

2019 Impact Review



Significant client figures



309

clients were supported
(112 women and 197 children)



289

individual arts therapy
sessions were offered to
children aged 4 – 18 years



251

women and children received
a therapeutic service



30

new volunteers
joined Emerge

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Our Vision

A community free of family violence.

Our Purpose

Provide safety and enable independence for women and children affected by family violence.

Our History

Emerge is the only individual specialist family violence, high security refuge, in the Southern Metropolitan area that also offers outreach programs to support women and children experiencing violence.

Established in 1975, it was the second family violence refuge to open in Victoria.

What We Do

Provide safe and secure accommodation for families in crisis within refuge and transitional housing, an outreach program for families at home, and a suite of therapeutic interventions to build independence and help heal from trauma.

ACCREDITED



Expanding our reach to support women and children

The need for the services and programs that Emerge offers women and children escaping family violence continues to grow, sadly.

Consequently, this past year has seen us working on several fronts to expand our housing program, increase our financial counselling and arts therapy programs, and move into new services such as child-minding at the Moorabbin Magistrates' Court, a Family Volunteers Support Program, and Safe at Home.

According to the most recent Census, more than one third of women accessing homelessness services do so because they're fleeing family violence. The Census also highlights that children under the age of 18 make up 27% of people experiencing homelessness.

These facts are mirrored in our figures which reveal that family violence, housing crisis and housing affordability, stress and relationship/family breakdown continue to be the highest reasons for seeking refuge. Six women said they were unable to return home.

The last year has seen Emerge support a total of **309** women and children including **83** being housed in crisis accommodation and transitional homes, with many experiencing homelessness before coming to Emerge. Five women and children were sleeping rough as they believed this to be a safer option to returning home.

Due to the breadth of the support we can offer, in the last year none of our women ended up homeless or returned to the perpetrator. The national average of women returning home to violence is up to 7 times before finally leaving.

These stark figures, together with our knowledge and commitment to effecting change, have driven our advocacy this year. We have worked with other family violence and homelessness services to drive action for more safe, affordable housing for women and children.

We are in the grip of a housing crisis, with not enough affordable housing being built or available. Across Australia, 200,000 are on housing wait lists, and that number is growing. Many women we support are not able to secure a private rental property as they need immediate funds to cover a security deposit and other upfront costs.

A highlight during the year was the celebration of our expressive arts therapy program's tenth anniversary in March. The program has grown and developed over the years.

Other highlights include the establishment of the Fresh Start Fund thanks to the generosity of The Funding Network and its supporters. The aim of the Fund to provide women with the initial money they need to secure a private rental property. Each fresh start costs \$3,500. A special 'pitch' night raised \$49,000.

Other partnerships include working with researchers from Swinburne University of Technology, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Luke Batty Foundation and ANROWS to test the impact of Safe Nest, a mother and child program, and linking with the City of Kingston and FareShare.

We thank our staff for their passion, commitment and resilience which enables them to undertake the difficult, complex work with women and children and the Board who ensure that Emerge is not only governed properly but also lives its mission.

None of this would be possible without government and philanthropic funding, community and corporate donations and partnerships, or our volunteers. We thank you all for this support.

We are inspired by the women and children whom we support. It's the reason we do the work we do. With your continued and ongoing support Emerge can help more women and children stay safe and live free from family violence.



Paula Westhead
Executive Officer



Nicki Batagol
Chairperson

Accommodating women and children

Demand for Emerge's housing services – from refuge through to crisis and transitional housing – has grown throughout the past year. This is despite the fact the refuge was closed for three months before demolition.

Over the past year:



83 women and children were housed in refuge and crisis accommodation.



38% of children in refuge were infants (0-3 years).



16 women and 27 children were in transitional housing.



87% of the women in refuge were from CALD backgrounds.



100% of women without permanent residency had no income.



100% of women and children were homeless before arriving.



87% of families were supported into private housing.



Most common age range for women was between **26-35** years.



36 clients were in short term emergency accommodation before coming to Emerge.



51 of the clients accommodated by Emerge were children under the age of 18, with **20** being children under four years old.



Family violence (all presenting) housing crisis and housing affordability, stress and relationship/family breakdown continue to be the highest reasons for seeking refuge, and **six** said they were unable to return home.

"My car was my only safe place for five months and then I found a home thanks to Emerge."

– Sheila



Reaching out to women and children

Emerge is one of the few family violence services in Victoria offering an outreach program to women and children living at home with their perpetrator, or in crisis and transitional housing.

Over the past year:



163 women and children, were supported by outreach, 55 of whom were children under 18.



77% of clients were supported through the court system.



Over **350** women and children attended special activities throughout the year.



2.8% of clients identified as Aboriginal but not Torres Strait Islander.



79% of women were from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds (CALD), including China, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Indonesia, Lebanon, South Korea, Russian Federation, Sudan, Thailand, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam.



Outreach programs at a glance

Financial counselling

The past year Emerge counsellors have assisted **57** women to sort through complex financial issues, including large debts with banks, car leasing agencies and Centrelink. All women continue to be supported in ongoing sessions by our financial counsellor, who is funded through philanthropic support.

Women's counselling

Twelve women have accessed our women's counselling program which began in January 2019. The program runs one day each week. The free service is available for any woman who is ready to engage in one-on-one counselling to help them heal after family violence.

Holiday activities

Every child loves a party and the opportunity to mix with other children. Our Holiday Activities' Program was highly popular with six different events running during the year. These included the Christmas party attended by **47 children** and **25 women**, ten pin bowling (**17 women, 28 children**), a visit to the Melbourne Aquarium (**8 women, 15 children**), ice skating (**8 women, 12 children**) and a movie trip (**5 women, 10 children**).

Peek-A-Boo Club™

Twelve mothers and babies received **37** sessions of the parent-infant psychotherapeutic support service, Peek A Boo™.

Art provides a stepping stone to a hopeful future

For the past ten years Emerge has pioneered arts therapy in Victoria, supporting women and children creatively through their journey to a life without violence. The program's results have inspired many family violence services around the world to investigate establishing similar programs.

In May **103** Emerge supporters, including **17** children, attended a celebration to mark this 10-year milestone. Emerging Hearts was emceed by Jo Stanley.

The evening took guests on a journey through arts therapy to learn more about what it involves, its benefits and how Emerge uses it in its daily work. All attending the party were given the chance to contribute to a major art work.

One of the many features of the evening included the chance to see a mural which community artist Kirsty Budge had worked on with children supported through Emerge. The butterfly art work, created by the Women's Arts therapy group, took pride of place at the event. The wings will be permanently displayed at the new Emerge refuge once it's opened later this year.

What sets Emerge's arts therapy program apart is that it is governed by the philosophy that the needs of the child are equal to the needs of the mother. The work focuses on giving children of all ages the opportunity to benefit from therapeutic play and interventions in a safe and respectful environment.

The arts therapy program extended its reach throughout the year with: **109** women and **142** children receiving a therapeutic response from Emerge; **289** individual arts therapy sessions were offered to children aged 4 – 18 years; **seven** arts sessions was run for the Women's Group each school term; Open Studio, the after-school arts

therapy program, had on average **eight** children per session, with approximately eight sessions run per school term; Little Sparkz, a therapeutic school holiday program, had on average **ten** children in each session and was run in **three** school holidays; and **Make Your Mark**, the research program with the therapeutic, learning robot Matilda, was run over **32** sessions with on average **six** children in each session.



“The butterfly represents the women’s hopes for the future and the strength they draw from being a part of the arts therapy group.”

– Bianca

Partnerships

Emerge wishes to thank its many partners who supported our work throughout the year.

Corporate partner

Marco Polo

Partners include

Anglicare Victoria
 Bayside/Peninsula FV partnership
 Brighton Quilters
 DV Vic
 Frankston City Council
 Glen Eira City Council
 Goodstart
 LaTrobe University
 Launch Housing
 Lions Clubs
 Moorabbin Magistrates' Court
 Kilfinan Australia
 Kingston City Council
 Peter Wright & Associates
 Rotary Australia
 Share the Dignity
 Southern Homelessness Services Network
 St Augustine's Southern Opportunity Shop
 St Kilda Legal Service

St Kilda Mums
 St Matthew's Anglican Church
 Stepping Up
 StoryCycle
 Swinburne University
 TaskForce
 Vincent Care
 Wendy Bunston
 Women's Health West
 Women's Housing Ltd
 And other individuals who continue to support us.

Philanthropy

City of Kingston
 Myer Northland
 StreetSmart Australia
 The Funding Network
 ANROWS
 Luke Batty Foundation
 Next Steps
 Impact For Women
 VCOSS
 Bendigo Bank

Emerge would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of the Department of Health and Human Services and Family Safety Victoria.



Health
and Human
Services

How you can help

Emerge has been helping women and children live free from family violence for over 40 years.

We rely on support from government, philanthropic organisations, businesses and the community to help deliver our vital services, housing and support programs.

By donating or partnering with us you will make a direct impact to helping women and children rebuild their lives after surviving family violence.

We thank you for your ongoing support.

Donate

Donations are vital to our ongoing work and allow us to develop innovative therapeutic programs for women and children that fall outside of our government-funded services. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

To donate please visit our website: emergesupport.org.au/support-our-work/donations

Partnerships

Emerge is committed to long-term, mutually-beneficial partnerships with local community groups, philanthropic organisations and businesses who share our vision of ending family violence and assisting women and children to rebuild their lives.

Our major donors and partners enable us to ensure our financial stability and continue to deliver our innovative services.

We can offer a diverse range of activities for businesses to engage with our work. This includes enhancing your profile by aligning with our brand, pro-bono work, helping to build staff motivation through volunteering and fundraising work, workplace giving and more.

Schools and community groups

Community groups, such as Rotary and Lions' groups, church groups, and others also work as volunteers on specific projects. We can come and present at your school or your church, and we welcome clubs willing to assist us.

Workplace Giving

Every pay day, you can help change lives.

Workplace giving is a simple, convenient and tax-effective way to support Emerge, and the women and children we work with. It also provides us with a steady, regular source of income, enabling us to plan.

Volunteer

By becoming a volunteer and supporting Emerge, you will form part of a team working to help women and children have safer, brighter lives, while also gaining a unique and valuable personal experience.

