

Annual Report



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Drummond Street respectfully acknowledges the Kulin Nation as Traditional Owners of the lands where we deliver our services and conduct our work. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first people of Australia. Sovereignty was never ceded, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders remain strong in their connection to land, culture and in resisting colonisation.

Drummond Street would like to thank our funders for making the delivery of our programs and services possible.

Anglicare Victoria
Attorney General Department
City of Melbourne
City of Yarra
Department of Education
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
Department of Health
Department of Industry, Science & Resources
Department of Justice and Community Safety
Department of Social Services
Neami
North Western Melbourne Primary Healthcare Network
Respect Victoria
The Smith Family
Wyndham City Council
YSAS

Board President's Report

As I sit down to reflect on the past year, I am struck by the profound challenges and the remarkable resilience demonstrated by our organisation and the communities we serve.

This has been a year of significant obstacles, marked by economic turbulence, social injustice, and tough organisational decisions. The communities we prioritise—those who already face the greatest inequities—continue to bear the brunt of political rhetoric and funding cuts. In these challenging times, governments have too often sought to balance budgets at the expense of marginalised groups, making the work of advocacy, research, and service delivery all the more critical.

Despite these barriers, our commitment to equity and social justice remains steadfast. We have always endeavoured to be an organisation that rises above simply meeting our contracted targets. Instead, we aim to meet people where they are, and prioritise those that the system has left behind.

This year, like many others in the sector, we faced difficult financial realities. Rising operational costs and the defunding of key programs necessitated an organisational restructure. While such transitions are never easy, they were essential to safeguard our ability to deliver vital services.

We acknowledge that restructures can be a particularly anxious time for staff, and we are deeply grateful for the understanding and professionalism demonstrated across the organisation. Throughout this process, Karen Field ensured that any changes made during the restructure would have minimal impact on services to our clients and staff, a reflection of her deep commitment to our values and mission.

It would be easy to compromise—to simplify our work or lower our expectations. But that is not who we are. As Kerry Arabena, a leader I deeply admire, has said, we must hold ourselves and others accountable to a high standard, even when it feels daunting.

This high standard means continuously listening, learning, and adapting. It means shaping our practices around the lived experiences of the people who walk through our doors. It means remaining curious, embracing critique, and evolving to meet the diverse and changing needs of our priority communities.

This year, we reviewed our practice guides, strengthened our data collection methods, and incorporated feedback from the communities we serve into every facet of our work—from program design to advocacy. We know this approach isn't the easiest path, but it is the right one.

Despite the challenges, we delivered an extraordinary amount of outreach, programs, services, and case management. We continued to advocate fiercely for equity, engaging in policy debates and holding systems accountable when they fall short. Our collaborations with peer organisations and government remain central to our work. Initiatives like the LGBTIQA+ community governance framework, and Q+Law, the co-produced legal service with Fitzroy Legal, continue to set the standard for inclusive, community-driven solutions.

Most importantly, we have remained true to our core values, prioritising the voices of those most marginalised and working to amplify their experiences in all we do.

None of this would have been possible without the dedication of our leadership team, staff, and volunteers. Restructures can be daunting, yet the professionalism and resilience shown by our workforce have been extraordinary.

To everyone who contributes to the work we do, thank you for your commitment to our mission, and for embracing the challenges of this year with such determination and care.

As we look forward, I am confident that the strength of this organisation lies in its people, its principles, and its unshakable dedication to creating a future where equity and justice are a reality for everyone.

With deep gratitude,
Nerida Nettelbeck
President, Drummond Street Services

CEO's Report

At Drummond Street Services, our commitment to the principles of equity and social justice remains unwavering, even in the face of growing challenges. This past year has tested our resolve, as the communities we serve have faced mounting pressures—whether through cuts to essential programs, negative political discourse, or systemic inequities that marginalise those already burdened with greater health and wellbeing disparities.

The increasing strain on funding, the cost-of-living crisis, and the continued ripple effects of the pandemic have impacted organisations like ours deeply. Maintaining the scope and quality of our services amidst these pressures has required tough decisions, creative problem-solving, and a renewed focus on our core mission.

What truly sets Drummond Street Services apart is our dedication to social justice and our recognition of the intersecting and layered needs of the individuals and communities we serve. Unlike many organisations, we do not take a one-size-fits-all approach. Instead, we prioritise an intersectional and person-centred framework that acknowledges the complex realities of marginalisation. This commitment ensures that we remain adaptable, innovative, and deeply connected to the lived experiences of our service users.

This year, our organisation undertook significant structural changes, including a leadership restructure designed to ensure our sustainability and operational capacity. While these changes were not easy, they have underscored the strength of our collective resolve. I want to acknowledge and thank the Board for their guidance and express my deep gratitude to the Executive team for their resilience during this process.

In particular, I want to honour the contributions of Cheryl Miller-Yell and Phoebe Wallish, whose dedication and leadership over many years have left an indelible mark on our organisation.

While transitions can be difficult, they also provide an opportunity to reflect on what matters most—our values, our approach, and the communities at the heart of everything we do. Our staff have continued to show extraordinary commitment to our work, adapting to new challenges with grace and determination. Whether through expanded workloads, engagement with new practices, or elevating community voices, their efforts are a testament to the depth of our shared purpose.

Drummond Street Services has never been an organisation that takes the easy path. We don't just meet targets; we meet people where they are, with programs that respond to the complexities of their lived experiences. This means asking hard questions, evaluating our impact, and embracing critique to continually improve. It means being steadfast in our belief that everyone deserves access to opportunities, services, and support that meet their unique needs, no matter how challenging the path to equity may be.

This past year, we have also continued to advocate for systemic change and better policies—standing firm when systems fall short and engaging in meaningful debates to advance the rights and wellbeing of marginalised groups. This advocacy is political, as it must be. We hold ourselves accountable to the communities we serve, amplifying their voices and ensuring that their feedback informs our work at every level.

Despite the difficulties, there is much to celebrate. We've provided thousands of hours of programs, case management, and outreach across Victoria, including essential support for LGBTIQ+ communities, families in crisis, and individuals navigating life after incarceration. We've enriched our data-driven practices and incorporated feedback from service users to strengthen our programs. Our work with Archer Magazine has continued to shine a light on underrepresented voices, and we eagerly anticipate celebrating the magazine's 10th anniversary—a milestone that reflects our ongoing dedication to social justice through storytelling.

By remaining deeply committed to understanding the intersecting barriers people face—whether they stem from systemic racism, homophobia, economic instability, or other forms of discrimination—we ensure that our work not only meets the immediate needs of those we serve but also contributes to lasting change. It is this commitment to recognising and addressing complexity that makes us unique, and it is what drives us to push boundaries and challenge ourselves to do better.

As we move forward, we remain steadfast in our commitment to learning and growth. We will continue to embrace the complexities of our work, elevate diverse knowledge, and challenge ourselves to meet the highest standards of excellence. I am deeply proud of what we've accomplished together and extend my heartfelt thanks to our staff, partners, and supporters for their enduring dedication to our mission.

Karen Field

Chief Executive Officer
Drummond Street Services



Drummond Street Services

OVERALL DATA AND REACH

Over the 2023/2024 financial year, Drummond Street's programs had incredible reach across our services sites. To view interactive data across each of our regions, please click the following link and check out our interactive [Annual Report 23-24](#).

OUR PROGRAMS 23/24

Drummond Street Services delivers programs across multiple diverse locations, where clients experience a range of varied needs. This section will provide an overview of each region and client engagement data from each service site. Overall, this will highlight some of the differences in client needs across the DS service footprint.

WORKING ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

Drummond Street works from a human rights-based framework in the provision of support for individuals, families, and communities.

We acknowledge that specific communities and groups disproportionately experience disadvantages and are not afforded equal social and economic opportunities, compared to other more privileged individuals and groups. With this in mind, it is central to our work that we name structural discrimination and oppression, as well as acknowledge, share and dismantle power and privilege.

Our services aim to meet the needs of this diversity by:

- Creating programs for people and families that meet their unique needs
- Working with small and emerging populations with specific needs
- Acknowledging individuals, families and communities within their own context
- Working across the life cycle, from birth through to key family transition points
- Being innovative in our approach and service provision.

Our holistic approach to care and our commitment to wellbeing for life is highlighted throughout this 2023-2024 annual report. Outlining our success across our key program areas.

Total Sessions

18,801

Total Program Iterations

3,303

Total Clients

2,727

A photograph of a Black family of three sitting on a couch. A woman on the left, wearing a teal shirt, has her arm around a young boy in a blue shirt. A man on the right, wearing a yellow shirt, has his arm around the boy. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. A green plant is visible on the left side of the frame. A yellow patterned pillow is on the right side of the couch. The text "Therapeutic Parenting and Early Years" is overlaid in the center of the image.

Therapeutic Parenting and Early Years

Drummond Street's therapeutic parenting and early years team provide a range of specialist supports for new parents, babies and children in the early years. The team take a whole of family approach to wrap therapeutic and practical supports around families to support families to not just survive but also to thrive.



Locations- Carlton, Collingwood, North Melbourne, Brimbank, Wyndham
Partners- Dadfit, Our Place, Glenroy Community Hub
Funders- North West Primary Health Network, Department of Education

READY, STEADY... FAMILY!

Ready, Steady... Family! [RSF] is an innovative program launched by Drummond Street Services in 2022, servicing Northern and Western Metropolitan Melbourne. The Therapeutic Parenting team delivers RSF in a client centred way, focused on meeting the needs of new parents, and those having subsequent babies who would like it to go better the next time around. The transition to parenthood can be tough, those first 24 months usually includes an adjustment of parents' identity, and a need for co-operation and respectful communication, when they may have never needed this previously.

REACH

RSF offers a range of ways to engage with joy, as families adjust to a new way of life. Drummond Street has a team of professionals ready to meet the needs of those welcoming a new baby into the family. Services include:

- Perinatal mental health counselling
- Parenting support, partner support and peer support for the everyday issues, such as eating, sleeping, routine, practical help and information on topics of client's choice
- A new partnership with Dadfit program, which provides dads an opportunity for fitness and connection, with opportunities for referral pathways when needed
- LGBTIQA+ mental health support during the perinatal period
- Informative groups and seminars
- Family violence parenting support
- Multicultural community support and engagement

The Early Parenting Team has delivered the Ready, Steady... Family! program, achieving the following:

[new and existing] were supported	seminars/groups were conducted	clients attended groups	professional development training sessions were delivered
296	98	539	17

INNOVATION

The Therapeutic Parenting team is a transdisciplinary team with staff with different areas of specialisation, education and lived experience. The team delivers the program in a range of ways to cater to individual needs, including individual counselling, couple work, groups and seminars, peer support, parent coaching, as well a range of community engagement activities. The team supports clients coming through the program to have a suite of interventions to choose from that will best support their needs. The team looks for opportunities for service delivery and collaboration, and this year began colocation at the Glenroy Community Hub to provide early years parenting support to the community there. The team also deliver professional development on perinatal mental health topics.

IMPACT

The Therapeutic Parenting Team has made a significant contribution to the Collingwood community. With the team primarily located at the Collingwood Public Housing Estate, they have been able to build trust with community members of all ages. Expecting parents, new parents, existing parents drop in to the Collingwood office regularly, searching for support. Being a permanent fixture at Collingwood has allowed the team to engage with the community in different ways, including through community events and cultural celebrations.

LIVEWIRES

LiveWires is a much-loved after-school and holiday activity program for primary school-aged children on the Collingwood Housing Estate. It has been running for 15 years.



REACH

LiveWires is located at the Neighbourhood House on the Collingwood Housing Estate and is attended by young people aged 5 to 12 years old. Most of the young people registered and attending the program identify as being from African heritage and a large proportion of the families who attend the program live on the housing estate and/or attend the local schools.

LiveWires runs after school sessions three days a week during school term, for age groups 5-9 and 9-12, with an additional 3-4 events during the school holiday period.

Between July 2023 and June 2024, a total of 76 sessions were completed. These were made up of:

- 26 completed Wednesday sessions with an average of 27 children attending
- 26 completed Thursday sessions with an average of 14 children attending
- 24 completed Friday sessions with an average of 44 children attending

INNOVATION

LiveWires was created in response to the huge service gap for after school programs for younger children on the Collingwood Housing Estate. The program provides young people and their families a safe and inclusive space to connect and positively engage.

We employ several resident community members, with shared and/or similar cultural backgrounds and experiences to the young people. This harnesses inter-generational connection, further supporting the program to foster lasting relationships.

LiveWires, driven by the interests and strengths of the young people, their families, and the community offers diverse activities such as homework club, emotional regulation support, and sports programs. LiveWires prioritises sharing education on emotional regulation and communication skills, due to its pivotal role in literacy and numeracy development, as well as overall wellbeing.

IMPACT

LiveWires has led to crucial referrals for additional services, strengthened connections between community members, and offered care for children and respite for caregivers. It has created a welcoming space where children can do homework, learn life skills, and enjoy healthy meals and snacks. It has also supported the community to view Drummond Street Services as a trusted and safe organisation.



Youth Programs and Services

Drummond Street ran a number of youth services and programs from 2023-2024 including:

- The Drum
- The Zone
- LGBTIQA+ Mentoring
- Queerspace Youth & [in]Visible
- QHub

Our youth services teams and staff support spaces and activities for young people where they are safe to be themselves, they can have fun, feel connected to their communities and build social and emotional skills. Young people who come to our programs for support can also be linked into other supports and programs, as needed.

Branches and locations: Carlton, Collingwood, North Melbourne, Wyndham, Brimbank, Ballarat, Geelong

Funders: City of Melbourne, City of Yarra, NWMPHN, Department of Health, Equality Branch

Partner Organisations: YSAS, Odyssey House, Cafs, Wellways

THE DRUM- CITY OF YARRA YOUTH SERVICES

The Drum offers young people in the City of Yarra programs, services and events made by young people, for young people.

REACH

This year, The Drum’s youth service, in the City of Yarra, engaged 632 young people across Collingwood and Richmond, with a total of 2,659 individual attendances in 129 program sessions, including holiday programs and one-off events.

The reach extended to diverse communities, focusing on at-risk and marginalised youth from public housing estates and beyond. An additional 792 instances of support were provided, addressing critical needs such as material aid, alcohol and other drugs [AOD] support, and referrals to both internal and external services, creating a comprehensive support network for young people.

Cultural Backgrounds	Gender	Age	Attendees
South Sudanese	57	8-15	185
East African	61	15-18	0
Vietnamese	24	18-25	0
First Nations	10	N/A	0
Other	24		
TOTAL	185	TOTAL	185

Gender	Attendees
Gender Diverse	1
Male	85
Female	94
N/A	5
TOTAL	185



IMPACT

The Drum's programs delivered measurable positive outcomes, with strong connections built through collaborative events and consistent community engagement. The introduction of the Tuesday evening program fostered a calmer, age-appropriate environment in Collingwood, supporting both younger and older participants' social and emotional wellbeing.

Through the Affirmative Consent program, youth received vital education on consent, leading to sensitive disclosures that highlighted the program's role in addressing personal safety and wellbeing.

Additional highlights included cooking workshops, sports, creative sessions in art, K-Pop and karaoke, all guided by the Collingwood Leadership Committee – a group of 12 local youth leaders, empowering peers to shape and influence program activities. Major holiday excursions to Luna Park, Bounce, and local events like the RYMS Showcase and Collingwood Block Party were memorable experiences that contributed to young people's sense of belonging and community.

Satisfaction surveys completed: 191

Over the past year, surveys showed a 4.47 / 5 [89.4%] satisfaction rating for programs and 4.53 / 5 [90.6%] satisfaction rating for staff.

INNOVATION

The Collingwood Youth Drop program evolved through partnerships with organisations like Reclink and Cultivating Communities, enriching the program by incorporating external services and wraparound support via Family Services and LiveWires.

This collaborative approach responded directly to community needs, adapting to the complex dynamics of mixed-age groups, by introducing a separate Tuesday program for older youth (12 to 18 years old), allowing younger participants a dedicated space on Wednesdays.

The Affirmative Consent program also introduced a unique educational aspect, helping youth understand consent legislation, and promoting respectful relationships. To address low engagement at Richmond, the program team reallocated resources to Collingwood, aligning service delivery with participants' needs and strengthening impact in high-engagement areas.

THE DRUM - CITY OF MELBOURNE YOUTH SERVICES

The Drum offers young people in the City of Melbourne programs, services and events made by young people, for young people.

REACH

Youth programs in the City of Melbourne continue to connect with young people across the municipality, engaging diverse and marginalised communities. Over the past year, programs reached over 3,600 young people in 285 sessions, spanning 10 tailored programs across four locations. An additional 1,035 instances of individual support were provided to 412 young people, addressing needs beyond program hours and enhancing the continuity of care.

Our program works with a broad demographic, prioritising marginalised and at-risk young people, including young men and women, multicultural communities, and participants from inner-city housing estates. Programs like the Young Men's and Women's groups at North Melbourne and Carlton consistently draw high engagement, offering a safe space for connection and skills development.

The FreeZA committee has further expanded its reach, engaging 12 young leaders from a variety of backgrounds and identities who contribute to community events, such as the Youth Voices platform in partnership with the City of Melbourne. These programs provide young people with spaces to voice issues and influence their community.

Cultural Backgrounds		Gender		Age		
African	98	Male	126	12-15	61	
Asian	17	Female	49	15-18	36	
First Nations	7	Diverse	50	18-25	153	
Pacific Islands/Māori	20	Not Disclosed	111	Not Disclosed	86	
Australian	35					
Other*	159					
TOTAL	336		336		336	



Satisfaction surveys: 187 completed over the year.

Over the past year, surveys showed a 4.79 / 5 (95.8%) satisfaction rating for programs and 4.86 / 5 (97.2%) satisfaction rating for staff.

INNOVATION

The Drum programs incorporate innovative approaches that adapt to the complex needs of participants. Trauma-informed and intersectional methodologies help guide responses to challenges, such as navigating group dynamics at the North Melbourne Community Centre and Carlton Baths, supporting all young people feel respected and safe.

The team adapt and innovate to support service engagement. When launching the Kensington Mix program proved challenging, the team shifted to outreach and school-based sessions. This approach was intended to meet young people where they are most comfortable and get direct feedback on their interests and needs.

Additionally, the FreeZA committee's collaborative model gives young people hands-on event management experience, building skills and confidence.

IMPACT

These programs are driving positive outcomes, enhancing community integration and personal growth for participants. Recent surveys indicate a 95.8% satisfaction rating for programs and 97.2% for staff, reflecting the value young people place on these services. Through increased support and intensive one-on-one sessions, staff are helping young people navigate the impacts of housing insecurity, cost-of-living pressures, and polarised social climates. In addition to fostering resilience, these interventions strengthen participants' sense of belonging and community engagement.

Beyond the weekly programs and intensive support, The Drum also offered a number of activities, including excursions to the Australian Open, Luna Park, and workshops in skateboarding, basketball, and art. As The Drum team looks forward, the focus remains on strengthening these connections and fostering a safe, inclusive community for Melbourne's young people.

QUEERSPACE YOUTH AND [IN]VISIBLE

The Queerspace Youth and [in]Visible programs are peer-led programs for LGBTIQ+ young people aged 16-25 years old who 'live, work, or play' in the Melbourne local government area. These programs are funded by the City of Melbourne, as part of the organisation's broader youth programming through The Drum.

REACH

Queerspace Youth runs three free group events per fortnight ranging from workshops, drop-ins or excursions out of Drummond Street's Carlton location. [in]Visible provides one free group event per fortnight for Queer, Transgender, Bisexual, Intersex People of Colour [QTBIPOC] young people for workshops, drop-ins or excursions. [in]Visible program participants always have access to Queerspace Youth program events, but not always vice versa.

The events across both programs often involve fun skills- and capacity-building activities, where participants can hang out, make new friends, and build community. Mental health and other kinds of community-based supports and informal referrals can be provided at each event to participants, by the program team. Over this year, the programs engaged more than 170 individuals in our workshops and events, with 396 instances of individual support provided.

Queerspace Youth and [in]Visible are funded by the City of Melbourne.

INNOVATION

The innovation of these programs lies in their flexible, peer-led approach and commitment to creating spaces that meet the diverse needs of LGBTQIA+ and QTBIPOC young people. This year, the team responded to feedback and introduced a queer community drop-in space in Carlton. The drop-in space provides a multifunctional environment with games, virtual activities, relaxation areas, and material aid, promoting informal, unstructured engagement. This space has been a huge success, fostering a sense of safety, connection, and belonging among participants.

IMPACT

The impact of these programs has been profound, providing both immediate support and long-term community building for LGBTQIA+ and QTBIPOC young people. Participants reported feeling a growing sense of safety and inclusion and have shared that the program has been life-changing, with one stating: "I remember the first time we visited the Queerspace Youth space, it felt so nice because I felt safe and comfortable – it felt incredible. Before coming here, I hadn't ever felt accepted in a space for who I am."

In response to the increasing complexity of health and wellbeing needs among participants, the team has strengthened internal referral pathways to mental health, family violence, and housing services. For instance, when a young person arrived at a workshop with immediate housing needs, the team was able to provide emergency relief and access to necessary amenities. This kind of immediate responsive support has had a tangible impact on participants' lives.

These programs have significantly enhanced our queer youth community's sense of belonging and have provided crucial support for young people navigating difficult personal and social circumstances. The continued expansion and innovation of these programs supports LGBTQIA+ and QTBIPOC youth in Melbourne to have access to affirming, inclusive spaces that promote wellbeing, community connections, and empowerment.

LGBTIQA+ MENTORING

The LGBTQIA+ Mentoring Projects is a peer-support program for community, by community. We aim to promote support networks and build resilience through identity, skills, and community connections that are vital to LGBTQIA+ social and emotional wellbeing – individually and collectively.

Mentoring is about bringing peers together, where someone is wanting support with coming out, staying discreet, transitioning, navigating relationships with family and loved ones, or just finding themselves and a place in community.

Mentoring is for family members too [of origin and/or choice], who are wanting to understand how to support someone in their life who is LGBTQIA+. For example, your child/young person comes out and you want to learn more about their identity and how to support them, through peer-support mentorship for yourself.

People aged 12 years and older can be mentored, and people aged 18 years and older can mentor. People of any disabilities, races, religions, sexualities, genders, cultural identities, refugee and asylum-seeking experiences, and classes can mentor or be mentored.



REACH

The LGBTIQA+ Mentoring program provided free one-on-one and group mentoring, along with community-based social activities, to LGBTIQA+ adults and young people across Northwestern Melbourne, Greater Melbourne, and Geelong. As a suicide prevention and community development initiative focused on psychosocial health outcomes, the program fostered vital support networks that are key to the social and emotional wellbeing of our community.

This year, the program supported 60 mentor-mentee matches, engaging 78 mentors who volunteered monthly to offer peer-to-peer psychosocial support to mentees. The program also supported 82 mentees, whether matched or unmatched, all seeking preventative mental health care, psychosocial coordination, and connections to the community through mentorship.



LGBTIQA+ Mentoring Client & Engagement Program Data, 2023-24	
Northwestern Melbourne, Greater Melbourne, & Geelong	
Mentoring Matches	Mentoring Group Events
60 mentor-mentee matches in program	16 mentoring group events in Melbourne
	7 mentoring groups in Geelong
Mentees	219 group event attendances in Melbourne
82 mentees engaged in program	107 group event attendances in Geelong
68 completed mentee intakes	124 group event attendees in Melbourne
121 prospective mentee sign-ups	57 group event attendees in Geelong
28 professional referral enquiries received	Community Engagement Activations
18 unmatched mentees at end of financial year	7 community activations in Melbourne
Mentors	3 community activations in Geelong
78 mentors engaged in program	5,360 folks in community reached in Melbourne
24 new mentors trained	1,610 folks in community reached in Geelong
54 new prospective mentor sign-ups	
Client Service Contact	
387 mentorship & staff support sessions	
496 mentorship & staff support hours	

INNOVATION

This year's innovation was rooted in fostering inclusive, intergenerational connections within the queer community. By engaging all mentors and mentees, whether matched or unmatched, through consistent and in-person opportunities like events, workshops, and drop-ins, the program created a more cohesive and supportive network for participants. Monthly newsletters offer regular updates on the program's activities and further promote community-building and mutual support among participants.

The program also developed stronger internal partnerships with the Queerspace Youth and (in)Visible programs in Melbourne and the QHub program in Geelong, enabling organic mentor-mentee connections to form. This shift reduced the reliance on practitioners for matching, allowing the team to focus on providing tailored support and supervision. The establishment of a queer community drop-in space in Carlton, provided a relaxed, welcoming environment for connection. This space became a hub for building queer community, fostering a greater sense of safety, inclusion, and belonging among participants and further enhancing the program's reach and impact.

IMPACT

The program's impact has been transformative for both individuals and the broader LGBTIQ+ community. By promoting social connections and addressing isolation, the program has helped reduce emotional distress and mental health challenges faced by many community members. Participants have reported a significant increase in wellbeing thanks to the equitable delivery of psychosocial support, peer mentoring, and a safe space to connect. The program has been instrumental in breaking down structural barriers to accessing inclusive services, with participants expressing gratitude for the community-driven support and opportunities to build lasting connections.



"I can't rate the program high enough. The staff have gone beyond my expectations, offering support that's been crucial for my mental health. Their events have been essential to my recovery, and the positive, encouraging staff have helped me foster new connections within the queer community."

-MENTEE

QHUB

QHub is an initiative which aims to create safe spaces for LGBTQIA+ young people in Western Victoria. QHub provides LGBTQIA+ young people and their families/carers in these regions welcoming, inclusive, and integrated support, as well as opportunities to connect with peers and older role models. Services aim to be prompt and provide access for communities, close to their homes.

REACH

QHub works with LGBTQIA+ young people up to 25 years old and their families/important adults in Geelong, Ballarat and the Surf Coast. As part of this work, QHub extends our reach into schools, psychology groups, GP offices, and other local organisations and businesses that work with this demographic.



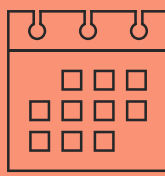
116

Total number of clients for counselling/Peer Work



598

Total number of sessions



332

Total number of events (drop ins, community engagement, trainings)



4,479

Total participation

QHub

INNOVATION

QHub is the only hub in Geelong or Ballarat that offers services to LGBTQIA+ young people and their families with specialist staff, who also identify as LGBTQIA+ and live regionally. In addition to providing free counselling and peer support services, QHub also offers a safe and affirming space that clients can access for social connection, education, and advocacy through drop-in groups and various events.

QHub works collaboratively with others in the regions who support LGBTQIA+ young people, providing free training on inclusive language, education, frameworks for best practices, and resources.

The sites and services have all been built through ongoing community consultation with an advisory committees comprised of young people, parents, and community members. This supports QHub services to be co-designed, meet the needs of the community, and provide wraparound local supports.

As a result of consultation, programs such as a group for children under age 12 and a simultaneous parent support group have been developed, which is the first of this kind in Victoria.

IMPACT

The overall impact for clients and community includes better mental health outcomes and increased social and community connectedness for Western Regional LGBTQIA+ young people and their families. Feedback from young clients shows they feel a greater sense of belonging and feel more affirmed in their identity. For many queer young people, QHub provides the first opportunity to connect with peers, as well as adults in their local community.

QHub is a unique and vital service that truly operates as a hub providing counselling, peer support, community capacity building, education, and safe spaces for LGBTQIA+ young people, their families, schools, and organisations in Ballarat, Geelong, and the Surf Coast regions.

Most Significant Change stories, collected from parents as part of an evaluation of the QHub program demonstrate the impact that QHub has in the lives of young people, including:

- A space to build confidence and connection.
- Giving hope through trans representation.
-

These stories spoke to improvements in confidence, mental health, social and community connection, and access to safe spaces. Parents shared how QHub provided welcoming places for young people to 'hang out' and feel safe to express themselves or explore their identity. Parents noticed positive changes in their young person and expressed their gratitude for the program, stating how challenging it can be for LGBTQIA+ young people to access support in regional Victoria.

THE ZONE

The Zone is an innovative alcohol & other drugs (AOD) support program in Melbourne’s North & West for young people (12-25) & their families.

The Zone’s team of dedicated specialists (including youth workers, nurses & practice leads) offer:

- Ongoing support for drug and alcohol use
- Drug education and peer support groups
- Help connecting with other health, community and essential services
- Provide support to families, chosen family or important people in your life
- Assistance with managing withdrawal

Regions: The Zone is located across the northern and western suburbs of Melbourne with sites in Carlton, Coburg, Broadmeadows, Sunbury, Sunshine, Melton and Abbotsford.
Funders: North West Primary Health Network
Partners: YSAS and Odyssey

REACH

This year, we provided comprehensive support to 556 young people and families in the northwestern region who identify as part of the LGBTIQA+, Pasifika and African community, and are experiencing challenges related to substance use.

Our approach was grounded in a mutual workforce structure and an integrated intersectional lens, allowing us to understand and address the unique needs of each individual and family in a holistic way, using a whole of family approach.

By centring our approach around harm minimisation strategies, we aim to provide young people and families the tools to gain insight needed to reduce risks associated with substance use, fostering healthier lives.



INNOVATION

The Zone acknowledges that family work and AOD services often do not fit to serve the specific, frequently co-occurring needs of diverse young people who need them. Australian AOD services are generally underpinned by a western medical model of problematic substance use, compounding stigma, and putting blame upon individuals, while treating AOD use as separate from other factors in people’s lives. Our commitment to utilising lived experience in our programs and working using an intersectional approach, has had a significant impact, allowing our team to build rapport and provide relatable support to young people and their families. This approach has proven instrumental in helping participants feel seen, understood, and less isolated in their struggles and identities.

Stigma, shame and embarrassment associated with AOD use, means that many young people, their families and their communities require targeted outreach to engage with services. Practitioners working with young people and families from diverse communities in Melbourne have noted successful outreach methods, including offering and sharing food, engaging in sporting clubs and attending community events, including in faith-based settings.

IMPACT

Outcomes have been both encouraging and transformative. We observed reduced harms associated with substance use among participants, along with increased motivation to engage in further education or reconnect with academic pathways. Primary health improvements were also evident, as was the strengthening of relationships within family and community settings.

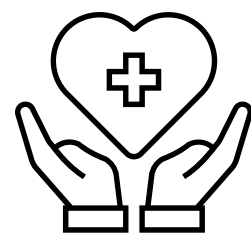
By displaying and recognising cultural values like collectivism, family responsibility, self-perseverance and integrating this into the work. Our work this year has reinforced the value of an inclusive and collaborative approach to care. By addressing substance use challenges through a whole of family approach, harm minimisation and a shared understanding of intersectionality, we have been able to support individuals and families in building healthier, more connected lives.



A photograph of a Black family of three sitting at a dining table. A woman on the left, wearing a brown top, is looking down at a baby. A man on the right, wearing a brown tank top, is leaning over and feeding the baby with a spoon. The baby, wearing a white shirt, is looking up at the man. The table is covered with a light green cloth and has several plates of food, including bread, fruit, and a jar of jam. The text "Family Services" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

Family Services

Drummond Street's family services team offer a suite of programs right across all our locations in the northern and western regions of metro Melbourne and Geelong. The full range of programs target families across key life course transitions, where is greater vulnerability for the onset of range of poor health and wellbeing outcomes. Key Family Services programs include:



Medical Care

Family Mental Health Support Services (FMHSS) – early intervention support for children and young people (0-18) at risk of or having development mental health issues and their families.



Family and Relationship Services

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Family Law Counselling

Family Law Counselling (FLC) which provide counselling and support for separating families.



Integrated Family Services

Integrated Family Services (IFS), which assists children, young people and families (including Aboriginal families) in need of support and protection.

FAMILY MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES (FMHSS)

This program aims to deliver early intervention support to vulnerable families with children and young people who are showing early signs of, or are at risk of developing, mental illness.

We use a developmental and whole of family, family life course approach – supporting children, young people and their families through key vulnerable transitions [pregnancy of second, third or more children, infancy, childhood, adolescence - and adverse life events], with a focus early in life.

REACH

As a community-based service organisation we have a vital role to play in responding to inequalities and inequities within social structures and systems. We cannot ignore the historical and current evidence that describes marginalisation and discrimination and links to poorer health and wellbeing outcomes. We also can't ignore that for many marginalised communities, their service access is impacted by the discrimination that they face. We therefore know that we need to reach into communities, using approaches including:

- Promotion and marketing activities
- Community Development activities for at-risk communities
- Mental health promotion activities with a focus on at-risk communities
- Community Engagement activities to engage vulnerable children, young people and their families into prevention activities and pathways into our services
- Services and strategies for our identified at-risk communities including children and young people, LGBTIQ+ community members, First Nations people and people with disability

INNOVATION

The FMHSS program uses the family as a setting for intervention, while remaining focused on child wellbeing outcomes. The family provides the earliest and most significant influence on the developing child across multiple domains of health and wellbeing. Family level risk and protective factors have the largest and earliest influence on later mental health outcomes for children and young people, for example parent-child attachment, parenting skills, family functioning, and the capacity to provide financially, materially and emotionally for children. This program focuses on building family capability to improve mental health outcomes for children. Additionally, the program provides specific interventions for at-risk communities or particularly vulnerable groups and families.

The FMHSS program ensures that within each intervention, there is a clear focus on matching the intensity of services for families, based on their needs. The program provides brief and intensive services, in addition to a range of group programs targeting a wide range of needs. We can increase the level of services families receive, when we identify greater levels of risk or need. This fits into good public health models of intervention, which allow for services to fit needs and to be targeted at key points of the family life cycle, when families may be more vulnerable.

IMPACT

As part of our risk screening via our centralised intake and assessment, along with ongoing dynamic risk assessment and case planning, we routinely collect information relating to risk factors and risk alerts, along with presenting needs. As the data below demonstrates our services are supporting many families/parents, who are contending with high and multiple risks, and which impact directly on their children and adolescents.

We continue to respond to high prevalence of crisis cases, predominantly related to family violence, unmanaged mental health, either for a parent, family member or child 'of concern'. We have experienced greater numbers of critical incidents, many which relate to child at risk, or potential CP involvement. Financial stresses, alongside cost of living and social isolation, continue to be drivers of risks and poorer mental health outcomes. We are fortunate that we can rely on the full suite of DS programs, and practitioner skills and knowledge to continue to provide wrap-around support for high need families.

FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIP SERVICES (FARS)

Recognising that healthy family relationships are a critical protective factor for a range of health outcomes for children, young people and adults, Drummond Street's Family and Relationship Services, offers family and relationship counselling, parenting and community connection, and is a valuable component of our wrap around public health model.

REACH

From July 2023 to June 2024, we reported 270 clients received support through FaRS, with 699 FaRS sessions delivered. An additional 340 clients attended community engagement activities, e.g. groups, events, or seminars.

During this period:

- 4.1% of the FaRS clients identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- 37.8% of clients were from multicultural or diverse faith backgrounds, with 28.9% who spoke a language other than English at home.
- 16.3% of FARS identified as living with disability.
- 58.9% of clients identified their sexuality as LGBTQ+
- 9.3% of clients identified that their gender was non-binary, trans or gender diverse.

In total, we ran 67 community engagement activities, e.g. Parenting in a new country / culture, Tuning into Teens, Bringing up Great Kids, Music & Movement groupwork and fun activities for children.

INNOVATION

As a community and family service organisation committed to early intervention, we place special emphasis on promoting wellbeing for life and assisting individuals and families to have a sense of safety and connection, within their broader communities. To have the greatest benefit [i.e. prevent onset and reduce severity or poor wellbeing impacts] services and interventions, such as our Family and Relationships Service, aim to get in as early as possible in the development of a health risk or health risk behaviour [e.g. mental ill-health, substance use, family violence, or child abuse and neglect], and as early as possible in life.

IMPACT

This year, we saw the impact of mortgage stress and the higher cost of living reflected in the levels of financial concerns with approximately 28% identifying severe economic deprivation and 10% identified as experiencing housing instability and homelessness. Nearly 25% of our FARS clients were still experiencing moderate to severe social isolation, after years of COVID-19 lockdowns. There was also a report of 36% experiencing frequent conflict resulting in FV family conflict and/or relationship difficulties as frequent discord and conflict 55%. 79% identified recent stressful events impacting on their well-being.

Our services supported family functioning and relationships, linking people into more intensive support as needed, to support them across a broad range of health and wellbeing needs.

FAMILY LAW COUNSELLING (FLC)

Our Family Law Counselling program offers counselling and support to separating families. Our FLC services successfully engages with diverse communities, including large numbers of LGBTIQ+ families.

REACH

Over the 2023-2024 financial year, Drummond Street supported 175 clients during the 12-month period in our FLC services. It was clear that clients we saw were experiencing increased risk and complexity of needs. The increasing impact of cost-of-living pressures, housing shortages and economic insecurity continues to take its toll on families.

A large number of families presented to the service with family violence, mental health concerns, experiences of a recent stressful event and high rates of emotional and behavioural symptoms in children. Of clients who presented in the program this year:



INNOVATION

When working with separated families, we actively involve and consult with other services within the family law system. If families are in crises, consultations occur with Child Protection, Police and other family violence programs. As we utilise a child focussed approach, when we are not able to provide a service for the children directly, we support children to be linked with appropriate supports to address their needs.

The service is offered to high-conflict families as early as possible in separation trajectory, with linkages to a suite of flexible services based on an assessment of child and adults needs. Psychoeducation is tailored to individual case needs, to build understanding of children's best interests. Meanwhile, individual adult counselling and planning for the next phase of post-separation parenting/family formation and connection with post-separation services plays a vital role in our service provision.

IMPACT

We continued to see post COVID-19 pandemic client complexity and risk relating to mental health, family violence and financial distress, at increased rates. Further, the impact of mortgage stress and the high costs of living over the past year have further impacted negatively on families. Material and economic deprivation was present for 27.4% of cases and for 40.1% for households with incomes below 60k per annum. We continued to observe this, particularly in relation to additional increases in family violence presentations, child and adolescent mental health, child safety concerns and family conflict -especially relating to conflict in parenting styles/decision-making, dealing with finances, and destabilised housing.

In 77% of all FLC cases, family violence was present. This included 6.1% of cases where there was also Child Protection involvement. These cases required multi-interventions including case management and counselling support and therapeutic parenting support to address the impacts of trauma on parenting and parent child relationships. Case management support including family law system navigation, access to legal support and financial support. We were able to provide families experiencing complex risk and need with holistic, wrap around support.

INTEGRATED FAMILY SERVICES (IFS)- HOUSING ESTATE, WYNDHAM, LGBTQIA+

The Integrated Family Services program assists children, young people and families in need of support and protection. This includes:

- Children and adolescents subject to, or at risk of, harm, abuse and neglect
- Children and young people who need support to remain with their family
- Families who need support to ensure a safe and stable environment for their children
- Families reported to or involved with Child Protection

REACH

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing IFS funding for Drummond Street, recognises the need for engagement with specific cohorts. This includes multicultural families and those with intersecting needs, such as living in poverty, experiencing racism, homophobia, transphobia or other forms of discrimination, people with settlement histories under the humanitarian entrants' program, and for people with trauma histories. Clients for this program reside in the city of Wyndham, in high-density public housing estates of inner Melbourne, and/or are LGBTQIA+ families and children-young people from across regions and are in need of specialist support. Drummond street's long- standing connection into these communities supports trusted relationship with families and at times of need.

INNOVATION

The 2023-24 financial year was the first full year of the LGBTQIA+ IFS Program. Common themes for the families included parents seeking to support trans and gender diverse young people, poor youth mental health, school disengagement, social isolation and social challenges for young people- including bullying and unhealthy relationships. The impacts of low income and previous COVID-19 lockdowns were also significant, and the program responded to a range of complex and cooccurring needs.

During the first year for the public housing component of the program, we started with community engagement within the Carlton, Flemington and North Melbourne high rises, building on preexisting rapport and connection within these communities. This community engagement approach has been highly successful. While we received one referral from The Orange Door, all other referrals have been through community engagement, including from families that would not normally access mainstream support. Key themes this year included historic and current family violence, partner coercion and control, homelessness, poverty, children's neurodiversity, poor parental mental health, parenting issues and social isolation.

Within Wyndham service delivery, we supported a number of families escaping family violence, supported young people's re-engagement in school through care team meetings and advocacy and supported people to reestablish social connection after isolation due to family violence. We also supported people around cultural issues, supported young people during gender transition, and helped people at risk of homelessness.

IMPACT

Some positive outcomes from the LGBTQIA+ stream of the program included the development of gender affirmation plans with schools and warm referral and supported engagement of young people with affirming mental and medical healthcare. We also supported parents and schools to understand the identities and support needs of their trans and gender diverse young people, and provided assistance with financial aid for a range of needs including school supplies, medical costs, transport and material aid.

During the first year of the public housing component, we supported marginalised individuals and families, developed safety plans for women and children experiencing family violence, which supported clients' safety. Multiple families were supported with housing and received safe and secure homes. Brokerage was provided to support families with basic needs and psychological assessments. We also developed a group in Flemington with IFS clients (mainly women and children) that were isolated from their communities because of FV, the group ran for 6+ months and we provided parenting education, social outings for the mother and children to promote wellbeing, and educational sessions on women's health, Family violence and self-care.

In Wyndham we supported engagement with Child Protection, psychoeducation, advocacy and family violence recovery. Case management supported links to Legal Aid, support to attend a family violence hearing at the Magistrates Court, links with housing, schools, health and legal services, and relocation advocacy around housing, education and employment. Financial support to clients supported a range of needs including driving lessons for parent escaping FV, beds for children escaping violence, a voucher for nursery furniture for a young single mum, funding for a Paediatric assessment and bin hire & clean-up for rental inspection.



ADOLESCENT VIOLENCE IN THE HOME (AVITH) SERVICES

Drummond Street delivers two programs to support young people using violence in the home. This includes the Family Violence for Young People program (with a mainstream service orientation) and the Standing Together, delivered in collaboration with the Centre for Multicultural Youth, to support multicultural and multifaith families.

REACH

Across both AVITH programs, there was support for a range of families in need, with reach across Melbourne's North West corridors. The teams supported families with a large range of needs including stress and pressure related to increased cost of living pressures, mental health distress in parents and children, family conflict and violence, school refusal and bullying. This has seen an increase in non-session work with cases (families) where the client/s are not present – this includes case work-case support, case management with external agencies involved with a family or needing referrals and care team meetings with wrap around services.

INNOVATION

Our AVITH programs aim to provide an integrated, intersectional, whole-of-family service to reduce the use of violence among young people. We support them and their families to recover, rebuild and develop healthy relationships. We achieve this by taking a developmental and ecological approach to identify risk and needs affecting the whole family and by providing a whole-of-family response, around each family member's needs. We work with other services and draw on collaborative practice approaches, such as those outlined in the WRAP study [Campbell et al 2023].

Drummond Street's approach works to explore the multidirectional and intergenerational aspects and impacts of violence within the family [Fitzgibbon et al 2018], while building on the practice wisdom of Ellen Pence's 'Four Pillars' and Catherine Hodes' 'Context, Objective, Impact (COI)' models. We actively engage participation by focusing on young people and whole families with a strengths-based, intersectional practice, recovery-oriented approach, that is inclusive and non-judgemental.

IMPACT

Between 58-65 % of families seeking services at Drummond Street come with experiences both historical and current of family violence. For many years we have recognised the intergeneration transmission of family violence, highlighting the profound impact of witnessing, experiencing and/or using violence in relationships across the family life course. We have much to learn about the experience and needs of these young people who use harm so that we can support them and their families to create healthy family relationships. Our commitment to this work will see Drummond Street continue to build evidence and practice in this space so that we can achieve better outcomes for young people and their families.





Tackling complex issues

Drummond Street provides specialist services to address a range of complex social, health and wellbeing issues. These programs provide tailored and targeted support across the following areas:

- Mental Health
- Family Violence
- Complex Trauma
- Housing homelessness
- Incarceration- pre and post release

Mental Health

Drummond Street provides a range of mental health services across Victoria. All programs allow for access to combined peer and clinical support, so clients get holistic mental health support. All programs have a 50% lived experience workforce and 50% clinical workforce. Programs include:

- The Locals [Whittlesea and La Trobe]
- Step Thru Care [Geelong]
- Head to Health [Geelong]

Funders: Federal Government, Department of Health

Partners: Neami National, Uniting, VHAS, Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative

Regions: Whittlesea, Latrobe, Geelong

REACH

Locals [Whittlesea & La Trobe] - The Mental Health & Wellbeing Locals work with adults 26+ years around mental health and wellbeing via clinical, peer and community link support. Drummond Street has eight roles across the locals, focusing on family work, LGBTIQ+ specialist support and multicultural specialist support, incorporating both peer support and clinical roles. The Locals offer a drop-in service, home based outreach, community-based outreach and telehealth.

Step Thru Care [Geelong]- Step thru Care provides mental health support for all ages, offering a stepped care model. Drummond Street has three roles within the broader program, supporting children and families and providing LGBTIQ+ specialist peer support. Step Thru Care incorporates peer support and clinical roles.

Head to Health [Geelong]- Head to Health provides crisis mental health and wellbeing support for adults 18+ years, incorporating both peer support and clinical roles. Within the program, Drummond Street provides two roles, focussing on family support and LGBTIQ+ peer support.

INNOVATION

These partnerships provide innovative responses that address the recommendations made in the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, by reducing barriers to access, working towards a dual diagnosis response to mental health and alcohol and other drugs (AOD). The programs provide both a clinical and lived experience lens to treatment and support and include a community mental health provider as the lead, an AOD service provider, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service provider, alongside Drummond Street. The combination of services involved and a variety of specialist roles within these programs, allows for more thoughtful responses, particularly for our priority populations such as LGBTIQ+, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and multicultural/multifaith communities.

IMPACT

The impact of these services has been significant in their respective areas, particularly for regional areas, such as Latrobe Valley and Geelong. These services have seen significant uptake in referrals, mainly due to existing service gaps, with significantly less service providers in these areas. The complexity of presentations has been evident in these regional areas, with more clients meeting the higher tiers of the IAR (Initial Assessment and Referral Decision Support Tool). At the Whittlesea Local, there are significantly higher numbers of multicultural clients accessing mental health support. The provision of a multicultural worker alongside the clinical staff has resulted in regular ongoing engagement from multicultural and multifaith communities in Whittlesea.

QSPACE LGBTIQ+ FAMILY COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Drummond Street's Queerspace, along with our community service partners, provides face-to-face and online counselling for LGBTIQ+ people seeking support across Victoria, in rural and regional areas. The QSpace network offers specialist individual & family counselling services for LGBTIQ+ people of all ages, as well as their families and communities.

IMPACT

The QSpace Practitioners are based in Geelong, Mildura, Wodonga, Traralgon, Kyneton and Bendigo. They provide individual support and counselling, family support and counselling, secondary consultations, community engagement activities, training and capacity building.

Partners: Anglicare Victoria, Upper Murray Family Care
Funders: Department of Health

INNOVATION

The issues facing LGBTIQ+ individuals and families can be magnified by living in rural and remote communities. QSpace data indicates a high level of client risk and need across a broad range of health and wellbeing areas, highlighting the need for a flexible and responsive program to address a range of issues for LGBTIQ+ clients, across the lifespan. Clients present a high number of risks and needs, including high rates of trauma and social isolation. For many LGBTIQ+ clients with negative prior service experiences, the QSpace program provides access to flexible and responsive services, that affirms people's identities and supports them with a range of mental health and wellbeing needs.

IMPACT

Key benefits of the program include the LGBTIQ+ specific focus of the work, including having identified LGBTIQ+ practitioner positions, which enable each organisation to create safer and more inclusive spaces for LGBTIQ+ clients. This is particularly important for clients with previous negative service experiences.

A key impact of the program also relates to the importance of the program being flexible in terms of reach, eligibility, and delivery to LGBTIQ+ people across the lifespan, using a whole-of-family lens. This approach supports QSpace to continue to effectively respond to client needs and is a way of reducing barriers to engagement.

Flexibility of the program is also important. Practitioners are able to meet clients where they are at and provide support at the frequency and intensity determined by the client, without being constrained by session limits or caps on clients' time in the service. Practitioners reported that the flexibility of the program enabled improved mental health and help seeking behaviours among program participants.

FAMILY VIOLENCE

Drummond Street’s family violence response consists of programs including:

01.

With Respect Case Management: LGBTIQ+ family violence case management

02.

With Respect Therapeutic Counselling: LGBTIQ+ family violence counselling

03.

Futures Free from Violence: a program for women, trans and gender diverse people who have used harm or violence and live in the community

04.

Living Free from Violence a program for women, trans and gender diverse people who have used harm or violence within Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (DPFC).

REACH

The Living Free from Violence (LFFV) program and Futures Free From Violence (FFFV) provide support for women, trans and gender diverse people to address their use of harm or violence in family or intimate partner settings. LFFV runs at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (DPFC). Program data reflects 33% clients identified as Aboriginal, and 10% as CALD, and 5% with disability. Over the 2023-2024 financial year, a total of 95 clients engaged across a sentenced group, rolling remand group, management unit group, a tailored group for people with cognitive disabilities and 45 individual sessions.

Futures Free From Violence receives voluntary referrals for clients living in the community through direct self-referral, from The Orange Door, Child Protection and other health and community services, as well as from Corrections for mandated clients. FFFV also provides family safety contact responses for victim survivors. Over the 2023-2024 financial year, the program supported a total of 218 clients across group and individual support, offering over 5,360 hours of support.

With Respect Case Management and Therapeutic Counselling programs work with LGBTQIA+ victim-survivors of all genders who have experienced family violence, including children and young people. With Respect Case Management provides crisis support, risk assessment and management, brokerage, and case management, completing 339 support period for clients across the 2023-2024 financial year. Therapeutic Counselling provides therapeutic interventions to improve safety, emotional health and wellbeing for LGBTQIA+ victim-survivors, and supported 77 clients in the 2023-2024 financial year.

INNOVATION

LFFV and FFFV provide specialist support in response to the lack of appropriate services for women and trans and gender-diverse people who have used family violence, including those who are court mandated to attend programs.

LFFV and FFFV employ a Parenting Specialist, who provided parenting and child focused support to clients in the program with children. A qualified Art Therapist also facilitates group work, alongside a specialist Family Violence Practitioner, enabling delivery of targeted therapeutic, evidence informed interventions.

With Respect Case Management employs LGBTIQ+ identified staff in the program, who supporting enhanced community knowledge and connection, as well as a nuanced understanding of LGBTQIA+ experiences of family violence.

An Integrate Service Response model enables all FV programs to work collaboratively to understand and manage risk and support families to receive a coordinated response, that considers need through both a victim-survivor and person using violence lens, across the life course.

IMPACT

The group and individual support provided by FFFV and LFFV enables participants to deepen their understanding of violence, address any co-occurring issues or complexities, and learn to develop alternate behaviours, with the aim of reducing violence among participants. Evaluations are completed at the conclusion of each group and have reflected positive client experiences, particularly regarding the responsiveness of the programs to meet individual needs. People have found it useful to explore boundary setting, anger and resilience.

With Respect Case Management has contributed to many positive client outcomes throughout the year, such as through legal advocacy, connection to community and culture, high risk and RAMP coordination, and refuge referrals. A total of \$202,009 was spent across this program and FFFV, contributing to client safety and wellbeing through material aid, transport, safety initiatives, and housing stability.

PRIDE IN PLACE - HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS

Pride in Place helps lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, asexual and queer people find housing. The program supports LGBTQIA+ folk who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or living in housing that is unsafe, insecure or too expensive.

Funder: Homes Victoria

Partner organisations: VincentCare, Uniting, FAN

REACH

Across 2023-2024 the Pride in Place program delivered specialist LGBTQIA+ supports to 322 people, who were homeless or at risk of homelessness, primarily focused within Hume/Merri-bek, Outer Easter Metro Melb, Inner West Melb and Central Highlands. Pride in Place was able to reach a large range of demographic and intersectional groups within the LGBTQIA+ community, including young people, people with disabilities and those from diverse multicultural and multifaith backgrounds. Notable in the delivery of Pride in Place was a strong representation of asylum seekers and refugees.

INNOVATION

Agency and choice are at the centre of Pride in Place, which focuses on meeting people at their 'place' (wherever they feel safe and secure) and providing a flexible, whole-of-person and outcomes-oriented responses. Through the delivery of the program, the emergence of strong intersectional and LGBTQIA+-led practice has enabled the development of specialised approaches to homelessness support. This is expressed in practice materials, training and development resources and in the services delivered.

IMPACT

Queerspace support has directly resulted in 25 long-term housing outcomes and 25 additional short- and medium-term housing outcomes. Client feedback has shown clearly that the program's commitment and focus on honouring the identity of those we support, has been a key driver in promoting client wellbeing across housing and homelessness, as well as a range of other issues.



REACH

The Complex Trauma team provide support specialist trauma-informed and culturally appropriate services to those who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse and are engaging with the National Redress Scheme [NRS]. The team provides information, referral pathways, counselling and psychological care, community engagement activities, secondary consultations, case work and advocacy. Support is provided to assist survivors safely prepare, engage with the application process, and healing post decision, which can take 18 months - 2 years. The team offer multi-modal delivery via centre-based sessions, community outreach, homebased outreach and telehealth, with most clients attending face to face sessions or a combination of those mentioned. Regular promotion to other services and sectors is vital to support the target population to be well informed about NRS and Redress Support Services [RSS] and the options available to them.

INNOVATION

Drummond Street's Redress Support Service provides practical and emotional support for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse who have made the brave decision to seek restorative justice through application to the NRS. Our skilled team is deeply committed to a complex trauma-informed approach to delivery, including continuity of care. We aim to provide survivors with the same practitioner through intake, allocation and counselling, to minimise survivors having to re-tell their stories. We have a transdisciplinary team of counsellors, psychologists, social workers, and a peer worker role and a family worker.

IMPACT

In 2023/24 the team supported 107 clients through the Redress Support Service with support. For these clients this included 1190 Redress session activities comprising of counselling, advocacy/support, referrals/information, intake and intensive support.

Our commitment to - and skill in - supporting those who experience complex trauma is recognised widely in the community. For example, our team was invited to support community members during the Victorian Premier's Parliamentary Apology to Care Leavers/Forgotten Australians and during the subsequent community consultation forums. During this process, the importance of recognising the intergenerational impact of trauma reinforced and the need to hear, believe and support justice for all survivors, of all forms of abuse – and their families – to facilitate healing and/or recovery.

PRE AND POST RELEASE - INCARCERATION

The Pre and Post Release program supports women, trans and gender diverse folk who are exiting prison. The program is funded by the Department of Justice and Community Safety. Pre and post release offers statewide service delivery, in partnership with Elizabeth Morgan House.

REACH

Drummond Street's Pre and Post Release Program works with women, trans and gender diverse folks from the age of 18 years old, who have been sentenced to a of minimum of 3 months in Dame Phillis Frost Centre [DPFC] or Tarrengower prisons to support their planning, recovery, transition, and reintegration into community. Over the 2023-2024 financial year, we received a total of 126 referrals for our pre-release [relink] program and 124 for our post-release [reconnect] program.

The past financial year brought to light the significant challenges and significant risks faced by the program's participants when leaving prison, which includes a lack of suitable housing options, limited access to alcohol and other drugs treatment, under-resourced mental health specialist support services, and extensive historic and ongoing experiences of family violence. This financial year, we observed challenges experienced by participants in custody with revoked residency status in Australia. This creates difficulty to prepare supports ahead of release, due to people's ineligibility for many services, in addition to the uncertainty of their release arrangements.

Despite these extreme barriers experienced through the program delivery, the team have continued to meaningfully engage participants and have achieved positive outcomes for our participants.

INNOVATION

Over the 2023-2024 financial year, Pre and Post Release team has grown its relationships with stakeholders from Corrections Victoria; the Transition and Reintegration Unit [TRU] and relevant prisons. This progress is a result of our commitment to working collaboratively and using feedback to enhance our stakeholder relationship. This included the strong partnership between Drummond Street and Elizabeth Morgan House, which enabled a diverse group of case workers with intersecting identities to work with a diverse group of clients. At DS, we take pride in the diversity of our case workers, and we recognise the significance of embracing Aboriginal self-determination, leadership and sovereignty. In addition, the Drummond Street team have had the opportunity to increase their understanding of colonisation within the prison system.



ELIZABETH MORGAN HOUSE
ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S SERVICE INC

Due to a considerable number of participants being discharged without a mental health care plan, our program supported many people to attend GP appointments to obtain a mental health care plan, in addition to accessing brokerage to pay and assist with gap fees to increase participant's accessibility to health services. Another effective practice around use of brokerage, allowed us to support clients with refurbished laptops that have supported participants to engage in study, apply for jobs, access online groups such as AOD and parenting programs, and being able to access and respond to emails.

Another remarkable support for the success of the program is the lived experience present through the Peer Support Worker role. Our Peer Support Worker has brought invaluable experience to the development and facilitation of AOD groups that are set to become a permanent fixture in our pre-release program.

IMPACT

Our program has had some extraordinary achievements in the past year. The team have successfully assisted some participants in finding appropriate accommodation, securing employment opportunities, and providing crisis accommodation assistance. The team have also offered support for those dealing with family violence and mental health issues, including trans and gender-diverse individuals looking to reintegrate into their communities. Additionally, the workers have provided support to some participants at the Coroners Court, with Child Protection, and at VCAT.

The program's success is the result of our agency's collaborative efforts with stakeholders, and our commitment to keeping everyone informed about the participant's progress. It has also been noted that the trauma-informed approach used in the intake session allows adequate time to break down all the information and discussions, as well as strengthening the capacity to build trust prior to entering the next step in identifying and achieving their transition goals.

EVIDENCE BUILDING AND ADVOCACY

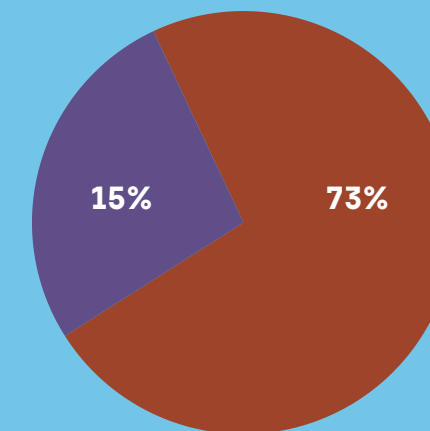
Drummond Street engages in evidence building and advocacy in a broad number of ways. Our Centre for Family Research and Evaluation, Archer Magazine and our Communications within and external to the organisation are driven by social justice values, acknowledging the need to continually walk alongside and advocate with, the communities we serve.

THE CENTRE FOR FAMILY RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

The Centre for Family Research and Evaluation (CFRE) has continued to support Drummond Street to achieve the second part of its mission “to understand what is needed and what works; and to disseminate that information to contribute to and inform best practice, social commentary, policy development and a solid evidence base for our sector”. This was supported across CFRE’s key portfolio areas- evaluation, practice development and training, and research.

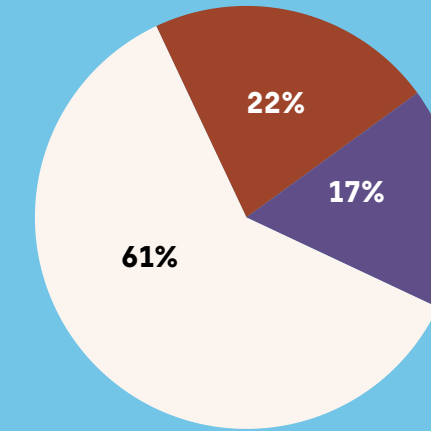
This year, most of CFRE’s resources have been dedicated to evaluation. The majority of CFRE’s evaluation projects have been internal evaluations.

Evaluation Projects



- INTERNAL EVALUATION
- EXTERNAL EVALUATION

R&E Projects



- CAPACITY BUILDING
- RESEARCH
- EVALUATION

EVALUATION

CFRE continued to evaluate programs from across Drummond Street Services and the Centre was thrilled to launch new and improved processes for collecting pre and post outcome data. While Drummond Street has been collecting this data since 2018, recent updates to the process included streamlining outcome evaluation across several programs, transitioning to a new integrated data management system, and organisation-wide capacity-building efforts to support the implementation of new processes.

CFRE also supported external agencies to evaluate their own programs and services through Evaluation Capacity Building activities. These initiatives focused on building a sustainable foundation of knowledge, attitudes and skills required to design and implement rigorous evaluations.

PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

CFRE launched an intersectional practice guide for the AOD service sector, building on the practice resources developed for the mental health sector last financial year. The team also developed a practice guide to support Adolescent Violence in the Home [AVITH] service provision, with a particular focus on multicultural and multifaith communities. A public facing guide will be launched in the 2024/2025 financial year.

The training and practice development team also delivered a number of trainings across range of services and sector within Victoria to support LGBTIQ+ inclusive practice and intersectional practice, in particular.

The team also developed a number of workplace training modules in preparation for the launch of Drummond Street's Learning Management System in 2024/2025. By emphasising the importance of eLearning frameworks, the training team worked collaboratively with practitioners from across the organisation to develop practice resources that appeal to different learning styles—visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic—to meet the unique needs of all learners and to further practice development across Drummond Street.

RESEARCH

CFRE continues to work in collaborative applied research projects to support evidence-building—particularly in the area of young people's use of violence, including:

- Work with Western Sydney University, Swinburne University and No to Violence in the Boys and Young Men Using Intimate Partner Violence project, which is due to launch its findings in 2025.
- Collaboration with the Australian Institute of Family Studies [AIFS], the Centre for Innovative Justice [CIJ] and the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare to support national research and consultancy effort relating to young people's use of violence to support national trails in this area.
- A successful application to the Australian National Research Organisation for Women's Safety [ANROWS] national grants round for The IVY Study: Towards an Australian response to the use of Intimate partner Violence by Young people, in collaboration with CIJ and AIFS.

CFRE will continue to expand its applied research efforts throughout the 2024/2025 financial year, with the launch of its research agenda.

SHARING FINDINGS

CFRE continues to share research, evaluation, training and practice development findings at conferences across Australia. This year we presented findings at:

- LGBTIQ+ Health in Difference Conference, Canberra
- AIFS Conference, Melbourne
- Australian Evaluation Society Conference, Melbourne
- Family and Relationship Services Conference, Melbourne



ARCHER MAGAZINE + STUDIO

Archer Magazine is a print and digital publication that platforms lesser-heard voices from intersectional LGBTIQ+ communities. Archer has been sitting under Drummond Street Services since 2022.

This has been an enormous year for the Archer team. Despite team and budget cutbacks due to financial constraints, the team pivoted the business into the creative agency space, launching a business-to-business social enterprise. The creative studio will assist with the viability of the Archer brand, by raising revenue through creative client work, while professionally platforming and mentoring intersectional creatives, and diversifying the sector.

Archer Studio uses the expertise of the Archer team to bring campaigns and creative assets to life in an inclusive and respectful setting, using lived experience, along with 12 years of expertise in media, publishing and social justice, and strong intersectional LGBTIQ+ networks and awareness.

The website is now live and the agency is being taken to market, alongside its flagship product, Archer Magazine. Early clients and responses have been very encouraging, and the business is on a positive trajectory.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The Archer team celebrated many achievements in 2023/24, including:

- Outstanding Contribution to Media award at the 2023 Victorian Pride Awards
- Celebration of the 10 year anniversary of our well-loved magazine
- Successful projects delivered to the first group of clients of Archer Studio:
 - Aesop
 - ACMI
 - Q+Law
 - Drummond Street Services
- Archer #20 - the PLEASURE print issue launched Dec 2023
- Highest advertising revenue earned since pre-Covid
- First ever long-term community partnership [Your Community Health, 12 months]

Alongside another year of publishing voices from people in intersectional LGBTIQ+ communities, the team is looking ahead to a more viable and sustainable future for Archer, with the ongoing support of Drummond Street Services.



EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY

Drummond Street Services has continued to advocate across a broad range of policy submissions, social media posts and ongoing advocacy with and for community.

REACH

Drummond Street's social media Platforms demonstrated significant growth throughout the year, connecting with 50,840 total followers across 24 platforms.

While challenges like reduced posting on some profiles impacted impressions, we achieved remarkable successes. Archer Magazine saw a notable increase in followers and record engagement on announcements for its most recent issue. Similarly, Drummond Street Services' LinkedIn grew by 23%, aided by targeted job ads that resonated with professional audiences. Queerspace Youth also achieved a meaningful rise in followers, reflecting increased engagement with young LGBTIQ+ individuals. Events like the LGBTIQ+ family picnics at Collingwood Children's Farm continued to attract diverse audiences, particularly families with new babies.

Innovation

Our adaptive and audience-focused strategies set us apart. We leverage insights to craft content that meets the unique needs of our communities, whether it's promoting inclusive family events, like the picnics, or targeted campaigns on platforms like LinkedIn. Archer Magazine's recovery from a challenging period, with improved engagement rates (rising from 22.79% to 65%), showcases our ability to pivot effectively. Innovations like resharing peer content on LinkedIn and experimenting with visual quality and hashtags help amplify reach and visibility while enhancing collaboration within our networks.

We have target audience and are able to tailor to them, for instance the LGBTIQ+ family picnics at the Collingwood children's farm have been so popular for families with new babies.

IMPACT

The outcomes of our efforts extend beyond connection and participation; they reflect our unwavering commitment to social justice. Our content amplifies marginalised voices, raises awareness of systemic inequities, and empowers communities to advocate for change. Through targeted initiatives like queer-focused programming and inclusive family events, we foster a culture of belonging and equality.

For example, by maintaining a strong social justice lens across all platforms, we spotlight critical issues such as housing insecurity, refugee rights, and the importance of permanent visas. This advocacy not only engages our audiences but also inspires collective action, strengthening networks of solidarity within and beyond our communities.

The impact of this approach is profound. It enhances the resilience of individuals facing discrimination, provides vital resources for those in need, and promotes allyship across broader audiences. By aligning our social media presence with our values, we ensure that our platforms are not just tools for engagement but also powerful vehicles for driving social change and fostering empowered, connected, and equitable communities.



**Drummond
Street
Services**