

Toora

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS
HOMELESSNESS
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



22 23

Annual Report

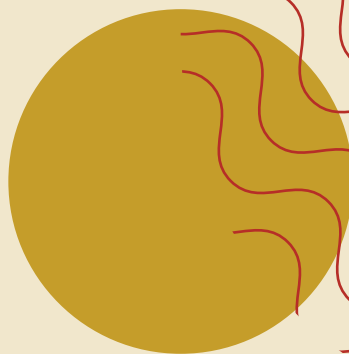
Acknowledgement

Toora Women Inc. (Toora) acknowledges the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people as the traditional custodians of the Country on which we live and work. We recognise this land was never ceded and the experience of colonisation and loss continues to affect the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and communities today. Despite this, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's connection to land, sea and community is strong and continuing. We pay our respects to elders past and present, and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and future leaders, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of First Nations people. We express our gratitude for the privilege of being able to live and work on their land.

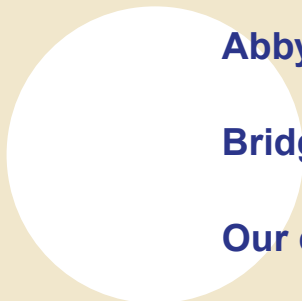
Toora is funded by:



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Who we are

We are a feminist, secular, not-for-profit organisation that has been delivering some of the largest gender specific services to women, trans women, and other feminine-identifying people and their children in the ACT and surrounds since 1982. Our purpose is to support, connect and advocate for women in the ACT and surrounding regions who are impacted by domestic violence, homelessness, institutions, and substance dependency to create better life outcomes and community change.



Toora means ‘Women who keep the fire alight’. You will find that most Toora Women have a fire inside them and a personal connection to the work that we do. Together, we form a unique team of diverse and passionate individuals, each bringing their own skills, abilities, and experiences. We are committed to the principles of social justice and accessibility. Our vision is women living with agency, dignity, safety, and respect.

Our impact

This year Toora has:

supported 512 clients.
Of those clients, 374 were supported through the Toora Domestic Violence and Homelessness Service and 138 were supported through our Alcohol and Other Drug Program.

supported 118 children.

supported 81 women
(or 16% of our clients) who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

supported 46 women
(or 9.5% of our clients) who had a disability pension.

supported 138 women
(or 28% of our clients) who identified as culturally and racially marginalised.

provided immigration assistance to 10 clients on 43 occasions.

provided a total of **57,561 nights of accommodation** for women and their accompanying children.

provided clients with a total of 91,576 service days.

provided 44 clients with counselling.

supported 86 women in Court matters on 250 occasions.

provided learning opportunities to six students.

provided 41 women on 69 occasions with employment assistance.

more than 150 women who came to Toora required crisis support.

in our longer-term accommodation, Toora had **157 tenants in 61 homes.**



Chair report

In 2022-23 the Toora Board recommitted to our vision of a world where women, girls, non-binary and feminine identifying people live safely and securely without fear, where we are equal, respected and valued for our contributions to society. It is an unfortunate reality, as demand for our services continues to grow, and an affordable housing crisis leaves more women on the brink of homelessness, that there is much work to be done to achieve this vision.

But I am immensely proud of the contribution Toora is making towards it. As we celebrate our 40th birthday, we are proud of our fiercely feminist history. And we are proud of our continuing efforts to be responsive to the changing needs of our community and find innovative solutions to tackle the problems community members face.

I would like to recognise the leadership of our wonderful CEO, Kellie Friend, who has risen to every challenge placed before her in her 18 months with the organisation. This report highlights many of the services achievements this year, for which Kellie and her team deserve much credit.

This year the Board focused on modernising our governance structures. We have established subcommittees on Finance and Risk, Organisational Governance and Clinical Care and Governance. I thank Board members for their participation and willingness to embrace the new structures, and the staff who have provided support necessary to make these processes operational. We have solidified our financial position and are actively seeking opportunities to expand our housing stock and diversify our income streams.

I would like to thank the passionate, committed, and diverse team of staff who work hard every day to make this community a safer and fairer one. While I am sad that the demand for Toora's services remains so high, and so many women in our community continue to face violence, homelessness, and trauma, I am glad you are all in their corner, treating them with dignity, respect and compassion.

To my Board colleagues, it is a privilege and a joy to work with you all. I thank you for your support in my first year as Chair, and for the many things I have learnt from you all. Special thanks to our outgoing members: Suzanne Muir, Naomi Cole, Flor Sermeno, Gail Freeman and Kate Yuille, your contributions to the Board and the organisation have made a significant impact.

On behalf of the Board, I would also like to acknowledge the passing of former Advisory Forum Board Member Jo, whose thoughtful contributions to the Board and representation of Toora staff will be deeply missed. Our thoughts and deepest sympathies to Jo's colleagues, family and friends.

To the people who have accessed Toora services, thank you for trusting our organisation. Your resilience and strength as you face challenges no one should ever have to is motivation as we continue to strive to achieve our vision.

Brooke McKail



Treasurer report

Toora has demonstrated strengthening financial management and a commitment to delivering high-quality services to women and their children during the financial year ended 30 June 2023. There has been growth in the financial positions and significant improvement in service delivery.

Toora received total income of \$6,647,390, compared to \$6,596,482 in 2022. Total expenditure of \$6,132,430 remained reasonably consistent with \$6,132,430 in the prior year. An operating surplus for 2023 of \$514,960 was maintained and increased from the previous years' \$382,408. This places the organisation in a position to plan for future growth in pursuing our purpose and growing our impact.

Thanks to the significant financial contributions from the ACT Government's Community Services and Health Directorates for the provision of on-going funding of Toora's essential services of supporting 512 women and their children impacted by Domestic Violence, Homelessness and Alcohol and Other Drugs. These critical services are further supported by generous donations from individual donors and our funding partners. Toora is committed to continuously enhancing services, addressing unmet need, and actively seeking opportunities for income diversification and growth.

Toora's future financial focus is looking towards a position of sustainability and strength. There are exciting opportunities for Toora to secure core funding through the ACT Government's Commissioning process and place the organisation into a position to provide a more streamlined wholistic service potential for women requiring Toora's services. In addition, the opportunity to further assess the positive impact of Toora's unique approach to service delivery.

A special thanks to Toora's Finance and Corporate team, led by our strategically thinking CEO, who have focused on process improvement, creating efficiencies, and maximising the service provided to clients, staff, and the Board. The year has seen a significant improvement in financial processes and controls with a focus on maximising service and minimising costs.

I look forward to a future where Toora can maximise opportunities for financial stability and growth to deliver on our Vision.

Ruth Hilton-Bell, CA

*The Audited Financial
Statements for the year
ended 30 June 2023
are available on the
ACNC's website.*



CEO report

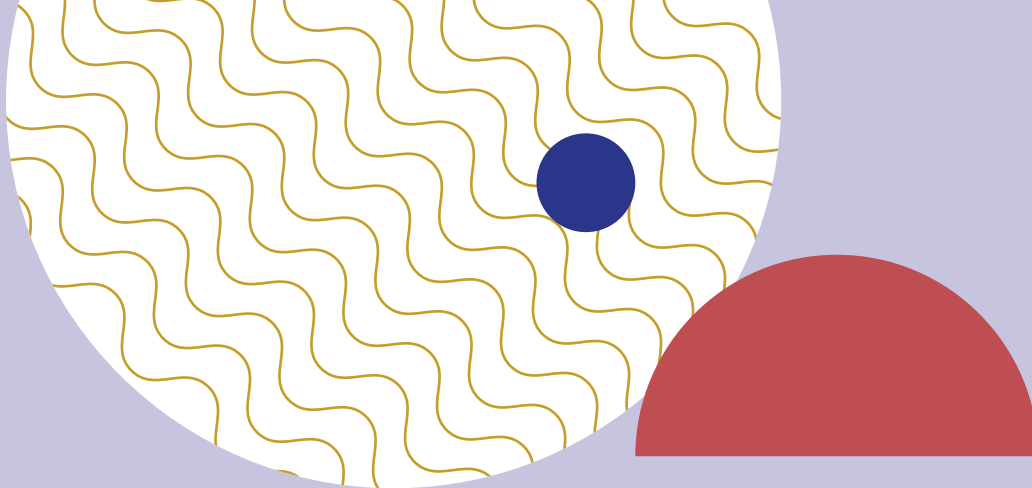
What a year it has been! Now, I know that is probably the sentiment of 2023 amongst many but here at Toora it has truly been an absolute whirlwind of a year with some seriously amazing goals achieved! This year meant change for Toora. We defined our purpose, watched clients achieve immeasurable and outstanding outcomes and focused on expanding our skills and knowledge. To say I am proud of the achievements of Toora would be an understatement.

Toora's client numbers have ramped up this year by over 100 clients, this is a result of increased community awareness of our services, service enhancements and improved client outcomes. While I am proud that we've been able to support so many more Canberra women I can't help but remain very concerned about the increase in clients due to the current cost of living and housing crisis.

To put our achievements into perspective, this year Toora supported 512 clients. Of those clients, 374 were supported through the Toora Domestic Violence and Homelessness Service (TDVHS) and 138 were supported through our Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Program. These numbers also remind us of the impact on children and young people affected by homelessness, domestic and family violence and trauma. This year, Toora supported 118 children.

Collectively this year, Toora has been working hard on reaching our potential and building upon our services to ensure, as an organisation, we are achieving our purpose and delivering renowned services to the Canberra community. This year our focus was on;

- > deepening our understanding of Toora's identity, purpose and vision and continuing our commitment to our specialisation in gendered-specific services
- > developing upon our sustainable and diverse funding streams to grow and meet the increasing demands of the local community
- > refining a client-centered and responsive service delivery model that optimises a client's access to alcohol and drug treatment, housing, counseling, family and children support and tailored case interventions
- > embodying 'One Organisation, One Approach, One Door'
- > expanding our community housing service capacity through investment planning and increasing our property portfolio
- > evaluating and improving quality service and program delivery
- > enhancing our governance, continuous improvement, and compliance environment
- > investing in IT infrastructure and a 5-year road map to enable sustained efficient and contemporary practice



- > embedding our gender inclusivity, diversity and cultural insights and competence into strategy, philosophy and practice strengthening sector partnerships

Through perseverance, adaptability and commitment, as an organisation we achieved some incredible feats over the past year including;

- > finalised the review of our purpose, vision, and values, of which are reflected in this report
- > increased our property portfolio by over 10 homes to reach 49 properties in total and increased our existing bed numbers by 10 to reach 101 beds due to property remodeling, plus, we have an anticipated 30 more properties to come through our rental subsidy program
- > centralised our service delivery and corporate staff in one physical location to further enable our integrated service model
- > formalised the acquisition of Parentline and have advanced service integration to support Toora clients and provide referral pathways for Parentline clients
- > stood up our Clinical Services Unit to provide more counselling and therapeutic groups
- > commenced our Diversity and Inclusion Committee responsible for delivering our Reconciliation Action Plan, Toora's first Disability Inclusion plan, alongside Toora's first Gender Diversity Plan and our first Culturally and Racially Marginalised plan, as a component of our professionalised governance environment
- > embedded our One Intake and Toora client service continuum, with clients gaining access to all Toora services irrespective of how they entered
- > invested in our financial management and people and culture operations to optimise our people capability and effective redirection of funds to our purpose
- > continued to build on the communication and engagement efforts of the organisation and importantly laid foundations for growth and success through future funding and profile awareness

I would like to acknowledge the Toora team that I am privileged to work alongside. Toora means 'Women who keep the fire alight' and you won't find a better example of this than our team who supports the Canberra community every day. I want to thank the service delivery team who tirelessly advocate and serve the needs of those who need our support. The success of our team is due in equal part to our corporate staff - service and advocacy takes on many forms and while not client facing, the contribution of Toora's corporate team enables service delivery and provides the foundation for positive client outcomes.

A special mention to a woman the world lost too early, Jo Connop, Toora's Aboriginal Liaison Officer. For those that were lucky to know Jo she was a powerful and bright light. A Toora staff member remembers Jo as an absolute powerhouse of a woman. A force to be reckoned with and a fierce advocate for our women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, and the ongoing social injustices we see every day. We again send our deepest condolences to all Jo's family and friends, near and far.

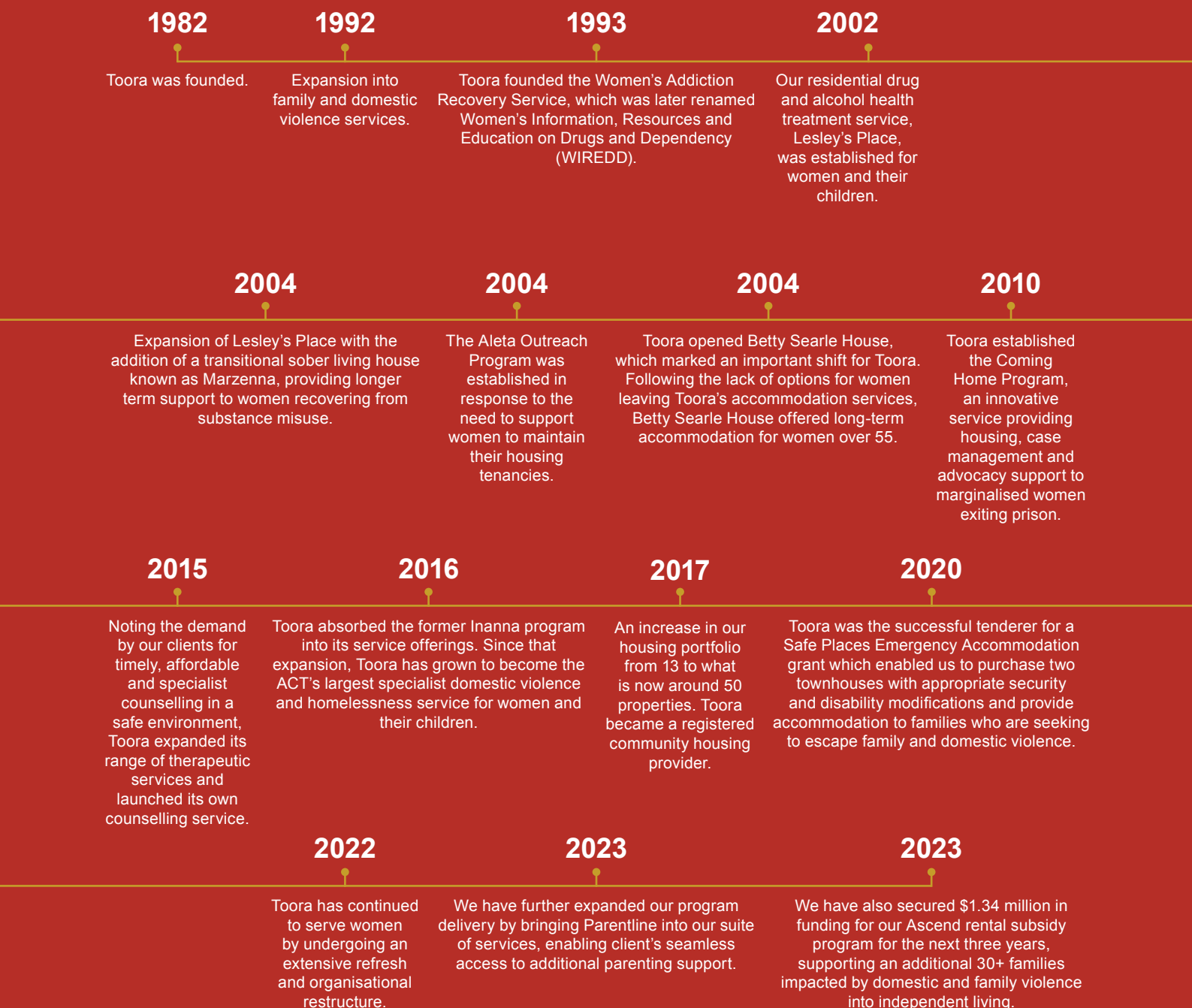
As we head into the next chapter of Toora, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Toora's supporters and everyone that has contributed to making this organisation what it is today. Your continued support symbolises hope, agency and change for women in Canberra.

Kellie Friend

40 years of Toora

In 2022, we reached a milestone of 40 years of helping and supporting women in Canberra and the surrounding regions.

40 years on and we are proud Toora remains strongly linked with the women's movement of the 1980s and we remain in a robust position to continue providing safe shelter and services to the ACT's most vulnerable homeless women, trans women, non-binary people, and other feminine identifying people. Below is a roadmap to a contemporary Toora.





Our values

At Toora we are guided by a series of values and principles that are a beacon to how we operate as a team, as a service, and as a support for vulnerable women in Canberra and the surrounding region. These values are:

1. **Unwavering Commitment:** we foster trust by being accountable, responsive, and reliable in all situations to ensure we can provide support in times of need.
2. **Excellence and Integrity:** we act with honesty, transparency and fairness and ensure our decision making is guided by integrity and strong ethics.
3. **Adaptive Service:** we provide flexibility, choice, and agency to ensure our services adapt to individual needs.
4. **Collective Strength:** Together we are stronger, and we work collaboratively to provide connection to a comprehensive network of support.
5. **Dignity and Respect:** we value and celebrate diversity and the differences that each person brings to ensure all perspectives are considered and heard with respect.
6. **Bold Advocates:** we are driven by our purpose and act with boldness and determination to challenge systemic barriers to create a community where we live with dignity, safety, and respect.



Our services

Our programs operate in a safe, friendly, and welcoming environment within a culture of empowerment and equality where clients feel valued, respected, and have the right to choose. Our combination of practical support and intensive individually tailored case management and counselling offers our clients encouragement, education, and positive life skills to achieve long-term change and achievement.

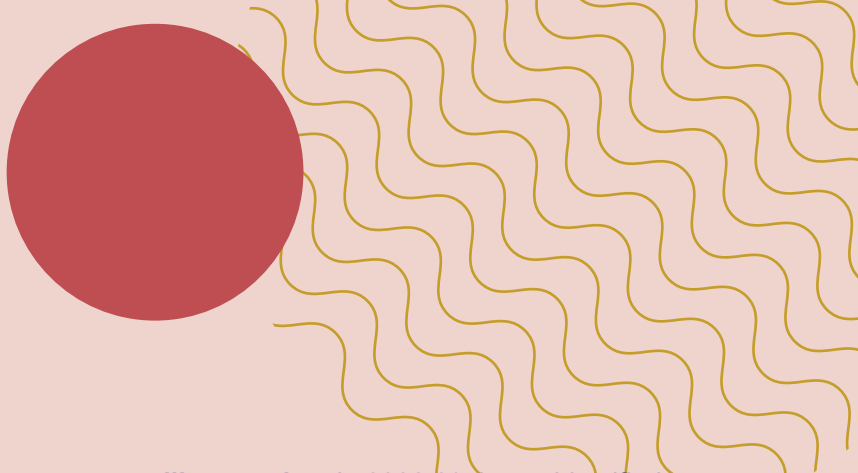
In 2022-23, Toora focused on providing a client centred and responsive service delivery model that optimises a client's access to AOD treatment services, housing, counselling, domestic and family violence support, family and children support and tailored case interventions. Our focus was to build a culture of one organisation, one approach, and one door for women in Canberra and the surrounding regions to receive support.

Ways that we have worked to achieve this include:

Property relocations and moves: In April 2023, we relocated our service teams to our corporate office in Weston Creek. This move not only built a sense of unity between our staff, but it also meant that we were able to make more space for beds in our existing properties.

Integrated clients: 2022-23 saw us strengthen our practices regarding 'integrated clients'. This increases the service provision for clients currently accessing an AOD service who have identified housing needs, and for clients currently in TDVHS who have co-morbid substance misuse stressors.

One intake: This model is unique to Toora and ensures a 'no wrong door' approach. A woman will therefore only need to tell her story once, then the One Intake worker will guide her on her journey throughout Toora services. To further embed trauma informed practice, the One Intake Tool has been designed in collaboration with both ACT Housing and OneLink to ensure minimisation of external replication of assessment. At Toora we understand the importance of maintaining motivation and engagement with service and eliminating the gap between help seeking behaviour and allocation. The One Intake workers are also able to provide 'Active Hold' to women if their chosen service is at capacity.

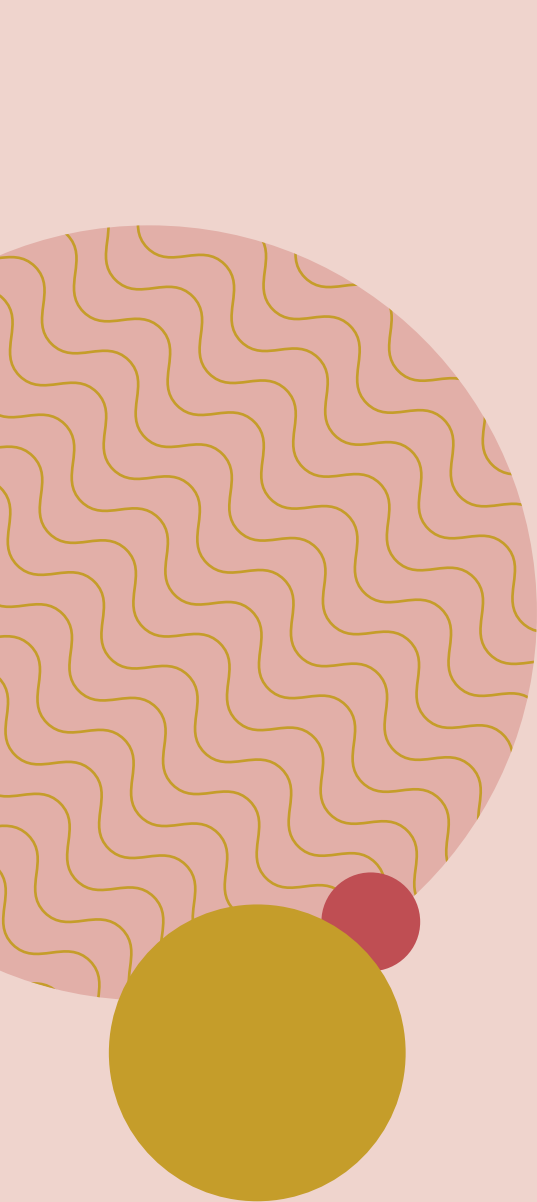


Standing up our counselling service: In 2022-23, it was identified a service gap existed for TDVHS clients as it was more difficult to access counselling, due to the counsellors being funded under the AOD services. 89% of clients in TDVHS in the last reporting period reported having experienced trauma, thus highlighting the great need for equitable access to counselling services. TDVHS recruited a Case Coordinator with qualifications in counselling to provide additional specialist support within the TDVHS client space. This included a focus on family dynamics and attachment work, use of Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) techniques and generalist soft counselling support. This ensures that each woman's journey through Toora services is holistic and responsive to need.

Ascend Housing scheme: It is commonly understood that we are facing a housing crisis within the ACT. Women who engage with Toora's services need secure, safe, affordable accommodation, and are often unlikely to meet the criteria for ACT Government Housing or social housing immediately, particularly if they work. The period a person is required to meet the financial criteria for hardship sufficient to qualify or be a Canberra resident long enough before they can become eligible for consideration for public housing, can at times act as a disincentive for some women to reengage with education, training and the workforce. From initial point of contact with Toora to allocation of 'priority' on the housing list, women are waiting for a minimum of two years. The impact of this is two-fold:

- > women who are not yet actively engaged in services like Toora are residing in unsafe accommodation or sleeping rough
- > women who are ready to sustain a tenancy are continuing to reside in temporary accommodation with Toora.

As a result of this, Toora has independently sought seed funding to alleviate this bottle necking of service through the 'Ascend Housing Scheme.' In 2022-23, we received an additional \$1.34 million in funding for this program, which equates to roughly 30 properties to support women and their families who have been impacted by Domestic and Family Violence.



Toora Domestic Violence and Homelessness service (TDVHS)

Our TDVHS program specialises in supporting single women and women accompanied by children by providing a suite of residential and outreach programs that each provide individualised case management and a range of emotional and practical supports.

A highlight for the 2022-23 year was the refinement of the Coming Home Program to have a smoother intake process and a more integrated model of service delivery. Instead of different Case Coordinators attending the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) every week, we have streamlined this to be one worker from our Intake team. These changes mean that the women can build rapport with one person who will be with them until they are released from the AMC. In addition to this, the Intake worker can assess their needs more holistically, providing support services from different Toora streams to work together to achieve the best outcome for the woman. Therefore, the woman will have access to individual counselling, psychotherapeutic groups, housing support and AOD support. These different levels of support are designed to be Step Up and Step Down as the woman needs and her healing journey progresses. In 2022-23 we supported 43 clients through the Coming Home program.

In addition to this we implemented the following updates to our service model:

In 2022-23:

- > TDVHS assisted a total of 265 adults and 109 children through its programs
- > 18% of these clients identify as Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander and 33% were from Culturally and Racially Marginalised backgrounds (CARM)

In addition, clients were supported with their individual needs in the following ways:

- > 13% of clients were assisted to link in with medical supports for physical health problems.
- > 2.5% of clients and their children were assisted to address immigration issues and the implications of residing under uncertain visa status
- > 7.4% of CARM clients were supported through the use of translating and interpreter services.

In the TDVHS service, clients presented with following needs:

- > 95% of clients had been affected by domestic and family violence
- > 43.5% of clients had mental health impacts
- > 32% of clients had alcohol and other drug dependency issues



Investing in our People for best client outcomes.

In 2022-23, Toora staff participated in the following training:

- > Cultural competency training (Your Mob)
- > Cultural competency planning session with Coolaman Consulting
- > National Principles for Child Safe Organisations (safeguarding children) training
- > Outcome STAR training
- > Working with Trans, Gender Diverse and Intersex Young People
- > Circle of Security Parenting
- > Common Approach
- > Preventing and managing psychological injury in the workplace
- > Urinalysis training (administration and interpretation)
- > Casework Reflective Tool training
- > Using Polyvagal Theory
- > Internal Family Systems
- > Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
- > Dialectical Behaviour Therapy
- > Extreme/Pathological Demand Avoidance: Theory, Getting to Grips with Grief and Loss, Not Another Icebreaker: Engaging Activities for Starting Groups and Disenfranchised Grief A Look at Hidden and Unacknowledged Grief:
 - > Understanding addiction
 - > Widen the Window of Tolerance: Three Proven Ways to Support Clients' Resilience
 - > Dialectical Behaviour Therapy for Eating Disorders
 - > Eight Core Themes from Parents Who Have Raised a Child with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- > First-Aid training
- > Security Awareness in the AMC
- > Preventing and managing psychological injury in the workplace
- > Integrated responses to domestic violence victims who have experienced non-fatal strangulation and traumatic brain injury (Churchill Trust)

Abby's story

Abby is a 32-year-old Indigenous Woman who was referred to Toora by the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC) after receiving threats from other detainees. Abby disclosed that she has been self-harming whilst in the correctional centre. At the time, she was applying for her Intensive Correction Orders to be re-instated. In June 2022, she was approved to attend a residential rehab in Wagga, on the conditions that she resided with her parents until she found suitable housing in the ACT.

In January 2023, Toora received correspondence that Abby was in the AMC again due to breaching her conditions in rehab. In March 2023, Abby had a hearing coming up for her Intensive Correction Orders to be re-instated. During this time, she reported that she was in an abusive relationship and was unable to return to her ACT Housing address due to safety concerns. To ensure she had immediate support upon her release, Abby was also referred to the ACT's Family Violence Safety Action Program who engaged with her in safety planning in preparation for her release.

Later that month, Abby was granted bail, however because she had bail restrictions in the Supreme Court, she was unable to leave the AMC. In April 2023, Abby was granted full bail and was moved into Toora accommodation. Abby was then supported by her Case Coordinator to get her belongings from AMC, obtain a new phone from Prisoners Aid, and go to Centrelink where she applied for an emergency payment, updated some of her information, and applied for Job Seeker.

Abby's Case Coordinator supported her to advocate to move into her sister's home as Toora had no standalone properties available at the time. This was granted by the Parole Officer as her sister's home was considered a safe place. Her Case Coordinator also advocated for her to gain a travel pass to visit her late brother's grave site outside of Canberra – which was also approved by the Parole Officer.

Abby's Case Coordinator then spoke to Toora's Child and Family specialist about booking an appointment with her to address her goal of reconnecting with her three children. Additionally, her Case Coordinator liaised with the ACT's Family Violence Safety Action Program, Housing ACT, and Abby's lawyer, and provided the latter two with support letters to advocate for her needs. Shortly after, Abby was approved to the Housing Priority list which recognises the urgent, critical, and exceptional circumstances that Abby was facing. Abby has also undertaken regular counselling and has communicated her feelings throughout her sessions – this is something that she struggled with upon commencement.

Abby has come a long way in her journey of healing and independence. She is currently waiting for a house to become available while she resides with her sister. She spends time with her sons and is engaging in regular counselling. Although it is a goal for her to obtain 50/50 parental custody of her children with their father, Abby has acknowledged this is a long-term goal and that there are other fundamental objectives (such as obtaining a house) that need to take place before the legal process for parental custody can begin. This patience and awareness provide insight into the growth Abby has undergone.



Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Service

Toora offers tailored and comprehensive treatment services that are trauma-informed to effectively treat alcohol and other drug dependencies. Taking a holistic approach, Toora also looks deeper into the underlying factors and origins of these dependencies. Toora understands that our clients are all unique and require an individual program that fits their personal circumstances. The methodologies used are evidence-based and staff are fully trained in delivering interventions.

Programs range from counselling and outreach support through to more intensive programs, such as live-in residential treatment. All programs are designed to support women to reach ongoing sobriety and achieve their goals.

In 2022-23, Toora's AOD Services:

- > Supported 138 clients, up from 118 previous reporting period. This represents an increase in service to 20 women, or 14% of clients
- > 29 clients were supported through residential treatment
- > The counsellors engaged with 44 clients in this period. 65 clients received support in an Outreach capacity, covering both pre and post-treatments supports
- > 86% of residential AOD clients were satisfied with the service offered by Toora
- > 58 clients attended the Day Program
- > 90 Clients were supported through the Outreach Program either pre-or-post treatment
- > 32 Coming Home Program clients were supported through AOD.

Bridget's story

Bridget is 47-year-old woman with two children; one is 17yrs and one is 14yrs. At the time of her assessment with Toora, she was drinking regularly but wanted to stop - she just didn't know how. She originally self-referred to Toora's Day Program because she identified that her drinking was making her life unmanageable.

Bridget presented with harmful use of alcohol, for which she had been hospitalised on several occasions. While she has been under the influence, she experienced blackouts, polydrug use, unsafe sex, driving under the influence and memory loss. Bridget assaulted her 17yr old daughter and was charged, ordered not to drink and to continue attending Toora's Day Program. She was also ordered to hand in her Working with Vulnerable People card, due to the age of her daughter, who was the victim of the assault. As a result, Bridget could no longer work in her field of childcare. She was experiencing severe financial hardship and was at risk of homelessness.

Due to Bridget's ongoing ambivalence towards harmful alcohol use, and her escalating circumstances, a motivational interviewing (MI) approach was used to evoke desires and needs so that she could self-identify how alcohol was impacting the different domains of her life. A collaborative approach was used to develop an Individual Treatment Plan which would best meet her immediate needs. Following the Day Program, Bridget was invited to attend one-on-one sessions to review circumstances, goals and achievements. Response to her crises were met as they arose, giving her the opportunity to highlight issues related to her alcohol use when her feelings and emotions were raw and she was more likely to reflect transparently.

Bridget was able to identify what she needed to do, but she lacked the confidence to follow through with a plan. During case management, a focus was placed on confidence, self-compassion and unhelpful thinking as this was an obstacle for her. Cognitive Behavior Therapy was applied to her sessions, as she was supported to understand how her thinking and subsequent feelings impacted her behaviors. Bridget was encouraged to cultivate helpful thinking strategies around having a meeting with her boss to request a long service leave payout.

Referrals were made to Care Financial and Canberra Community Tenancy Law to meet the level of expertise required to address Bridget's financial and accommodation crisis. Legal Aid was arranged through the process of charges and legal requirements. Although all possible measures were taken to support Bridget's commitment to abstinence or minimisation of harm, she continued to drink harmful volumes and it was decided, in collaboration with Bridget, that residential support would be necessary to focus primarily on her mental health, with ongoing support towards abstinence. Bridget was referred to Step Up, Step Down where she secured a bed, and 24-hour support was available to address her co-morbidity with a more intensive and holistic approach.

The background features a light beige color. In the top right, there is a large circle with a pink-to-white wavy pattern. Below it, a smaller solid gold circle is partially visible. In the bottom left, a large solid red semi-circle is partially visible.

Our community

In 2022-23, we worked with and were supported by a breadth of organisations, agencies, businesses and individuals across, domestic and family violence, alcohol and other drug, women's health, mental health, and legal services to provide a multidisciplinary, integrated and collaborative approach to achieving client outcomes.

Toora is grateful for the funding support we receive from our individual donors, philanthropic organisations and government agencies.

In 2022-23, Toora participated in the following community and fundraising events: Bunnings Sausage Sizzle fundraiser, Bond Hair Religion fundraiser, Toora presented at CIT's alcohol and other drugs panel discussion, Screening of Brazen Hussies fundraising event, Toora presented at a panel discussion hosted by the Snow Foundation, Hosted Toora Client Christmas event, Hands Up For Canberra Giving Day hosted by Hands Across Canberra, DVCS National Domestic Violence Remembrance Day event, Hepatitis ACT service visit plus more.

Our community partners

- > Roundabout
- > Australian Childhood Foundation
- > ATODA
- > Women's Health Service
- > Quest for Life Foundation
- > Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services
- > Marymead, Early Life Matters Team
- > Everyman
- > Families ACT
- > Meridian
- > Karalika
- > Multicultural hub
- > Domestic Violence Crisis Service
- > Perinatal Wellbeing Service
- > Parentline
- > ACTCOSS
- > The Canberra Rape Crisis Centre
- > A Gender Agenda
- > Hepatitis ACT
- > OzHarvest
- > Legal Aid
- > Care Financial
- > St Johns Ambulance
- > Thread Together
- > DV Safe Phones
- > Givit
- > Vinnies
- > YWCA
- > Directions ACT
- > MHCC
- > Community Housing Australia

Our business and funding partners

- > Bond Hair Religion
- > Snow Foundation
- > ACT Government
- > CHC
- > Toshiba
- > CentreRED
- > Artemis Partners
- > Coolamon Consulting
- > Synergy
- > Tailored HR solutions

Our individual donors

- > ACT Mental Health Consumer Network
- > Adrienne Sykes
- > Alexandra Leask
- > Andrew Loomes
- > Ann Maloney
- > Annette Pilloni
- > Annie Murdock
- > Ashley Crump
- > Belinda Roberts
- > Ben Ashman
- > Bettina Hill
- > Biff Ward
- > Brenton Kalisch
- > Cath (no other name given)
- > Cecilia Brennan
- > Chris Jennar
- > Cox Architecture
- > Darren Adam
- > David Hawking
- > D Clark
- > Department of Infrastructure
- > Donna Moody
- > Dr Michelle Atkinson
- > Els Wynen
- > Elizabeth McAllister
- > Emma Bromley
- > Emma Regeur
- > Erika Casey
- > Erin Johnston
- > Frances Thomas
- > Gemma King
- > Hannah Bachelard
- > Harry Burkett
- > Helen Innes
- > Hilary Johnson
- > Irene Wegener

- > Jacqui Uhlmann
- > James Leask
- > Janene Burgess
- > Jennifer Rowland
- > Jessica Tidemann
- > Joan C Scott
- > Joanne Maples
- > Kate Lawson
- > Katerina Radovanic
- > Kim Cartwright
- > Kin Ng
- > Krystel Chevallier
- > Lachlan Blain
- > Layla Brady
- > Lily (no other name given)
- > Liz Read
- > Lynn Su
- > Max Phillis
- > Megan Mouradian
- > Michael White
- > Mitchell Brooks
- > MTP Services
- > Nathan Vincent
- > Neville and Jacqui Jones
- > Paul Luckie
- > Peter Doyle
- > Penelope Lake
- > Penny Gosling
- > Pip Spence
- > Rebecca Rush
- > Ren Noble
- > Robert Lapsley
- > Robert Davy
- > Robyn Ross
- > Rosemary Royds
- > Ruth Young
- > Sarah Shafik
- > Sabita Mathew
- > Sharon Watts
- > Shannon Jones
- > Shet Young
- > Simona Evans
- > Simone Politch and Dane McCormack
- > Stephanie Kizimchuk
- > Steven Sofronoff
- > Susan Hoerlein
- > Susan Moore
- > Therese Faulkner
- > Toby Wagner
- > Tsz Shuen Wong
- > Victoria Wang



Diversity and inclusion

At Toora, we are committed to providing culturally sensitive services in an environment where race, culture, gender expression and sexuality, and any other differences are respected and valued. Toora recognises there are challenges faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, women from Culturally and Racially Marginalised (CARM) backgrounds, as well as transgender women, non-binary people, intersex people, and other feminine identifying people.


In 2022-23, we commenced our Diversity and Inclusion Committee responsible for delivering our Reconciliation Action Plan, Toora's first Disability Inclusion plan, alongside Toora's first Gender Diversity Plan and our first Culturally and Racially Marginalised plan, as a component of our professionalised governance environment.

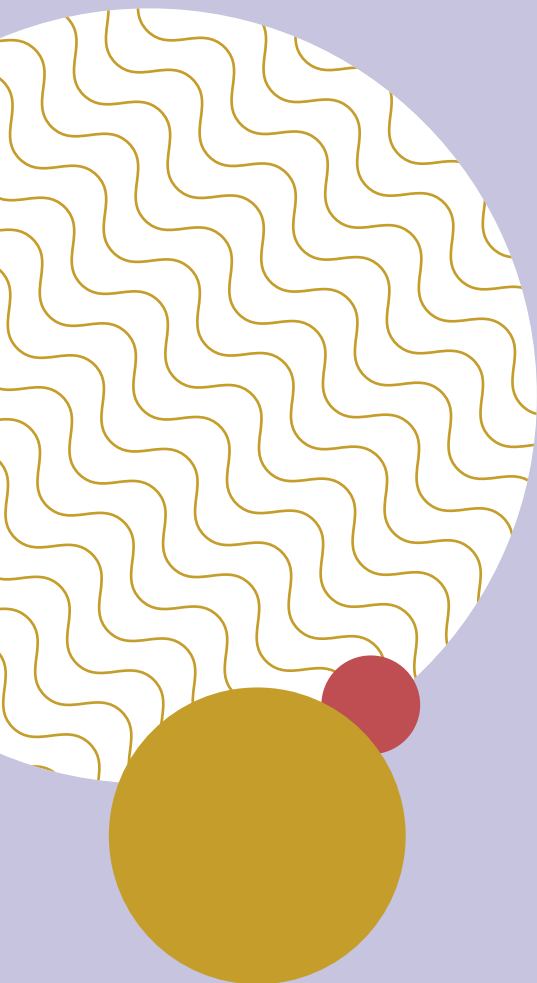
In 2022-23 we worked with Coolaman Consulting who ran a session with us to help develop the Cultural Competency Framework that is now used to help guide our services and ensure that our services are culturally appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Diversity and Inclusion committee:

Our commitment to Diversity is demonstrated by its inclusion as one of our highest-level strategic priorities, which we express in our strategic plan as Goal 5 - *An inclusive and diverse organisation that is culturally informed and competent.*

Toora has a long and proud history of being a strong ally to diverse groups in our community and as we engage in reforming our organisation into a best-practice provider of services to clients who are representative of many diversity groups we seek to build on our experience and formally embed and report on arrangements that have always been of cultural importance to the organisation, but we've often been silent in relation to.





Our Diversity and Inclusion committee is chaired by our CEO which signifies the importance of implementing change and progressing in this space. The diversity of our staff, clients and community demonstrates we understand and are committed to the united effort required to implement significant change. Leadership at the most senior level of our organisation demonstrates we are prioritising the timely and successful implementation of all of Toora's diversity strategies including our:

- > Reconciliation Action Plan commitment made with Reconciliation Australia
- > Cultural competence framework
- > Disability Inclusion framework
- > CARM Inclusion framework

Disability Inclusion: Toora has received funding to scope, develop and implement a plan to identify and prioritise meaningful goals for improving accessibility and inclusion for women or their children with disability across our organisation and our services. In consultation with GetAboutAble and Women with Disabilities ACT (WWDACT), we will be looking at things like what Toora could do better, gaps in our service, barriers to access, as well as our strengths, resources, and opportunities.

Gender specialist and Inclusive: Providing services for women by women is core to our foundation as a gender-specialist organisation. We know the significant role that women-only services play in the domestic violence, homelessness and AOD sectors. It highlights the fact that women-only services are leading the way in best practice service delivery. Gender specialist work is informed by trauma models of recovery and a gendered understanding of the causes of violence. This enables us to dismantle barriers for women to create a safe environment, instil hope, and restore dignity and empowerment. Toora's residential and community sites are women-only spaces. All our services are run by women to support women, understanding that social barriers faced by women mean that women may not receive adequate treatment and support in mainstream services. Toora staff and programs are informed by female specific research and acknowledge the unique ways that women's physical, mental, social, and spiritual wellbeing can be affected. The main purpose of gendered services is to provide specialist services in a manner which enables women to regain control of their lives.

In 2022-23, our team began working with A Gender Agenda (AGA) to ensure that our spaces are safe and inclusive for all women, including trans women, non-binary people, and other feminine-identifying people. We will continue to work with organisations like AGA and Meridian to further embed these practices in our day-to-day operations.



Cultural Capability Framework

Toora's Cultural Capability Framework commits all levels of the organisation to action. The commitments that follow give regard to the needs and aspirations of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, the goals articulated within our current strategic plan and the impassioned, and unanimous desire expressed by our people for maturation of the competencies that will support us now and into the future to respectfully achieve the best possible outcomes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children that access our services.

Toora provides services to women of all different backgrounds, in fact, around 50% of our clientele are Culturally and Racially Marginalised Women. In March 2023, the Diversity Council of Australia (DCA) updated their language in response to research - from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) to Culturally and Racially Marginalised (CARM). At Toora, we are committed to utilising the most up to date and appropriate language. This research outlines that CARM provides recognition of the significance of race and racism in the lives of people who are not white. According to the research, 'the term 'Culturally' is added because these people also face discrimination due to their culture or background.'

Toora also updated its website to be translated in 14 different languages including but not limited to: Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese and Indonesian. Since the implementation of this feature in February 2023 up until June 30 2023, Chinese was the most used language apart from English, accounting for 2.5% of all web sessions.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework 2023-2024



National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reform 1.	Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making Outcome: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are empowered to share decision-making authority with governments to accelerate policy an place-based progress on Closing the Gap through formal partnership arrangements.
ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019—2028	Community Leadership: Outcome: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a strong voice, are decision makers on issues that impact them and lead in the achievement of positive life outcomes.

Commitment 1 - Amplify and Magnify the Voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women	
System	- Identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women for appointment to our Board.
Standards	- Establish employment targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women across the organisation.
Organisation	- Establish an Advisory Group of former and current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.
Individuals	- Establish and/or strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework 2023-2024



National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reform 2.	Building the Community Controlled Sector Outcome: There is a strong and sustainable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector delivering high quality services to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the country.
ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019—2028	Inclusive Community: Outcome: A self-determined and inclusive society where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are valued, respected, and experience a life free of racism and systemic discrimination.

Commitment 2 - Build a Culturally Appropriate Service	
System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incorporate a Cultural Competence requirement for Board Appointments.
Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deliver Cultural Awareness Training to all new employees. - Review all facilities to ensure they are culturally adequate.
Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a personal Acknowledgement of Country for use across organisation. - Employ deliberate and targeted strategies to attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. - Provide regular and ongoing opportunities for staff to participate in cultural development activities.
Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be client led and curious.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework 2023-2024



National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reform 3.	<p>Transforming Government Organisations</p> <p>Outcome: Improving mainstream institutions: Governments, their organisations and their institutions are accountable for Closing the Gap and are culturally safe and responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including through the services they fund.</p>
ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019—2028	<p>Inclusive Community:</p> <p>Outcome: A self-determined and inclusive society where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are valued, respected, and experience a life free of racism and systemic discrimination.</p>

Commitment 3 - Embed a Holistic Case Management Model	
System	- Develop a Community of Practice in Holistic Case Management for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.
Standards	- Provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients with choice in terms of kinship care.
Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a relationship with AIATSIS to support clients who need to develop a connected family history. - Examine best practice models of traditional therapeutic care that can be incorporated into programs. - Explore opportunities to deliver programs and services 'on country'. - Provide opportunities for all clients to participate in events acknowledging days of significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. - Implement an annual review of random file samples for cultural integrity and provide high level feedback to staff.
Individuals	- Ask clients " Are there any other cultural considerations you need me to be aware of?" and note and record the information.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework 2023-2024



National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reform 4.	Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level Outcome: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to, and the capability to use, locally-relevant data and information to set and monitor the implementation of efforts to close the gap, their priorities and drive their own development.
ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019—2028	Inclusive Community: Outcome: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a strong voice, are decision makers on issues that impact them and lead in the achievement of positive life outcomes.
Commitment 4 - Build and Share Collective Intelligence	
System	- Advocate for adjustments to the National SHIP system - that improve record keeping of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander client data - Advocate the importance of case studies and storytelling as a reporting metric to all funding agents.
Standards	- Define the business imperatives and identify the data that accurately demonstrates the organisational effort required to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.
Organisation	- Define and articulate for all staff the purpose of data collection and the intended outcomes of reporting. - Ensure that a cultural view is sought on every decision regarding the capture and use of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander client data.
Individuals	- Keep records of positive observations on Aborigina and Torres Strait Islander clients files, inform clients at the outset what will happen with the information collected and ask regularly for performance feedback from clients.

Jessica's story

Jessica, a 29-year-old Aboriginal woman who is also a single mother of a daughter and two sons. She was referred to Toora through the Family Violence Safety Action Pilot. Prior to meeting with Toora, Jessica had been couch surfing for over 12 months. Jessica was in a relationship where she was experiencing severe domestic violence, and because of this violence, her children were placed in her sister's care. Jessica initially engaged with Toora through outreach support. She was warm-referred by Toora to other services including Bernardo's, DVCS, Women's Legal Centre and others. After a period, Jessica engaged less with Toora and eventually her case was closed due to a lack of engagement.

At a later date, Jessica re-engaged with Toora and she was assisted into Toora accommodation where solid relationships and trust was built between Jessica and Case Coordinators. As Jessica engaged with Toora's services more frequently, she was also referred to Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health and Community Services as well as Child and Youth Protection Services (CYPS).

Jessica now engages regularly with Toora and has joined our counselling program while working alongside CYPS to restore custody of her three children.



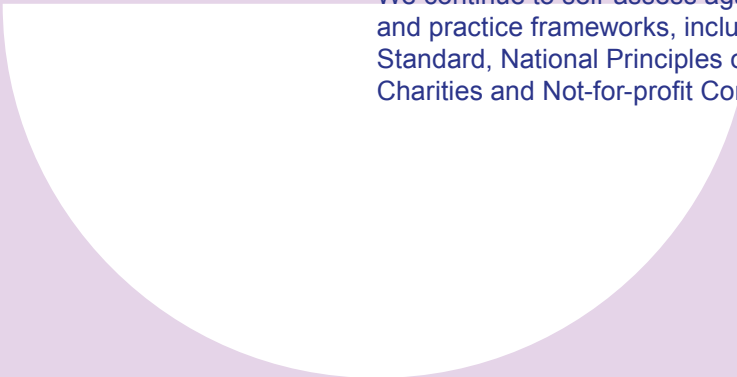
Quality improvement

2022-23 has seen significant enhancement of Toora's governance, compliance, and quality improvement systems.

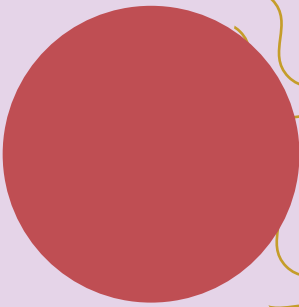
These enhancements include:

- > review and development of a new Enterprise Risk Framework, Strategic Risk tolerances and a Risk Policy
- > review and development of board subcommittees to include a Clinical Governance Sub-committee and an Organisational Governance Sub-committee, along with our well-established Finance sub-committee
- > implementation of software to assist in our ongoing internal and external audits, and compliance requirements
- > implemented a cloud based human resources management software.

Toora is accredited against the QIC – Health and Community Standards and this year we had our mid-cycle review. The report noted 'there is energy and focus on continuous improvements in governance, management, and evidence-based services. The Assessor wishes to acknowledge the CEO's leadership and others' efforts in continuous quality improvement, which has seen several aligned systems and processes developed.'



We continue to self-assess against the multiple regulatory requirements and practice frameworks, including the NSQHS Clinical Governance Standard, National Principles of Child Safe Organisations and Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC) Governance Standards.



Toora's policies and procedures continue to be reviewed and updated to ensure they meet the changing needs of the sector and the organisation and will continue to be a focus for the coming year. Some of the reviews in 2022-23 have included:

- > Safeguarding
- > Codes of Conduct
- > Complaints handling
- > Client and Organisational Records Management
- > Finance Policies and Procedures
- > Human Resources Policies

Delivering excellence in service delivery is our key outcome for our clients and community. Toora has made improvement in service and program delivery by:

- > reviewing program structures in response to service gaps for clients
- > planned a new Clinical Services Team
- > reviewed our Clinical Governance Framework, which was externally reviewed
- > reviewed the Clinical Governance Committee, and related working groups and reporting mechanisms.

We continue to use feedback and complaints, incidences, and our satisfaction surveys to ensure the voices of our clients are heard and inform continuous improvement and changes to programs and services. In 2022-23 we invited several clients to participate in our strategic planning sessions, enabling clients to inform change at the highest possible level in the organisation.

Toora is registered and regulated under the following providers:



Strategic Plan 1 July 2023 - 1 July 2024



Vision

Our vision at Toora is a world where women, girls, non-binary and feminine identifying people live safely and securely without fear; where we are equal, respected and valued for our contributions to society.

Goal 1

To provide gender specialist quality services that are holistic, evidence-based and outcome focused

Objectives

- 1.1 Strengthen and expand supports for areas of need e.g. children in our care and First Nations women
- 1.2 Implement the Toora models of care
- 1.3 Expand the range of therapeutic counselling services
- 1.4 Improve our collection and analysis of data
- 1.5 Work collaboratively with other service providers to maximise client outcomes
- 1.6 Improve how we measure client outcomes and impact

Goal 2

To inform people of who we are, what we do and why we do it

Objectives

- 2.1 Promote our brand as a leader in gender specialist, innovative and evidence-based services for women with complex needs
- 2.2 Implement a communication strategy to convey the impact, outcomes and 'value adds' of our service
- 2.3 Advocate for the needs of women and their children in wider forums

Goal 3

To be a sustainable organisation with diverse income streams

Objectives

- 3.1 Improve the strategic focus of our financial management systems
- 3.2 Continue to build our equity to meet the strategic needs of the organisation and reduce financial risk
- 3.3 Further develop community housing expertise and expand our housing stock
- 3.4 Further develop strong collaborations and alliances with other agencies to maximise efficiencies, funding opportunities and expertise
- 3.5 Be submission ready for engagement in Commissioning for service delivery
- 3.6 Seek alternative sources of funding

Goal 4

To ensure organisational capacity and capability to meet the needs of existing and future clients

Objectives

- 4.1 Maintain accreditation, community housing registration and any other mandated quality requirements
- 4.2 Have a structured proactive approach to the current and future information technology needs of the organisation
- 4.3 Build and support a qualified employee base to meet strategic and operational demands
- 4.4 Attract and build the capacity of First Nations staff to ensure culturally sensitive service delivery and professional development

Goal 5

An inclusive and diverse organisation that is culturally informed and competent

Objectives

- 5.1 Develop, in consultation with staff and client stakeholders, and implement the Toora Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-25 and the Toora Cultural Competence Framework
- 5.2 Develop and implement a Diversity and Inclusion strategy that gives consideration to all diversity groups, but in particular First Nations people, Culturally and Racially Marginalised (CARM), LGBTQI+ and people with disability