



**Annual General Meeting
29th October 2014**

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Election of Officers

Chairperson

Treasurer

Secretary

Ordinary members

Auditors S J Miller

Public Officer Russel Sykes

CEO Report Laurie Matthews October 2014

I wrote in last year annual report of the impending tender process for our Specialist Homelessness Services, Caretakers Cottage and Options and the steps we were taking to best engage with the sector. I also wrote of the continual changes within the Out Of Home Care sector with a transition to foster care managed by the nongovernment sector. We have come through these processes successfully if not a bit bruised by the process.

Caretakers Cottage has formed a partnership with the Ted Noffs Foundation who will provide 4 crisis or high needs beds along with an early intervention program targeting young people in local schools and their parents whilst Caretakers Cottage will continue to provide crisis accommodation and a growth of Options transitional placements from 16 to 78 young people. A small brokerage program has been added to the mix as well as responding to the needs of under 16's who were not recognised in the tender.

Given Caretakers expertise and reputation for working with young clients we committed significant resources to ensuring quality work would continue as well as supporting St Laurence House to continue operating in their Sturt St property which is now designated as transitional housing in our package. After the tenders had been announced Housing came to the realisation that there would be no under 16's response so a \$27 million package has now been announced. This has been a poorly executed reform process that has been marred by secret negotiations with the peak organisations and large players. There was no way to gain access to the consultation process as all that was offered was a road show to announce what had been decided, not what those in the field believed was good program development.

In our 37 years of operation I have never seen such an ill-conceived reform process. Services were put in a position of cannibalising other local "competitors" in the interests of competitive tendering thus creating divisions between those who survive. As far as I can see the only benefit from this process has been to reduce the number of contracts from 400 to 140 operated by 85 organisations. To achieve this outcome in the Eastern Suburbs we have experienced a cut in funding from \$2.38 m to \$1.5m with an expectation to expand to include a dedicated early intervention program.

For Options it will meant an increase of 230% increase in funds and a 460% increase in workload, we had been so proud of building up our capacity, to successfully engage young people exhibiting significant mental health needs and young indigenous people looking to develop their independent living skills. Unfortunately we will not have the capacity to support so many young people with high support needs however, it remains important to be a support agency rather than a provider of cheap accommodation.

Caretakers will participate in the next round of tenders for under 16's and focus on indigenous young people. Fortunately our contacts and service providers in the indigenous community have been growing to the extent that we always have at least one resident involved with Tribal Warrior. We will continue to work with the Children's Guardian to find ways to include mentors who have

experienced the ups and downs of life and because those down sides may include a violent past thus precluded from playing any part in our program.

We have worked well with indigenous young people over the years though had not really sought to develop any particular skills in working with this group however, both Caretakers and Options usually have a 50% indigenous resident group

We have a new Minister in Gabrielle Upton, member for Vacluse, which includes our Bondi Rd premises. Minister Upton has visited the refuge and offered support to secure some additional funds. She has been keen to come to grips with this most of this chaotic portfolio though will have her work cut out for her if she is to wrest her authority from the bureaucracy . I have great hopes that our relationship with the Minister will grow as she develops a greater understanding of the homelessness sector.

Our Out Of Home Care programs have not been exempt from reform as Family and Community Services continue to divest themselves of any direct Out Of Home Care responsibility. The major reforms of transferring all foster care to the NGO sector have not impacted directly on Entity and Horizon. New bed night funding has impacted us directly as when we have no control over the allocation of young people to services and while the Department still seeks placement in SHS crisis refuges that are not accredited they are doing so at the cost of the viability of OOHC residential programs.

Julie has produced a fantastic resource for workers and young people who are exploring the viability of aspiring to transitional housing. Having produced a resource book and a work book for young people she is now looking for some funding so that we can print more copies and load it onto our website.

Horizon has had a much better year with better occupancy rates and is set to work more closely with Options to rehouse young people in transitional housing. A goal of the new funding regime is to generate some more interaction between Out Of Home Care and the Specialist Homelessness Sector. We need to ensure a dialogue is initiated between ACWA and Y foundations to ensure that OOHC client do continue to have the protections and assurances enshrined in the Children's Guardian accreditation.

You will note in the Aftercare section of this report lots of photos of children and babies as Courtney has taken on the role a parent does when their children have babies. It is encouraging to see how well the program has developed and the important role it plays in many developing lives. This program is not funded by FACS and is a credit to Courtney Julie and Jenny to be able to squeeze sufficient funds from our core funding.

Financial matters

Caretakers have engaged new auditors Steven Miller who will help us to recast our financial management systems to meet our new responsibilities. In the mean time we will continue to seek further funds to ensure the employment of an administrative assistant. Following much lobbying after the tenders were announced Caretakers has received some additional funds with the offer of a comprehensive funding review by the end of this year. This is important in the light of cuts to our district.

Delores women's refuge donated 2 motor vehicles to Options and we are also gaining some interest from local commercial sponsors.

Each of the program areas will need to work on local fundraising this year as our capacity to continue subsidising deficits has come to an end, although our accounts indicate a small deficit of income over expenditure it is vital that programs are adequately funded and have some capacity to retain funds for unexpected demands including repairs and maintenance and its requirements.

Where are we heading

In the short term our priority is to bed down our new Specialist Homelessness Services contract, specifically ensuring the massive growth in transitional housing is well supported

We still have much work to come as the Commonwealth Government attempts to roll out tough new Youth Allowance rules, fees on education wherever you look and the withdrawal of funds from youth connections school programs. Whilst we have limited success in securing employment for clients it has always been a good alternative to engage in further training however, this is now coming into question as young people resist the demand to run up large educational debt.

Caretakers is well placed to secure some ongoing funding for under 16's programs when the next tender is offered in the New Year. At this stage it would appear appropriate to make further inroads to the indigenous community and set up a respite type program for young indigenous kids. Our relationship with tribal Warrior and early morning PCYC boxing programs have continued to be attractive to our clients and I am sure will develop as the coming year progresses.

We most definitely need to gain greater acceptance by the local elders and attract greater involvement from them in matters including smoking ceremonies for each of our properties, or support to link kids up with kin. We need to be identified as an indigenous friendly service and promoted within the community.

Our dual role of providing both OOHC and SHS accommodation and support puts us in a good position to participate in the coming debate about cost shifting and appropriate resourcing within this area.

There are many people who commit time and energy to this organisation whether it be on the Board of Management, the young people and their parents who participate in the life of the refuge or those providing support through art classes. A team of 22 permanent staff and a wider group of 10 more casual workers who continue to be committed to the young people with whom they work and to the organisation.

We have seen the departure of Anette Jespersen and James Riddett both long term workers who have brought fantastic skills and commitment to the young people in their care and to their teams. This has made way for some more people to join our great organisation. Dianna Sales, Brodie Willis and Jordan Howe have joined the youthwork team at Bondi while Michael has taken a full time position at options and new workers Dafna and Alexis have now joined the team as caseworkers.

The Dept Community Services has continued to be at the heart of community welfare responses and we will work to ensure they continue in this role. Particularly, I would like to acknowledge the New Minister Gabrielle Upton who has shown care to minimise some of the tougher impacts of the reform. Community Program officer Grahame Roth and DPP Skevi Panayi who have guided us through the reforms.

Regardless of the challenges we will face associated with funding changes in some programs and the implications of Government Budgets. Reviews and reforms, Caretakers will not err in our commitment to providing the best possible services for young people and their families, to continuing to advocate for social justice and to continue the collective efforts to reduce homelessness and disadvantage.

Laurie Matthews



Annual Johnson (now CT Partners) Christmas event

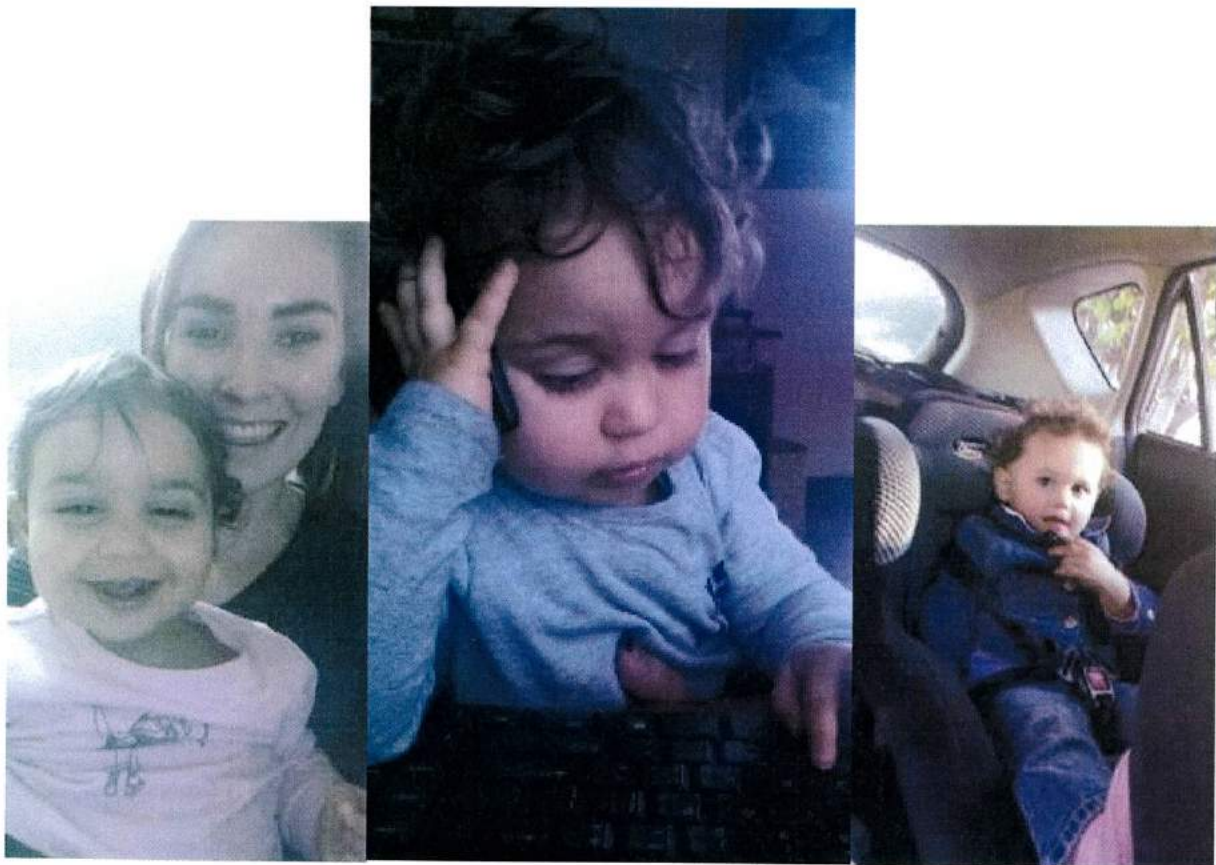
Annual Report 2013/2014: Entity Aftercare Program

Entity Aftercare program has had an insanely busy year with clients!

The support around some clients this year has taken an important role in working more intensively alongside other services in order to give clients the best possible support. These services include Family and Community Services – working with clients to keep their children in the family home, Doctors and Mental Health professionals managing clients and their Mental health, Health Physicians and gym staff to support clients in weight management and Healthy living.

Aftercare is offering a wider range of support to clients such as fitness programs, Leaving Domestic Violence relationships, Family Court issues as well as Housing & moving, Education, Employment, Mental Health management and support, TILA & Leaving Care Plans and working with more and more services to ensure young people have complete support.

Aftercare continues to work closely with Horizon so that there is a smooth transition when exiting the program and begin working with Aftercare.



Client Overview

- The current Aftercare clients range from 16 – 27 and are 44% female, 50% male and 6% other.
- Aftercare has a group of young people at present who are accessing the service regularly for intensive support while others contact Aftercare on a more casual basis and others just to keep in touch.

- Clients are accessing the program for support in Education, Mental Health and Physical Health including fitness, pregnancy support + Birth plan, Medication management, day to day tasks such as groceries and getting to appointments.
- Aftercare currently has 1 client who is pregnant. This client has 4 other children, two of which are in care, 1 currently with the biological father but the matter will soon go before the family law court and 1 in her care but has current FACS involvement due to Risk of harm reports being made. As at the last Aftercare Annual report there were two other female clients who were pregnant – one client has had her child removed due to risk of harm as she was in a domestic violent relationship. The other client has her child in her care and is doing really well, she is currently in TAFE and has baby in child care on campus.
- Aftercare has recently started to introduce support for clients around fitness. One client has been referred to an Exercise Physiologist regarding weight and health issues and Aftercare Case Worker has become this client's gym buddy. Case worker goes on regular walks with client as well as a once a week gym session with a Personal Trainer. Case Worker assists client in healthy eating also by providing a book of recipes including healthy breakfasts, lunches, dinners and snacks. Aftercare has referred another client to the program also regarding Mental Health in hope to use exercise to regulate energy levels and anxiety. Case Worker will also buddy this client at the gym.
- Aftercare has been working closely with a Male client around his mental health. We are currently working on finding him a Psychiatrist who will give us an updated assessment and diagnosis. From there his treatment plan and medication will be managed by his GP with the support of Aftercare.
- Aftercare has been providing driving lessons to one client who now has his learner's licence. Although a scary prospect, it has been very good for the client to build up their driving hours, as they do not have a leaving care plan for the Department to assist with paying for lessons. The client is developing his driving skills well.

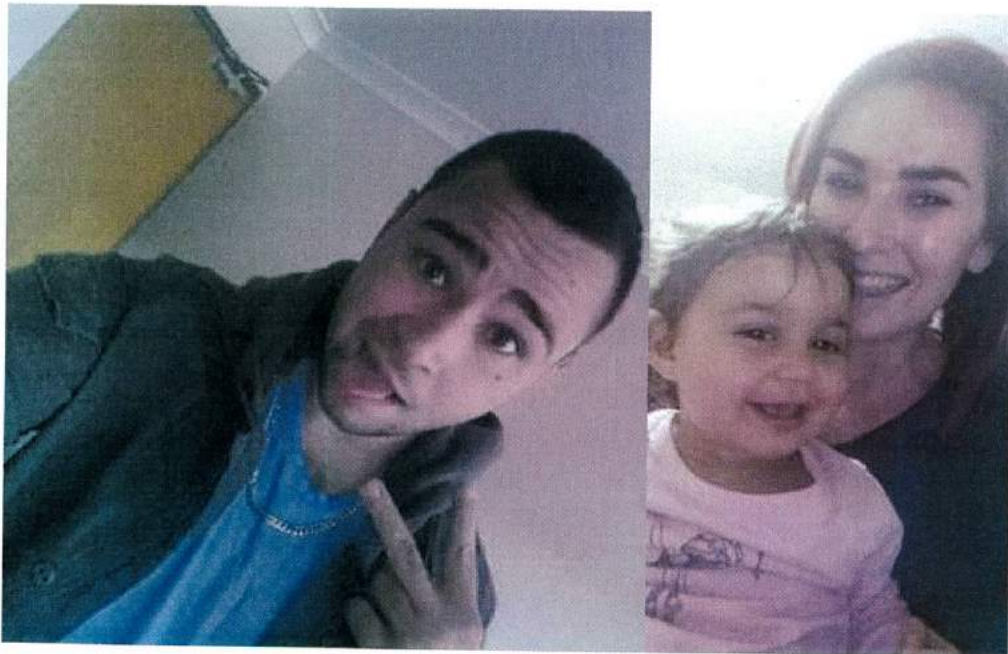


Achievements

Aftercare has had a big hand in one female client keeping her child in her care. The client has had FACS involvement for the past 12 months, due to concerns for the children that have been in her care and because she is pregnant again. Aftercare has been brought to the forefront as the key support given the extensive relationship that the Case worker has with the client. Aftercare has been conducting weekly home visits, assisting with appointments, taking her to case plan meetings, and assisting with legal support as needed. Aftercare also assisted with an emergency move for the client to a new home when there were issues with her safety at her current home. Aftercare assisted with the packing and watching the baby while the client was packing and cleaning.

An intensive service has now become involved with the client. Aftercare now works alongside the other service to give the client and her children the best possible chance at moving forward with her children in her care. This arrangement and support has continued to involve a lot of intensive work with the client, including attending her appointments with her, attending case planning meetings with the client, FaCS and the other service. We have developed a birth plan for the birth of her new child, and Aftercare and the Entity Caseworker will be assisting with the plan and birth.

Aftercare has moved a number of clients into new houses and currently all clients are in stable long term accommodation.





Program Development

Aftercare has been working more closely with Horizon clients in order to develop the relationships so that they are more comfortable when they leave care accessing the Aftercare program. This involves attending appointments, going to case review meetings, assisting with living skills development, etc.

Future Aspirations

On a client level, we aspire to continue to motivate young people to reach the goals they have set. For one client this means keeping up the work around her health and fitness, and continue to energise and motivate her until she becomes more healthy and fit and no longer has the health concerns that she currently has. For another, it means achieving an accurate and appropriate psychiatric assessment, which to date has been difficult to achieve. This would mean a treatment plan that would assist him in moving forward in his studies and career.

On a program level, we aspire to having young people in the program work and develop to a point where they are able to mentor young people at Entity or Horizon. This would mean a lot of one on one work with the clients to make sure that they are ready for the responsibility that this role holds and also careful selection of which clients would be appropriate to take on the role of mentor.



Thanks and acknowledgements

Entity Aftercare would like to thank the following agencies:

Family and Community Services, Benevolent Society, Catholic Care, Michael Russo and the team at Hurstville Aquatic Centre, Dan and the guys at Coast to Coast Removals, Upzone Hurstville and now Headspace Hurstville – Special thank you to Dr Vasilios Papakostas (Dr Bill), Housing NSW, Bridge Housing, Options, Edgy @ YouthZone Hurstville, Pandelis Tsomis of Sydney Psychology, Tafe NSW, Liverpool Hospital, Dr Michael Freeland, TILA, Marrickville Legal Centre, Probation and Parole Hurstville & Sutherland, Domestic Violence team @ Bankstown LAC.

Annual Report 2013-2014: Options Youth Housing

Options strives to support young people who are experiencing homelessness, or at high risk of becoming homeless, through a supportive and collaborative case management process. The ultimate goal of Options Youth Housing is to assist and encourage young people to break the cycle of dependence on the welfare system, achieve their goals and become confident young people.

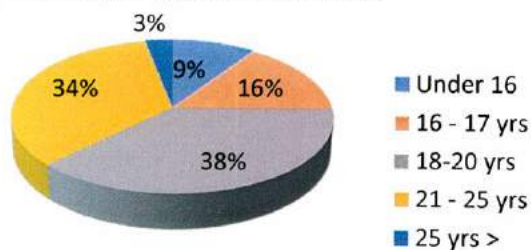
2013-2014 saw:

Phone Referrals	102
Outreach Support	5
Young People Housed	32
Average Stay	294 nights
Exits	20
Private/Shared Accom	6
Return to Family	6
HNSW	5
Other	1
Unknown	2

The main presenting reason for young people was inappropriate/inadequate living conditions, which included couch surfing, living in overcrowded situations or living in inappropriate, short term living arrangements. A significant proportion of young people also presented with a lack of family support, a housing crisis and a relationship or family breakdown.

Of the 102 referrals Options received, 36 young people were supported-with 32 of these young people accommodated, with the average stay being 10 months (294 nights) , this increased by 57 nights on last year. Of those who were supported 36% identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and 13% CALD.

Age of Young People Accommodated

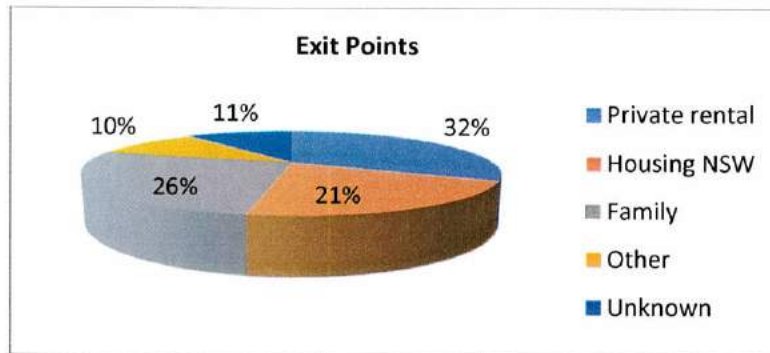


Clients with Complex Support Needs

25% of young people were formally diagnosed with a medium to high level mental health issue while 22% identified alcohol or other drugs as a significant issue in their lives.

Exit points

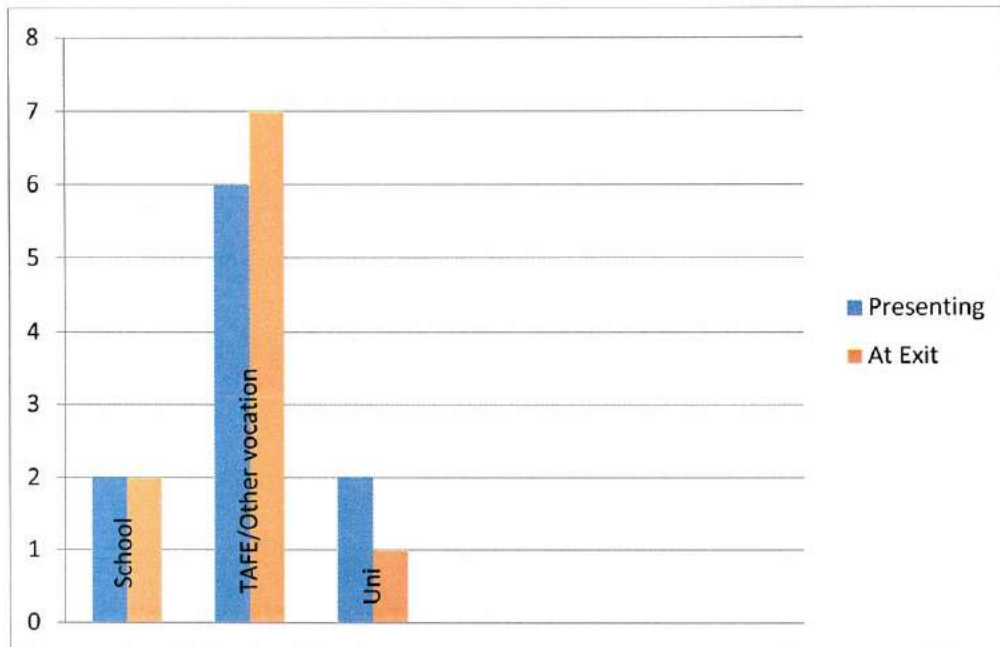
Options had a high number of young people exit the program this year with 20 young people exiting the service. 6 young people were evicted from the program for non-compliance with the program guidelines, while the remaining 14 had planned exits.



Employment

On presenting to Options 3% of young people were employed in full time employment and 13% in part time employment, upon exit Options saw an increase to 13% of clients engaged in full time employment and 13% in part time employment.

Educational achievements



Income Source

The primary source of income for presenting clients was a Centrelink Allowance with 86% of young people in receipt of a social welfare payment, upon exit this reduced to 80% of young people receiving social welfare. There was also an increase from 3% to 11% of young people's incomes being a wage.

Program Achievements and Highlights

There were two significant changes to Options throughout the year which are noteworthy.

The way in which Options charges rent was changed to the Social Housing model as per the new Housing Registrar agreements which came into play for September 2013. Client rents are now based on 25% of income making it fairer and a more realistic payment model for young people.

It was also the year for the Going Home Staying Home Reform tender process in which Caretakers Cottage was the preferred tenderer for the district, for Options this means a significant increase in client load and property allocations for the year ahead.

There was also a fair amount of capital works completed on the majority of Options properties, with new carpets and painting so the houses are looking great.

Program Challenges and Struggles

There was an observable increase in the number of young people accommodated with Options who were significantly abusing drugs which saw an increase in property damage and vacancy times which had a significant impact on the program however staff handled these issues well and support was maintained with the young people concerned in assisting them to move to a more suitable housing option.

Client Achievements and Highlights

Options welcomed 2 new additions to the 'family' this year with 2 babies being born whilst residing with Options.

A 20 year old pregnant woman found herself in a placement issue with Housing NSW after a specific member of Housing NSW staff was found to have breached guidelines which affected a housing offer for our client. After a huge amount of advocacy on behalf of the client Options managed to secure a 2 bedroom Housing NSW property for the client and her new born baby. Mum and bub are doing well in their new property and baby just saw in his first birthday!

A 19 year old client engaged in a Business Traineeship, which she completed towards the end of her stay with Options. In the 11 months she was with us she saved her money and on completion of her Traineeship with a Government Department she was offered a full time job, she found herself a 1 bedroom unit to rent and moved into independent living with a secure, full time job in hand.

Program Developments

Kate Witherdin, the program manager, took 6 months maternity leave and Michael Brickwedde acted up in this period, we also employed a part time case worker, Dafna Dar for that period. With the successful result of the Going Home Staying Home tender Dafna was offered a full time position on Kate's return and so Options expanded to 2 full time case workers.

Future Aspirations

Due to the Going Home Staying Home reform, Options will see a great deal of changes over the following 12 months. In this time we anticipate increasing our available beds from 16 to 60 as well as increase from 5 CAP properties to 23 CAP properties; and 4 Nomination Rights properties with Bridge Housing to 10-as a result we are hoping to formalise our relationship with Bridge Housing.

I anticipate that the next 12 months will be a period of transition and learning to manage the increase of client load, new staffing and moving offices.

Donations and Support

StreetSmart has once again been a great support to Options with a grant of \$1000 to us for client brokerage, this was used to assist clients in times of crisis with transport, food, identification assistance.

Waverley Council also generously donated \$625.00 to Options to upgrade our rent management database to coincide with the new rent calculation arrangements.

Partnerships, Thank you's and Acknowledgements

Options could not run as smoothly and as successfully as it does if it were not for the extensive support for external agencies, individuals and businesses that support us. Options would like to thank:

Adam and the Team from StreetSmart Australia, The Come In Centre, Bridge Housing Ltd, BYA and Green Light Movement, Shopfront Youth Legal Centre, Waverley Council, NSW Office of Community Housing, Ronald Valencia from WEAVE Youth Services, Oasis Youth Services, Waverley Council, the many anonymous donators from our Christmas collections and anyone else who has supported us in any shape or form that I may have non-intentionally forgotten.

And lastly the most important-all our young people current and past who share their stories, their lives and their daily ups and downs with us and make our 'jobs' enjoyable, challenging and meaningful.

Annual Report 2013-2014: Entity Out of Home Care Youth Service

Entity finally got the okay from council and moved into the new house at Sylvania in January. That was a very long and drawn out process.... After moving over to the new house, some staff spent a few weeks working on the old house cleaning, repairing and painting it to hand back to the owner. Of course, as comes with buying property, there was a major hiccup once we moved into the house. The seriously old sewerage pipes outside the house were damaged in a few places beyond repair. Then there was a cavity beneath the concrete slab outside the back door caused by the wearing away of the dirt by the constant flow of liquids from the broken pipes. Some serious plumbing work and concreting was done and the house was back on track. Thanks to Curran Plumbing for their great work on the pipes and their great customer service.

Throughout the year we have been involved in a few network groups set up specifically for discussion around the issues arising for residential care services. These have included Department run groups and a group run by ACWA. These groups have discussed some pertinent issues over the year specific to services running residential care. Some of these issues include NGO services accessing the Referral Management System (RMS) to place young people with other NGO services, inappropriate referrals to residential care, the slowing down of referrals to residential care and funding issues. It has been good to see that other services are facing the same issues as Entity and talk about different ways each service has dealt with the issues.

There has been an ongoing issue with referrals coming from out of area and not enough referrals coming from local areas. There are numerous issues with housing young people from out of area, as they are removed not only from their peer group and family, but also from any other stable things in their lives, such as school, mental health professionals and other support services. This separation can destabilise the young person quite significantly. We have found that the young people do not cope with being very far away from their own area.

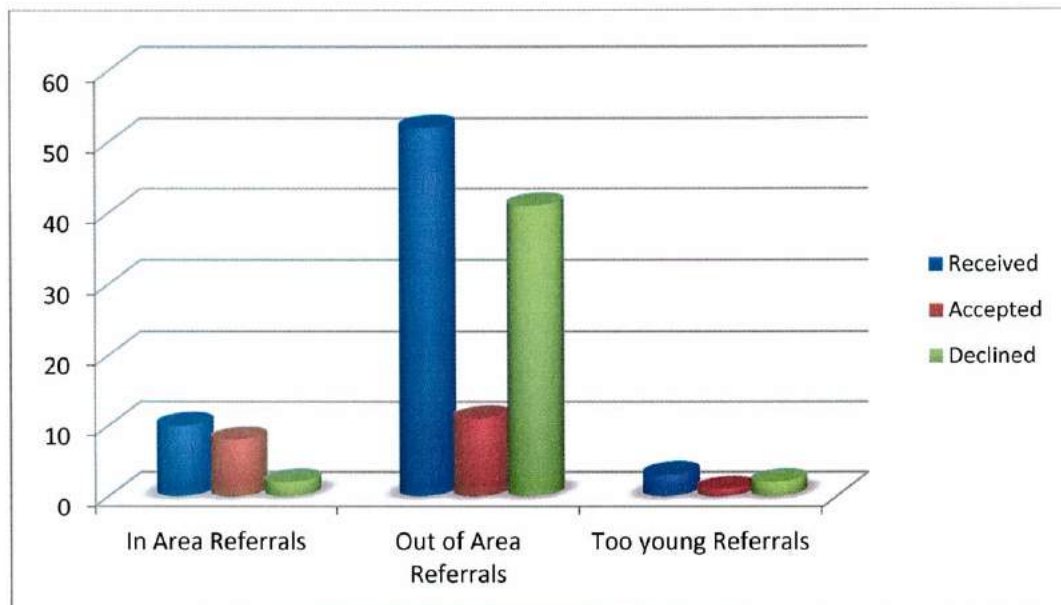
Entity continue to work closely with Metro Central Child and Family District Unit (C&FDU) and partnerships and planning around placements and referrals. The relationship between us has remained strong over the year and has involved a lot of open communication around the different issues arising over time. We had a number of issues around funding this year, with the change in the way in which Out of Home Care Services are funded. There was some confusion over the spreadsheets and actual placements that we had, and a number of late night study sessions to understand the maths around it all. We successfully navigated the spreadsheets and were able to communicate where our figures did not match the department's figures and were reimbursed the funding that we had lost due to the error in figures.

Michael Durrant (psychologist) has continued to provide monthly supervision and consultation to staff. Michal supports staff with strategies, opportunities for debrief, and staff are able to ask questions about our management of the young people in placement. Michael is a strong support for staff and very helpful for staff. We very much appreciate the support and advice that Michael provides. Many thanks to our Committee for their continued support with keeping Michael working with us.

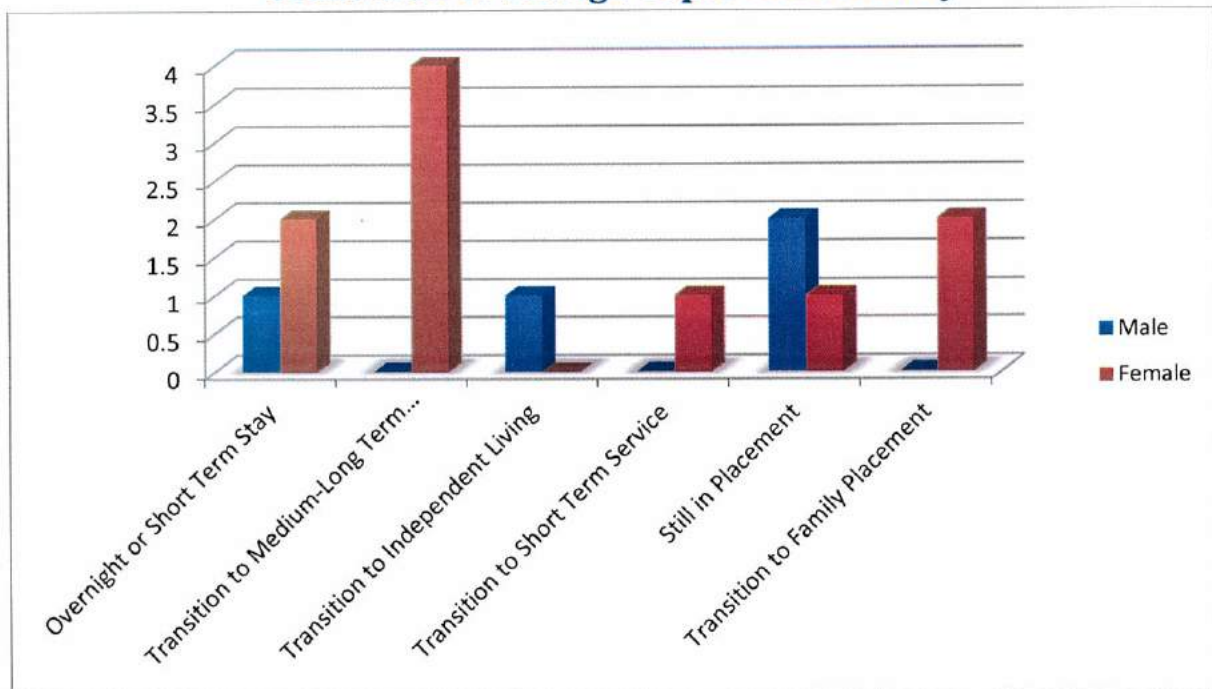
Client Overview:

- Entity received 63 referrals. 38% male and 62% female. Of these 63 referrals 52 were out of area referrals. Many of these were from Western NSW or Hunter area, which takes the young people hours out of their own area. This impacts all areas of their lives, as they need to start with a new school, new peer group, new medical and psychological professionals. They are also removed from their community which can cause great disruption to them. Young people can become very isolated when removed from their community which can cause an increase in behaviours or an internalisation of their isolation causing sadness and frustration.
- Entity accepted 20 referrals, however some of these referrals were withdrawn by Community Services due to the dynamics of the current residents and the impact that could have on the young person being referred.

Types of Referrals Received, Accepted and Declined



Transition of Young People Out of Entity



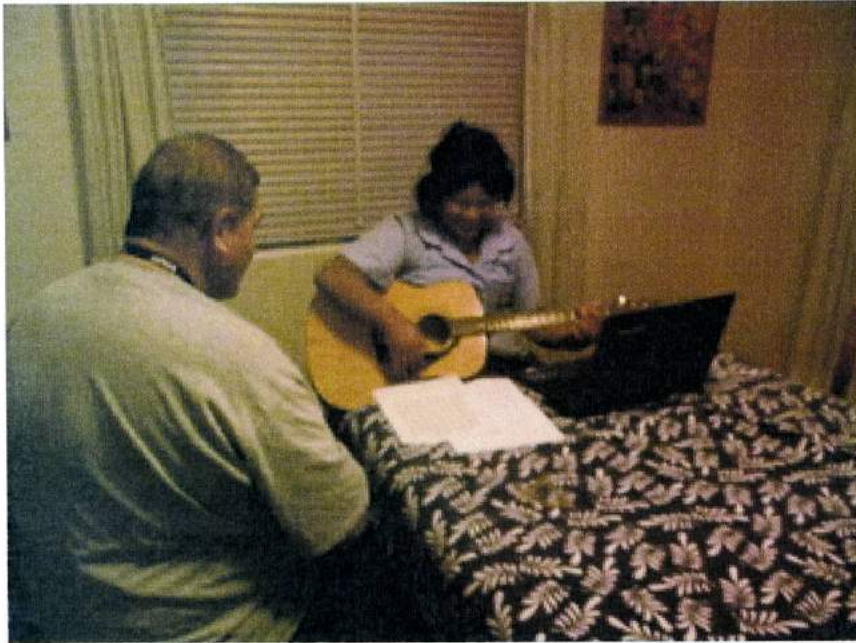
- All young people at Entity receive Medical, Dental and Eye Care as necessary or desired and are provided financial assistance where needed.
- Over the year, we have seen a slight increase in young people engaging in education. More young people coming to Entity this year have been enrolled in an education program than previous years. We are still experiencing some difficulty engaging young people in their education programs, either due to the distance they have to travel or their desire not to go to school. Entity will wrap rewards around young people for school attendance, which often sees an increase in their attendance.
- There has been a big decrease in referrals to the service this year. This is in part due to the Department not bringing older adolescents into care very often, and the changes in funding and transfer of case management to the NGO's. These things combined has been less referrals to Entity which has meant that we have regularly had vacancies. We have been able to negotiate with Metro Central C&FDU to offer medium to long term placements to a couple of young people in hopes of preparing and transitioning them into the Horizon program. This has meant that some of the older young people have the option of staying in placement and working towards semi-independent living and not having to move to a long term placement to then have to move again into Horizon's.
- We have had a number of young people comment to their FaCS caseworkers that Entity is a good place to live, and they would prefer to stay here than have to move to another placement. A couple of young people have made similar comments that "if I can't live with my family then I am staying here at Entity".



Achievements & Program Developments:

As mentioned above, we moved into the new premises at Sylvania this year. The house was sparkling and ready to use when we moved in thanks to the hard work of Julie who scrubbed it, built furniture and hung TV's and pictures (in double brick walls!) and fixed things around the house. Because of all of her hard work, we were able to move in and unpack and get going in record time.

Entity has continued to receive praise from services, schools and FaCS workers. We have been praised for the "good work" we do with the young people.

**Young People's Achievements:**

A number of our young people have successfully transitioned into long term placements this year. A few have turned 18 and moved into independent living.

We have had a couple of young people successfully enrol at Sylvania High School and maintain their enrolments while at Entity. One young person got a part time job at Hungry Jacks, and kept this job throughout her placement here.



Future Aspirations:

Over the last few months, Julie has been working on re-developing and updating all of the Entity resources. This has included a Sutherland Shire phone and web directory, young people's manual, staff manual, calendars and TV rosters. There has been a lot of work put into these resources, and they look fantastic and have had a good response from staff and young people.

Julie is now working on developing an appropriate living skills program, breaking down all of the different skills young people need to learn for living independently. These skills include, money management, learning how to rent and have a good tenancy, house cleaning and maintenance, job searching, etc. The books that Julie is making have information pages, skill assessments and then a test at the end to check the young person's understanding. These books will take some months to develop. Julie would like to continue working on her sexual health book once she has finished the living skills books.

Entity would still like to develop an education program for young people who come to the service and are not enrolled in school, or who cannot maintain mainstream schooling. There are funding and logistical issues to consider with this kind of program, however it would be very helpful to young people in the service, especially with a number of the alternative schools losing funding this year.

Partnerships, Thanks and Acknowledgements:

Entity would like to thank the following people and agencies for their continued support and work with us and our clients:

Hurstville Police Station, Dawn Pointon (Hurstville Police Youth Liaison Officer), Miranda Police Station, Deb Wilson (Miranda Police Youth Liaison Officer), Department of Education out of home care team, Sylvania High School, Youth Zone, Up Zone, Key College, Edgeware SSP, St George Youth Services, Project Youth, Headspace, Youth Connections, ACWA, Michael Durrant, Metro Central C&FDU, Sutherland Community Mental Health team, Partnerships and Planning, the Management Committee and a big thanks to our CEO Laurie Mathews.

We would like to give a special thanks to our neighbours for their patience and understanding of our service.



Horizon Semi Independent Service - AGM Report 2013 -2014

Introduction

Horizon Semi Independent Service is funded by the Department of Family and Community Services. It was established in 2009 after a need was identified for young people in Out of Home Care to gain supported independent housing as a transitional step before they leave Care. Horizon was allocated 4 placements to assist young people and, has retained this placement capacity.

In detail, Horizon Semi Independent Service provides up to 24 months of accommodation and case management support to young people in Out of Home Care. Through individual living skills and personal development programs, Horizon aims to prepare the young person to leave care and transition to independent housing.

With Horizon, a young person can expect to receive safe, secure and affordable housing, active case management and practical support, regular meetings with key stakeholders, assistance with living skills and personal development needs, support to link with community activities, assistance to obtain independent accommodation upon exiting care, a documented and approved Leaving Care Plan, a final copy of Life Story Work and referral to Caretakers Cottage Aftercare program.

Program Delivery and Development

Julie Booter is the Manager of Horizon, with Jenny McNamara as the full time Case Manager. Jenny works closely with Courtney Barlow, Case Manager of the Caretaker's Cottage Aftercare program to assist young people make a smooth transition as they exit Horizon and engage with Aftercare Services.

To maintain professional development and service delivery, Horizon has actively participated in ACWA training, Youth Network forums, Leaving Care and After Care Practice Forum, Cultural Support Plan training quarterly FaCS OoHC Residential Care Meetings and monthly internal supervision.

Program Capacity

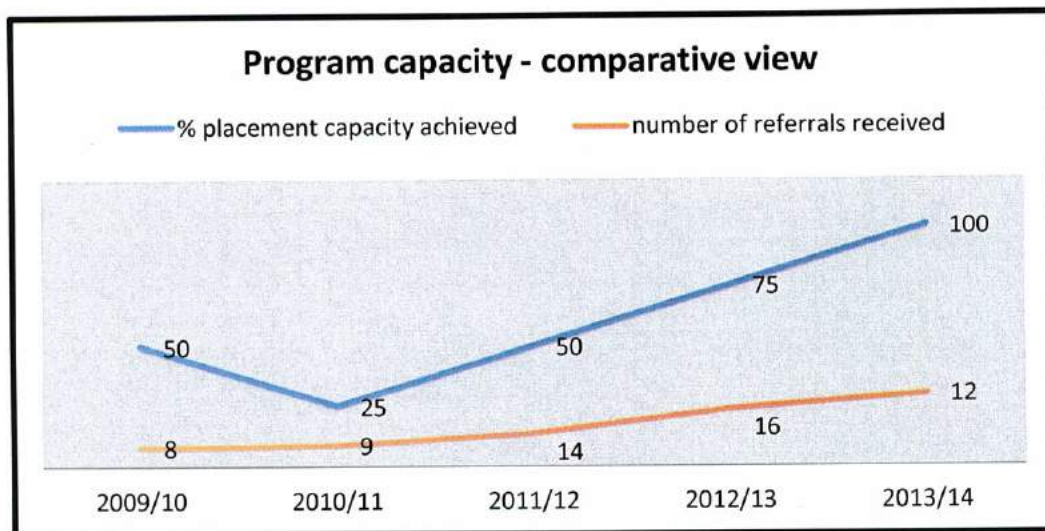
Over the last financial year, Horizon has achieved 100% full bed capacity. This increase in placements is 25% higher than the previous financial year and is the first time that the program has reached maximum capacity since its introduction in 2009. In March 2012, FaCS permitted Caretakers to undertake an intensive marketing strategy for the Horizon program. This consists of:

- 1) Program awareness (via the development of printed materials and multi-media website links)
- 2) Program knowledge (via making formal contact with potential referral sources such as youth services and centres, school counsellors and liaison officers, alternative education providers, juvenile justice, Centrelink, OoHC NGO providers and local region FaCS offices to further discuss the program and attend a program information meeting with the relevant staff of the organisation)

- 3) Program referral management (via the development and maintenance of a comprehensive referral network database and, providing regular updates on vacancy management to FaCS Metro Central, who continue to be the gateway to all referrals).

Maintaining strong relationships with FaCS Metro Central, coupled with the marketing strategy has shown to be significantly successful, with placement vacancy rates decreasing by 50% over the past two years and referrals from NGOs increasing by 75%.

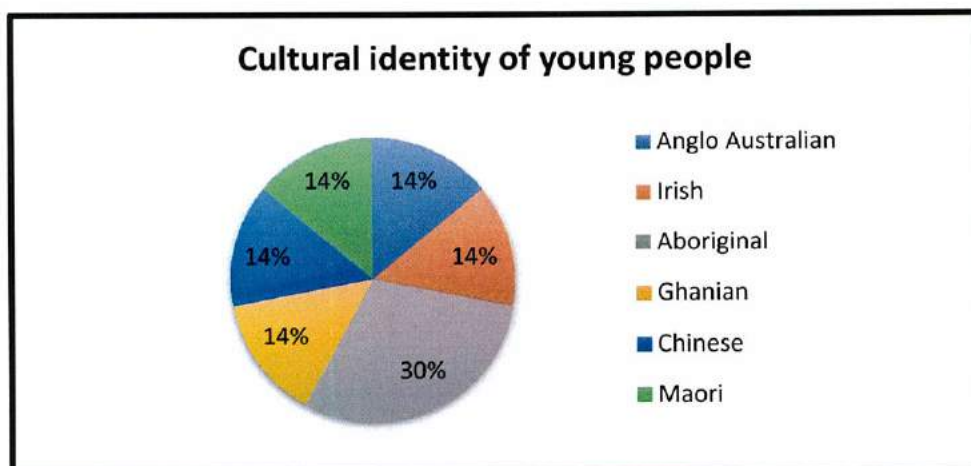
Below is a comparative graph of the program capacity since its introduction in 2009.



Placement and demographics

Of the clients placed with the Horizon program this financial year, 44% were male and 56% female. Young people came to Horizon from various suburbs across Sydney such as Hornsby, Homebush, Concord, Glebe, Hurstville and the Inner City of Sydney.

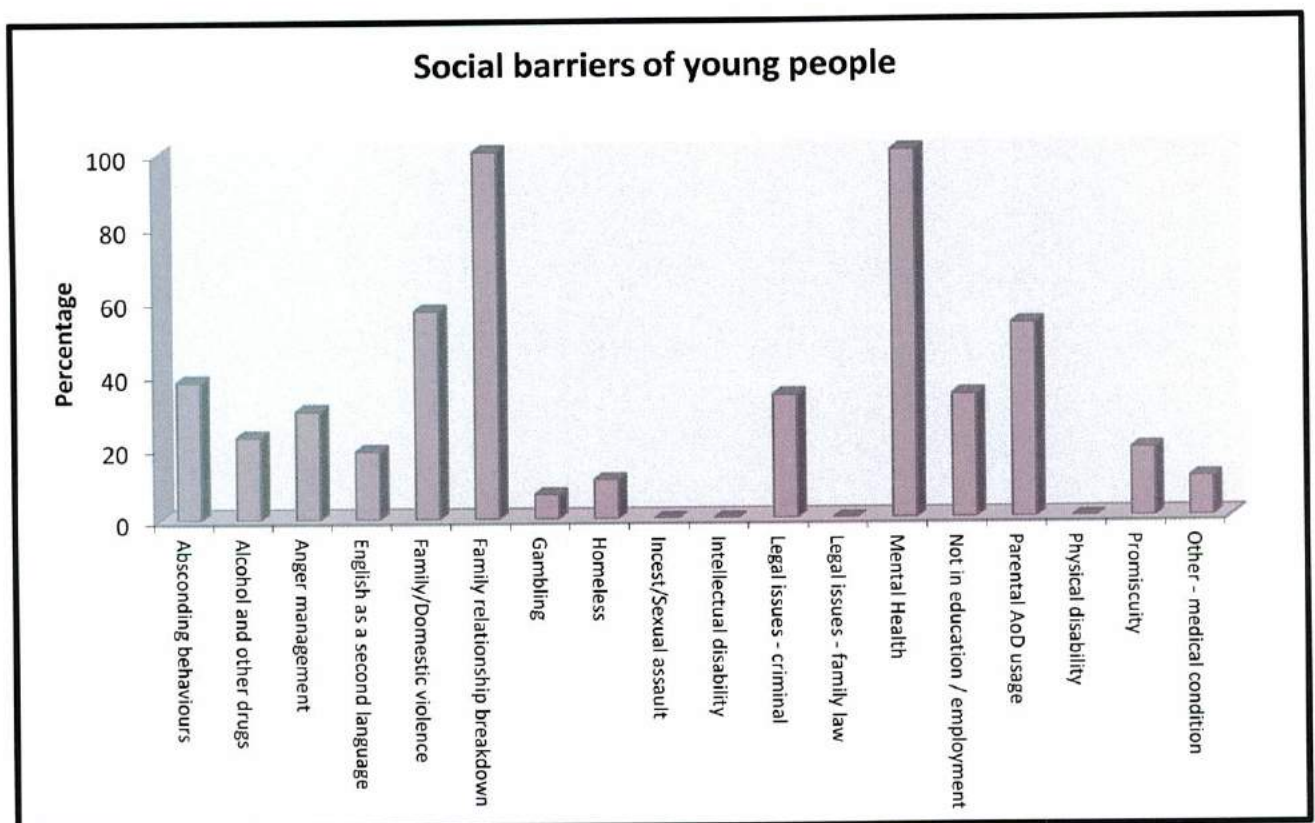
Young people identified with many different cultures as summarised below:



Of the young people within the program, 42% of young people were identified pre-crisis, 16% were identified in crisis, 21% entered through a formal transition plan and 21% were placement matched. As specified in the program guidelines, all clients accepted into Horizon are under the Parental Responsibility of the Minister of Family and Community Services until the age of 18 years. The average age of a young person being referred and placed within the program was 16 years.

42% of clients were case managed by Family and Community Services, with the remaining 58% being case managed by NGOs. Of this combined total, Horizon had successfully transferred and assumed case management of 58% of these cases by the end of the financial year.

Young people within the program presented with many social barriers. Below is a summary of barriers that young people have faced upon entering the program and over the last financial year.



Client Outcomes and Program Successes

Horizon is maintaining strong relationships with real estate agencies and has held placements in Homebush, Pagewood and two in Hurstville. Where a vacancy exists, one of the Hurstville properties continues to be used as the transition unit and assessment base (for young people who enter via the Pre-Assessment Living Skills program).

To build on a young person's educational skills and capacity to secure employment, all clients engaged in education, vocational training and/or employment. These programs were sourced to suit the young person's individual needs and abilities. This financial year, clients engaged in the following economic activities such as mainstream tertiary education, mainstream apprenticeship studies,

mainstream secondary education, supported secondary education, Job Network employment services and casual employment.

One client completed a semester of university studies, however deferred his educational program to address financial management and gambling barriers. He engaged in counselling programs and has since returned to education through TAFE.

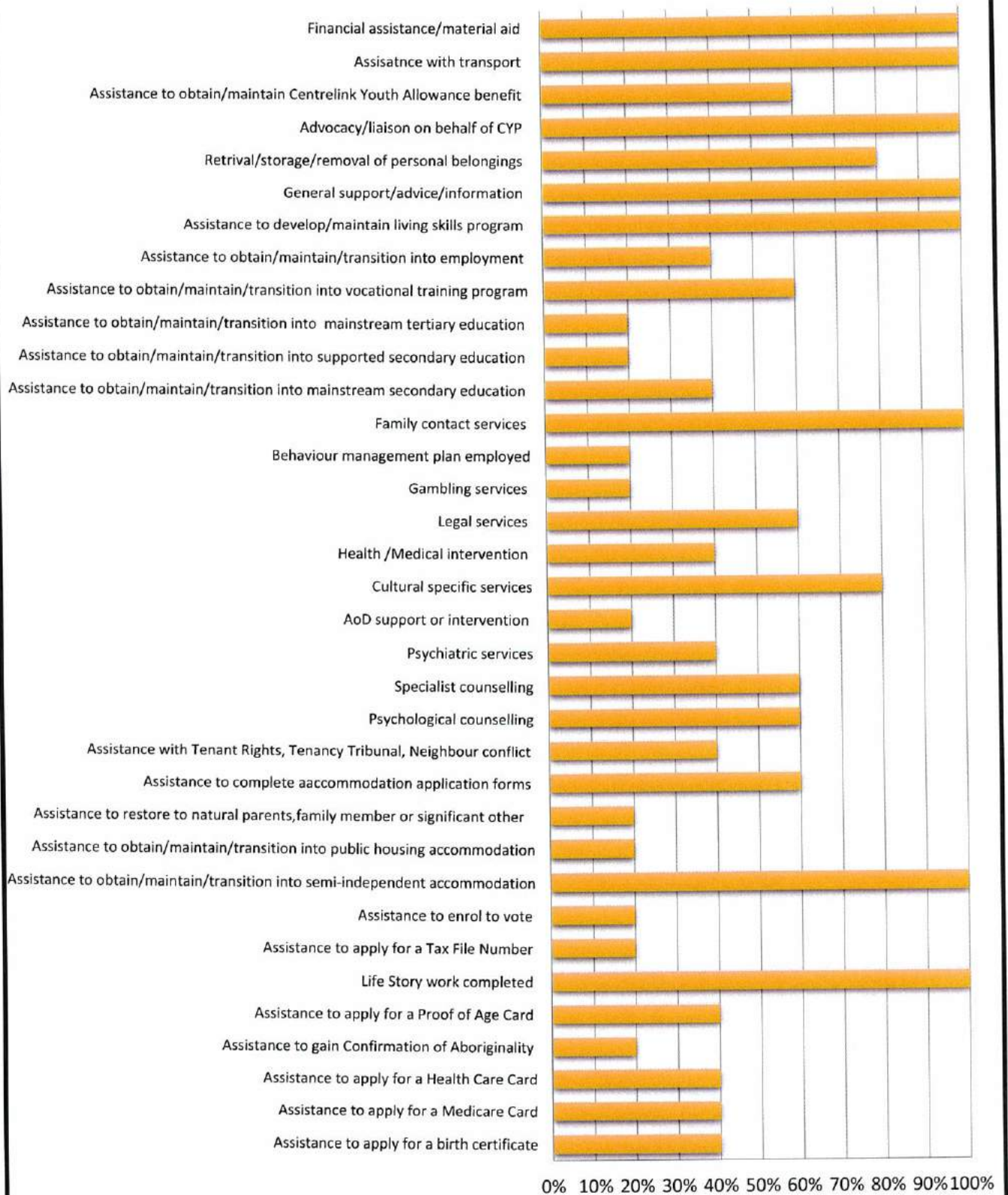
One client is continuing to complete her secondary education through the Regentis Youth Centre (which is offered through the Petersham TAFE Outreach program), one client has recently completed a Cert II in Commercial Cookery which has assisted her to secure a full time apprenticeship as a Chef. She is now working four days per week and attends Loftus TAFE one day per week. One client works casually as a waitress in a restaurant in Brighton-Le-Sands, she is also working closely with her Job Network provider to assist her in securing further full time employment and, one client is currently completing his Yr. 12 HSC at Sydney Secondary College, Blackwattle Campus.



To address barriers, build upon personal identity and skill development, increase resilience and improve family relationships, young people engaged in the following social supports and interventions.



Social supports and interventions



For clients who successfully completed the Horizon program, 50% transitioned to family and a further 50% transitioned to independent youth housing services. All young people left the program with an approved Leaving Care Plan, a Life Story book, original documents, all the furniture/household and whitegoods from their Horizon placement and a referral and linkage to the Caretakers Cottage Aftercare Program.

Future Directions

Horizon will continue to implement the marketing program to ensure that placement capacity remains at 100%. Horizon will develop a partnership with the Caretakers Cottage Options (independent Housing) program to assist young people to transition from Horizon to another supported placement once they attain the age of 18 years.

To reduce the costs of establishing young people into placements, Horizon will continue to seek the support of FaCS, continue to develop networks with community welfare agencies such as St Vincent De Paul, and utilise online programs such as free-cycle and gumtree.

As a continuum of care strategy, Horizon will continue to work closely with the Caretakers Cottage Aftercare Program and assist young people to engage with and access this support available to them.

Partnerships, Thanks and Acknowledgments

Horizon would like to thank the following people and agencies for their continued support and work with the program and our clients:

Coast to Coast Removals, Metro Central C&FRU, Metro Central FaCS ISS and CSC, Burwood FaCS CSC, Stretch-A-Family, BHR Real Estate, HT Wills Real Estate, John B Grant Real Estate, Hurstville Centrelink, Burwood Centrelink, Department of Housing, Central Sydney Juvenile Justice, Medicare Teen Dental Services, Southern Sydney Dental Services, Charles Sturt University, Ultimo TAFE, Bankstown TAFE, Petersham Outreach TAFE, Loftus TAFE, MTC Work Solutions Kogarah, Youth Connections Belmore, Aboriginal Medical Service, Youth Zone, St George Youth Health Services, Caretakers Cottage Management Committee, Horizon Manager Julie Booler and CEO Laurie Mathews.

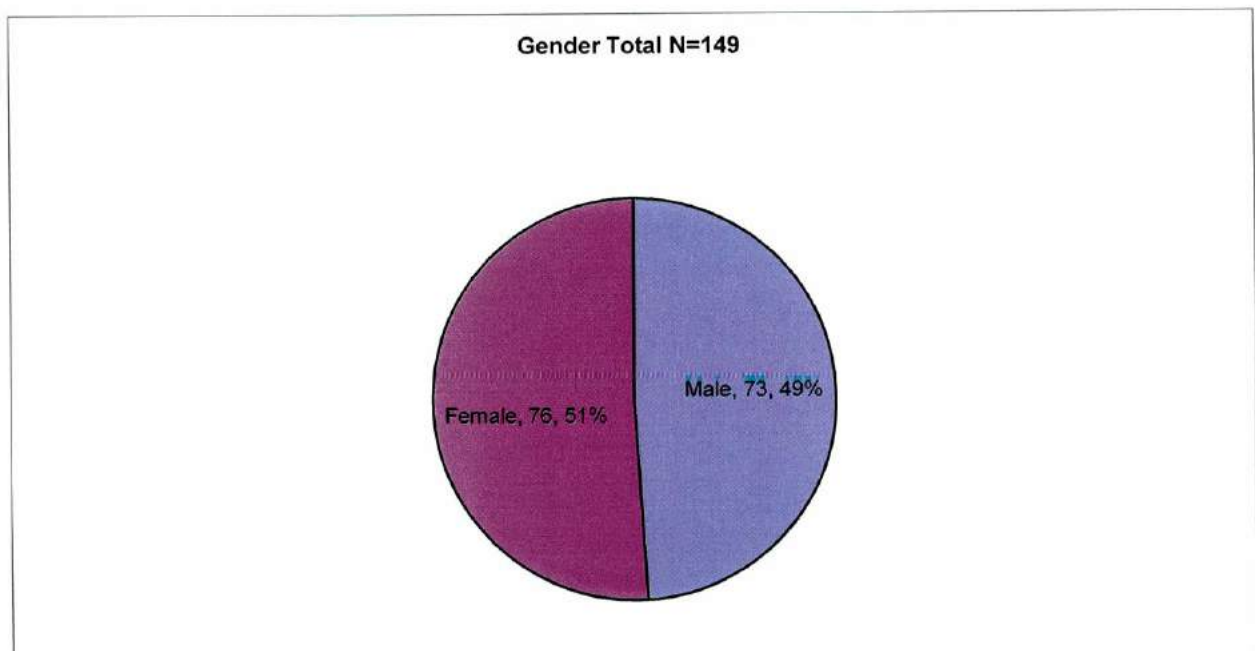
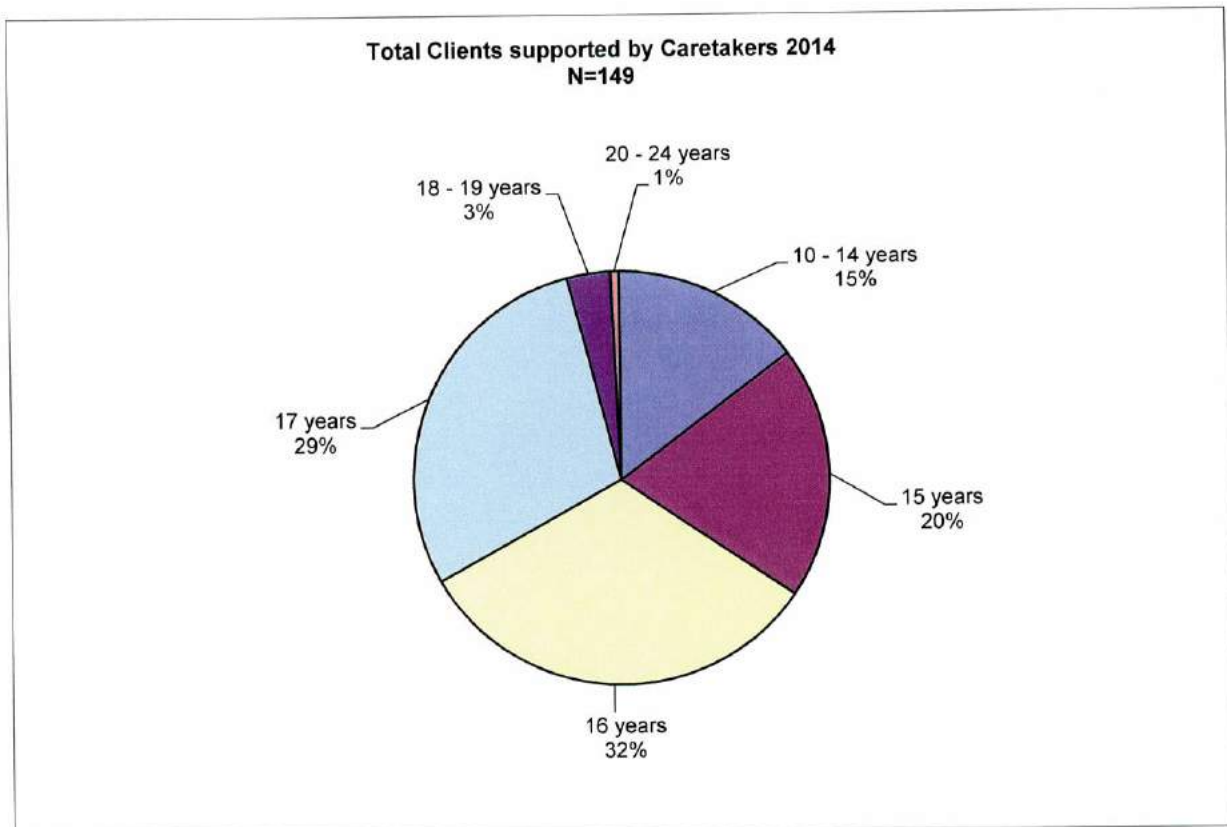


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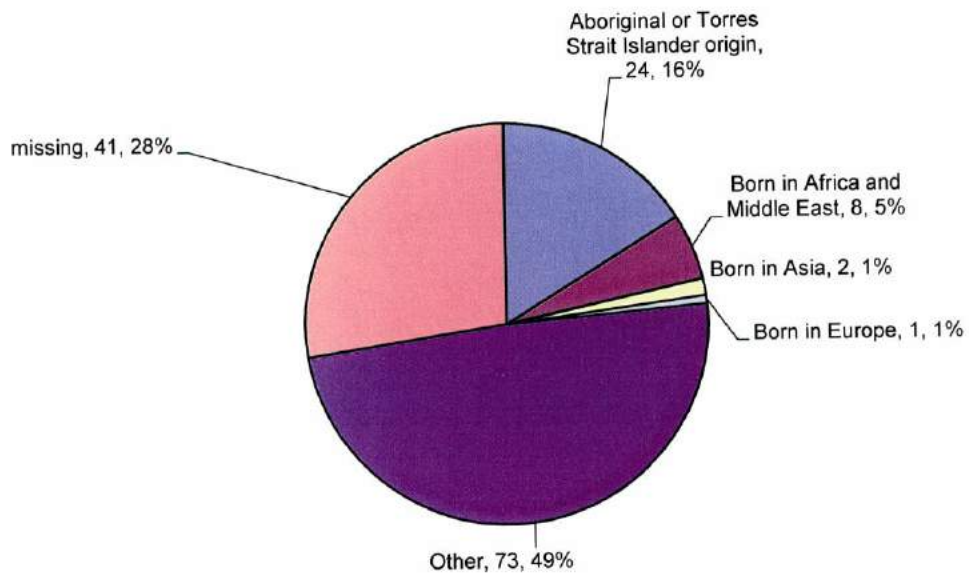
BASIC OVERVIEW

- In 2013-2014 Caretakers Cottage provided a service to 149 clients.
- The largest proportion of clients serviced by Caretakers were under the age of 16 years. 35% were under the age of 15 years, 32% were 16 years, and 32% over 16 years.
- Of this group, 12% were born overseas with the majority born in Africa or the Middle East and 16% were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island background.
- Caretakers has shown a marked increase in our ability to access Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people over the last financial year. In fact, Aboriginal clients increased by 100% in the last 6 months of the year.
- 31% of Caretakers Clients had a previous diagnosis of a mental health issue, but only 10% were receiving treatment upon becoming clients of Caretakers. 2% had a disability requiring assistance or the use of aids.
- 13% of clients were couch surfers before arriving at Caretakers, and 7% were still couch surfing at the end of the support period.
- 23% were out of home for less than a week, however the vast majority, 63%, had been out of home for less than 6 months.
- Of the clients Caretakers worked with during the last year, 79% were not previously known to the service. Most clients required only one support period, however, a small proportion of clients (under 15%) required multiple support periods before they were stabilised. The average length of time of support provided to our clients was 43 days. The average length of time residents stayed at the refuge was 24 days.
- The overwhelming reason identified by clients for requesting assistance was 'family breakdown' with 38% of client responses citing this as the main reason triggering their homelessness. 11% of responses also cited the housing crisis as the next most important variable in rendering these young people homeless.

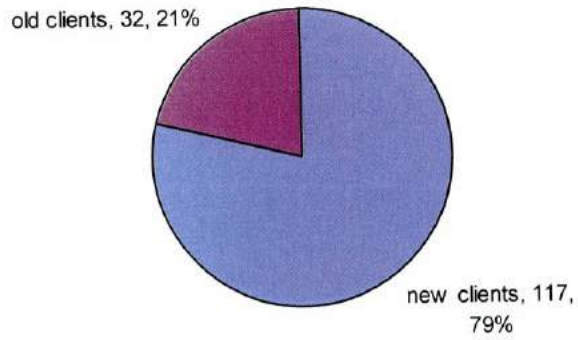
- 33% of clients stated they were unemployed when they first presented at the refuge, however this fell to 19% at the end of Caretakers involvement. This most likely reflects less the fact that these clients were getting employment but more so that they were being diverted by the service back into formal education. Specifically 36% were not undertaking formal study upon presentation, however, this dropped to 27% by the time Caretakers terminated client support.



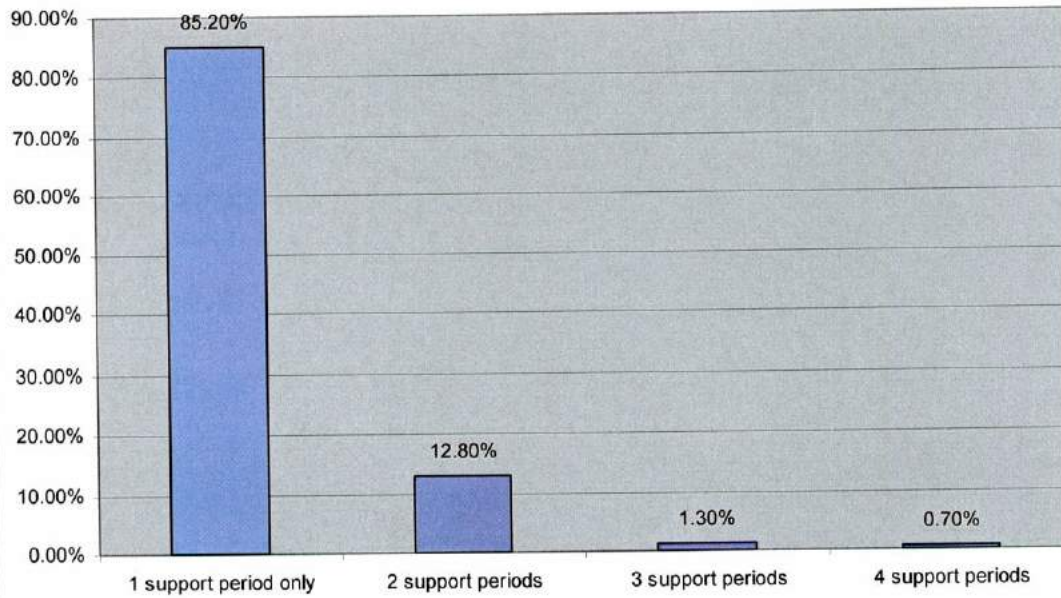
Ethnicity N=149

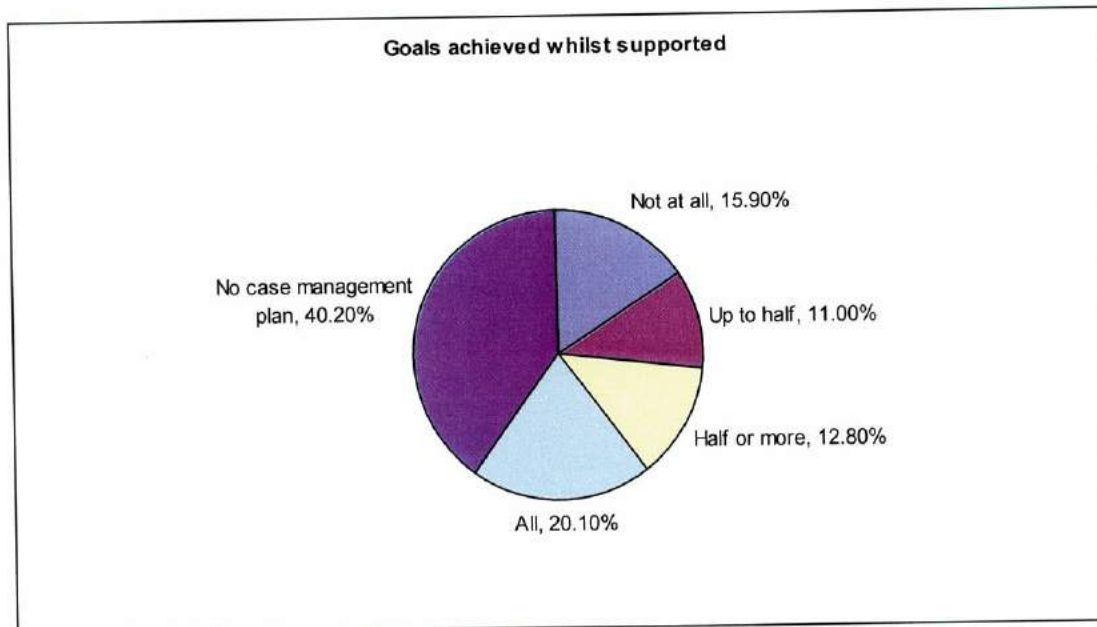


New vs Old Clients N=149



No. of Support Periods for each Client N=149





PROGRAMS

- It was an innovative year for Caretakers Refuge. During this time we experimented with two pilot onsite programs; specifically an aboriginal mentor program and a drug and alcohol program.
- Our implementation of an onsite drug and alcohol program came directly as a result of the information gained from our fledgling client satisfaction survey data, which identified that drug and alcohol was the only area where the service was not effective in its interventions.
- All other areas of Caretakers intervention, including assisting clients in learning better strategies of conflict resolution, assisting clients to improve their family relationships, assisting clients to reconnect or improve their education and so on were perceived by clients as improved by the service.
- Caretakers also initiated a pilot onsite aboriginal mentor program. This pilot program came directly from the knowledge that the service may not have been accessing local indigenous young people as well as it could. The implementation of the mentor program which began in January 2014 suggests that it has yielded substantial results, whereby there was a 100% increase in indigenous young people using the service in the first 6 months of its implementation. We have also seen an increase in specialist

aboriginal services referring to the service concurrently most likely as a result of the service's enhanced ability to effectively intervene with aboriginal young people.

- The implementation of a further Caretakers experiment – that of having a private counsellor providing counselling to our clients and their families also onsite at Caretakers has also proved a marked success. Over the past year, it has now become an integral weekly practice providing additional intensive support to current and ex residents of the service.

FUNDRAISING

- Caretakers had a fabulous year regarding fundraising. The main event for the year saw Caretakers receiving donations organised by the Coogee Taste Festival and most importantly Sauce Bar and Grill, Coogee which resulted in raising \$12,000 for the service.
- The service is also thrilled to have also more recently won the Gumtree Refurbishment Competition. Gumtree has allocated a stylist and furniture who will design and refurbish parts of the refuge to make it a lovelier place to live in for our residents. We are particularly thrilled that this will include a complete refurbishment of one space into a proper counselling room used by our clients.
- The development of the Service's website, thanks to the hard work put in by board member Victoria McFarlane, over the past year, has also assisted in Caretakers becoming better known in the local community with an increase in donations in kind.

HUMAN RESOURCES

- It was a year of many changes for Caretakers during the last financial year. Several long serving full time staff left the service, including Katherine Carlotti, James Ridett and Anette Jespersen. Their expertise will most certainly be missed. However, several staff also joined the Service, namely Diana Sales and Brodie Willis. Both new members very quickly have become an integral and much valued part of the Caretakers team and have brought with them an injection of youth and creativity appreciated by staff and clients alike.

BUDGET

- Caretakers Cottage ended the financial year with a slight surplus of \$1876.

RESTRUCTURE

- The past financial year has been a year of massive change and reform for Caretakers. After a difficult year of reforms, Caretakers was successful in the tender process and was commissioned to provide homelessness youth services for the Eastern Suburbs. The successful tender has resulted in Caretakers working in partnership with Ted Noffs and is expected this will provide earlier intervention regarding drug and alcohol issues, mental health issues and family conflict issues for young people in the locale.
- This partnership has also allowed a quicker referral and transition process of clients between the two services and programs.