



## Welcome to our 29th Annual Report

**Toora Women Inc. has been delivering services to women in the ACT and surrounds since the early 1980's.**

We support women with complex issues who have experienced past or present traumas such as domestic and sexual violence, women impacted by their own or another's drug and alcohol use and/or mental health issues, women experiencing homelessness or needing support to stay out of the homelessness system and women in the ACT corrections system.

Our current drug and alcohol and homelessness programs range across a variety of settings such as crisis and transitional accommodation, day centres and outreach support, allowing Toora to provide a wrap-around trauma informed care model, in an integrated service system. We deliver these complex services within human rights and feminist framework.

All services are based on a theoretical model of recovery, respect and empowerment. This includes encouraging self-help and minimizing the effects of institutionalization and the harm associated with dependencies.



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Thank you to Toora Women Inc women who work tirelessly to provide support for vulnerable and marginalised women and children.



## Board Report

**I would like to begin by thanking Sarah Jewell who volunteered to Chair when the majority of the Board was new and unfamiliar with the operations of Toora Women's Inc (Toora). Sarah provided skillful and positive leadership until she left to pursue further education in Ireland in September.**

I want to thank current board members Gail Freeman, Jess Aulich (community members), Susan Clarke-Lindfield (ED), Vivienne Pearce and Jo Rankin (Advisory Forum representatives), Dorothy Broom who made a brief but valuable contribution, Carol Benda, a community member who has been our legal brain and will be sorely missed and Gabrielle Sledge who completes her term in November.

On behalf of the Board I would like to thank the Toora Women Inc women who work tirelessly to provide support for vulnerable and marginalised women and children who rely on the services provided by Toora for safety, support and healing.

Our formative work for the year was to navigate our way through Toora's processes and understand the way the organisation works and the services it provides. We have endeavored to make ourselves accessible to Toora workers and promote the good intent of the Board. Several of us have attended the Advisory Forum and Toora functions such as the 29th birthday event.

The Board is required (for risk management purposes) to be familiar with both the services Toora provides and the premises from which they operate. In September we had a bus tour accompanied by Susan and Nat (who was an amazing tour guide). It was exciting and rewarding

to spend time with workers and hear them talk with such professionalism and commitment about the work they do. It also provided the Board with an operational evidence base to promote and defend Toora in the wider, sector arena. It also became a further opportunity for relationship building between members of the Board and Toora workers.

The Board resolved to review the Constitution. Carol Benda has chaired us through this process which was really appreciated.

In October, we participated in a strategic planning session which began the process of articulating a compelling vision and identifying our strategic priorities.

It has been a pleasure to work with Susan over the year, who has respectfully and steadily guided Toora through some critical work, and has a wealth of experience to contribute. It has also been a pleasure to be on a Board that is inclusive of workers. Viv and Jo have provided valuable context which has assisted other Board members better understand Toora. They have also managed to remain an effective conduit between Toora workers and the Board.

I hope together we can progress and implement our important work over the coming year, with shared confidence in the purpose and value of our work both within our respective roles and together for the amazing entity that Toora is.

**Carmel McBride**  
A/g Chair

# Executive Director's Report

This has been a year of change for Toora Women Inc. At last year's AGM, a new Board were elected and along with the new Executive Director have brought fresh skills and experience to work within the Toora team. We were responsible for administering a budgeted income totalling over \$3.5 million dollars which encompassed 33 paid staff and three major funding areas. 192 women used Toora supported accommodation services over this period and 557 used outreach, day programs or follow up support.

This first year at Toora has been a learning curve as I have strove to attain local knowledge and expertise in the homelessness, AOD, corrections and women's services sectors. I've been successful in building networks and am on several key committees such as ATOD and Joint Pathways Executive.

Internally, one of my first tasks as Executive Director was to undertake a confidential survey to gauge staff satisfaction in working at Toora, which has informed my approach to managing the organisation.

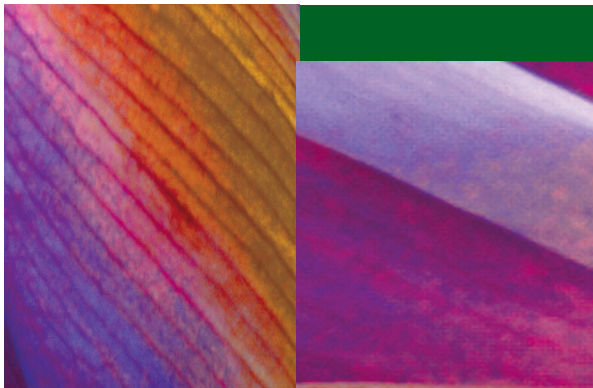
## Highlights for the 2011–2012 funding year

It was the third year of our strategic planning cycle and a decision was made to build on the existing objectives for another year until the upcoming sector reforms are identified. While this plan will not be formally evaluated until 2013, it appears that the objectives are well on the way to being met.

A Business Continuity Plan was written to ensure that in the event of disasters or other business interruptions, Toora recovers as quickly as possible whilst the maximum possible service levels are maintained. Thankfully this plan has not been tested in a major way; however it proved useful in managing small disruptions throughout the year.

A finance sub-committee was established which provides strong overseeing of Toora's finances. One of its first tasks was to set up an equipment replacement reserve, to ensure the organisation has adequate financial resources and planning to replace ageing equipment.

We were fortunate to successfully tender for NGO Treatment Grants Program that secured WIREDD's major source of funding for the next 3 years. We also successfully tendered to be one of five community organisations to receive proceeds from the upcoming Franklin Charity House auction. This house is being built by the Master Builders Association and all proceeds will go to the Day Refuge.





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A multi-faceted staff development strategy was created to look at how we can support, enhance and improve the skills, competencies and overall performance of our staff. This strategy incorporates internal and external clinical supervision; enhanced training budgets; targeted core training; paid study leave; and supporting staff to gain qualifications beyond the Minimum Qualifications Strategy.

In this past year, staff have undertaken training to gain qualifications in:

- Certificate IV Mental Health
- Certificate IV Frontline Management
- Certificate IV and/or Diploma Alcohol and other Drugs
- Diploma Community Services Coordination
- Diploma of Management
- Diploma of Counselling

The Coming Home Alliance between Toora Women Inc, Beryl Women's Refuge and Canberra Rape Crisis Centre was strengthened and is functioning well. Each agency brings the expertise currently available through their organisations, ensuring the best possible range of options to women exiting the prison system is provided. We share a common goal of empowerment for women to overcome difficult life challenges.

Toora is accredited through Quality Management Services (QMS). Work has continuously been done throughout the year on our quality work plan and the last assessment indicated that it is 88% complete.

A two month review was conducted of our on-call system resulting in a new policy written within a risk management framework. The working party continue to meet and are currently developing a training module for new on-call workers.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Toora Board for their commitment and support. The time taken out of very busy lives to volunteer to deal with the difficult issues facing Toora is gratefully acknowledged, as well as the knowledge and skills each member brings.

Branka Trajkovski, our Deputy Director needs particular mentioning as she provided a great deal of mentoring and support to me in my first year. Her practice wisdom is a wonderful resource and I can't ask for more. Thank you, Branka.

I would also like to thank all staff for making me so welcome at Toora. You respond sensitively and professionally in providing quality support to women with very complex issues. I'm extremely pleased to be your executive director.

**Susan Clarke-Lindfield**  
Executive Director

# Toora House & Day Refuge

**Toora House** is a homelessness service providing support, crisis and transitional accommodation for homeless single women, unaccompanied by children. The service operates Monday to Friday.

We assist women with their priority needs but also, we work together to set and achieve goals and to develop skills that will help them live more independently.

We acknowledge that there are a variety of reasons why women become homeless, including but not limited to; domestic or sexual violence, mental health, poverty, drugs or alcohol and other addictions such as gambling.

**The Day Refuge** is a safe, secure, friendly and supportive place for women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Women can access the service Monday to Friday.

Toora House and the Day Refuge continue to offer trauma informed care to women with complex issues in a respectful, non-judgemental and non-discriminatory way.

Our service fills a crucial gap in the sector: we, including Heira, are the only services in the ACT that offer residential support specifically to homeless single women.

Most of the women who access the Day Refuge benefit from provision of material support, such as use of shower and laundry facilities, internet access and access to a food store.

Over the past 12 months we have implemented a project called 'Health & Happiness' through the Day Refuge. The funds for this project came from the 2011/12 Community Funding round of the ACT Health Promotion Grants Program.

With the proceeds we were able to run a number of different groups. We ran a gardening group and set up a vegetable and herb garden at the Day Refuge. We started an 8 week 'Healthy Cooking on a Budget' group which utilized a lot of the produce grown in our garden. We also engaged qualified instructors of; Yoga, Pilates and Belly Dancing, to come and offer their knowledge and expertise to run classes for the women in blocks of 8 week lots. All of these groups were free for the women to attend and transport was provided where needed.

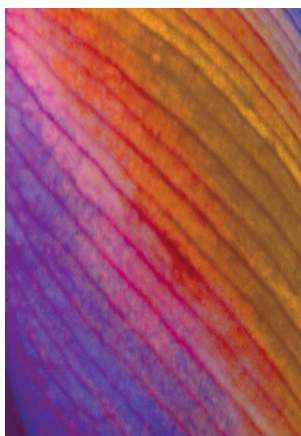
The groups run through the grant are about giving the women skills to help them survive and also about decreasing social isolation and giving them a means to general well-being; physical, emotional, psychological etc. This contributes towards women building up resilience and ability to cope with whatever life throws their way.

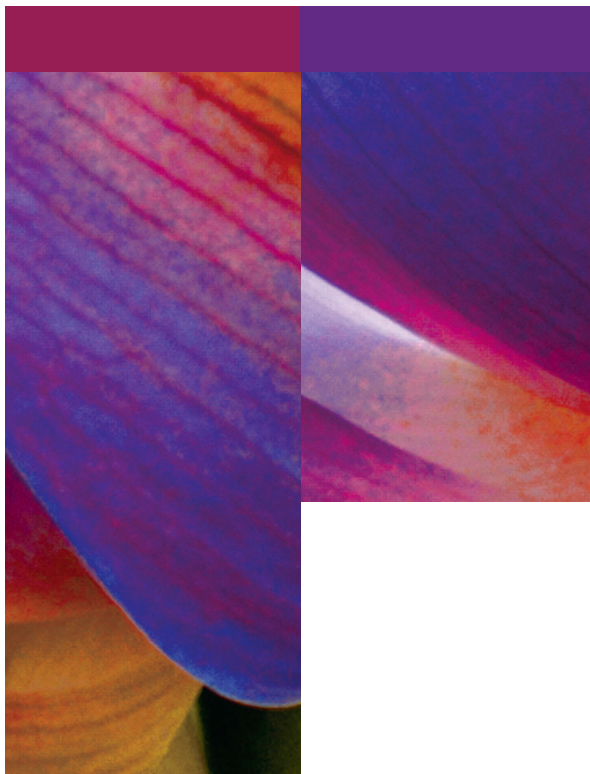
Toora House & the Day Refuge collaborate with all Toora Women Inc. services to ensure that we provide a continuum of care approach to service delivery.

We continue to work closely and foster positive relationships with many other services in the community sector, such as; First Point, ACT Housing, DVCS and Centrelink, just to name a few. We recently renewed our MOU with Street Law, who continue to provide an invaluable service to the women we support through their weekly outreach visits to the Day Refuge.

In the past 12 months we have attended sector meetings, forums, expos and open days related to the Homelessness, AOD and Mental Health sectors.

Day Refuge workers participated in a meeting hosted by ACT Housing, of non-residential homelessness service providers, to discuss and implement a template for inputting data into the new SHIP system. As a result of this meeting, we are now able to capture relevant data from the Day Refuge into the SHIP program.





In September, two of us were lucky enough to be able to attend the 7th National Homelessness Conference in Melbourne. It was a great opportunity to participate in and learn about future directions for the sector and to continue building on the effort to reduce homelessness.

We have continued to support women with very complex needs over the past year. We have seen an influx of older women accessing our services as well as a rise in the number of younger working women from low socio economic backgrounds.

The percentage of women with AOD or mental health issues has remained about the same; however, the number of women with comorbidity issues has increased dramatically.

During the first half of the year, we saw an influx of pregnant women accessing our services. Many of them were at risk of losing their new born to Care and Protection due to a lack of appropriate accommodation options available to them once the baby was born, when they could no longer reside with our service.

We also continue to support high numbers of women from CALD backgrounds.

In the coming year we plan to continue providing excellent service to the homeless women we support. We look forward to having a Toora House Planning Day so that we can brainstorm ideas for improving service delivery.

The Day Refuge plans to continue expanding and we are currently exploring a number of collaborative projects with other agencies in the sector. The proceeds from the sale of the 'Franklin Charity House' will also provide an opportunity for expansion.

I would like to acknowledge the hard work and support provided by all of the workers over the past year, not only here at Toora House & the Day Refuge but throughout all of Toora Women Inc.

Thanks to our funding bodies and all the key stakeholders who make it possible for us to run our services.

I want to express our gratitude and thanks to all who have contributed their time and expertise or offered their services to us at greatly reduced rates, such as; Carol for the massages, Katrina for the Yoga, Racquel for the Pilates and Fran for the Belly Dancing. Also to the Soroptimists for their continuing support in the form of their yearly donation to the Day Refuge, allowing us to run monthly outings for the women we support.

Lastly I would like to acknowledge all of the women who access our services, who make it a joy and a privilege to come to work each and every day.

**Jo Rankin**

Toora House & Day Refuge Coordinator

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# Heira

**Heira is a homelessness service that specialises in domestic violence support for homeless multicultural women who are unaccompanied by children. Heira provides emergency and transitional accommodation within the case management framework and in accordance with relevant sector standards. This gives women, who often arrive much traumatised, some time and space to work toward identifying their goals. Heira also provides women with an opportunity to achieve their goals in a supported, secure and safe environment. While in our service, we work with women on developing skills that will help them live more independently.**

Heira provides respectful, caring and confidential support to women while encouraging them to make positive life changes. Like all Toora Women Inc. services, Heira works towards providing safety, respect and choice for all women.

In this period Heira's focus was on collaboration with other services in the community. Heira has very strong working relationships with services such as Department of Immigration, Housing, Domestic Violence Service, Centrelink, First Point, Companion House, Australian Federal Police, Child Protection Services and Women's Health as well as Women's Legal Centre.

Some of the women Heira accommodated sought to reallocate and move interstate. In response to this, we decided to extend our collaboration to include a national focus as well. We met with the manager of the Immigrant Women's Health Service

(IWHS). IWHS is located in western Sydney and employs a team of bi-lingual and bi-cultural workers who support and advocate for migrant women. Meeting with the manager of IWHS, who is involved with CALD communities and is also a member of NSW Premier's Council on Preventing Violence Against Women, as well as a Commissioner for the Community Relations Commission NSW, helped Heira to obtain information regarding making appropriate referrals and advocating for the women wanting to move to NSW.

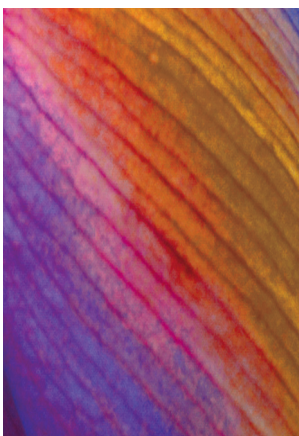
As per collected data, around 75% of the women that Heira has supported and accommodated in the last 12 months have been from CALD backgrounds. Majority of these women are from isolated communities. It was observed that, while some of the women choose to return to their relationships, they leave Heira empowered and prepared to stand up for themselves. It has also been observed that these women from isolated communities have been speaking, sharing their experience, with other women in their community as more and more women from these communities are now accessing our service.

Apart from providing accommodation Heira also provides information and educates culturally and linguistically diverse women around the non-acceptance of domestic violence by running domestic violence groups. The DV groups includes a social and health component, in an effort to help CALD women to deal with depression and other emotional issues that may arise as a result of their circumstances. These women often are missing

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contacts with their extended family in their country of origin, as well as feeling excluded from their community and other family members in Australia. Whenever possible, Heira workers support these women in their efforts to connect with the members of their extended families.

Our service is a very diverse work and a living space, shared by women from very different cultures, backgrounds or minority groups. Where needed, Heira workers support women to develop skills for living in a diverse environment.

Throughout out this year we worked with number of women with unresolved immigration status. We have developed considerable expertise in supporting women and dealing with various and complex requirements in the immigration laws, specifically the Domestic Violence Provisions of the Migration ACT, needed for different types of visas or for acquiring residency.

Heira participates in many indigenous activities and events within the wider community. In the past year, Heira workers attended NAIDOC on the Peninsula, Closing the Gap Clearinghouse Seminar and a Reconciliation Week seminar 'Rights and Recognition'. Heira looks forward to a future involvement in these activities and hopes that building connections with the Aboriginal community will contribute towards our service accessibility to Aboriginal women.

Heira has traditionally offered students the opportunity to undertake their work placements in

our service. This year, Heira had a university student from a Muslim background and was observed that her presence in our service had positive impact on the Muslim women who accessed our service. The student was a source of encouragement for other women with the same or similar background.

Heira team is going to have a planning day in October. We are going to do a small review of Heira service, analysing what we do well and what we can improve. We also want to discuss Heira service target group; explore early intervention & reaching CALD communities and to discuss greater partnerships/collaborations with similar services in the broader ACT community.

Heira would like to thank all the women who have accessed our service and worked with us. Thank you to all other Toora Women Inc. services, as well as to Management and the Admin Team for their hard work and ongoing support throughout the year.

Heira would also like to thank the Community Services Directorate, Department of Immigration, Domestic Violence Service, Centrelink, First Point, Companion House, Australian Federal Police, Child Protection Services, Women's Health Service, Women's Legal Centre and all other services that we work with in supporting women during their difficult times.

**Mirsada Draskovic**  
Heira Coordinator

# Aleta Outreach Service

Aleta is funded by the National Affordable Housing Agreement to work with women who are homeless, at risk of homelessness and those who are transitioning from homelessness to independent living. Women are supported to obtain and maintain safe, secure, affordable long-term housing options. Case management is trauma informed and aims to break the cycle of homelessness by increasing awareness of and capacity to access support networks and community resources.

**Aleta supported 88 women over the past year to move from homelessness into supported or independent accommodation and to sustain their tenancies.**

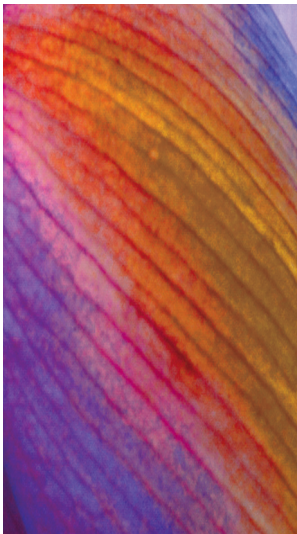
- 55% of the women that accessed us for support with applications for public housing were sleeping rough and couch surfing at the time of initial contact with us.
- 93% of all the women we supported have both past or present experiences of trauma and many of them have complex needs such as co-existing mental health and drug and alcohol issues.

Some patterns that we have observed throughout this years reporting periods are reflected below:

- 41% of the women we supported were from Cultural and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds; and 25% of women were over 50.

The Aleta team have worked collaboratively with many services throughout the year, both government and community, to achieve better outcomes and quality of life for the women accessing our service.

Aleta works closely with other Toora Women Inc. services and management to ensure issues for homeless women are represented on key networks, across the ACT Community Sector.



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In the following year Aleta looks forward to new developments within Toora Women Inc.'s non-residential services. We anticipate a co-location model that is better resourced to continue to provide trauma informed case management to women experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness and women with complex support needs.

Aleta would like to thank all the services that have worked collaboratively with us to achieve better outcomes for women.

Thank you to Mary Ryan and Vanessa Dumbrell for jumping in and supporting Aleta on a number of occasions. Thank you to the Aleta team; Dara Luzaic and Bogda Kocik for their ongoing hard work and commitment to Toora and the women we support.

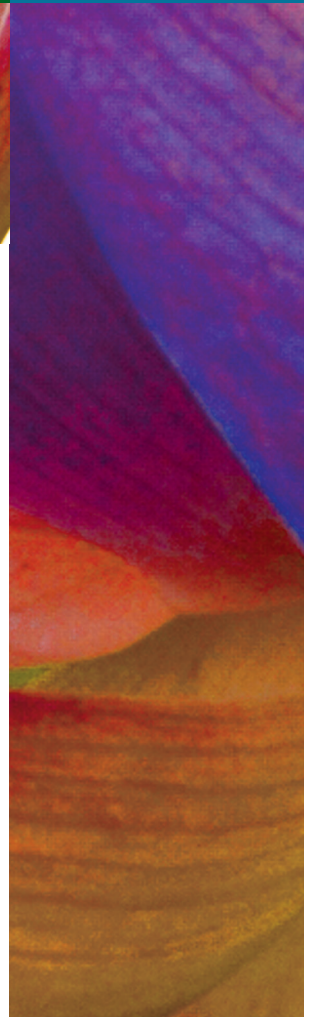
Thank you to all Toora services, staff and Toora's Board of Management for their continued commitment to our common goals.

Thank you to Dr Sandi Plummer for her tireless support and guidance.

Thank you to the ACT Community Services Directorate for their ongoing financial support of Toora programs

And especially thank you to the women who access us for their patience and trust in very difficult circumstances.

**Natalie Liosatos**  
Aleta Coordinator



# Women's Information Resources Education On Drugs and Dependency (Wiredd)

**WIREDDD offers support and information to women on issues of drug and alcohol use, relapse prevention support, treatment options, help for families and generalist information related to women's health needs, dependencies, grief and loss issues, parenting support, violence in women's lives and co-dependency. Support and information is offered through the provision of groups, phone and drop in services, one to one counselling service, educational and support groups and outreach.**

WIREDDD also supports women in accessing other sector and mainstream services, in pursuing other required specialist support, training and or education.

WIREDDD has had a successful year in supporting women across the ACT and region. We continue to provide expert gender-specific information, support and referral for women with issues relating to alcohol, drugs and other dependencies. We are committed to maintaining an active role in keeping women's drug and alcohol issues on the national and local agenda. Even though we have a small team, we continue to deliver quality services and maintain systemic advocacy.

Toora Women Inc. was successful in securing 3 years funding for WIREDDD, through Non-Government Organisations Treatment Grants Program (NGOTGP) from the Commonwealth.

WIREDDD delivered Drug, Alcohol and Dependency training to the women's sector. The feedback from the participants was very positive and it has been requested to run again. The training was evaluated by Toora Women Inc. management and has confirmed compliance with the quality standards.

The collaborations with Karralika has significantly strengthened: all of the women using Karralika's program are now attending WIREDDD's Relapse Prevention group and many women from their Treatment service are attending WIREDDD's workshops Family of Origin and Beautiful Me.

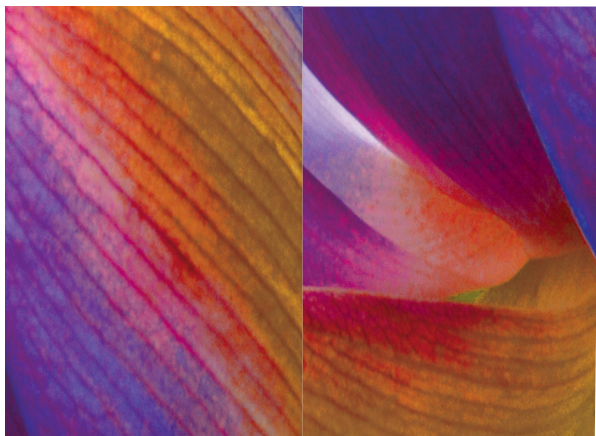
WIREDDD has developed a good working relationship with Canberra Recovery Services as well. We have organized ongoing service visits and women from their program are also attending all of our groups.

Our relationship with the AMC continues to be very productive. As a result of WIREDDD's hard work and commitment to the incarcerated women, WIREDDD is held in high regard by the AMC correctional staff. We have been attending the AMC Women's Group monthly meetings and joining them in an afternoon tea prepared by the women who are currently incarcerated.

The Relapse Prevention has been supported by 3 outside services who have come and run Educational groups: ACT Hepatitis Resources Centre came and ran Being Green, ACT Health came and delivered information on Pap Smears and the last one was for Breast Checks.

Our service was invited and participated in the Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAMHA) radio program, to discuss women gender and Drug and Alcohol and other Dependencies.

WIREDDD workers are enrolled in the Train4Life training provided by Toora Women Inc.





We continue to support large number of women accessing drop-in support. This is a crucial part of supporting women whose day to day lives are often chaotic due to dependencies.

Apart from delivering regular groups, WIREDD has provided face-to-face and phone counselling, and outreach to women incarcerated at the AMC, as well as to women in psychiatric units and detox/rehab services.

WIREDD's Relapse Prevention, a weekly-run group, continues to attract up to 15 women on average per session.

We worked with ATODA and the Drug Action Week Working Group to raise and enhance community awareness and understanding of Drug and Alcohol related issues in the Canberra area by running a well-loved group for women on removing their Masks when not in addiction.

WIREDD workers participated in International Women's Day and Reclaim the Night events.

We continue to participate in the Co-morbidity Bus Tours by welcoming the participants on their visits and sharing information about our gender specific service.

WIREDD's most important achievement continues to be exceptional delivery of crucial women's drug and alcohol services.

We are seeing many more women on methadone that are not supported by other community organisations to, either, reduce or come off their methadone.

There is also an increase in number of women accessing WIREDD who have Care and Protection involvement: we have been supporting them with drug and alcohol issues as well assisting them to get their children back.

A higher number of women, in the age group of 60+ years, are accessing WIREDD due to relationship break ups and for use of high of amounts of medication prescribed by doctors.

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**WIREDD continues supporting women who fall through the gaps; an example is women with Mental Health issues.**

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WIREDD continues supporting women who fall through the gaps; an example is women with Mental Health issues.

We are looking forward to working together with our funding bodies, to further enhanced Trauma Informed Care support for women in the ACT community. This will enable us to continue our core work of facilitating groups, counselling and outreach while staying open for drop-in which is necessary for incidental counselling, safe spaces, crisis support and more.

WIREDD team would like to thank Vivienne Pearce for acting as a Coordinator for nine months while I was completing my studies, and to welcome Mary Ryan to the team. I would like to extend warmest thanks to all of the women who are part of WIREDD's team. As a team, we put our hearts into WIREDD and are committed to supporting each woman that walks through the door.

The team would like to acknowledge the women who use our service and to thank Dr Sandi Plummer for her amazing work and ongoing support to WIREDD.

WIREDD would like to thank the amazing women who access our services, it is always a privilege to work with them.

Thank you to both the ACT and Commonwealth Government for their ongoing funding to support the marginalised and much needed women who access our service.

Thank you to our Management and Board who have Toora services in their hearts. We appreciate their hard work for this year.

Also, I would like to thank our two sister services from Toora Women Inc. Lesley's Place and Aleta for the collaboration and ongoing support.

**Paulina Hellec**  
Coordinator of WIREDD

# Lesley's Place

**Lesley's Place is a drug and alcohol service which provides residential and outreach recovery support to women and accompanying children. We strive for quality service provision to women in need within the ACT and surrounding areas.**

Lesley's Place continues to take an innovative approach to working with women and women with children whose lives are impacted by the harms associated with dependencies. Our flexible program and commitment to women with complex comorbidity and trauma ensures that barriers to treatment and support for women continue to be minimised.

We continue to work closely and foster positive relationships with other services in the AOD sector. These include THC Withdrawal unit, Arcadia House and Karralika Programs. We have also established a close working relationship with Canberra Recovery Services since the opening of their women's program earlier this year.

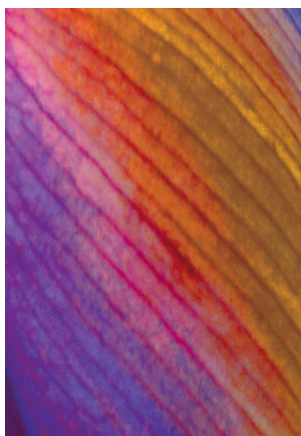
Also, we are excited to have formed a partnership with Belconnen Child and Family Centre, to co-facilitate the Learn, Giggle and Grow playgroup for mothers and their children aged between 0 and 5 years.

There are a considerable number of women with drug and alcohol issues, referred to Lesley's Place by the Adult Mental Health Unit (AMHU). We have developed, over some years, a good working relationship with this service. These women consistently access our drug and alcohol residential services as well as outreach support. We receive referrals not just from AMHU but also from other ACT Mental Health Services.

Throughout 2012 Lesley's Place has participated in many important sector development projects through ATODA, including the review into Opioid Treatment Guidelines, the Workforce Development Strategy, and the Service User Satisfaction Survey.

We continue to advocate for the needs of women affected by chemical dependency and complex trauma, and promote our service broadly within the ACT. We recently participated, together with WIRED, in the 2XX radio show News From The Drug War Front: we were interviewed by Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation.

Throughout 2012, Lesley's Place has supported a higher than usual number of women whose children were under Department of Community Services orders. Through working closely with Care and Protection and agencies such as Carhu (Child at Risk Health Unit), we are pleased to report that a high percentage of those women were successful in gaining restoration of their children.



We have also supported and accommodated women with drug and alcohol issues who were exiting prison, both in the ACT and NSW. Effective collaboration with the Coming Home program and Toora House has ensured continuity of care for these women.

Lesley's Place is looking forward to implementing our Trauma Informed Care model, reinforcing our place in the community, along with TWI generally, as leaders in the provision of services to women with complex comorbidity and trauma.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the women who use our service. We are privileged to support them and witness their journeys during their stay at Lesley's Place.

I would like to thank the Lesley's Place team, including our valuable relief workers, for their commitment to these women and for all their hard work throughout 2012.

I would like to express our gratitude to all sister services within Toora Women Inc. for their ongoing collaboration with Lesley's Place, and our thanks to Management and the Admin team for their tireless support.

Also, thank you to our Board Members for their governance and support, and to the ACT Department of Health for continuing to fund the Lesley's Place program.

**Roberta Wicks-Elferkh**  
Lesley's Place Coordinator

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# Coming Home



**The Coming Home Program is governed by an alliance between Canberra Rape Crisis Centre, Beryl and Toora Women Inc. The three agencies share a common goal of empowerment for women to overcome difficult life challenges.**

Our purpose is to provide services to women exiting the Corrections system that will reduce homelessness and reduce recidivism.

Coming Home provides accommodation and support for five women and does outreach support to 15 women.

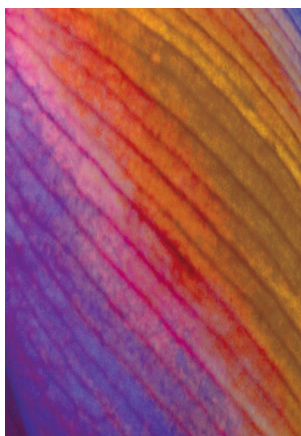
The Program provides wraparound support to women exiting the Alexander Maconochie Centre. A relationship is established with a woman during the 6 months prior to release through outreach visits

to the jail. On release the service provides intensive case management, outreach support, advocacy and referral. In providing safe accommodation and follow up in all areas of a woman's life, we give her the opportunity to fulfil her potential and reintegrate into the community. This leads to stronger families and stronger communities.

The Coming Home program manages Viv's Place, a transitional property, and up to 4 other properties on a head lease agreement with ACT Housing. Women are housed in place in the head lease properties until they achieve sustainable tenancy. At this time their lease is transitioned to their name and managed by ACT Housing. Outreach, in the form of case management or other support, continues with The Coming Home Program for as long as the woman feels it is needed.

This year the Coming Home Alliance had a planning day. The Alliance MOU was finalized and policies of the Program were reviewed and approved. An MOU with Women And Prisons (WAP) has also been signed off by both parties.

The Coming Home team has worked hard at increasing the outreach component of our program. We have ensured the Community Sector in the ACT is aware of what we have to offer by maximizing networking opportunities. This includes presentations at The Reintegration Jigsaw Conference, Homelessness Forum, Canberra Institute of Technology and the Adult Mental Health Unit as well as participation in the Women's Advisory





Group at the Alexander Maconochie Centre and in other forums as appropriate. The Coming Home workers and women service users are actively involved in the Women and Prison (WAP) group in the ACT.

We are also participating in Toora Leadership and workers meetings, including Advisory Forum, Clinical Governance Committee and Reconciliation Action Plan Committee. We recently undertook a mail-out to the community sector to better inform services of our outreach capacities.

Coming Home provided Drug and Alcohol Training through WIREDD to the community sector, including Beryl and the ACT Hepatitis Resource Centre (ACTHRC). As of October 2012 the Coming Home coordinator is now a member of ACTHRC Board.

Of the women using our service, 80% have experienced past family and sexual violence, 87% identify Drugs and Alcohol as a problem and 60% identify as Aboriginal. 100% identify that they have experienced violence whilst incarcerated.



Our service has been utilized to full capacity. This year three women from our program have transitioned their lease and are now renting directly from ACT Housing. Since we have operated no sentenced woman has exited the prison to homelessness.

This year Coming Home has worked collaboratively with Lesley's Place, WIREDD and Toora House while supporting some service users. I hope that, over the next year, we will forge deeper relationships with all Toora services.

I would like to explore the Toora Women integrated service system by the Coming Home Key Support Workers doing some training and even working for short periods in the Toora Drug and Alcohol services, perhaps on an exchange basis. Almost all of the Coming Home service users have Drug and Alcohol as an issue that needs to be addressed and that seems to be a practical way to give the workers real experience. The exchange would also give D&A workers an opportunity to learn from Coming Home workers and service users.

I would like to thank the women who use our service. It is truly a privilege to be given the opportunity to participate in their lives on the level we do.

The Coming Home Program is funded by Housing & Community Services ACT, a division of the Community Services Directorate.

The Alexander Maconochie Centre has been supportive of every aspect of the Program: Mark Bartlett, Matthew Mitchell and Francesca Papandrea

managing logistic issues and the Corrections Officers dealing with day to day referrals and our contact with the women in prison.

The Community Sector has been welcoming and the Women And Prisons (WAP) group has provided input to the Coming Home Program and support to our Service Users.

Support has been forthcoming from the Boards and staff at Toora, Canberra Rape Crisis Centre and Beryl Women.

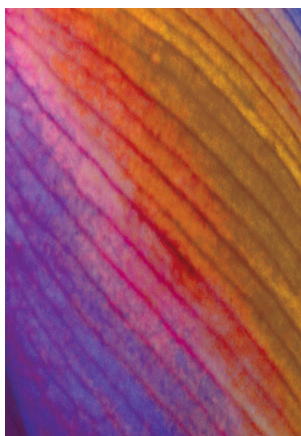
We are extremely grateful to these services and people for their ongoing support of Toora Women Inc generally, and of the Coming Home Program in particular. I would like to use this opportunity to offer our sincere thanks.

**Kirsty McIntyre-Smith**  
Coming Home Coordinator

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I would like to thank the women who use our service. It is truly a privilege to be given the opportunity to participate in their lives on the level we do.

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