



Yacaaba Centre

Information & Counselling Service Port Stephens Inc

Annual Report
2021-2022

OUR SERVICES

The Yacaaba Centre has had a year of many changes. With the easing of restrictions, we have been able to reintroduce clients back into the Centre under the guidelines of NSW Health. We have continued to be funded by the Department of Community and Justice (DCJ) for counselling services related to supporting those at imminent risk of homelessness.

Due to the challenging times since the beginning of the pandemic the Centre continues to receive demand for our services, particularly in mental health presentations. A one-off funding grant from NSW Health enabled us to increase our services to help alleviate this demand by being able to extend our opening hours to 5 days a week, expand counselling hours, and hire a Client Liaison Officer.

There continues to be a consistent demand for emergency relief which was relieved by a one-off partnership grant from DCJ for COVID related support received in November 2021. This enabled us the funds to make a real difference, where we were able to pay rent, bills, provide essentials and other vital expenses to people who had been impacted by covid.

Although this year we have received the most Government funding than ever before we still rely on the community to assist us in supporting our community through welfare and emergency relief.

We continue to be a Centre for the people of the Tomaree Peninsula, aided by the community to support our local community.

Louise Simpson
Manager

Clients

Our clients sought help from us for many reasons including financial and housing stress, domestic and family violence, family breakdowns, relationships, mental health concerns. COVID-19 impacts, employment difficulties, lack of family and community support, grief, and isolation.

Female	216
Male	65
Children	5

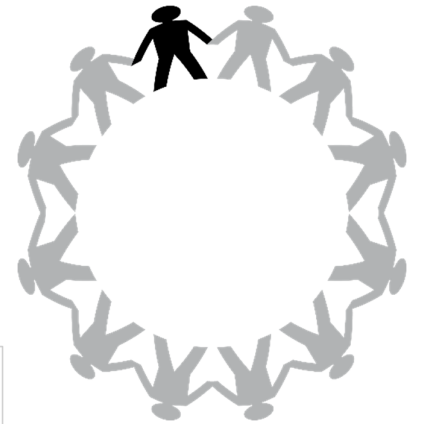
Support Periods
286



Counselling

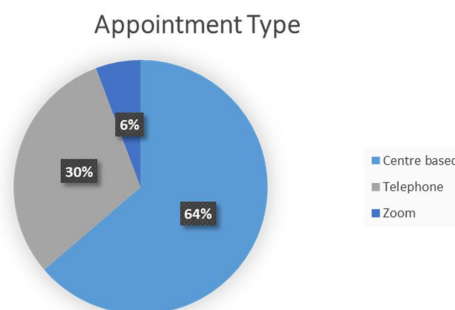
The Centre is the only type of service on the Port Stephens Peninsula that offers free counselling support. As we are geographically isolated from other services with the next similar service 45 minutes away the demand for our services is consistent.

The Centre aims to have a short wait period of less than two weeks. Long wait periods contribute to disruption in treatment and increase therapy drop-out rates, which further increases the probability for future mental health issues.



Appointments
628

We continue to offer our counselling clients the option to come into the Centre for their appointment or a telehealth option (phone or video session).



"In this time frame there have been significant positive changes to the Centre. The team moral & connectedness has grown into such a positive, warm, inviting space to work in. With this growth comes the noticeable ripple affect onto our clients. The Centre has grown more financially stable, which allows for more services for the clients to access".
(Athena, Counsellor)

Staff

"Absolutely love working with this team"

(Virginia, Administration/Account)

Counsellors

Our counsellors are compassionate, professional, and empathetic to all who come through our doors. A minimum qualification of a bachelor's degree is required for our counsellors in a discipline specific training in Counselling or Psychotherapy. Our counsellors have vast experience and a variety of additional expertise including certified mental health practitioner, accredited supervisor, victims service counsellor, and qualified sandplay therapist.

All our counsellors must have a current membership to Psychotherapy and Counselling Association of Australia (PACFA), or Australian Counselling Association (ACA) at level 3 or higher.

Counsellors

Gill Fletcher	Continuing from previous year
Ina George	Continuing from previous year
Louise Simpson	Continuing from previous year until December 2021
Athena Banks	Appointed January 2022 ongoing

Student Counsellors

Athena Banks	Ongoing until December 2021
Daniel Shipton	Joined May 2022



Administration

This year we were able to expand our administration team. Continuing from the previous year is our highly skilled administration officer, Virginia Smith, who has extended her hours to two days a week.

A new role of Client Liaison Officer (CLO) was appointed four days a week. This position is job shared with Clare Shennan and Thalia Chapman. The CLO's role is to triage all enquires presented to the Centre and process client intakes and referrals. The CLOs also refer other suitable services such as housing, legal appointments, NDIS, and other specialist services.

Volunteers

We would like to thank all of our volunteers who helped during this year. Special mention to Jim, Jackie, Nicky, Karen, and the Nelson Bay Rotary boys.



Client Welfare

Client Welfare Value - \$35, 997.60

Client Transport - \$8,032.35

Hampers 383

Milk 306

Bread 278



Christmas Hampers 70

*\$3,650 worth of
Christmas vouchers
given*

A message from our President

This year has seen changes at the Yacaaba Centre and with the easing of COVID restriction, the Centre has been able to return to providing face to face services. At the beginning of this financial year, July 2021, we obtained a grant from NSW Health to extend our services in the provision of mental health to those in our community effected by the Pandemic through loss of their employment, reduced incomes and other situations that have impacted on their mental health.

We also received a partnership grant from DCJ which enabled us to work closely with other services in the Port Stephens and Lower Hunter areas, to assist in the provision of hampers, supporting rental payments and other services that would financially assist their clients during the tough times of restrictions during COVID.

In January 2022, we appointed Louise Simpson as our acting manager and in May we were incredibly pleased to appoint her as our full-time manager. Louise has previously held managerial positions and run her own business. For the past three years, Louise has been a counsellor at the Centre and is well placed to take on her new role.

Under Louise directions, we have been able to extend our services and work closely with other agencies to meet the growing demands within our community.

During the year, we have continued to work on the requirements needed to meet Australian Services Excellent Standards accreditation in July 2023. We have been able to engage a consultant to assist us in the process and hope to have the accreditation in place before the required date by DCJ of June 2024.

I would also like to recognise and thank the very generous donors to the Yacaaba Centre who have enabled us to provide food and vouchers to many in our community who are facing challenging times.

I would like to acknowledge the work of the Management Committee whose support has been invaluable to me and the Centre throughout the year.

A big thank you to our manager, staff and volunteers who often go beyond their roles to ensure that our clients receive high quality services which assist them when most in need.

Jill Pretty
President

Benefactors & Supporters



Communities & Justice



Health



Health
Hunter New England
Local Health District



We would like to send a huge thank you to all our partners, donors and supporters this year, we could not do what we do without all of you!



KATE WASHINGTON MP
MEMBER FOR PORT STEPHENS

MERYL SWANSON MP Labor