

ANNUAL REPORT

2022
/ 23



VICTIMS AND WITNESSES OF
CRIME COURT SUPPORT INC

2022/23 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

While last year I reported that 2021–22 had been a year of change and transition for VWCCS, 2022–23 has allowed us to build on our solid foundations to create a more agile organisation to respond to our evolving environment.

In the second half of 2022 the graduates of our long delayed (due to Covid-19) Induction and Training program joined the ranks of our existing Court Support Officers (CSOs). As a result, VWCCS now has a total of 125 volunteers, 69 of them CSOs.

These new volunteers were needed to support a significant increase in the number of matters and the number of clients supported by VWCCS, especially in the District Courts. VWCCS also commenced supporting clients in Health Care Complaints Commission cases.

The Courts continued to be impacted by Covid-19, playing catch-up for the previous years as well as experiencing on-going delayed trials due to illness of trial participants. This meant VWCCS volunteers were required to be extremely flexible and to work very closely with our partners (especially the Witness Assistance Service) to ensure we can provide Court Support when and where it is most needed.

The establishment of the distinct function of Roster Coordination for District Court matters has served VWCCS well in meeting these scheduling challenges.

In a very welcome recent development, The Scully Fund has generously funded VWCCS to recruit a paid CEO. This funding recognises the importance of the role of VWCCS within the criminal justice system and the challenges of relying on volunteer leaders of an expanding organisation. It builds on the on-going support VWCCS receives from The Scully Fund to support our operations and train volunteers.

I would like to thank Operations Manager Leanne Hillman for her excellent leadership of VWCCS during this challenging period. Leanne will continue to occupy that role and assist with the induction of a new CEO once they have been recruited.

Volunteers in the new middle management structure worked closely with Leanne to provide improved support to CSOs and other volunteers through the Operational Management Group. I warmly acknowledge their professionalism and dedication.

During 2023 VWCCS revised and updated the Policy and Procedures Manual to include a new Code of Conduct. This project was undertaken by Sheila Curson who was joined by Lesley Craig who made a very welcome return to VWCCS after taking leave for family reasons. I would like to thank them both for their valued contribution.

In 2023 we refreshed our website, updating the contents with our most recent data. I would like to thank Pieta Thornton, Maggie Weiley, Mary-Anne Sakkara and Simon MacKenzie for their work on the website. I would also like to acknowledge Simon MacKenzie for his on-going IT support, technical know-how and training for existing and new volunteers.

The year has seen the retirement of volunteers who made a significant contribution to VWCCS during their tenure of more than ten years as CSOs — Margaret Miller, Barbara Peters, Gillian Cready and Ruth Diddams.

Another key representative was Irene Addison, Manager R&ID Downing Centre whose professionalism and willingness to take on a range of responsibilities beyond her stated role is much appreciated. This was most clearly evident with the assistance provided to Managers in each location with the Induction and Training Program, in particular in overseeing and reporting on the Mentoring stage of the program. Irene has provided invaluable support to the Operations Manager and Board Members in all administrative tasks associated with complying with government regulatory requirements and the collection of data.

I would also like to recognise the contribution of Michelle Boyle as Counsellor who has returned to further studies, Sandi Pike for her computer skills and formatting expertise and Katherine Hirshman for her managerial and administrative expertise as Co-Manager of the reception and information function at the Downing Centre.

It was with regret that I accepted the resignation from the VWCCS Board of our Founder and former President, Pieta Thornton OAM in May 2023. We miss Pieta's wise counsel and collegiality but remain eternally inspired by her legacy. I wish Pieta the very best and thank her deeply for all she has done during her lengthy involvement with VWCCS.

The Board has recruited new members to ensure there are necessary governance, accountability and risk management strategies in place. Philip Crowley, a distinguished commercial lawyer with a long history of working in Asia joined VWCCS in November 2022. In April 2023 the Board welcomed Andrew Sargant, an award-winning advertising, marketing and tourism professional and Clive Addison a retired Chief Executive Officer and General Manager with extensive experience across the commercial and not for profit sectors. The new members have already made a valuable contribution to VWCCS Incorporated and complement the skills of existing members Vice President Maggie Weiley, David Whitfield, John Basson and Leanne Hillman.

Allens have generously continued their support for VWCCS Quarterly Training Days by providing much valued meeting space and catering.

Thanks also to the NSW Attorney General, the Hon Michael Daley MP and Parliament House for their support and use of Parliament House venues for training purposes.

The continued support of our Patron, Her Excellency, the Honourable Margaret Beazley, AC, QC, Governor of NSW is greatly appreciated.

I look forward with optimism to the coming year for VWCCS. In recognition of the diversity of our clients we will be developing a diversity policy and Reconciliation Action Plan. These will make explicit our commitment to reconciliation, diversity and inclusion and set out how VWCCS will work with clients and volunteers from all backgrounds to improve client outcomes.



Graeme Henson AM
VWCCS Inc President

XX September 2022

2022/23 REPORT

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 PATRON

Her Excellency, the Honourable Margaret Beazley, AC, QC, Governor of NSW

INCORPORATED COMMITTEE

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

Graeme Henson	Chair/President
Maggie Weiley	Vice President and Joint Secretary
David Whitfield	Treasurer and Joint Secretary
Pieta Thornton OAM	Committee Member – Retired 16 April 2023
Leanne Hillman	Committee Member and Operations Manager
Dr John V Basson	Committee Member and Consultant Psychiatrist (Forensic & General Adult Psychiatry) and VWCCS Consultant.
Philip Crowley	Committee Member and Legal Consultant
Clive Addison	Committee Member
Andrew Sargant	Committee member

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, Local Managers and 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 are:

Leanne Hillman	Chair and Operations Manager, Training and Development Manager and Incorporation Committee Representative
Maggie Weiley	Secretary, Special Projects Manager and Incorporation Committee Representative

Sheila Curson	Human Resources Co-Manager
Lesley Craig	Human Resources Co-Manager
Tina Giannetto	Coordinator, District and Local Courts, Downing Centre
Piers Codling	Coordinator, Local Courts, Downing Centre
Jen Rollins	Coordinator, District Court and HCCC, Downing Centre
Mary-Anne Sakkara	Referral Manager, District Court, Downing Centre
Irene Addison	Manager, Reception and Information Desk Volunteers, Downing Centre
Jill Paton	Manager, Parramatta
Rosie Crossing	Coordinator, Parramatta
Christine Tyler	Manager, Newcastle
Pat Harper	Coordinator, Newcastle

SERVICE LOCATIONS

VWCCS operates at the following locations:

- Parramatta Justice Precinct covering Local and District Monday to Friday, Childrens' Court on request.
- Downing Centre covering Local and District Courts Monday to Friday and the Supreme Court on request.
- 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 2 locations at Parramatta and at Newcastle. 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

VWCCS provided Court Support to **1,696** victims/witnesses and Court Support Officers volunteered a total of **4,370** hours for the financial year. Reception and Information Volunteers assisted **13,713** court attendees and volunteered **17,967** hours during this period.

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 face to face Induction and Training program over 5 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.
- An Induction and Training Program (I&TP) for new Volunteers was commenced in April 2021 but was severely interrupted by Court shutdowns caused by Covid. The final stage of Mentoring and Supervised Court Support was completed in early 2023 with 29 new CSOs joining the Courts.

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

The accompanying Statement of Income and Expenditure for the year ended 30 June 2023 and Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2023 are in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act 2009.

INCOME

The only income received during the year was from Admission and Annual Membership Fees totalling \$21.00.

No donations were received during the year.

EXPENDITURE

Expenditure for the year totalled \$9,111.40, compared to \$10,806.15 in the previous year. The largest expense items were \$2,756.10 for internet and telephone and public liability and volunteer insurances totalling \$1,195.90. Depreciation amounted to \$3,044.27

BALANCE SHEET

The Trust Funds at the end of the year totalled \$43,458.91, compared to the previous financial year of \$52,549.31. The decrease of \$9,090.40 represents the Net Deficit for the year. In the previous year there was a Net Deficit of \$6,783.15.

The assets are made up of cash at bank \$36,483.91, a GST refund due from the Australian Taxation Office of \$391.00 and depreciable office furniture and computers of \$6,584.00. During the year VWCCS purchased new computer totalling \$2,115.21 for use by volunteers.

There were no liabilities as at 30 June 2023.

There were no mortgages, charges and other securities affecting any property owned by VWCCS as at 30 June 2023.



David Whitfield

Treasurer
VWCCS Incorporated.

11 July 2023

VWCCS INCORPORATED
CHARITY ABN 34 783 564 316

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	Notes	2023 \$	2022 \$
Revenue			
Admission and Annual Membership Fees		21.00	23.00
Donations – The Scully Fund		0.00	0.00
Donations – Others		0.00	0.00
Volunteer Grants – Commonwealth Government		0.00	4,000.00
Total Revenue		21.00	4,023.00
Less Expenses			
Accommodation		613.63	0.00
Centre for Volunteering Membership		90.91	90.91
Depreciation	1	3,044.27	1,013.00
Induction and Training Program		61.09	3,236.08
Insurance – Public Liability and Volunteer		1,195.90	1,155.86
Internet and Telephone		2,756.10	3,756.10
Miscellaneous Expenses		61.82	245.18
Office Supplies		1,287.68	1,309.02
Total Expenses		9,111.40	10,806.15
Net Deficit for the year		9,090.40	6,783.15

BALANCE SHEET
AS AT 30 JUNE 2023

Current Assets			
Cash at bank		36,483.91	43,892.25
Receivables – ATO GST Refund		391.00	1,144.00
Total Current Assets		36,874.91	45,036.25
Non-Current Assets			
Office Furniture and Computers	1	12,386.23	10,271.02
Less Accumulated Depreciation		5,802.23	2,757.96
Total Non-Current Assets		6,584.00	7,513.06
Total Assets		43,458.91	52,549.31
Trust Funds			
Opening Surplus as at 1 July 2022		52,549.31	59,332.46
Net Deficit for the year		(9,090.40)	(6,783.15)
Total Trust Funds		43,458.91	52,549.31

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. During the year new computers totalling \$2,115.21 were purchased for use by volunteers.
2. Assets are depreciated over three years.
3. There were no reportable related party transactions during the year.

**Artwork design generously
prepared by Peta Nugent**