

ANNUAL REPORT

2018
19



VICTIMS AND WITNESSES OF
CRIMES COURT SUPPORT INC

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The spirit, dedication, camaraderie and professional approach to the work undertaken by all VWCCS Volunteers, including its various Sub Committees, has and continues to be VWCCS' greatest strength.

I am pleased to advise that following a very successful Induction and Training Program held in Newcastle in July/August 2018 a new service commenced in the Newcastle Local and District Courts in October 2018. VWCCS continues its service at Parramatta, the Downing Centre, Waverley, Orange and Bathurst Courts. VWCCS has also added to its Orange and Bathurst teams by including 2 inductees in the training program in Newcastle.

VWCCS wishes to thank the NSW Department of Justice and the Scully Fund for providing funding which played a significant role in enabling VWCCS to maintain its high standard of training of its inductees in Newcastle. VWCCS wishes to acknowledge and thank Newcastle Police for its generosity in providing its Tony Tamplin Training Room throughout VWCCS' Training Program and to the Registrar of Newcastle Court for providing a Court Room in which to conduct the Moot presided over by NSW Magistrate the Hon Graham Blewitt, AM. Unfortunately as a result of circumstances beyond our control the planned expansion to Dubbo was unable to occur. Whilst a number of Volunteers from Dubbo completed the Induction and Training Program some had to withdraw for personal reasons resulting in the decision to postpone the Dubbo expansion.

VWCCS Parramatta's court support work has increased with further referrals for the Parramatta District and Family Courts and extending to other Courts including Blacktown, Penrith and Richmond Courts.

I would like to congratulate all members of the Induction and Training Program Project Team for their extraordinary commitment to the development of the VWCCS' Program, acknowledged by key representatives from the Justice Sector as unique and highly professional. In addition I want to pass on my

heartfelt thanks to those experienced Court Support Officers who travelled to Newcastle to provide valuable mentoring for the new Volunteers.

I would also like to acknowledge the involvement of a number of professional colleagues from NSW Police and Police Prosecutions, NSW Justice, Local Court of NSW, NSW ODP and its Witness Assistance Service, Newcastle Law School, University of Newcastle, Hunter Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, and Survivor Advocate Mr Sascha Chandler, who generously shared their expertise during the Induction and Training Program.

VWCCS wishes to acknowledge the support and encouragement of the NSW Attorney General, The Hon Mark Speakman SC, and his dedicated staff. The Attorney General's positive recognition of VWCCS' specialised service to all victims and witnesses of crime and its desire to extend its service to Courts in certain regional areas of NSW, assisted in giving impetus to locate VWCCS to the Central West and Newcastle Courts.

To VWCCS' General Manager, Leanne Hillman, your overall and professional management of the agency is outstanding and highly valued by the Management Team and all VWCCS Volunteers.

To VWCCS' Vice President, Maggie Weiley, your management of Special Projects and assisting the General Manager with the compiling of applications for grants and donations, is also highly valued. Your support over the years to the expansion of VWCCS for the benefit of victims and witnesses of crime is commendable.

I particularly wish to thank Dr Sheila Curson, a foundation member of VWCCS, who continues to

make an outstanding contribution to the agency's success and development. I personally wish to thank her for her unwavering loyalty and professionalism.

To VWCCS' Manager Parramatta, Denis O'Connell, your significant contribution to the management of the agency's Parramatta Volunteers, your dedication to the success of court support for victims and witnesses of crime in each of the three locations within the Justice Precinct is honourable. In addition, special thanks go to Jill Paton, VWCCS' Principal Coordinator, Parramatta, for continuing to ensure the smooth operation of the Parramatta service.

To Irene Addison, VWCCS' Manager of the Reception and Information Desk at the Downing Centre and to Rosemary Day and Lorraine Shaw, VWCCS Manager and Assistant Manager of the 3 Reception and Information Desks at Parramatta Courts, I wish to congratulate you all for the work you undertake managing your teams of Reception and Information Desk Volunteers who work so diligently each working day at the Courts. The work you undertake continues to add further value in assisting victims and witnesses of crime and to all court users. You and your respective teams are very much appreciated by court users and VWCCS. I would like to also formally acknowledge Rosemary Day's tireless work and contribution to the Operations Management Committee and wish her well in her retirement from VWCCS.

Special thanks and recognition must go this year to Stephanie McCoy and Sue Cook who manage the District and Supreme Court Referrals at the Downing Centre. Your work in coordinating the in-coming referrals from various agencies, which since the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, has significantly increased VWCCS' court support assistance both at the Downing Centre and Parramatta Courts. Your dedication and professionalism is acknowledged and highly respected by all at VWCCS.

A very special thanks must go to John Waddington, who with much enthusiasm was responsible for Downing Centre rosters for many years until his recent resignation in February 2019. John also managed the Parramatta Roster after Chris Burgess retirement until Rosie Crossing assumed this responsibility in February 2019. Thank you to John Craig and Lesley Craig for assuming responsibility for the Downing Centre rosters.

In addition, the contributions of Simon Mackenzie (IT Volunteer Consultant), Peta Nugent (Graphic Designer), Bauer Media (supply of magazines for clients) and Paul Diener (PRD Printing for the printing of the Annual Report) continue to be highly valued.

I also want to thank all VWCCS Volunteers who have worked so hard this past year and continue to make a much-valued contribution for the benefit of victims and witnesses in their justice journey. The spirit, dedication, camaraderie and professional approach to the work undertaken by all VWCCS Volunteers, including its various Sub Committees, has and continues to be VWCCS' greatest strength.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Management Committee Members without whom VWCCS could not operate:

- Maggie Weiley (VWCCS Vice President)
- Leanne Hillman (VWCCS General Manager)
- Dr Sheila Curson (VWCCS Human Resources Manager and Downing Centre Principal Coordinator)
- Denis O'Connell (VWCCS Parramatta Manager and Website Manager)
- Maria Pirrello (VWCCS Psychologist)
- Irene Addison (VWCCS Reception and Information Coordinator – Downing Centre)
- Jill Paton (VWCCS Coordinator – Parramatta)
- Joy Christian (VWCCS Downing Centre and Parramatta)



PIETA THORNTON, OAM
VWCCS Inc President

2018 REPORT

During the 2018/19 Financial Year VWCCS provided Court Support to 2,091 victims/ witnesses and Court Support Officers volunteered a total of 5,859 hours.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The principal objectives of VWCCS are to provide the following:

- A unique, high standard and non-judgmental court support service for its clients: victims and witnesses of crime, their family members and close friends in both State and Commonwealth criminal matters.
- A unique and high standard court support service providing continuity by extending its service to cover clients whose matters begin in the Children's or Local Courts of New South Wales and which later may progress to a higher Court.
- A unique and high standard court support service which does not duplicate any other court support service operating in the New South Wales and Commonwealth criminal jurisdictions, but supplements such services when required.

ORGANISATION PROFILE

VWCCS PATRONS

Professor S Caroline Taylor AM

Professor S. Caroline Taylor AM is recognised as one of Australia's leading experts and consultants in the field of child and adult sexual violence and domestic violence and the criminal justice response to victim/survivors and social models of trauma and recovery.

Professor Gordian Fulde AM MBBS, FRACS, FRCS (Ed), FRACS/RCP (A&E) Ed, FACEM
Prof Fulde was awarded the 2016 Senior Australian of the Year.

Professor Fulde was the Director of the Emergency Department at St Vincent's Hospital and Sydney Hospital and was the longest serving Emergency Department Director in a major hospital in Australia. He is actively involved in teaching and training

students and staff in many facets of medicine and emergency medicine as well as consistently contributing and offering his time to many schools and organisations in the Community. He is a member of the curriculum committee for the Faculty of Medicine, University of New South Wales. He is a founding father of the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM) and has played an integral role in establishing the ACEM training course. He continues to examine for the College, as well as the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, the University of New South Wales and the University of Notre Dame.

INCORPORATED COMMITTEE

VWCCS became incorporated in March 2008 and the current Committee is made up of the following members:

Pieta Thornton	President, Founder and Director of VWCCS.
Maggie Weiley	Vice President and Secretary
Leanne Hillman	Treasurer and Operations Manager
Sheila Curson	Committee Member and VWCCS Principal Coordinator Downing Centre
Chris Burgess	Committee Member and VWCCS Principal Coordinator Parramatta
Denis O'Connell	Committee Member and VWCCS Parramatta Courts Coordinator
Joy Christian	Committee Member and Downing Centre Coordinator
Peter Thornton	Committee Member and Lawyer
Dr John V Basson	Committee Member and Consultant Psychiatrist (Forensic & General Adult Psychiatry) and VWCCS Consultant.

VWCCS has a legal representative, Mr Peter Thornton, who oversees VWCCS' legal requirements.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

A Management Committee was established in 2010 to oversee and make decisions about the operational issues of VWCCS. The Committee comprises representatives of VWCCS' Incorporation Committee, Court Support Officer (CSO) Coordinators and Reception and Information Desk Coordinators from each of the locations in which VWCCS provides a service. Specific time limited working parties are established as required. Members of the Management Committee have taken on some specialist responsibilities:

Pieta Thornton	Executive Chairman – oversight of all Projects
Maggie Weiley	Special Projects and Publicity
Leanne Hillman	Funding, Training Coordinator
Sheila Curson	Human Resources
Denis O'Connell	Information Technology
Maria Pirrello	Psychologist

SERVICE LOCATIONS

VWCCS operates at the following locations:

- Parramatta Justice Precinct covering Local, District and Children's Courts Monday to Friday
- Downing Centre covering Local and District Courts Monday to Friday and the Supreme Court on request.
- Orange Local Court two days per week and District Courts during District Court circuits.
- Bathurst Local Court two days per week and District Courts during District Court circuits
- Waverley Local Court Mondays and Fridays
- Newcastle Local and District Courts Monday to Friday

ROLE OF COURT SUPPORT OFFICERS

Court Support Officers (CSOs) provide information and support to victims or witnesses of crime, attending court to give evidence.

ROLE OF RECEPTION AND INFORMATION DESK VOLUNTEERS

There are Reception and Information Desk Volunteers based at Downing Centre, its 3 locations at Parramatta and at Newcastle from September 2018. These volunteers provide an initial point of contact and referral for any member of the public (including victims and witnesses) entering the court buildings. In addition, these services also provide a general information function for all court attendees.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

During the 2018/19 Financial Year VWCCS provided Court Support to 2,091 victims/witnesses and Court Support Officers volunteered a total of 5,859 hours. The Reception and Information Volunteers at Parramatta, Downing Centre and Newcastle assisted 40,109 court attendees and volunteered 3,961 hours.

COURT SUPPORT OFFICER DATA

Location	No. of Clients	No. Court Support Hours
Parramatta	741	1998
Downing Centre	914	2722
Waverley	161	282
Central West	4	9
Newcastle	271	848
Total	2,091	5,859

RECEPTION AND INFORMATION DESK DATA

Location	Number of people assisted	Reception and Information Desk Hours
Parramatta	24,794	1,791
Downing Centre	10,843	1,935
Newcastle	4,472	235
Total	40,109	3,961

TRAINING

INDUCTION AND TRAINING PROGRAM

Prior to commencing as a Court Support Officer all volunteers undertake:

- Three interviews – two prior to the induction and training program and the third after their observations and reflections assignment
- A comprehensive induction and training program over 7 days
- Minimum of 15 hours court observation followed by a written report of court observations including self-reflection
- Court Support Mentoring Program with a three months' probation period.

ONGOING TRAINING

- Volunteers are offered four days refresher / training per annum. Each Volunteer must attend no less than 2 of these training days.
- Volunteers can access formal debriefing as required

TREASURER'S REPORT

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF VWCCS INC
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2019

This report is given pursuant to the provisions of the *Associations Incorporation Act 2009*. For the financial year ending 30 June 2019 the income of VWCCS Inc (VWCCS) was **\$8,837.98** made up of membership fees, reimbursements, voluntary contributions and donations.

Expenditure was an amount of **\$38,758.61** comprising costs incurred with recruitment of new Volunteers for Central West NSW and Newcastle, delivery of an Induction and Training Program in Newcastle for all new Volunteers, office supplies (stationery and printing), insurance, costs of telephone and internet use and Centre for Volunteering Membership.

After taking into account a credit surplus of **\$79,119.99** as at 1 July 2018, the bank balance with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia at 30 June 2019 was an amount of **\$49,199.36**.

The outstanding liabilities of VWCCS as at 30 June 2019 were NIL.

There were no mortgages or charges or securities of any description affecting any part of the property of the Association as at 30 June 2019.

The assets of the Association as at 30 June 2019 comprise:

a) Credit with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia Neutral Bay	\$49,199.36
b) Office furniture and computer purchased during 2018/19	\$2,814.31

In accordance with the Act, the Treasurer will submit a receipt and expenditure accounts balance sheet for the previous year that accords with this report.

Dated: 15 November 2019



LEANNE HILLMAN
VWCCS Inc Treasurer

