDV: \$277,480
PLANT AND EQUIPMENT WDV: \$125,977
MOTOR VEHICLES WDV: \$75,257
OFFICE EQUIPMENT WDV: \$62,179
LAND: \$120,000
LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS: \$64,546
RIGHT-OF-USE ASSET: \$535,949
PRE-PAYMENTS: \$8,495
OTHER DEBTORS: \$993
CASH AT BANK: \$1,321,330

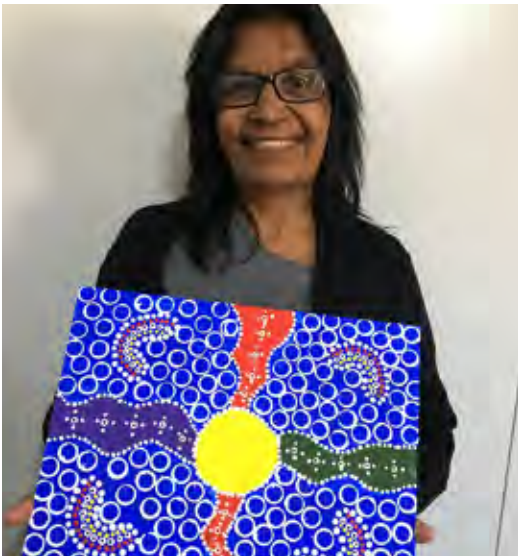


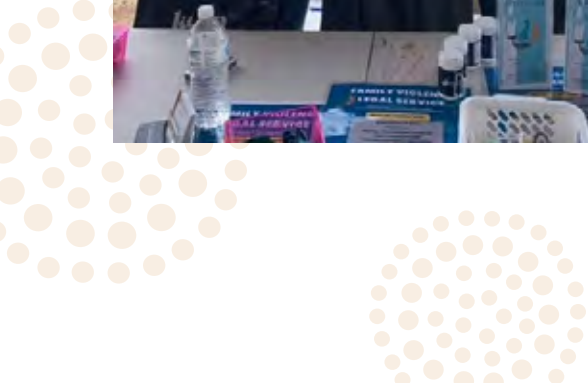
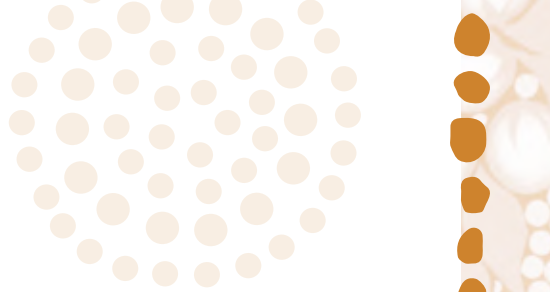
SALARIES AND WAGES: \$1,409,246
REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE AND REPLACEMENTS: \$77,951
ADMINISTRATION: \$83,221
OPERATIONAL EXPENSES: \$238,037
COMMUNITY PROJECTS/SUNDRY: \$83,475
LEGAL EXPENSES: \$9,857
DEPRECIATION: \$74,713
PROVISION FOR GRANT FUNDING SURPLUS: \$163,965
STAFF RELATED COSTS/CONFERENCES: \$92,439
CONTRACT WORK: \$55,109
AMORTISATION EXPENSE: \$103,322
RETURNED FUNDS: \$209,219
MOTOR VEHICLE EXPENSES: \$17,883



LEASE LIABILITIES: \$535,887
CONTRACT LIABILITY: \$780,069
CREDITORS AND PAYG: \$43,306
ACCRUED EXPENSES: \$47,081
GST OBLIGATIONS: \$96,341
PROVISION FOR ANNUAL LEAVE AND LSL: \$82,702

2022 - 2023 Highlights!

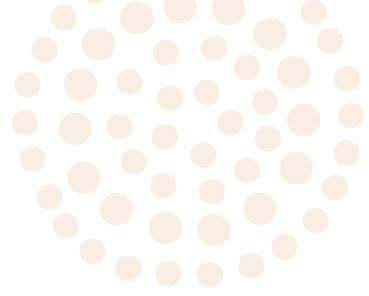




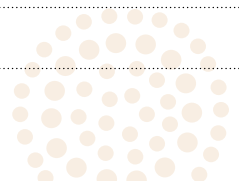
Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes, spanning the width of the page.

Notes



A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes, spanning the width of the page.





Designed and Printed by Multi Print SA, 52 Victoria Parade, Port Augusta SA 5700 ~ Telephone: 8641 0900

Artist ~ Katrina Williams