

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2017-18

### **PURPOSE**

To provide integrated safety, counselling and justice support services to people impacted by crime and abuse in South Australia



# OUR BOARD



Bryan Morden  
(Chair)



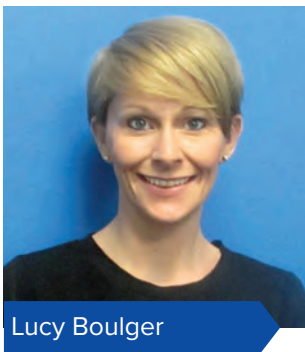
Karen Fullagar  
(Deputy Chair)



Peter Gormlie  
(Treasurer)



James Blanford



Lucy Boulger



Dr Helen Paige FAICD



Dr Nina Sivertsen



Angela Catinari

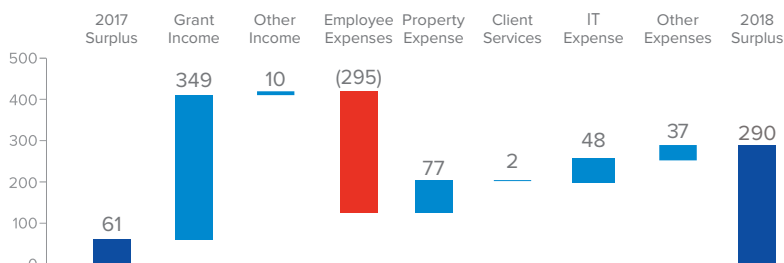
## FINANCIAL

### Summary of Results

INCOME STATEMENT	2018	2017	CHANGE
<i>\$A000s</i>			
Grant Income	4,505	4,156	349
Other Income	128	118	10
Employee Benefit Expense	(3,165)	(2,870)	(295)
Property Expenses	(399)	(476)	77
Client Services	(346)	(348)	2
Information Technology	(111)	(160)	49
Other Expenses	(322)	(360)	38
Surplus/(Deficit)	290	61	229

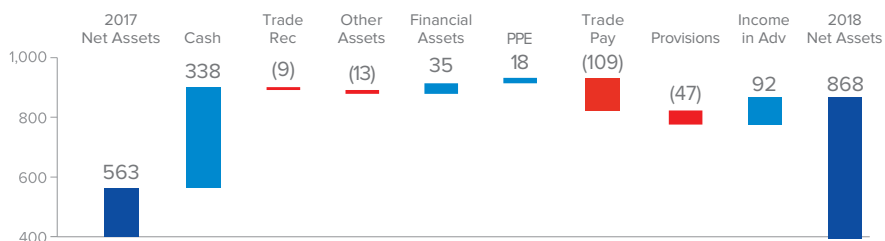
### Financial results year on year

#### Financial Performance



FINANCIAL POSITION	2018	2017	CHANGE
<i>\$A000s</i>			
Current assets	902	586	316
Non-current assets	621	568	53
Total assets	1,523	1,154	369
Current liabilities	(614)	(568)	(46)
Non-current liabilities	(41)	(23)	(18)
Total liabilities	(655)	(591)	64
Net assets	868	563	305

#### Financial Position



### Key comments

- Increase in grant income as a result of increased funding from funding bodies, including Attorney General's Department and Department of Communities and Social Inclusion in line with funding agreements.
- Increase in employee benefit expense is due to a 3.3% increase in staff wages in line with VSS Enterprise Agreement and Equal Remuneration Order (ERO), as well as increased grant revenue which has resulted in increased staff resources for VSS programs.
- Decrease in property expenses of \$77K, the prior year included relocation costs from VSS moving offices in 2016.
- Increase in trade & other payables of \$109K resulting from accrued wages for June and outstanding payments

# ADVOCACY

Victims of Crime

Right to Safety

Justice and Changing the System

Changing Values and Attitudes

Awareness and Prevention

## From the Chair and Chief Executive

### We are pleased to present the 2017-18 Annual Report for Victim Support Service (VSS)

This year has been a year of renewal. We have a new CE, a new independent Commissioner for Victims' Rights has been appointed and we are looking to the future. But we do so with a respectful nod to the past. VSS has grown significantly over the last 39 years. Our achievements during this time see us regarded as the peak advocacy body and service provider for victims of crime in South Australia. Now we look to what we can achieve in the coming twelve months with an eye on our 40th birthday in October 2019.

Our business is arguably the best in the country for our delivery of trauma informed counselling. For us, the term "trauma informed" is more than just a buzzword – it is something we work on every day, in every way, so that our clients get the quality service they deserve. We also lead the way in our use of technology to keep our clients who are victims of domestic violence in their own homes with increased safety. We want to build on our leading practices so that we continue to help the people of this state experiencing violence and abuse to find a path to healing.

We work collaboratively within our sector, as well as consulting with leading bodies and advocacy groups, to inform and promote our services and to provide advice on our areas of expertise. The networks that we work with, through their own areas of expertise and experience, strengthen our services and challenge us to find new ways to reach victims of crime. We recognise that there are new and emerging ways in which crime is occurring and we are conscious of the need to be across these trends.

Advocacy on behalf of victims of crime has always been an integral part of the organisation. This is an area that we will be focusing on in the coming year. We listen to the victims of crime that we serve, both in practical and policy matters, so that we can use the strength of many to formulate and convey our message on the issues affecting them within our community.

We are particularly appreciative of the people who are VSS and the professionalism, expertise, care and energy that they bring to the work they do. This extends to our volunteers who are an inspiration. The work that they do is vital to the services we are recognised for and they are an integral part of our staff.



**Bryan Morden**  
Chair, VSS Board



**Caroline Holmstrom**  
Chief Executive, VSS

# SNAPSHOT REPORT

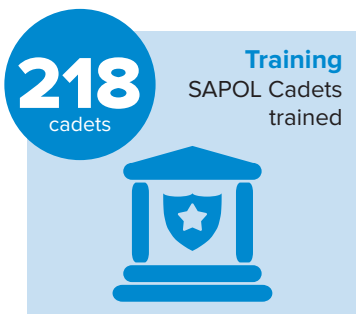
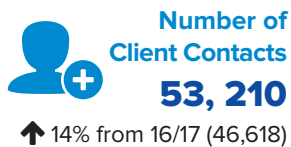
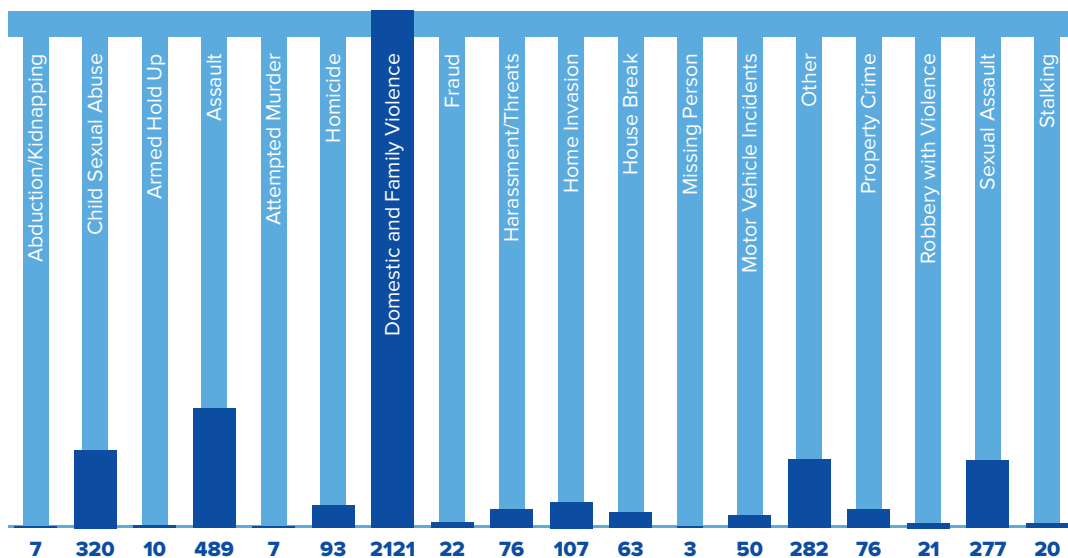
17-18

## Locations

- ① Adelaide Metro
- ② Berri
- ③ Mt Gambier
- ④ Murray Bridge
- ⑤ Port Augusta
- ⑥ Port Lincoln
- ⑦ Port Pirie
- ⑧ Whyalla



## The Number and Type of Crimes



**24,791** Number of Client Contacts  
**2448** Number of New Counselling Client Contacts



**22,979** Number of Client Contacts  
**1336** Number of Referrals  
↑ 6% (from 16/17 1256)  
**520** Number of Staying Home Staying Safe Home Security Audits

**617** Number of Members  
↑ 12% (from 550 16/17)  
**332** Number of Loans  
↑ 11% (from 300 16/17)  
**95** New Members  
↑ 6% (from 90 16/17)



**801** Number of women assisted with an Intervention Order  
**92** Number of women represented in Court  
**100** Number of women assisted with Tenancy Orders

# VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

- Court Companions
- Public Speaking
- Public Awareness
- Research

## SUPPORT



### State-Wide Support to Victims of Crime

**Support to Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse in accessing the National Redress Scheme**

### Support for Victims of Domestic or Family Violence and Abuse

Staying Home Staying Safe – Risk Assessments and Home Security Audits for women at risk of, or experiencing, domestic or family violence and abuse

Women’s Domestic Violence Court Assistance Service – legal information, advice and representation for women who are at risk of, or experiencing, domestic violence and abuse

### Trained Court Companions

Volunteers assisting victims of crime to understand the Court Process and supporting them to give evidence and feel safe

### Victim Impact Statements

### Information for Victims of Crime Compensation

### Individual Advocacy

## LISTEN



### State-Wide Victims of Crime Help Desk and Counselling Service

**Royal Commission Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse Counselling Service**

### State-Wide Community Engagement

### Partner Consultation

### Working with the South Australian and Federal Governments

## EDUCATE



### Resource Centre

The VSS Resource Centre offers a free service with access to current self-help and therapeutic materials. 95 people joined the VSS Resource Centre in 2017-2018.

### Website and Online Resources

### Trauma Informed Fact Sheets and Publications

### Research and Submissions to State and Federal Governments

### Community Education and Training

### Visibility in Courts and Police locations

### Public Speaking and Awareness activities and Events

**“I find the brain-rebuilding and identity-rebuilding books really helpful”**

Member

## AWARDS

### WINNERS 2017

#### Professional Award Winner

#### Greg Mayfield

Greg Mayfield is a senior journalist for The Recorder and the Flinders News at Port Pirie. He was honoured in 2017 by this award for his work in promoting awareness of domestic violence in regional South Australia.



#### Volunteer Award Winner

#### Sue Bourke

Sue has been a court companion with VSS since 2013 and over the past four years has supported many victims of crime and their families whilst they attend court.



## What is trauma-informed practice (TIP)?

At VSS we are committed to working from a trauma informed approach. This is a strengths-based framework grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma that emphasises physical, psychological and emotional safety for everyone. It is an approach that creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment.<sup>1</sup> Put more simply, TIP asks what has happened to the person, not what is wrong with them.

Developments in neuroscience have supported the recognition of TIP as we increase our understanding of the neuroplasticity of the brain, that neural pathways can be generated, renewed and integrated, meaning recovery from trauma is possible.

Over recent years awareness and adoption of TIP has increased significantly. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has played a role in achieving this, as it adopted this framework from its inception and has recommended it for ongoing counselling support to survivors.

TIP is not only a practice adopted by counsellors, it is a practice adopted by the organisation and everyone involved in the organisation from front line staff to board members. There are five principles that underpin this approach: safety; trustworthiness; choice; collaboration; and empowerment.

At a service level this means that we recognise and respect the trauma history of clients and the need for “safe enough” space; ensure all policies and procedures incorporate trauma-informed principles, including design of office space and all interactions a client may have with our staff; and involve consumers in all systems, and articulate and uphold trauma-informed rights.

At a counselling level, we are both trauma informed and trauma specific as we are here to support victims of crime with their experience of trauma. We have adopted a phased base approach that upholds the primacy of safety; the value of the therapeutic relationship, maximising a sense of empowerment and control; and avoiding retraumatisation. We respect that every victim of crime has a unique experience based on their circumstances (including previous trauma). We recognise that not only are they the expert of their life, but that therapy needs to be tailored to fit the person not the person to the therapy.

## Case Study – Staying Home Staying Safe

Marina\* is a 45 year old single parent of Jane\*, her 14 yo daughter who lives with her, and son John\*<sup>2</sup> who is 19. Unfortunately, over the past 5 years, Marina and Jane have both endured physical, verbal and financial abuse from John. John has drug abuse issues. He has smoked marijuana daily for six years and he is now a regular methamphetamine user which has led to an increase in his abusive behaviour.

There is a ‘no contact’ Intervention Order (IO) in place which lists Marina and Jane as protected persons. However, John continues to breach this. He gains access to Marina’s private rental property through the back door which no longer closes securely due to previous property damage caused by him trying to gain access to the house.

In the past John has taken money from Marina’s purse, a television and jewellery. Marina no longer keeps anything of value at her home.

On two occasions, Marina has woken to find John sleeping on her couch. She has called the police and asked him to leave. This has resulted in John physically assaulting Marina by punching her to the head and strangling her. John also threatened to come back to kill Marina and Jane.

As a consequence, Marina has been unable to sleep at night due to fear of John returning to the property. She has also taken a lot of time off work due to physical injuries and ill health. They both live in constant fear. Often Jane sleeps at friend’s houses and there has been a noticeable decline in her school work. When Jane does stay at home, she sleeps in the same room as Marina.

Staying Home Staying Safe was asked to intervene.

With Marina and Jane, SHSS developed a safety plan and arranged for installation of sensor lights, security doors and window/door alarms.

On checking in with Marina, she reported that they are able to sleep much better knowing she will be alerted if John tries to gain access to the property. They are both also feeling safer knowing that they have an action plan in place should John try and access the property.

1 Blue Knot Foundation <https://www.blueknot.org.au/Workers-Practitioners/For-Health-Professionals/Resources-for-Health-Professionals/Trauma-Informed-Care> accessed 27 April 2018

2 \*Not their real names