



DETOUR
HOUSE^{INC}
Caring for women in need

Annual Report
2020-2021



**Detour House and
The Girls Refuge**

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We acknowledge the Aboriginal land in which we live and practice and the cultures that here gather; our ancestors and future generations. We embrace anti-oppressive feminist practice, holding the hope of creating safety-centred positive change.



Vision and Purpose, Organisational Structure, Management Committee

After extensive stakeholder engagement, and to align with our 2022-2026 strategic plan, we have renewed the Vision & Purpose of the organisation.

Vision

A future where all women and girls* live safe, stable and fulfilling lives.

Purpose

Empowering women and girls* through the delivery of trauma-informed safe places and tailored programs, to reduce the incidence of homelessness.

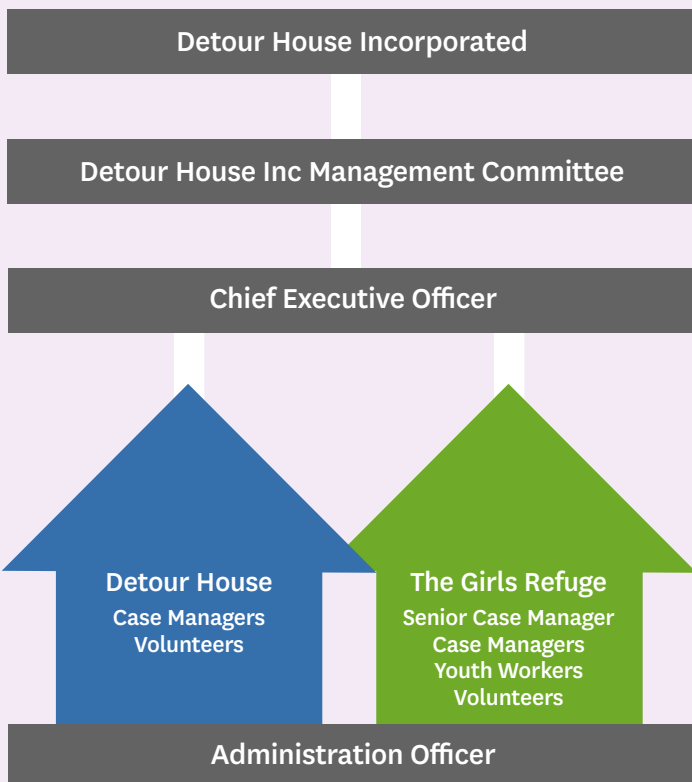
**Detour House Inc celebrates and stands with people of diverse genders and sexualities. Our services are delivered to cis and trans women and girls, and gender non-binary people assigned female at birth.*

Detour House Inc Management Committee

2020 Melanie Bradfield, President / Chair	2021 Monique Purcell, President / Chair
Kiara Salmon, Treasurer	Kyle Westgarth, Treasurer
Louise Fleck, Secretary	Kiara Salmon, Secretary
Alexandra Fish, Member	Davanh Inthachanh, Member
Monique Purcell, Secretary	Evrithiki Diinis, Member
Nikki Kelso, Member	Kristen Stanleick, Member
Sandy Kervin, Member	Sandy Kervin, Member

“It allows for connection and accountability. It has been really helpful and the support has been amazing”

Detour House Aftercare Client



About us

Detour House Inc provides trauma-informed safe places and tailored programs for women and girls to stay and gain greater safety and stability in their lives. Our services are located in Sydney's Inner West and are delivered across two key services: Detour House and The Girls Refuge.

Detour House offers a specialist residential alcohol and other drug rehabilitation program. At Detour House, we equip people who are addressing substance use with knowledge, tools and strategies to successfully transition back into everyday life. Detour House is one of only a handful of alcohol and other drug treatment services in NSW that centres on providing a stepped care option to support transition back into community.

The Girls Refuge (TGR) is the only gender-specific crisis accommodation service in NSW for girls aged 13-17 years experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. We provide young people with person-centred support at their own pace. As part of our crisis refuge service, we support young people with access to transitional and long-term housing, development of life skills, access to legal advice, assistance with accessing income support, school liaison, employment assistance, career mentoring, and advocacy.

Detour House Inc is overseen by a Management Committee of professionals across the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. Our services are funded by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) as Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) and supported by the generosity of valued donors and supporters throughout the community.

As a member of the Inner City Services for Women with Complex Needs consortium, Detour House together with lead agency B Miles Women's Foundation and the Community Restorative Centre delivers services for women with specialised complex issues. Funded by DCJ, this partnership directs service provision towards women recovering from substance dependence, experiencing mental illness, or who have been exposed to the criminal justice system.

In recognising the need for gender-safe services, we believe in and value the work of specialist women's services. We thank the NSW Government and the broader community for recognising and supporting the important work that we do at Detour House Inc.

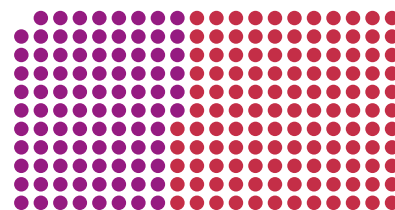
Detour House Inc 2021

Towards reducing the incidence of homelessness, across the year:

219

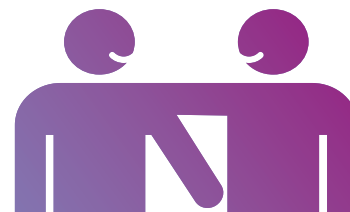
women and girls were supported

● Women ● Girls



248

support periods were delivered



8,955

client contact sessions were conducted



3,605

bed nights of accommodation were provided



“Connection with other women and talking about my feelings. Peer support and helping other women. Processing feelings.”

Detour House client



The continuing hard work of our people to support the Australian community throughout a very challenging year, both as a result of COVID-19 and an increase in the community demanding our services, has strengthened Detour House Inc.

Over the last year, brand strength, stakeholder satisfaction and digital take-up have all improved. We were also pleased to sign renewal contracts with the Department of Communities and Justice and our affiliations, Inner City Services for Women with Complex Needs consortium (led by B Miles Women's Foundation), for continuation of core programs at Detour House and The Girls Refuge from 1 July 2021 until 30 June 2024.

As we wrap-up our 2016-2021 Strategic Plan, we have reflected on our achievements, which included:

- Cementing strong relationships with funding bodies and network partners
- Strengthening existing partnerships within the sector and pursuing new sponsors, organisations, volunteers and people to support us
- Diversifying our funding base in order to extend and secure services into the future
- Sharing our knowledge and practical experience in providing services to women and girls experiencing domestic violence, childhood abuse and neglect, alcohol and substance misuse, and homelessness
- Increasing our profile to ensure we have the right channels to connect.

I would like to thank everyone who helped us achieve our 2016-2021 Strategic Plan priorities and goals.

As we develop the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, the Management Committee is focused on delivering value for our people, the community and key stakeholders. We have revitalised our vision and purpose; we are strengthening our brand; and we are positioning Detour House Inc to be well-placed to meet the challenges of the coming years.

We look forward to sharing more with you on this in the first half of 2022.

The Management Committee is undergoing a continued renewal process.

We farewelled our previous President, Melanie Bradfield, together with Committee Members, Nikki Kelso and Alexandra Fish. I would like to acknowledge the incredible contribution that these wonderful women made in their time on the Committee.

We have been fortunate to be able to add to the Detour House Inc Management Committee experienced executives, Kyle Westgarth, as Treasurer, and Evrithiki Diinis, who formally joined us from the Observership Program. Following recruitment of exceptionally high calibre, we also welcomed Davanh Inthachanh and Kristen Stanleick to the board in 2021, who will strengthen our expertise especially in the areas of people and culture, systems, communications and service delivery. The calibre of applicants was so outstanding that through this recruitment, we also enhanced our Service Subcommittee by onboarding two Subcommittee Members bringing sector expertise in gender-based violence and mental health.

It has been a pleasure leading this group of professional and energetic women and being a part of an organisation with such a strong vision and purpose.

I would like to thank the Management Committee for their time, energy and dedication during the past year and for the insights and expertise they each bring to overseeing Detour House Inc's activities.

We are fortunate to have such skilled and committed staff led by Olivia Nguy, Chief Executive Officer. The Management Committee would like to thank our staff for their hard work and dedication, and for their passion and commitment to the women and girls we support. We would also like to thank our generous supporters throughout the community who make the work of Detour House Inc possible.

I am honoured to be associated with Detour House Inc. Nothing makes me prouder than when I witness the organisation and our people helping women and girls in seeking support. This is the heart and soul of Detour House Inc and the driver for us to do more and better each day.

Despite the last two challenging years, I am confident the organisation will complete the goals and priorities in progress and that Detour House Inc will continue to play a strong role in the service of all its stakeholders.

Monique Purcell,
President

Chief Executive Officer's Report



It goes without saying that the past year has been another difficult one for many. We empathise deeply with all who have been affected by COVID-19 over the past two years. The pandemic has compounded homelessness, risk of

homelessness, and impacted community mental health and wellbeing significantly in this time. Indeed, at the time of writing this, we are preparing to increase the support we extend to community members impacted by COVID-19.

Amidst the hardship, it is a marvel to reflect upon the incredible growth and the achievements of the people who have come through our doors with more resilience than ever. We are also proud to have brought to fruition multiple new developments across our services to broaden and deepen supports for our service users, despite and amidst the 'new-normal' challenges of COVID-19. The year that has passed has been the year that we envisioned: of bolstering aftercare service delivery at Detour House; of achieving further education, employment and wellbeing outcomes with the introduction of our new day program LEVEL UP! at The Girls Refuge; and of integrating the evidence-based 'Emotion Regulation Impulse Control (ERIC)' model into youth work and case management at The Girls Refuge to strengthen relationships and mental wellbeing amongst our service users.

Looking forward, we are eager to bring our 2022-2026 strategic plan to life. In the immediacy, we are focusing upon new ways to support women at Detour House in the process of regaining employment; on increasing the outreach support we deliver to young people at risk of homelessness at The Girls Refuge; and investing significant energy into further enhancing the quality of our services, with aspirations to achieve exceptional alignment with the Australian Services Excellence Standards and the NSW Clinical Care Standards for Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services.

To our community – our wonderful donors, funders, service partners, budding students, and volunteers: thank you for your generous support, especially at a time when so much is at a squeeze, and where we have needed to be more creative and adaptable than ever. To our staff and Management Committee: you never cease to amaze me through the incredible dedication, energy and skill you bring to our service users and the organisation, no less through the challenging and busy year that has been. I cannot thank you enough for it - you are phenomenal. To our clients: you are extraordinary and mighty. Thank you for helping us to shape our services with your feedback and insight, and for inspiring our team day in and day out.

Olivia Nguy,
Chief Executive Officer

“The year that has passed has been the year that we envisioned: of bolstering aftercare service delivery at Detour House; of achieving further education, employment and wellbeing outcomes with the introduction of our new day program LEVEL UP!”

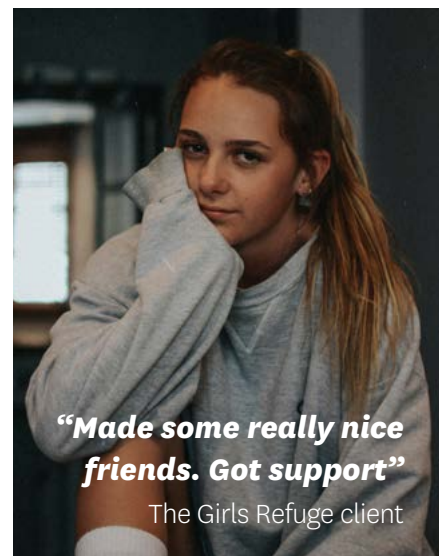
Our Supporters

A huge thank you to the incredible organisations and individuals who have assisted Detour House and The Girls Refuge this year, in their giving of time, talent and donations.

We extend an exceptionally large thank you to our major donors and supporters Elizabeth Gilbert, Teen Spirit Foundation, The Lions Club of Sydney Waratah, VGI Partners Foundation, and VivCourt. Your contributions have been significant in enabling the growth and deepening of our service delivery and impact.

Our heartfelt thanks go to:

- Avalon K
- A Sound Life
- Aesthetic Artistry
- Aileen Sage Architects
- Australian Dental Health Foundation
- Australian Social Value Bank
- B Miles Women's Foundation
- Bunnings Warehouse
- CAOS
- Clyde and Co
- Community Restorative Centre
- Currie & Brown
- Day Street Band
- Delta Therapy Dogs
- Department of Communities and Justice
- Dress For Success
- Elena Duggan
- Elizabeth Gilbert
- Endeavour College of Natural Health
- Family Planning NSW
- Fernwood Fitness Broadway / Annandale
- First Point Ventures
- GAPP
- Good 360
- Good Shepherd
- Griffin Theatre Company
- Haymarket Foundation
- Heaps Decent
- Hon Briggs Design & Interiors
- Housing NSW
- Inner West Council
- Inner West Mums
- Inner Wheel Five Dock
- Jamie Parker MP
- Justice Connect
- Leichhardt Bowling and Recreational Club
- Leichhardt Marketplace
- Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre
- Lemonaid Coaching
- Lions Club of Sydney Waratah
- Marrickville Legal Centre
- Mills Oakley
- Mirvac
- MLC School
- Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous
- Norton Rose Fulbright
- Oz Harvest
- PAWS Pet Therapy
- Perpetual
- Pink Hibiscus
- Rotary Club Five Dock
- Save My HSC
- Share the Dignity
- Social Alchemy
- St James Primary School
- StreetSmart
- Sundaraj & Ker
- Take Charge
- Teen Spirit Foundation
- The Glebe Society
- Tutoring4All
- Two Good Co
- VGI Partners Foundation
- VivCourt
- Wesley Mission
- Women's Executive Leaders of AOD Specialist Treatment
- Women's Wardrobe by Vinnies and Thread Together
- Youth Block



Homelessness at a glance

Highlights, workshops and activities



290,500

People in NSW required Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) in 2019-20 (AIHW 2020).



1 in 10

SHS clients reported problematic alcohol and other drug use in 2019-20 – almost 28,500 people (AIHW 2020).



13%

Of SHS service users in 2019-20 were children and young people aged 10-17 (AIHW 2020).



42,400

Young people presented alone to SHS services in 2019-20 (AIHW 2020).



2 in 5

Currently 2 in 5 people who need crisis accommodation are unable to access services (AIHW 2019).



125

Each year, approximately 125 women and children are turned away from crisis accommodation services when leaving domestic and family violence in Sydney's Inner West alone, due to lack of availability (Department of Social Services 2019).

LEVEL UP!

LEVEL UP! Day Program was introduced at The Girls Refuge (TGR) in October 2020. Developed and implemented with input and support from past service users of TGR, LEVEL UP! is a holistic day program for young people who are disengaged from school during experiences of homelessness, with the aim of helping to reach education, employment and wellbeing goals.

We are extremely grateful to Fernwood Fitness Broadway/Annandale for hosting free weekly gym sessions and classes to our service users across the organisation, and to A Sound Life for the delivery of weekly yoga and meditation sessions. These sessions went a long way in improving physical and mental health amongst participants.

Thank you also to Save My HSC, Avalon, and Tutoring 4 All for providing lower cost tutoring support so skilfully to participants, and Social Alchemy who have provided supplementary pro bono tutoring sessions to our clients. You provided remedial education that was so well adapted to each participant, from a place of both fun and understanding.

Over the year, our LEVEL UP! participants enhanced their cooking, nutrition and job readiness knowledge and skills through a 10 week cooking program facilitated by Two Good Co. Congratulations to participants who achieved a food handling certificate in the process!

Participants also developed self-compassion strategies, skills to manage complex and challenging relationship dynamics, and built up their emotion regulation skills through weekly workshops delivered by Good Shepherd ANZ and clinical psychologist Pippa Mitchell.



Highlights, workshops and activities

Aftercare support

Aftercare support to women at Detour House was enhanced with a generous contribution from the Teen Spirit Foundation via a Perpetual Impact grant, and extended by mammoth fundraising efforts of the Lions Club of Sydney Waratah. Over the year we were able to build up an offering of relapse prevention and transitional aftercare case management and transitional support to women who have completed the core program at Detour House by an additional two days per week.

Volunteering Day

A massive painting day was undertaken to freshen up Detour House, thanks to volunteers from Mirvac who rolled up their sleeves on their Volunteering Day.



Art therapy

Welcoming our Master of Art Therapy student Mel on a one-year placement has enabled us to extend regular art therapy sessions at a group and individual level to residents of The Girls Refuge (read more on page 20!)

Emotion Regulation Impulse Control

Integrating Deakin University's Emotion Regulation Impulse Control (ERIC) framework into our everyday practice through youth work and case management at The Girls Refuge builds up distress tolerance, reduces risk-taking behaviours and promotes strong and healthy relationships and mental wellbeing amongst the young folk we work with.

Workshops

We hosted a tonne of workshops and education groups across our services, including financial management sessions with Wesley Mission, Managing Your Moods with Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre, domestic and family violence workshops with Marrickville Legal Centre, music production workshops with Heaps Decent, and goal setting mentoring sessions with Lemonaid Coaching.

Classes

Nutrition and cooking classes with women at Detour House were delivered thanks to the generous support of Oz Harvest's NEST program grant.

International Women's Day

A superb International Women's Day in celebration with Masterchef Australia 2016 winner Elena Duggan got our young people connecting to culture, creativity and each other through individual recreations of her semi-final winning dessert Apples, Biccies and Cheese.

Pet Therapy

Our furry friend Jada visited The Girls Refuge fortnightly through the generous support of PAWS Pet Therapy (in addition to our therapaws cuddle crew Jazzy and Barkley)!



Community garden

The bountiful community garden at Detour House, and veggie garden beds at The Girls Refuge are in bloom. The garden beds continue to provide a space to build up skill in growing produce, a means of increasing food security, continued community connection, and grounding.

School holiday activities

We hosted a dynamic set of school holiday activities throughout the year for The Girls Refuge clients, not entirely hampered by COVID-19! A special thank you to Pink Hibiscus who provided pamper packs and Aesthetic Artistry who arranged for an in-house pamper session at TGR. Other school holiday highlights included a trip to Griffin Theatre Company, Pixar Putt, Tree Tops, a stack of beach trips and pool days, poetry slams and drive in movies. We also got creative in-house with a TGR escape room, cupcake decorating competitions and stacks of craft (read: hama beading, tie dyeing, flower pot painting, jewellery making) to make school holidays in 'COVID-19 lockdown' go by as quickly and dynamically as possible.

Fundraising

We celebrated incredible fundraiser events – with special thanks to Lions Club of Sydney Waratah, Rotary Club of Five Dock, Grill'd, Inner West Mums, Day Street Band and all involved in the Inner City Football Fundraiser Match, and all the generous donors who supported our first Gift of Empowerment Christmas Card campaign.

Outcomes at The Girls Refuge



THE GIRLS
REFUGE
Caring for girls in need

TGR client complexity

A snapshot review of young people accessing crisis accommodation at The Girls Refuge reflects that:

47%

had accessed multiple crisis accommodation services due to protracted homelessness

48%

had already experienced homelessness for longer than 12 months

72%

were not yet ready for independent living

48%

were unlikely to achieve family restoration

Outcomes at TGR

In feedback received from young people who stayed at TGR in 2020-21:

84%

said they felt safer by the time they left TGR compared to upon arrival

74%

said their housing situation improved at the time of leaving TGR

2 in 3

respondents achieved improved wellbeing during their time at TGR

89%

reflected having a positive experience of TGR

What do our clients say?

What did you get out of your stay at TGR?

- "Stable environment. Able to work on self. Wonderful staff. Able to have fun, enjoy different hobbies, learn more. Felt safe. Have a home".
- "When I stayed at The Girls Refuge, I had many positive experiences including positive and uplifting staff, Opal Cards to get to and from education, extra support with anything we needed. Staff tailored to different and diverse needs of all of the youth in their care, and I also wouldn't have had my driver's license by now if it weren't for The Girls Refuge helping me out with lessons".
- "Support with paying off my fines, work and TAFE".
- "Strong friends. Enhanced moral support".
- "Transitional accommodation".
- "Made some really nice friends. Got support (case management)".
- "A good opportunity to go to a second house that was perfect for me".
- "A roof over my head and further accommodation".

They also said:

- "Really good experience. Thankful TGR was there to help".
- "Had an amazing time, felt very supported".
- "Activities were fun. Caseworkers helped to find a house".
- "Had a roof over my head. The workers were really nice, overall really good".
- "A good program especially if you are homeless".
- "All social workers really helped at the time".
- "Had a really good time at TGR. The staff were really nice".

Meet Alyssa*

Alyssa is a young Aboriginal woman, who has suffered a significant amount of trauma throughout her life. She came to TGR reluctantly at 15, feeling like it was her only option for safety after surviving an extremely abusive relationship. Alyssa had been in a constant state of fight or flight mode to survive the trauma she has experienced. She suffers with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, which makes regulating emotions really difficult.



Alyssa understandably really struggled to trust adults and services when she first came to TGR, as she had been let down by people so many times. Over time however, Alyssa developed trust with staff at TGR, and her behaviours began to change. There were less outbursts of difficult emotions such as frustration and anger, and she developed skills to communicate and manage her emotions in healthier ways. Alyssa was talking through the problems she was facing and using positive coping strategies such as going to the gym.

Having unconditional care and support from all the staff at TGR – someone by her side on the journey – had a significant impact on Alyssa’s self-esteem. The team at TGR had the privilege of seeing her flourish and express more of her fun, playful personality during her stay.

Alyssa had been disengaged with school since she was 11 due to being bullied and experiencing instability. She struggled with sleeping due to trauma, and used substances as a coping strategy. Whilst at TGR, Alyssa was supported to access mental health support, and significantly reduce her substance use. She developed a better sleep routine and re-engaged with education. Alyssa felt more in control of her life than ever before and was taking action and responsibility for the life

she wanted to live. Alyssa had received a collection of transport fines, and TGR was able to help Alyssa repay these fines by volunteering under a Work and Development Order. Through her continued hard work and commitment, Alyssa contributed positively to the community and received an ongoing offer of employment from this experience. This gave Alyssa a new-found sense of purpose. She felt proud that she had achieved so much and started to believe in herself.

Alyssa initially struggled at TGR as she had grown up in an environment where there was aggression, abuse and substance use. She has reflected that the calm, predictable, nurturing environment at TGR felt uncomfortable at first as it was an unfamiliar atmosphere. However, since leaving The Girls Refuge, Alyssa recognises that this was the right place for her to grow and to be her best self.

Alyssa moved out of Sydney to stay with family. Since leaving Sydney, it has been difficult for Alyssa to engage with support services in her new area. Her history of trauma continues to make it really difficult to trust new people. Despite these barriers, Alyssa has kept in regular contact with TGR. She is able to actively seek help from TGR when needed, and we are providing ongoing case management support in an outreach capacity. This continues to encompass emotional support to manage the impact the trauma has had on her; helping her develop life skills and healthy coping strategies; and linking into services to support with her mental health and wellbeing. Alyssa has also reengaged in education to complete her year 10 ROSA in her new area. Life is not easy for Alyssa, however she is an incredibly resilient young woman. The amazing progress she made while engaging with TGR has given her hope for her future, and determination to achieve her goals.

*Name has been changed. Illustrative photo only.



Meet Anna

One of our many fabulous Youth Workers at The Girls Refuge.

1. How would others describe you in 3 words?

Compassionate, supportive, inclusive (I asked my work colleagues for this).

2. How would you describe TGR in 3 words?

Diverse, open-minded, trauma-informed.

3. What do you love most about working at TGR?

Working together in a supportive team, funny moments together with our young people and learning new things with every young person who comes to The Girls Refuge.

“Stable environment. Able to work on self. Wonderful staff. Able to have fun, enjoy different hobbies, learn more. Felt safe. Have a home”

The Girls Refuge client



Art Therapy group session



Detour House client complexity

Clients presenting to Detour House over the past 12 months presented with the following co-occurring issues in addition to substance dependence:

88%

had diagnosed mental ill health

80%

presented with primary homelessness

71%

sought support for poly-drug dependence

66%

had experienced domestic and family violence

21%

had a diagnosed eating disorder

Additionally:

43%

had child protection matters that presented concern for the care and protection of their children

27%

had criminal justice matters, either as a victim or perpetrator, that they needed support with

18%

disclosed that they had experienced sexual assault.

Our clients said

"My stay at Detour House has been showing me how to live my life again. Doing the program here has been the best gift I could have ever asked for. The growth I see and feel in my life - I never thought it was possible. The staff have been so supportive, more than I could ever of asked for. Doing my first 2 steps of the 12 step program has given me the freedom to feel like I'm on the best road of recovery. From the bottom of my heart, I owe so much to Detour and the Detour program."

"You are supported to take responsibility for your own recovery. Your decisions affect your quality of recovery, and you need to stay motivated. Detour encourages you to do that. My biggest issues have been handling cravings / mental health on weekends. I am now able to plan ahead, take self-care measures, and lean on people around me. I'll be moving into share accommodation and handle that they are drinkers much better. Detour has changed my life and I'm grateful with my whole being!!"

"The ongoing support from staff members has been a massive comfort in my recovery outside the house. Knowing that I have them to talk to has given me the confidence to face tasks daily and empowered me to be brave in facing my disease. They have been invaluable to my recovery".

"Kelly and Wendy have been so friendly and supportive, and have given me so much help and assistance. I believe without the help of Detour House I would not have learnt the skills I have today, but I have to give myself credit for growing and being open to the help I've received here. I am able to move into independent accommodation thanks to Detour House. I have a better relationship with myself and my family today, and have a strong connection with my higher power, and a really strong recovery today. I just want to thank Detour House for helping me find myself and my strength and helping me to start an amazing life for myself."

"Detour House has given me confidence and helped me find myself. I can now stick to a daily routine and can emotionally regulate better."

"It's been a huge relief and help to have the support after leaving the residence of Detour."

Detour House outcomes

Of program participants who provided exit feedback:

100%

said they developed strategies to manage triggers and not use substances



In snapshot data from clients in receipt of after care support upon completion of the core Detour House program (up to 12 months after core program completion):

100%

reported an improvement in their wellbeing, attributing this mainly to participation in Detour House's program



78%

indicated they had continued stability in their housing situation



78%

reported increased confidence to maintain housing



88%

reported their wellbeing as 4 or 5 out of 5 (5 = excellent)



100%

rated Detour House 4 or 5 out of 5 (5 = excellent)



78%

indicated that Detour House aftercare support had a significant impact on their continued recovery at 4 or 5 out of 5 (5 = most impact)



“Detour House has given me confidence and helped me find myself. I can now stick to a daily routine and can emotionally regulate better.”

Detour House client

56%

had re-engaged with work and 33% had re-engaged with further study



What do you find most helpful about transitional and aftercare support?

“Connection with other women and talking about my feelings. Peer support and helping other women. Processing feelings.”

“It allows for connection and accountability. It has been really helpful and the support has been amazing”.

“That it fills my mornings up. That I still have a forum to talk about what’s going on for me. The connection”.

“Transition group has been a consistent and helpful factor in my life, an important way of staying connected with peers, and an outlet outside of AA/NA and psychologist appointments to talk about what is going on for me. Basically where I learned how to support and be supported”.

“My stay at Detour House has been showing me how to live my life again. Doing the program here has been the best gift I could have ever asked for. The growth I see and feel in my life - I never thought it was possible. The staff have been so supportive, more than I could ever of asked for. Doing my first 2 steps of the 12 step program has given me the freedom to feel like I’m on the best road of recovery. From the bottom of my heart, I owe so much to Detour and the Detour program.”

Detour House client



A resident’s “garden” created out of clay during an individual art therapy session

Meet Jas*

Jas shares her experience at Detour House, at the end of completing the core program.

When I came in to Detour I was an emotional mess, aware of some of my shortcomings, and really couldn't see how I could make a change with these behaviours, as they had been a part of me and my life for so long. The girls would say to me when I talked about behaviours like co-dependency and people pleasing "oh those behaviours will definitely be worked on here at Detour". I just couldn't see how it would happen for me!

I was desperate for change and came into this recovery wanting and knowing I needed change in my behaviours, not just my using, if I wanted long term abstinence from addiction.

As I had in the previous two rehabs I had just completed, I surrendered to the program of Detour and handed my faith over to the staff and did what they asked of me, even if sometimes it was begrudgingly. I sat with my feelings, processed them and realised everything that was asked of me was the right thing for me to do for me and always in my best interest.

I had many challenges along the way and combined with the theory education, which was so beneficial, and staff being there every step of the way, as well as my peers, I've met each challenge as they've come up and dealt with them in a way I'm proud of. I have seen so much growth in myself, more than any other recovery - mostly in my emotional regulation.

I am growing self-esteem and confidence in myself as a human being, and building a connection with myself instead of unhealthy co-dependent relationships with others. I have realised what true healthy friendships are and have nurtured my relationships with women in recovery

who have always been there supporting, including my sponsor. Most of my meetings are women's meetings and I don't interact with toxic people or any men: only doing the suggested things and running everything I do past my sponsor and friends in recovery. I'm a group member of three women's meetings each week and do service. Detour House has given me the ability and support to do all of this.

When I exit, I'll be moving into my own home for the very first time, which I'm nervous about. But mostly just nervous about the logistics of moving, rather the recovery, as I have so much support in the community and it's all up to action: and that's up to me, which is actually a relief. I'm so grateful to have come and experienced Detour House and wish I'd done it earlier.

"I was desperate for change and came into this recovery wanting and knowing I needed change in my behaviours, not just my using, if I wanted long term abstinence from addiction."

*Name has been changed. Illustrative photo only.



Meet Amie*

I wanted to share with you my experience of Detour House and its aftercare program and the impact it had on me. I did the residential program at Detour House from November 2019 – January 2020. Since then, I've attended transition group as much as possible (probably 3 out of every 4 weeks) either in person or via zoom. I started recovery in around July 2019, and have had multiple periods of sobriety.

I started a Bachelor of Science and Arts at the University of Sydney in 2014. It is designed to be a 5 year course, but due to my addiction, I failed some subjects and deferred my degree while I was doing rehab at Detour House. When I went back to Uni it wasn't smooth sailing. I was re-entering doing 3rd year subjects, and I had a relapse toward the end of semester during my first attempt at a semester back at uni.

Since having a dedicated transition worker at Detour House, I have felt a lot more supported in managing the stresses of day-to-day life, and not reached a crisis point where my sobriety was affected as it had been previously.

I am currently living in a share house with three others. I am on the lease and have been there for nearly 1 year now. I am not employed, but have returned to my part-time volunteering position at FBi Radio Station.

“From my experience, I believe aftercare is helpful in continuing to create a strong community where women feel safe to be honest about what is happening in their lives, and connect with others.”

Transition group has also been really helpful for creating another support network of women in recovery that are a similar age and have similar experiences. I do an aftercare program at Wesley Hospital Ashfield, individual therapy, have a sponsor, do regular AA meetings, and maintain relationships with friends and family in sobriety, but I feel transition group at Detour has a unique contribution to my recovery. In my experience, the most difficult part of rehab is actually reintegrating into the outside world, when you aren't sheltered from triggers and don't have any accountability to stick to your changed behaviour.

From my experience, I believe aftercare is helpful in continuing to create a strong community where women feel safe to be honest about what is happening in their lives, and connect with others. I also think that it has a positive impact on the women that are currently in the residential program, as it give them hope about having a 'normal', exciting life when they complete their time at rehab, as well as knowing they will receive ongoing support once they finish the program.

*Name has been changed. Illustrative photo only.



Meet Emma*

Emma, aged 39, accessed Detour House to address her substance use, which had included alcohol, GHB and ice for over fifteen years. Behind most, if not all substance dependence lays experiences of trauma and poor mental health. In Emma's circumstance, she had experienced domestic violence and multiple sexual assaults, and had a diagnosis of depression, anxiety, and PTSD. At the time of entering Detour House, she was also dealing with grief and loss, which had led to increasing alcohol and other drug use. Emma's substance use had resulted in homelessness, unemployment and the breakdown of relationships with family and friends.



Emma shared about how much her mental health was impacting her: that her anxiety was “through the roof”, she had difficulty sleeping, and she was unable to switch off her negative thoughts, with constant critical self-talk.

Emma's treatment plan was focused on addressing experiences of trauma and domestic and family violence. The team worked with Emma to focus on safety and stabilisation, guiding Emma in developing skills and strategies to grow distress tolerance and self-regulate. Detour House worked with Emma to build a positive concept of self, challenge negative thoughts, develop stronger boundaries, and strengthen emotion regulation and problem-solving skills, and to work on and address relapse prevention and cognitive impairment relating to substance use.

Emma learnt new practical tools and strategies such as CBT and mindfulness techniques, and tactile ways to focus through anxiety, for example through the use of play dough, helping also to remain in the present, working through her body and mind's tendency to disconnect – a common symptom of trauma and ice use. Relaxation techniques, meditation and working on sleep hygiene were incorporated in work with Emma to manage stress and reduce anxiety. Work on healthy relationship building was undertaken, and Emma learnt more about and reflected upon the indicators of domestic and family violence and toxic relationships. During her time at Detour House, Emma was also supported practically to access a rental subsidy, access ongoing mental health counselling and Victims Services support, and address dental issues.

Upon program completion, Emma's mental health had improved considerably, especially in relation to her anxiety. She had become comfortable setting good boundaries and communicating assertively with friends and family. Her relationship with her mum had improved to the extent that they were now meeting up for regular coffee dates, and she had begun communicating again with her siblings. Emma is now enrolled in university, working on completing her Master's in Nutrition. She practices yoga and walks daily. Months following program completion, Emma continues to abstain from alcohol and other drugs, and work on relapse prevention. The journey is not easy nor straightforward – Emma had a lapse in this time, which is common on the path of recovery – but she had learnt from past experience and got back on track with her recovery journey immediately. Emma is now even more committed to her recovery and has more awareness around areas she needs to work further on.

*Name has been changed. Illustrative photo only.

A spotlight on student placements

Over the year, The Girls Refuge (TGR) has had the privilege of hosting and supporting a wide range of students from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds in completing their placements in Social Work (Bachelors and Masters), Counselling, Art Therapy, Community Services, Youth Work, Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Case Management.

TGR provides a safe learning environment for developing professionals, and we aim to support students with a whole-of-team approach. Our students develop core skills in direct and indirect practice, gaining experience as part of a reflective team of professionals.

A day in the life of a student at TGR may include waking clients up and supporting them to get ready for school; building rapport and supporting them to engage in tutoring and other activities; supporting clients with appointments; advocating for clients with other services; applying for Centrelink and housing pathways; developing, implementing and reviewing case plans and safety plans; completing mandatory reporting; attending case conferences and interagency meetings; working on research; reviewing and developing policy; participating in staff workshops and team meetings; engaging in professional development training; engaging in both individual and group supervision, and so on.

Working with young people with complex needs is not easy. Boundaries are constantly tested and developing confidence takes some time, however the kind and genuine care students give to our clients is always appreciated.

Perhaps a perfect example of this is captured in one of our Master of Social Work student's experiences. In her first week of placement, she took a few clients to the gym as part of the LEVEL UP! program. Two residents didn't want to attend the session and thought it would be funny to run away, so they got on a bus and left. This was hard for our student as she felt she had failed, but what a learning opportunity this was!

We discussed in supervision her frustrations, thoughts on assessing risk, and steps moving forward including having a direct conversation with these residents. This wasn't easy, but she sat with the discomfort of not having been able to keep clients engaged and was challenged in developing a plan with clients to attend the following week, which they did. The very happy ending to this story is that this student successfully completed her placement and progressed to being employed as a TGR Youth Worker and Case Manager backfill today.



Having myself started at Detour House on my first social work placement, I feel privileged to be able to give back to others in supporting their learning journey. It's been challenging to provide quality placements during COVID-19, but we pushed through and made it! On this note, I'd like to thank all the education providers that have worked with us in finding the best students for our service, and in supporting the supervision process: University of Wollongong, University of Sydney, Australian Catholic University, Western Sydney University, University of Notre Dame, TAFE Ultimo, SGSCC and Open Colleges.

We extend a huge thank you to each one of our students from this last year: Beth, Maddie, Tara, Phoebe, Maddy, Joan, Corrie, Mel, Rose, Maddison, Fernanda, Angela and Siobhan. You will always be thought of at TGR and we're hoping to see you soon working in the sector!

Fran Seijas,

Senior Case Manager

Art therapy at The Girls Refuge

I have been undertaking my clinical placement at The Girls Refuge as a trainee Art Therapist since February this year. Taking on an art therapy student was a new experience for The Girls Refuge, and I have been very lucky to have had their support and encouragement to integrate the practice of art therapy into the service.



The nature of art therapy allows participants to explore complex issues in a non-threatening and contained way. The magic of art therapy occurs within the three-way transference between therapist, participant, and artwork. The artwork created by participants can act as a container for complex traumas or emotions that therapist and participant can then explore together. I have found that most of the residents that stay with us at The Girls Refuge identify that they do need mental health support. However, many of them do not feel ready to engage with deep trauma counselling and psychotherapy. Art therapy can provide that first step for residents to begin their mental health journey that is not overwhelming and is guided by their own readiness to engage.

Through art therapy sessions that I have facilitated, clients have been open in sharing their struggles and traumas and have been able to channel these feelings through their art making. For example, a past resident who greatly struggled with non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) created a large collage using bright red paint and images containing the colour red which were collected from magazines. The final image was very striking and through the process of Art Therapy, this client was able to explore their association of the colour red being an emotional release and the colours connection to their self-harm. The client was able to gain that emotional release in a safe and contained way through their artmaking and together we could explore deeper meaning within their image.

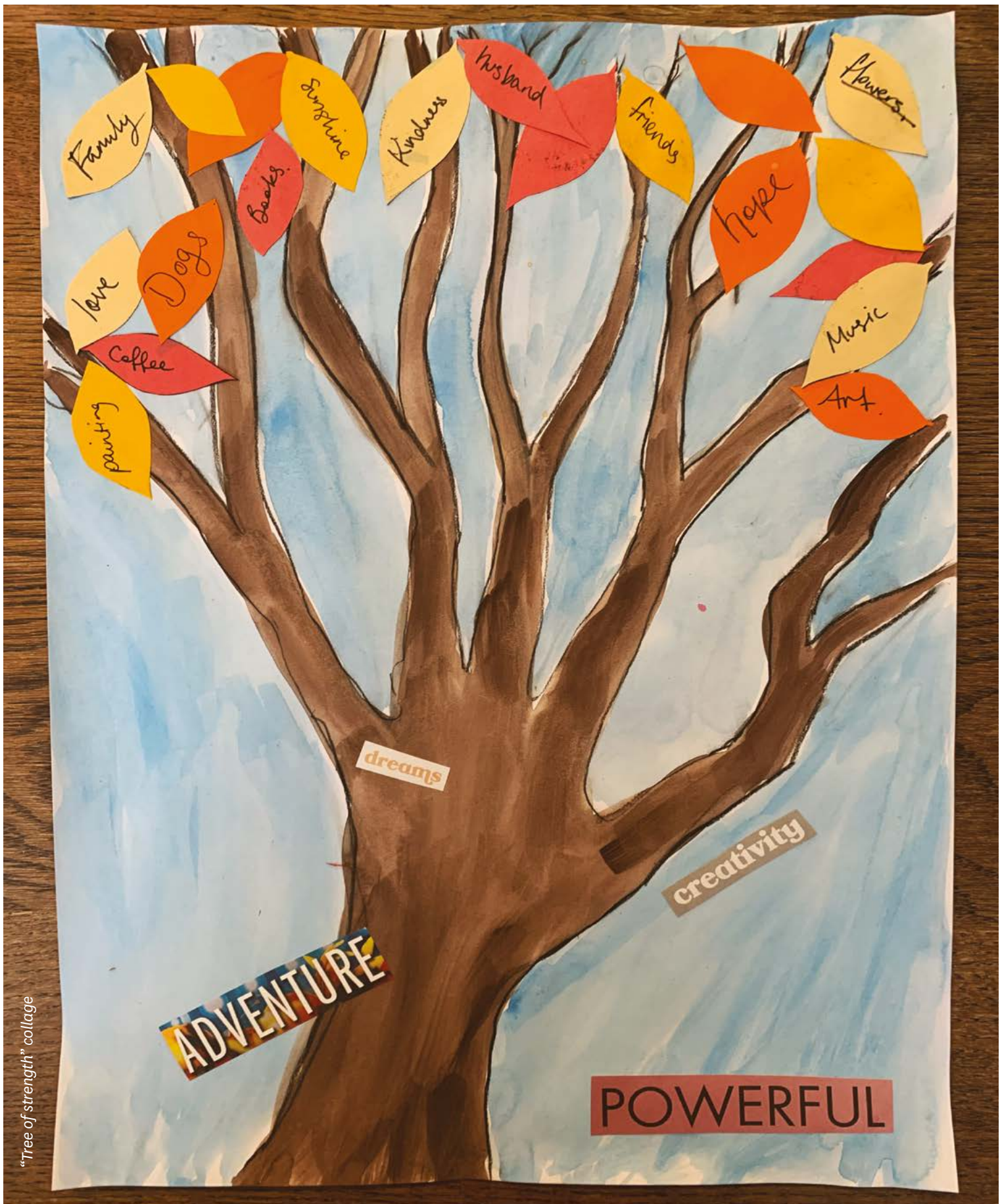
An art therapy directive I have been developing over the last few months is a system of “safety cards” that has now been integrated into the intake process of new clients into The Girls Refuge. These “safety cards” are used by clients to communicate to staff how they are feeling and indicate if they feel they are in a heightened state. The residents are encouraged to use their creativity and existing knowledge of themselves when developing these cards. Many residents choose to use a scale of 1-10 and then may associate an emotional state to the number. Residents might also add an emoji or small drawing that corresponds to the state. The only thing I ask of the residents to add to their “safety cards” is what they need in return from staff when they are in a heightened state. For example, one client used emojis to create their cards and recognised that they need a distraction, such as an art activity or a walk outside, when they reach a level 6 so that they don’t continue escalating and reach a level 9 or 10. Another resident would stick a card that corresponded with her emotional state on her door each morning, so staff would be aware of how she was feeling before they interacted with her. It can often be hard to verbalise to others heightened states of emotions. The “safety cards” allow clients to communicate and reach out to staff and other residents in an alternative, non-verbal way.

Although at times I have found the client group of adolescent girls both challenging and confronting, I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to work with and learn from them. I am very grateful to have been granted this placement with The Girls Refuge, as it is a service that has been incredibly supportive and has given me an invaluable learning experience and I am very excited to continue working with them.

Melina Altman,

Master of Art Therapy student

“Although at times I have found the client group of adolescent girls both challenging and confronting, I have thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to work with and learn from them.”



“Tree of strength” collage

Family

Sunshine

Kindness

Husband

Friends

Flowers

Love

Dogs

Books

Coffee

painting

Hope

Music

Art

dreams

creativity

ADVENTURE

POWERFUL

Detour House Inc - 2021 Treasurer's Report

Dot work painting (detail),
created by a resident



I am pleased to present
the Treasurer's Report for
the financial year ended
June 2021.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the appropriate accounting standards and other mandatory professional standards and have been independently audited by Charles Oosthuizen from Moore Australia.

Despite uncertain times, Detour House Inc has had a successful financial year. We have continued our focus on strong financial management and being a sustainable organisation during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Our gross revenue for the year was \$1.6M, an increase of 14.7% from the preceding year, although government funding only increased by 5.9%.

Donations and non-government grants received during the year amounted to \$118,389 – more than double the prior year. The generous support we have received from the community and the corporate sector has enabled us to continue to develop programs designed to empower our clients to make change, extending our Detour House aftercare program and our LEVEL UP! day program with no impact on our operations budget. The generous ongoing and recurring support of our donors is fundamental to what we do.

There was no major capital expenditure during the financial year – spending was closely monitored during the year, and we came in within budget.

In FY22, the Committee has plans to use our modest surplus funds, retained through sound financial management, to improve our programs, prepare for ASES Accreditation and further invest in the overall sustainability of Detour House Inc.

It is a privilege to work with such an empowered and committed team, and I look forward to another strong year in FY22.

Kyle Westgarth,
Treasurer

Financial Report

for the year ended 30 June 2021

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

Figures in Australian Dollars	2021	2020
Income		
Grant income	1,345,033	1,247,768
Rent received	44,380	56,879
Donations	93,036	49,348
Sundry income	131,152	51,550
Interest received	43	182
Dividends — franked	47	203
	1,613,691	1,405,930
Expenses		
Administration and office expenses	(97,593)	(97,844)
Audit fees	(6,079)	(11,296)
Depreciation	(45,447)	(68,579)
Employment expenses	(1,050,636)	(981,686)
Household expenses	(59,380)	(51,636)
Program related expenses	(92,379)	(43,841)
	(1,351,514)	(1,254,882)
Surplus before tax	262,177	151,048
Tax expense	-	-
Surplus for the year	262,177	151,048

“We have continued our focus on strong financial management and being a sustainable organisation during the COVID-19 Pandemic.”

Auditors: Moore Australia. For a full financial statement, email olivia@detourhouse.org.au or visit www.acnc.gov.au



DETOUR
HOUSE INC
Caring for women in need



THE GIRLS
REFUGE
Caring for girls in need



How you can help

- Make a donation. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.
- Host a fundraiser or toiletries drive for us.
- Become a corporate sponsor.
- Give new and unused bed linen, towels, toiletries and household items to help women and girls who are moving into a new home and a new life.
- Volunteer your time and utilise your talents.
- Leave a bequest.

Contact Olivia Ngoy, Chief Executive Officer for more information:

P 02 9660 4137, 9am-5pm

M PO Box 253 Glebe NSW 2037

E olivia@detourhouse.org.au

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