

LODDON CAMPASPE

**Centre Against Sexual Assault**

# Annual Report

2018 – 2019



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# Contents

- 3 LCCASA Vision**
- 4 Our Philosophy**
- 5 Our Values & Principles**
- 6 Chairpersons & CEO Foreward**
- 7 Our Team**
- 8 Clients**
- 9 Cases**
- 10 Our Work**
  - Program and Service Delivery
  - Multidisciplinary (MDC) Centre
  - Therapeutic Approaches & Expertise
- 11 Case Study**
- 12 Our Work**
  - Legal Support
  - Sexually Abusive Behaviours Treatment Service (SABTS)
  - Crisis Support
- 14 Tarrengower Program Report**
- 15 Our Community**
- 16 Our Organisation**

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Loddon Campaspe Centre against Sexual Assault extends our gratitude to all the people who walk through our doors and trust us with the privilege of bearing witness to your healing and recovery.

**Our vision is a community where women, children and men live without sexual harassment, abuse and violence.**

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## Our Philosophy

**Loddon Campaspe Centre Against Sexual Assault (LCCASA) is committed to ensuring access to equitable, supportive and timely services for female and male clients of all ages who are recent and past victim/survivors of sexual assault to address the individual and often complex impacts they experience.**

We acknowledge that sexual assault arises from a power imbalance, usually between men and women, and men and children. It is a violent act, which occurs regardless of age, class, culture and race. Men's exercise of power over women and children can be reinforced by myths and attitudes held in the home, workplace and the community.



LCCASA is committed to advocating for change by educating and empowering the community to dispel prevailing myths and attitudes that perpetuate violence and power inequities. To work towards a safer community, LCCASA will encourage and promote changes within society to address gender inequities and the abuses of power.

Sexual assault is a violation of human rights and a crime against the individual and society. While acts of sexual assault are always the responsibility of the perpetrator of the assault, it is the responsibility of the whole community to work towards the prevention of sexual violence.

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## Our Values & Principles

### **Social Justice**

Equity, inclusion and human rights are embedded within our organisation

### **Integrity, Safety, Respect & Empowerment**

Are integrated in every aspect of service delivery and governance

### **Quality and Accountability**

Our work is evidence based, measured and accountable to our clients and the community

### **Feminist**

we work within a feminist framework to challenge and reform structural gender inequities



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## Chairperson & CEO Forward

**We are pleased to present the Loddon Campaspe Centre Against Sexual Assault 2018 - 2019 Annual Report. The report provides an overview of the specialist trauma informed counselling and support, education and training and advocacy that LCCASA has delivered to government, our funding bodies, as well as to our members, community, staff and partners.**

LCCASA continues to be recognised for its expertise in responding to sexual violence, co-designing and delivery of training and education and in supporting organisations develop their practices in response to sexual harassment and violence. We are involved in a range of partnering arrangements and as well as cross-sectoral advisory groups.

Over the past year demand surpassed service delivery and at times our waitlist for service was over six months. With a well-received and much needed funding boost and employment of additional staff the waiting list has reduced significantly. Of the services and programs delivered last year it is interesting to note that we increased our services to clients by 13 percent with 38 percent of all our clients under the age of 18 years. The number of male clients accessing our service increased by 25% and female clients by 5 percent.

The feedback that we receive from clients reinforces the importance of the work that we do and the empowering and healing impact of this work.

Essential to this are our dedicated and committed staff who continue to ensure that clients are central to the work we do. Their commitment to providing high-quality, sensitive and responsive services to people impacted by sexual assault is nothing less than extraordinary.

As a result of additional and consolidated funding this year we have increased the number of staff employed for direct service delivery and to support program management. While service and program delivery are our core business, it is not possible to deliver programs efficiently or effectively without business operations support and we will be assessing our operations requirements in the next financial year cognisant of increased staff numbers, organisational growth and ever-increasing compliance requirements.

To our partners, funders and stakeholders we look forward to continuing to work together to enhance responses to people that have experienced sexual violence and to create real and sustainable community change in understanding and preventing all forms of gendered violence. We greatly appreciate the high degree of collaboration with our partnerships and through our shared work we achieve better outcomes for all our clients and the community.

Thank you to the Board for their ongoing commitment to LCCASA. This year we farewelled Lauren Coatsworth from the Board and welcomed Anne Baker. The Board initiate and drive the strategic directions of the agency, provide good governance and are truly committed to the vision and values of LCCASA keeping the clients in their gaze at all times.

**Sonya Oper**

Chairperson

**Kate Wright**

Chief Executive Officer

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# Our Team

## BOARD

**Sonya Oper**  
(Chairperson)

**Lauren Coatsworth\***  
(Treasurer)

**Nickie King**

**John Dalton**

**Lindsey Bish**  
(Vice Chairperson)

**Kathleen Tonini**  
**Anne Baker**

## LCCASA STAFF

**Kate Wright**  
Chief Executive Officer

**Kiera McDonald\***  
Manager, Programs and Services

**Alex Crocker**  
A/Children Youth and Families Team Leader

**Sylvia Andrews**  
Adults Team Leader

**Meegan Stanley**  
Intake Systems and Response Coordinator

**Lee Edmonds**  
Education and Advocacy Coordinator

**San Leenstra**  
A/Senior Project Officer

**Jenni**  
Team Leader Administration

## COUNSELLOR ADVOCATES

**Kim**

**Jane**

**Bruce**

**Terry**

**Helen**

**Mena**

**Meg**

**Katie**

**Claudia\***

**Holly**

**Jan**

**Jodie**

**Louise**

**Lauren**

**Asadeh**

**Maria**

**Beth\***

**Tracey**

## ADMINISTRATION TEAM

**Rachelle\***

**Rebecca\***

**Joan**

**Donna**

## AFTER HOURS SERVICE STAFF

**Alex**

**Lily**

**Mena**

**Allannah**

**Meegan**

**Michelle**

**Terry**

**Jane**

**Kim**

\*denotes no longer with LCCASA



# Clients

People (women, children and men) that have had contact with LCCASA over the year. Clients may engage in crisis, short, medium or long term counselling.

## 1068

TOTAL CLIENTS

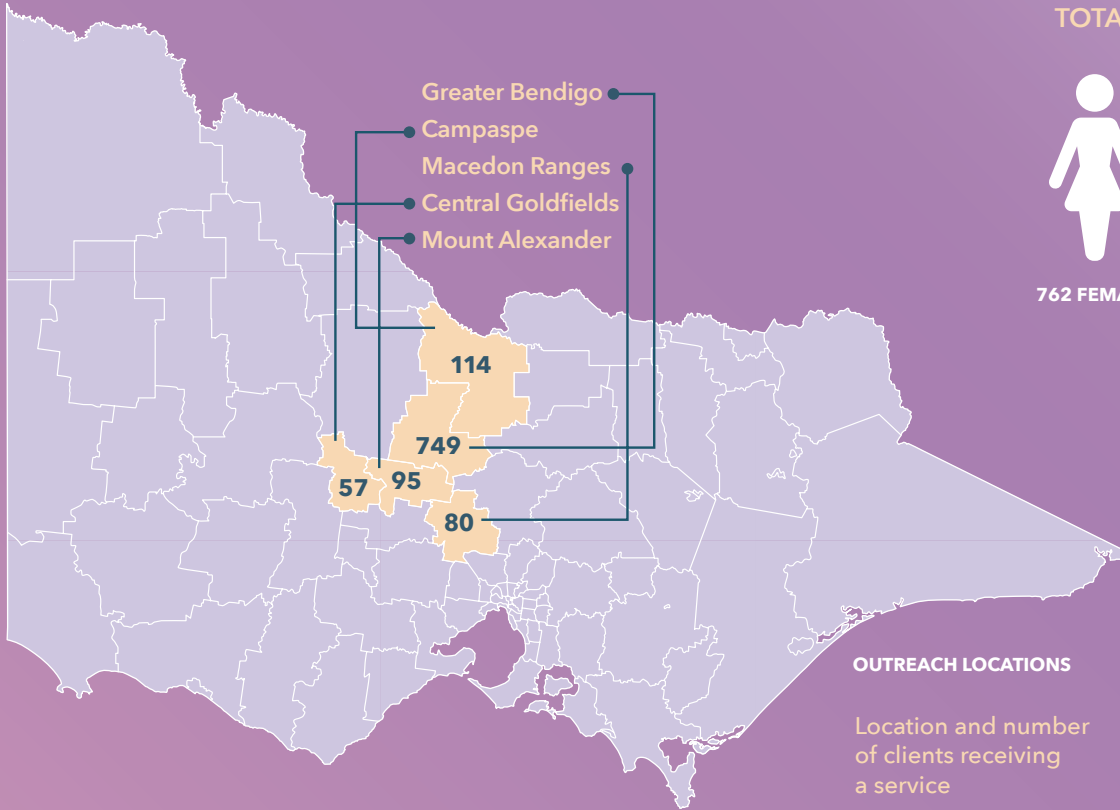


762 FEMALE



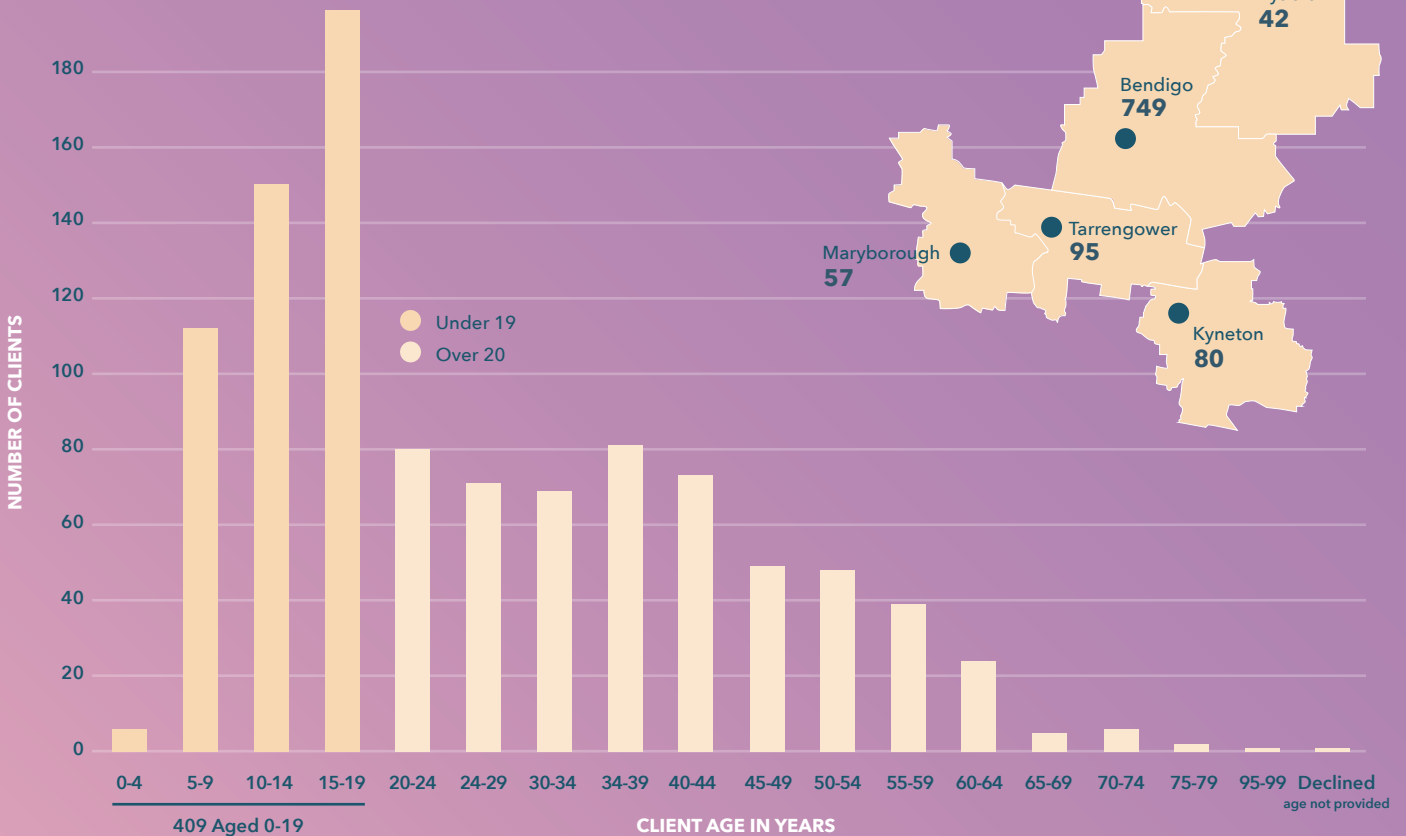
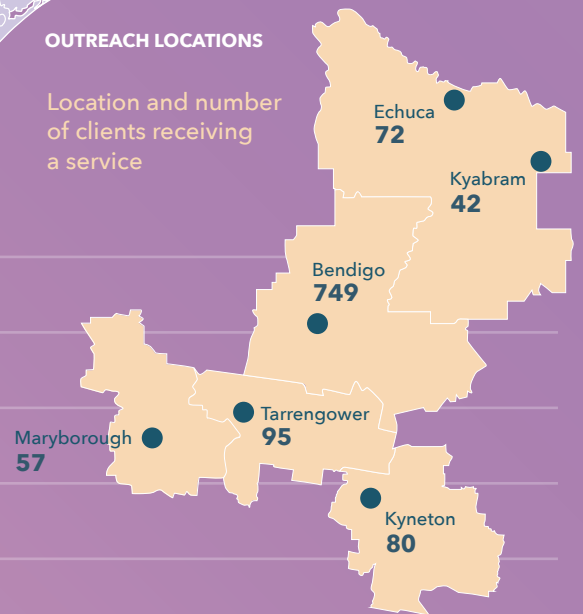
305 MALE

1 OTHER



### OUTREACH LOCATIONS

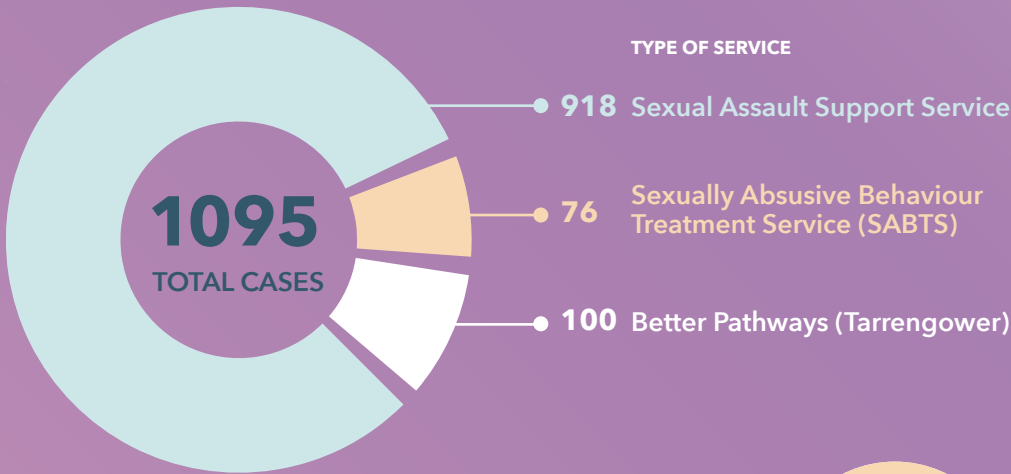
Location and number of clients receiving a service





# Cases

People (women, children and men) engaged in receiving a service with LCCASA



**TRAINING AND ADVOCACY**

**45**  
Training and education sessions were delivered.

**1,575**  
Total number of people that attended professional development and information sessions

**486**

**NON SUBSTANTIVE (NON-SUBS) CASES**  
LCCASA provides advice to other professionals and community members regarding their client, a situation or service overview and availability. This also includes a one off episode of care with the service.



**AFTER HOURS SERVICE**  
Recent sexual assaults



**TO THE COMMUNITY**  
HEALTH NURSE AT THE MDC

**REFERRAL SOURCE**



**236**  
Self



**235**  
Police



**91**  
Family or friend



**104**  
Child Protection



**55**  
Centre Against Sexual Support



**19**  
Legal Service



**14**  
Medical GP



**51**  
Health Service



**33**  
Community Welfare Other



**17**  
Secondary School



**20**  
Family Violence Service



**27**  
Victims Assistance Program

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# Our Work

**We provide specialist trauma informed prevention, early intervention response and recovery services.**

## **PROGRAM AND SERVICE DELIVERY**

Our services include free and confidential, trauma informed counselling for adults, young people and children who have experienced sexual assault or violence either recently, or in the past, and to their non-offending parents, partners, family and friends. We also provide a 24-hour crisis care response to people who have experienced recent sexual assault, including crisis counselling, information, support and advocacy for medical care and legal options.

LCCASA also provides specialised advocacy, secondary consultation, community education and professional training across the sector and within the community.

## **MULTIDISCIPLINARY (MDC) CENTRE**

The Bendigo MDC brings together LCCASA, specialist investigators from Victoria Police, Department of Health and Human Services Child Protection, Bendigo Community Health and Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine to provide an integrated service response for children, adolescents and adults experiencing sexual assault. Navigating 'the system' after traumatic experiences such as sexual assault is often confusing, daunting and frustrating. The coordinated and seamless transition to other services, at the MDC, minimises stress for people accessing the co-located services, providing a more holistic and timely response to clients, their families and carers.

## **THERAPEUTIC APPROACHES & EXPERTISE**

At LCCASA we offer short, medium and long term specialist counselling for women, children and men who have been impacted by sexual assault either recently or in the past. Our experienced counsellor advocates utilise a trauma lens in a range of evidence-based modalities to address the specific impacts of sexual assault and family violence.

We encourage and support professional development in a range of specialty areas that utilise the latest research in the management of complex trauma. These include body-based sensorimotor therapies, creative therapies, family therapy, Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) techniques and Internal Family System techniques focused on managing the impacts of sexual assault trauma.

The range of programs offered reflects best practice and our belief that a tailored and flexible approach is required to meet the needs of individuals and families. We continue to extend our innovative approaches and offer an array of therapeutic work that develops self-awareness, recovery and connection with others and the community.

In the 2018 - 2019 year we provided therapeutic counselling services (sexual assault and family violence) to 1,086 people across the Loddon area, representing a 13 per cent increase on the previous financial year. Of all people who accessed therapeutic counselling during the year, 38 per cent were under the age of 18 years.

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## Case Study

**Elizabeth (name has been changed) is a 14 year old, referred to LCCASA by the Bendigo SOCIT team in the Multidisciplinary Centre, who received counselling after being groomed and sexually assaulted by a 48 year old trusted family friend, within a small community.**

After LCCASA became involved, it also became clear that the community around Elizabeth were highly polarised, particularly as Elizabeth and the perpetrator's children attended the same school. Many friends and community members vocalised their judgment of Elizabeth and strongly advocated in favour of the perpetrator and his family, as they were prominent members of the community. This caused Elizabeth significant distress and negatively affected her sense of belonging and connection to the place that she had called home.

Elizabeth received a total of 12 counselling sessions, aimed at providing Elizabeth an opportunity to engage with her internalised feelings of shame and blame. The betrayal of trust by not only by the perpetrator but the subsequent judgement by her community, profoundly affected her engagement in social activities, school achievement and her psychological

wellbeing. Elizabeth experienced chronic stress, relational trauma, social isolation and harassment, increasing feelings of objectification, sexualising and externalising her sense of self at a sensitive developmental time. Support and counselling also assisted Elizabeth in providing a Victim Impact Statement for Court.

Elizabeth's perpetrator was convicted, prosecuted, incarcerated for over 2 years and placed on the Serious Sexual Offenders register in Australia. Elizabeth felt intensely guilty, perceiving that these consequences were her fault, experiencing nightmares and flashbacks of court and received Eye Movement Desensitisation Response to reduce these trauma symptoms. LCCASA also completed a Victim of Crime Court Report for Elizabeth and provided a letter of support for Elizabeth and her siblings, who now attend an out of area school and are beginning to form new friendships in a new community, feel accepted and belong again.

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# Our Work

## LEGAL SUPPORT

In addition to therapeutic services we also provide client advocacy, Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal (VOCAT) reports, court reports, case conferencing and secondary consultations to other professionals. Our reports contribute to achieving valuable outcomes for people seeking compensation to assist in reducing the impact of

the crime and trauma they experienced and this year we saw the request for VOCAT reports and support increasing by 250% from last year. It is also recognition of LCCASA's work and expertise in the assessment of the impact of trauma on a person's life and recommending what is useful in aiding their recovery.

## SEXUALLY ABUSIVE BEHAVIOURS TREATMENT SERVICE (SABTS)

Our SABTS provides counselling and support for children and young people up to the age of 17 who display problem or sexually harmful behaviours. This is a growing area of specialisation within our workforce and a growing area of demand within the community. Most of our referrals for this program are from Child Protection and Victoria Police and in some cases children and young people are mandated to participate via a Therapeutic Treatment Order.

This work commences with a comprehensive assessment with the child or young person and the approach includes working with their families, carers and the system around them, including school, activities and extended family.

The program was developed and funded in 2007 and national and international evaluation indicates that participation and engagement in SABTS (and like) programs significantly reduces the likelihood of harmful or problematic behaviours continuing. It is important to understand that a child exhibiting sexually abusive behaviours is not an indicator that the child or young person will go on to sexually offend as an adult. This year 76 children and young people participated in our SABTS intervention, counselling and support program. This is a decrease from last year of 21 percent and reflects the refinement of our referral processes and the assessment completed with clients when engaging in the SABTS program.

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# Our Work

## CRISIS RESPONSE

LCCASA provide a crisis for people who have recently experienced sexual assault across the Loddon and Campaspe regions. This year our After-Hours service provided a response to 20 women and 10 children who experienced a recent sexual assault. This is an increase of 50 percent from last year.

Our afterhours service operates seven days a week and works in conjunction the Sexual Assault Crisis Line, Victoria Police and Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine to provide a comprehensive crisis response including support, medical and legal advocacy, clothing and other assistance. We have a dedicated team that work cohesively with other agencies to minimise trauma and provide a comprehensive “wrap around” response to each person we work with.



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# Tarregower Program

## REPORT

The LCCASA program at Tarregower Prison provides a broadened trauma counselling service to women two days per week throughout the year. A total of 100 women received a CASA service during the year and we provided two "Breathe it Out" groups to support our clients in responding to and recovering from trauma. The demand for our service at Tarregower has increased by 27 percent this year.

The Department of Justice and Community Safety funding also funds specialist training for correctional staff on the trauma experience (for women inmates and themselves) and how it can impact on self-regulation. Correctional staff that

participated in the training provided feedback that the training was extremely beneficial to their work.

Two training sessions were developed and delivered to custodial prison staff during the year. The training is experiential and focusses on the impact of trauma on the nervous system, physiological and behavioural indicators. The training included information for self-management and reflection of the impact of trauma and stress including strategies to manage hyperarousal (activated stress response). Feedback from staff that attended the training indicate it was high quality, informative and well received.

## CASE STUDY

### **Ruth (not her real name) is a woman in her early fifties who was incarcerated for fraud and attended LCCASA with a history of trauma.**

This included past emotional, financial and psychological family violence; caring for her mother through decline and death by cancer, social isolation and escalation of financial pressure post-separation; and past family violence by her son during his drug addiction. Ruth developed an addiction to alcohol to numb feelings of fear and worry and suffered depression over the year preceding imprisonment. This was in the context of prolonged socio-economic stressors.

Ruth described the stress of hiding her crime and subsequent criminal case as further impacting her

to the point where she experienced a sense of relief on receiving her sentence because, "it (the stress) was over". Her counselling goals included processing feelings of grief and loss, dealing with significant fear, anxiety about the future and strengthening her boundaries to deal with life post release.

Ruth attended four sessions of counselling due to her sentence length. Interventions and approaches included connecting Ruth with her strength and internal resources, mindfulness somatic work to help her engage calming skills, and creating a safe space for her to release feelings of grief and sorrow. In her last session Ruth identified themes making more space, "doors opening", connection and positivity regarding the future.

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# Our Community

**We build understanding for individuals, community and organisations to respond to sexual violence and prevent it from occurring.**

## EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

LCCASA continues to lead and participate in policy development and service design at a local, regional and state-wide level through our memberships of the Gender Equity and Violence Prevention (Loddon Area) Consortium, Stewardship Group for the Loddon Mallee Action Plan for the Primary Prevention of Violence Against Women, Gender Equity Coalition and Strengthening Hospitals Responses to Family Violence and Sexual Assault, Maryborough Family Violence Service Implementation Group, and Communities for Children.

Building community and individual capacity to understand and respond to sexual harassment, abuse and violence is a very important part of our work. To facilitate this, we present and participate in a range of events and forums including International Women's Day, 16 Days of Activism, Respectful Relationship service provider forum, Health expos and forums, La Trobe University O Week, Bendigo TAFE O Week, Rotary and the Chill Out Festival.

This year we expanded our reach and the diversity of information provided, with newly formulated presentations on vicarious trauma for health professionals, in-depth training and supervision to staff working with children with a disability displaying problem sexual behaviours, and important information about the context and dynamics of sexual assault for newly arrived migrant women and children.

We coordinated and facilitated a whole of community information session held at Maryborough Education Centre with Child Protection and Victoria Police SOCIT, with the aim to strengthen professionals and community members understanding of the dynamics and context in which child sexual assault occurs, and to strengthen reporting.

We are proud to have worked alongside the Macedon Ranges Youth Ambassadors to produce a youth focused sexual assault and consent video resource which has now been funded by Department of Education and Training to roll out across Victorian secondary schools.

Our professional development workshops and information sessions reached over 1,500 people, delivered through 45 sessions and presentations.

The focus of our professional development sessions has included:

- Responding to disclosures of sexual assault by children and adolescents
- Understanding and responding to problem sexual behaviours displayed by children and adolescents
- Understanding context and dynamics of sexual assault and gendered violence
- Understanding context and dynamics of child sexual abuse
- Youth, consent and where to get help
- Preventing and responding to vicarious trauma



# Our Organisation

**We align our resources, people, policies and systems to achieve the best possible outcomes for clients and the community**

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CLINICAL SUPERVISION**

Continuous quality improvement is central to our work and ensures that we offer services of a high standard that are based on evidence and best practice. Professional development, organisational training and reflective clinical practice are all essential in supporting and ensuring our staff work with clients is empowering and transparent. We are committed to investing in practice development and this year staff undertook extensive professional development including child focussed EMDR, trauma processing, legal training, clinical and peer supervision and specialist support in the Sexually Abusive Behaviour Treatment Service.

Specialist clinical supervision to senior staff and reflective practice group sessions to all staff was provided by our clinical consultant Colleen Cousins. SABTS program development and supervision was provided by our clinical consultant Russell Pratt.

## **INTAKE AND RESPONSE SERVICES**

Last year we doubled our Intake Team in response to demand and this year, further building on this work, we created a specialist Intake and Response Team of five staff. The expanded team delivers quality information, interventions and assessment for individuals and other organisations and agencies seeking a service, advice or information from LCCASA. As part of this model we are trialling a brief or short therapy model for clients that require immediate support or short-term counselling. This allows us to provide a therapeutic response assessing immediate needs, identify strengths and providing strategies to manage immediate issues and concerns.

Initial outcomes from the expanded team and brief therapy trial indicate it is a valuable and important service offer for clients and for referring organisations and agencies.

## **SERVICE INNOVATION**

We also reviewed and strengthened our internal systems and processes to continue offering transparent and empowering practices for, and with, our clients. From first contact with LCCASA from reception through to counselling and advocacy we ensure our processes are clear, ethical and reflect our organisational values. In designing our new website we are ensuring access to information and our services is available in the digital platform as well as our traditional mechanisms.

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# Our Organisation

## ON THE HORIZON FOR 2019 - 2020

LCCASA will continue to deliver high quality and best practice counselling and support for women, children and men impacted by sexual assault and violence. Projects and focus for the coming year include:

- Expanding our groupwork offer across all client groups
- Strengthen our capacity to be more inclusive of people within the LGBTQ+ community
- Strengthen our capacity to be more inclusive of culturally diverse communities
- Improve Cultural Safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders via our Reconciliation Action Plan
- Advance our research agenda via a partnership with Latrobe University to deliver a PHD scholarship in sexual violence in a regional rural context
- Conduct a feasibility into the infrastructure requirements for LCCASA over the next 5-10 years
- Launch our new website and branding

## PRESENTATIONS, NETWORKS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Gender Equity and Violence Prevention (Loddon Area) Consortium

City of Greater Bendigo Gender Equity Coalition

Strengthening Hospitals Responses to Family Violence and Sexual Assault

Loddon Campaspe Indigenous Family Violence Regional Action Group

State-wide Sexual Harassment Working Group

State-wide Multidisciplinary Centre Reference Group

Communities 4 Children,

Maryborough Family Violence Service Implementation Group

Family Alliance Network

Centre for Excellence in Rural Sexual Health

Anglicare Foster Care Accreditation Panel

Latrobe University - Orientation Week and Student Leader Training

Respectful Relationships

Chill Out Festival

Primary Care Partnership

Mental A Z Network (MAZN)

Bendigo Safe Community Forum

Eaglehawk Rotary

Bendigo and Kyneton Zonta Clubs

Tarrengower Prison - International Women's Day

Policy and Research Consultations

## DONATIONS AND SUPPORT

LCCASA extends its gratitude to all the people who walk through our doors and trust us with the honour of supporting your healing journey.

Our services are primarily funded by the DHHS, Family Safety Victoria and DOJCS and we also acknowledge our supporters and donors who are important to the success of our organisation.

Zonta Kyneton

In the Bag

Share the Dignity

Restoring Hope

All other donors that requested they remain anonymous.



LODDON CAMPASPE

## Centre Against Sexual Assault

For more information contact LCCASA

71 Bridge Street, Bendigo VIC 3550

T. 03 5441 0430

E. [lccasa@lccasa.org.au](mailto:lccasa@lccasa.org.au)

[lccasa.org.au](http://lccasa.org.au)

LCCASA acknowledges the traditional owners of this Country. We acknowledge their living culture and their unique role in the life of the Loddon Campaspe region.

LCCASA celebrates cultural diversity, and we welcome people of all race, religious or political views, sexual orientation or gender identity.

