

Annual Report  
2024-25



**Kara**  
family violence service



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We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work. We pay our respects to their Elders, past and present, noting their continued connection and care of Country for more than 60,000 years.



Kara Family Violence Service supports the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ community members experiencing family violence. We are committed to celebrating the diversity of our team and clients, prioritising safety and inclusion in our community.



Kara Family Violence Service is a child-centred organisation founded on the safety and wellbeing of infants, children, and young people. We work together with mothers and caregivers to ensure children's safety at all levels of service.





# Purpose

**Our Purpose** for 47 years is helping people affected by family violence. Our specialist service provides support and education to help victim survivors of family violence in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne be safe, take control of their lives, and work towards a better future.

## What we do

**Risk assessment and safety planning**

We work with people to identify potential risks and create a plan to help ensure their safety.

**Crisis accommodation in secure refuge**

We offer secure short-term crisis accommodation for people needing to relocate for their safety.

**Holistic case management**

Our specialist family violence practitioners provide intensive case management, emotional support, referrals and material aid.

**Community outreach**

We support people in the wider community experiencing family violence who are referred to us or contact us for assistance.

**Advice, information and emotional support**

We provide Information and assistance on matters including legal processes, intervention orders, and child protection.

**Specialist children's assessment and support**

Our dedicated Child and Youth Practitioner assesses and identifies the individual needs of each child as victim survivors in their own right.

**Links to additional support**

We assist clients with advocacy, referral and liaison with other appropriate services.

**Transitional and ongoing housing support**

We help with short-term transitional accommodation and assistance to find stable housing in the community.

**Specialist LGBTIQ+ services**

Our support services are inclusive and accessible and we have strong connections with specialist organisations working with the LGBTIQ+ community.

**Secondary consultations for other professionals**

We partner with others working with people experiencing family violence, by providing specialist assessment and advice.

**Community education programs**

Our support groups & therapeutic programs help people past the initial crisis settle back in the community and take steps for their long-term safety.

**Wellbeing programs**

We offer a range of age-based activities for people staying in our refuge that boosts wellbeing and social connection including cooking sessions, art sessions and craft.



Kara Family Violence Service is a not-for-profit organisation providing safety, support and education for people affected by family violence. Our specialist service provides high-security crisis accommodation, case management, outreach support, secondary consultations, and community education programs across the eastern suburbs of Melbourne. We support those experiencing family violence, including women and children of all ages. We are committed to the inclusion and safety of people with disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, LGBTIQ+ and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We understand the complexities of family violence providing programs and services that empower victim survivors toward a life free of violence.

## Strategic plan

In 2024, we launched Kara Family Violence Service's 2024–2027 Strategic Plan, outlining our continued commitment to advocacy, responsive service delivery, and promoting gender equality to improve outcomes for those affected by family violence.

### Our vision

Kara Family Violence Service supports women and children to live safely without fear of violence.

### Our mission

To support women and children impacted by family and intimate partner violence.

### We're working to achieve our vision and mission in four key ways:

1

Advocate on behalf of a diverse client base and the rights of women and children at risk of violence in our community.

2

Deliver responsive, adaptable services in accordance with feminist best practice, that transform the lives of women and children.

3

Increase awareness of domestic and family violence in our community and contribute to changing attitudes and behaviours towards gender inequity.

4

Secure the future of our organisation to enable innovation and meet service demand.





# People

**People** are at the heart of everything we do. It is through the unwavering dedication and commitment of our front line team and volunteer board that we continue to deliver exceptional service and performance. Their passion and expertise drive our impact and shape the quality of our work every day.

## From our Chair

Over the past year, the Board has remained focused on delivering against our three-year Strategic Plan. A key part of this work has been strengthening our leadership structure to share the management load more effectively and ensure Kara FVS can continue to grow its impact and reach across the sector and for the victim survivors we serve.

A major focus this year has been enhancing our leadership structure to ensure the organisation is well-positioned for sustainable growth and operational resilience. By redistributing management responsibilities, we aim to foster a more collaborative and supportive environment for both staff and clients.

To support these structural changes, we have continued to grow our client-facing team, ensuring we have the capacity to meet increasing demand. In August, we were pleased to appoint Manelle as our new Team Leader.

**Manelle** has quickly become a trusted and respected figure within Kara FVS, demonstrating leadership through her client-centred, capable, and compassionate approach. Her presence has already made a significant difference in the day-to-day operations and in the quality of care we provide.

Early in the year, we secured a new office space, which has been a transformative step for the organisation. The new premises not only allow us to expand our services but also provide a secure, welcoming environment for the people we work with our Outreach Clients in the wider community. This space has become a vital hub for community-based work, enabling us to offer more tailored support to clients living independently after experiencing family violence.

Looking ahead to the new financial year, in support of our enhanced leadership structure, we are preparing to hire a new **Operational Manager** who will oversee our refuge services and client support programs. This role is critical in ensuring that our frontline services remain responsive, coordinated, and aligned with best practice. We are also planning to appoint a **Chief Executive Officer** later in the year, who will provide strategic oversight and guide the organisation through its next phase of development. This expanded leadership model reflects our commitment to building a strong foundation for long-term impact.

We are sincerely grateful to our partners, donors, and supporters who continue to stand beside us. Their



generosity has enabled Kara FVS to provide care packs, vouchers, hampers, and other essential support to help clients rebuild their lives safely within the community.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the incredible **Board Members** who volunteer their time, energy, and expertise to guide the organisation's future, and our **dedicated staff**, whose compassion and professionalism make a difference every single day. You are the heart of Kara FVS, and I'm deeply proud of all that we continue to achieve together.

**Shelley Tung**  
**Chair – Kara Family Violence Service Board**



# Our Board



Shelley Tung  
Chair



Dr Angela Spinney - Vice Chair



Aislinn Martin - Secretary



Shraddha Gatiya - Treasurer



Dr Ilsa Evans - Member



Geraldine Bilston - Member



Carly Hobday - Member



Victoria Kladohous - Member



Kristin Williams - Member

# From our Manager

Over the past twelve months, Kara FVS has undergone significant transformation, particularly in relation to organisational structure and team composition. These changes reflect our ongoing commitment to delivering high-quality services to clients and adapting proactively to the evolving demands of the sector.

Our team has welcomed several new members, including a **Team Leader**, a **Day Support Worker**, a **Child and Youth Practitioner**, and additional **Family Violence Practitioners**. This growth enhances our ability to respond effectively to the increasing demand for our services.

Consistent with recent trends, we have seen a rise in the number of victim survivors accessing support, accompanied by greater complexity in the issues presented. This is particularly evident in the needs of children, which will be a key area of focus moving forward.

A major milestone this year was the opening of our second office in the City of Monash. This new space provides a confidential and professional environment for outreach client meetings, while our team continues to maintain strong collaboration by rotating across both sites.

We are deeply grateful for the ongoing support of our stakeholders, particularly the **Department of Families, Fairness and Housing** in the Eastern Metropolitan Region, and **Family Safety Victoria**. Their continued funding, guidance, and partnership are vital to our work.

I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Board of Kara FVS for their leadership and support, and to our dedicated staff team for their expertise, professionalism, and individual contributions.

The wellbeing of our team remains a top priority, and we have continued to foster a positive and connected workplace culture



through initiatives such as reflective practice, African Drumming sessions and regular morning teas.

As we look ahead to the coming financial year, we remain committed to innovation, collaboration, and excellence in service delivery.

Veronica Coleman  
Manager – Kara Family Violence Service



# Appreciation

Constructive feedback plays a vital role in shaping how we work with future clients. Throughout each client's journey, we provide multiple opportunities for them to share what we're doing well and where we can improve. One key moment is when clients transition away from our services — at this stage, we offer an exit survey to gather their insights.

We also welcome anonymous feedback through our website, allowing clients to share their thoughts freely and confidentially.

Feedback often arrives in more personal ways too, such as heartfelt emails, handwritten cards, or thoughtful gifts. These moments are incredibly meaningful for our team. They serve as powerful reminders that the support we provide can truly make a difference in someone's life.



**"Thank you for your call today, it has made my day given the week I had last week so thank you."** CLIENT



**"I wanted to get in touch and say thank you for all the help financial and otherwise and show you pictures of her new home Sarah\* is very excited to share this with you."** NDIS WORKER

**"Thank you very much for organising the uniforms and calculator. Thanks for helping with my complicated stressful life."** CLIENT

# Making change

## Walking together to end family violence #16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

As part of the global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, Kara FVS joined the City of Monash for their annual Walk Against Family Violence. This event, a key part of the Monash Health and Wellbeing Plan, aims to raise awareness about family violence. Dr. Angela Spinney, a Kara FVS Board Member, spoke about the depth of family violence and our organisation's efforts to help victim survivors.

The walk concluded at the Monash Men's Shed with a BBQ to reflect and celebrate progress. On November 25th, Kara FVS also participated in the Walk Against Family Violence in Melbourne's CBD, joining other family violence organisations. The event emphasised the importance of continued action to create safer communities.

## Acknowledging and exchanging Ideas

To honour the 16 Days of Activism, Kara FVS hosted an afternoon tea for reflection and conversation. The event featured a quiz on activism history and a fun "Guess Who" game. With orange-themed food symbolising the campaign's colour, the afternoon was a mix of education, connection, and enjoyment. Together, we continue to raise our voices, stand in solidarity, and work toward a world where violence has no place.





# Building a bond

## African drumming - wellbeing session for the Kara FVS team

Every day in the Kara FVS office is fast paced and frenetic and with a lot of new team members it was a great opportunity to take some much need time out. In late April, the team were invited to join in an African Drumming workshop followed by lunch. African drumming requires all participants to listen to each other, communicate and work as a team in order to achieve harmony and rhythm. Each player has an equally important part that contributes to the overall rhythm while enjoying laughter and fun.

The session included an hour of drumming and then 15 minutes of rhythmic dancing and was both energising and motivating while helping to promote focus and stress-relief. The commitment of the Kara FVS team is essential to how we provide industry leading services to our clients and their wellbeing and connection as a group is always top of mind for the Kara FVS board.



# More staff

## In early August 2024 we opened a second office providing more service

For the past two years, Kara FVS has worked on-site at our safe and secure refuge. The office had limited seating space meaning staff spent time hot-desking and the high security nature of the refuge site meant we were unable to bring our Outreach clients on-site.

The new office is located in the City of Monash. The Kara FVS team is now collaborate across the two locations with the new office providing ample desk space for 5 family violence practitioners and 4 administration staff.

Importantly the new office provides a safe space for Outreach clients to meet with their Practitioners. The site is easily accessible, welcoming and has parking on-site. The meeting room is set up with a dedicated children's space to keep the smaller clients happy and occupied while Mothers can engage with their Practitioner. For donors the new office means we again have a location to drop in their donations and material aid.







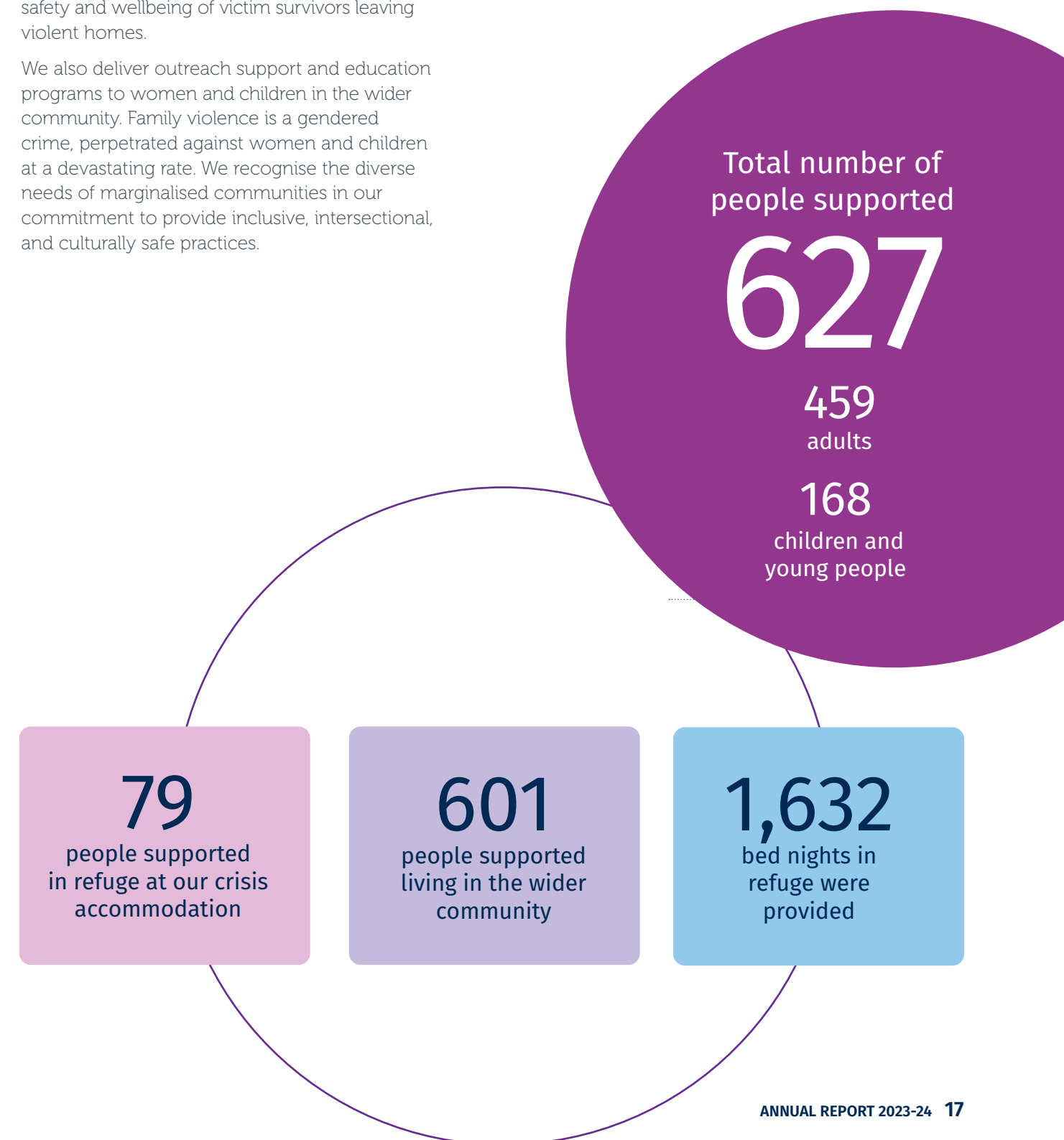
# Performance

Performance statistics are at the heart of how we assess our work each day. They offer critical insights that guide us in refining and enhancing our services, helping us respond to the evolving needs of our community with precision and excellence.

## Our numbers

We provide a range of free and confidential support to women and children experiencing family violence in the Eastern Suburbs of Melbourne. We offer specialist case management and crisis accommodation to ensure the safety and wellbeing of victim survivors leaving violent homes.

We also deliver outreach support and education programs to women and children in the wider community. Family violence is a gendered crime, perpetrated against women and children at a devastating rate. We recognise the diverse needs of marginalised communities in our commitment to provide inclusive, intersectional, and culturally safe practices.





# Client snapshot



# Specialist support

We work to empower victim survivors with the relevant tools, information, and resources to support their journey from crisis to recovery. Our goal is to provide timely, effective, and tailored support, ensuring victim survivors receive integrated and holistic care at every stage of their engagement with our services.

**31% of clients presented with a previous mental health diagnosis**

198 people required additional mental health support during their stay and ongoing.

**Most common types reported:**

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Bipolar
- Borderline personality

**Only 18% of adults we worked with were receiving income through employment – the remaining had no income or Centrelink payments**

Leaving an abusive situation often means losing access to financial resources. In many cases, this is due to financial abuse, where the perpetrator controls the income. For 39 clients on temporary visas, this lack of access was compounded by their ineligibility for government assistance, leaving them with no source of income.

**Most common types reported:**

- Parenting payments
- Newstart
- Disability pension
- Carer support
- Aged pension







# Prevention

The **prevention** of long-term family violence is a fundamental component of the support we provide to the women and children in our care. By equipping them with the necessary skills and tools to identify and understand family violence, we empower them to build resilience and create a safer, more secure future.

## Community education

### Empowering through awareness and connection

At the heart of our mission is a commitment to supporting individuals affected by family violence, not only within the safety of our refuge, but throughout the broader community. Our specialist case management and targeted outreach services extend beyond crisis response, offering long-term pathways to healing and empowerment.

A cornerstone of this work is our Community Education Program, which raises awareness, builds knowledge, and fosters resilience. These programs are open to referrals from industry partners and accessible via self-referral through our website, ensuring broad community reach.

### STEP FORWARD: Family Violence Support Group

Running each school term, STEP FORWARD is a trauma-informed support group tailored for women in our local community who have experienced family violence. Facilitated by experienced practitioners, the program offers practical tools for recovery and emotional support in a safe, inclusive space.

Using an intersectional feminist framework, the group explores the diverse forms of abuse and violence that survivors may encounter. It also addresses the isolation often caused by controlling or abusive relationships, helping participants rebuild connection, confidence, and community.

### Art and Wellbeing: Creative Healing for Women

Our Art and Wellbeing program provides a unique opportunity for women to engage in creative expression as a pathway to healing. Led by a qualified Art Therapist, participants explore a variety of artistic mediums including collage, watercolor, chalk, oil pastels, and sculpture to reflect on personal experiences and relationships.

This nurturing environment encourages self-discovery, emotional release, and connection through creativity, supporting women to reclaim their voices and strengthen their wellbeing.



"I felt the content in the second day was particularly good. The boundaries content especially and the breathing activity which gives me practical tools I can use in my personal and professional life. Thank you – it was a great experience."

PARTICIPANT - STEP FORWARD



# Children first



At the core of everything we do is a strong dedication to the safety and wellbeing of children. We believe every child has the right to feel safe, supported, and empowered—especially when facing the challenges brought on by family violence.

Our **Child and Youth Practitioner** is central to this work, partnering with children and their non-offending parent to build trust, nurture resilience, and connect them with therapeutic and educational support. Through compassionate and respectful conversations, we help children process their experiences and guide parents in creating calm, predictable environments that support healing.

We recognise that no two children are the same. That's why our approach is flexible and tailored and designed to meet each child where they are. By supporting children to move from resistance to resilience, we create space for them to feel heard, express their needs, and begin their journey toward recovery.

“I’d particularly like to thank the children’s worker. She was key in helping me and Ben heal from everything that happened.”

FEEDBACK FROM JOSIE\* AND HER SON BEN\* IN THEIR EXIT SURVEY



# Disability Action Plan

Kara family Violence service completed our **Disability Action Plan (DAP)** ready for presentation in September 2025.

The DAP is an important measure that enables organisations like ours to identify and overcome barriers experienced people with disability. Women and gender diverse people with disabilities experience higher rates of family violence and sexual abuse and face additional barriers when trying to access support. Therefore, the purpose of the DAP is to implement and ensure that actions involving employment opportunities, facilities, services, programs, and resources are inclusive for staff and clients with disability.

“Understanding that a person should not have disclose their disability to receive equitable, accessible services.”

Survey on reducing barriers







# Support

**Support from the Victorian Government provides the core funding for our organisation. We rely on partnerships with industry, working together for better outcomes. The support from our donors in the wider community is essential to supporting the women and children we work with.**

## Our partners

### Victorian Government

The Kara Family Violence Service Board and Staff would like to thank Family Safety Victoria and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing who provide our operational funding under the Funding and Service Agreement and to the Staff of the Department in the Eastern Region for their ongoing support.



### Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre

The Kara Family Violence Service Board and Staff would like to thank Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre who partner with us to support vulnerable women and children residing in motel while they await a refuge bed. Kara FVS continues to strengthen its valuable partnership with Safe Steps and associated services.



### Our Industry network

We want to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to our partners organisations and network. Your support and collaboration is vital to the work we do.

- Safe and Equal
- Orange Door Inner Eastern Melbourne
- Orange Door Outer Eastern Melbourne
- Community Housing Ltd (CHL)
- Connections Uniting Care
- Anglicare Victoria
- Eastern Community Legal Centre
- Eastern Access Community Health

- Uniting Vic.Tas
- YWCA Australia
- Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Centre
- Craig Family Centre
- Connecting Up Inc.
- Eastern Emergency Relief Network Inc (EER)
- InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence
- Salvocare Eastern
- The Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne)



# Community kindness

## Kindness from our donors

Over the past year, we have received funds and in-kind support from our wonderful community, individually or as part of a corporate, local business, philanthropic organisations, school or community group. Without their help we are able to extend the reach and depth of our services. Thank you.

- Ferntree gully View Club
- Forest hill Woodturners
- DV Collective
- StreetSmart
- Sheridan
- Heather Lindsay
- Impact For Women
- Phillip Webb Enterprises
- Emergency Relief Network
- Kingswood College
- Full Gospel Assembly
- Mums Supporting Families In Need
- Nino Early Learning Centre
- The Social Education Group
- Kiwanis of Waverley
- Next Steps Australia
- Bethany Whitcher
- Nuzhat Ahmed
- Box Hill Golf Club Ladies Committee
- Bronwyn Burgess
- Zonta Club of Melbourne on the Yarra
- Starcorp Textiles
- Blackburn Lions Club
- Zara Sauners
- Tim Tu
- Judith Eadon
- Bruce Jenkins

624

food vouchers  
were handed  
out to clients

72  
Linen packs were  
handed out to women  
and families



## Linen packs are a game changer

We were delighted to receive regular deliveries LINEN STARTER PACKS courtesy of **Next Steps Australia** for the women and children we support. These packs are filled with essential items like full linen sets, doona, pillows, protectors, towels, and face washers, ensuring a comfortable start for families arriving at Kara FVS. We place the packs in the rooms ready for clients on their arrival, and then they take them as they transition to more stable housing and they are setting up a news home from scratch. It's an expensive and stressful time and the pack make a huge difference.

# Pack program

## Thanks to the community we are able to provide complete packs to our clients

Providing material aid to our clients is just as crucial accommodation and support. Many clients arrive at Kara FVS with very little and often have no access to finances. When clients first come into refuge, we provide them with linen packs, clothing packs, toiletry packs, and toy packs. Thanks to the generous support from our community through in-kind gifts and financial donations, we can offer these essential items.

As a small organisation with limited team members and storage, we work hard to prepare these packs in advance so our family violence practitioners can quickly grab them off the shelf. Recently, we've been fortunate to receive pre-made packs from some of our kind donors. Thank you to the **Kiwanis' of Waverley, The Social Education Group** and **Impact for Women**.

113  
clothing packs  
were handed out  
to families



139  
Toiletry and Wellbeing  
packs were handed  
out to clients



160  
"Bags of Love" from  
Impact for Women were  
provided to women







# Finance

## Financial summary

### For the year ended 30 June 2025

Kara Family Violence Service concluded the 2024-2025 financial year with a net surplus of \$703,232, while maintaining a sound net asset position that reflects prudent financial management and effective governance by the Board and staff.

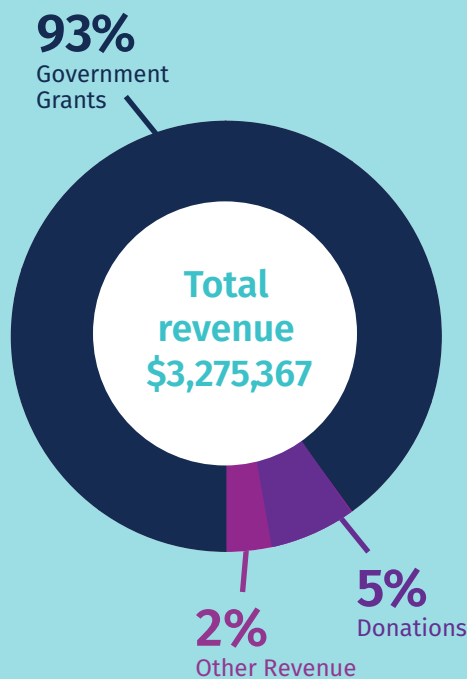
Total income increased by 20% during the year, with the majority of funding continuing to come from the Department, reflecting an ongoing endorsement of our vital work supporting women and children experiencing family violence across Victoria.

The increase in employment costs this year reflect our commitment to service excellence, supported by expansion of our workforce, enhanced staff training, and well-being initiatives. These measures ensure that Kara's team is equipped to deliver high-quality refuge, outreach, and community services. Our capacity to assist women and children continues to grow both within our core and cluster accommodation and across the broader community.

The financial statements have been independently audited by Connect National Audit, who have confirmed that they present a true and fair view of our financial position as at 30 June 2025 and are in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards.

### Statement by the Treasurer

On behalf of the board, I am pleased to present these results, which reflect Kara's ongoing financial sustainability and our collective commitment to delivering high quality services in support of our mission.







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# Kara

family violence service