



Laurel House

SEXUAL ASSAULT SUPPORT

COUNSELLING • EDUCATION • ADVOCACY • CHANGE



North and North West
Tasmania Sexual
Assault Support
Services Inc

20 22

Annual Report

Acknowledgement of Country

Laurel House acknowledges and pays respect to the palawa people, who are the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and waters of lutruwita. We pay respects to Elders past and present. We particularly acknowledge the resistance and resilience of those Aboriginal people who have experienced sexual violence. Your stories and your strength of culture inspires us to fight for equality and a positive future without sexual harm.



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Artist and Advocate Emily Dash and Laurel House Project Officer, Rebecca Ripperger behind the scenes at the filming of Hear Me.

Learn more about Emily's extraordinary work at:
<https://www.facebook.com/EmilyDashArtistAdvocate/>

PHOTO CREDIT: Allen Koppe ACS

About Laurel House

The North and North West Tasmanian Sexual Assault Support Service, known as Laurel House, is a not-for-profit, community-based specialist sexual assault support service. We provide sexual assault trauma counselling and support, education, training and advocacy. We provide an inclusive, holistic service that addresses sexual inequalities and abuses by advocating for individual and community change.

We provide a range of confidential Tasmanian Government funded services that are free to victim-survivors throughout North and North West Tasmania. We offer face-to-face, online and phone counselling to adults, young people and children, and their family and supporters from our offices in Launceston, Burnie and Devonport and through outreach in rural locations.



LAUREL HOUSE RUNS A 24-HOUR SUPPORT SERVICE AND OFFERS SUPPORT THROUGH THE FORENSIC, MEDICAL AND LEGAL PROCESSES. LAUREL HOUSE ALSO OFFERS COMMUNITY, WORKFORCE AND SCHOOL-BASED EDUCATION, PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND DEBRIEFING.

Laurel House is also funded by the Australian Government's Department of Social Services to develop resources and deliver training that improves the capacity of mainstream health providers and disability services to respond to sexual assault experienced by people with disabilities.



Our Board

As at 30 June 2022

The Laurel House board is comprised of a committed group of volunteers who bring a range of skills and experience. The board met regularly during 2021/22 to lead the organisation through a period of considerable change.

During FY22, Laurel House made changes to our subcommittee structures to provide additional oversight of clinical quality and client safety. There are now three subcommittees of the board that draw on the expertise of the board and staff.

Governance and Nominations Committee assists the Board in fulfilling its corporate governance responsibilities in relation to Board and CEO recruitment, performance, and development. The Committee is comprised of Jess Greene (Committee Chair), Elise Frost and Kathryn Fordyce (CEO).

Finance, Audit and Risk Committee assists the Board to fulfill its fiduciary and corporate governance responsibilities relating to financial reporting, audit, internal controls, risk management and compliance. The Committee is comprised of Nicole Crook (Committee Chair), Andrea Porte, Elise Frost and Kathryn Fordyce (CEO).

Clinical Governance Committee assists the Board in fulfilling its clinical governance responsibilities including compliance with the National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence (NASASV) National Standards of Practice, the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and other best-practice frameworks regarding quality and client safety. The Committee is comprised of Eliza Jones (Committee Chair), Charlotte Brown, Jane Fleming, Victoria Headlam, Shannon Lovell Greene, Suzanne Hart (Counselling Lead – North), Sharon King (Counselling Lead – North West) and Kathryn Fordyce (CEO).



JESS GREENE
Chair



ANDREA PORTE
Deputy Chair



NICOLE CROOK
Treasurer



ELIZA JONES
Secretary



CHARLOTTE BROWN
Board Member



JANE FLEMING
Board Member



ELISE FROST
Board Member



VICTORIA HEADLAM
Board Member



SHANNON
LOVELL-GREENE
Board Member

Chair's Report

It's been a big year for Laurel House, and the landscape in which we operate continues to present opportunities for us to further our reach.

We have continued to support clients, advocate for change and build awareness and understanding of sexual violence, whilst also managing navigating other challenges and changes, including a flood in our Burnie premises, COVID and planning our move to our new premises in York Street, Launceston.

Kathryn, our phenomenal CEO, has led our organisation from strength to strength. In her 18 months with Laurel House, Kathryn has forged new partnerships, advocated for victim-survivors to all levels of Government, contributed to policy, supported our staff and Board, and been recognised for her valuable contribution by being appointed to National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse Advisory Group.

There's been a lot of juggle this year, with the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings, working closely with the Tasmanian Government on the introduction of Multidisciplinary Centres for Family and Sexual Violence,

and sexual violence dominating the news headlines. Our staff have taken that in their stride, all while managing significant demand for our services.

Our Disability Project team delivered the Toolkit and Resources for Disability Workforce Support, which was funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) to develop and deliver educational resources and training across Tasmania. It assists Tasmanian clinicians and disability support workers to better support people with a disability who have experienced sexual assault.

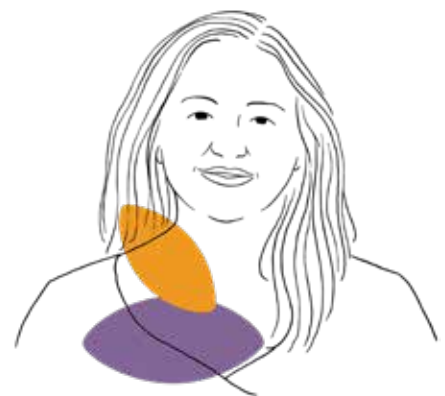
The comprehensive toolkit has been developed to create awareness and educate the workforce to respond to disclosures of sexual assault in a trauma-informed way. The way in which disclosures are responded to can make a real difference to the experience of survivors, their families and carers.

Our Board has been keenly focused on the future, and delivered important strategic thinking as we look to how we continue to provide our services in a contemporary,

inclusive and accessible way.

I would like to recognise our Clinical Governance Committee in particular, who are so knowledgeable and passionate about our services and made a significant contribution in the development and review of policies and procedures.

Big thanks to Mick Clark, who led sessions with staff and Board this year to develop our new strategic plan which will be launched later in 2022. Many Board members are continuing their tenure into 2023, which is a testament to the commitment Board members show to Laurel House.



JESS GREENE
Chair

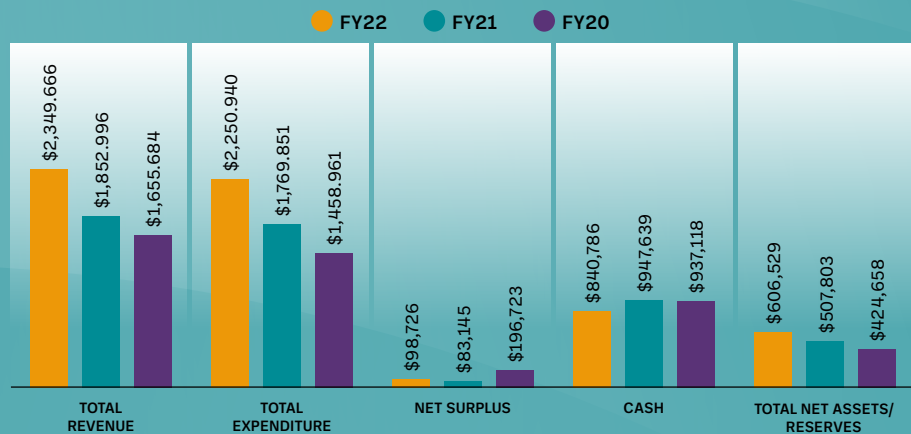
Financial Snapshot



27%

Increase in Total Revenue

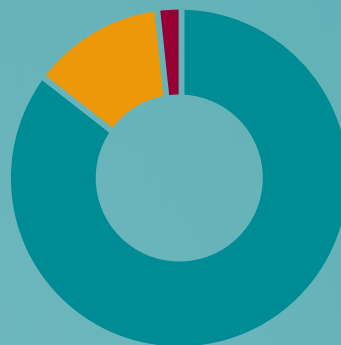
CHANGES IN KEY BALANCES



11%

Decrease in Cash

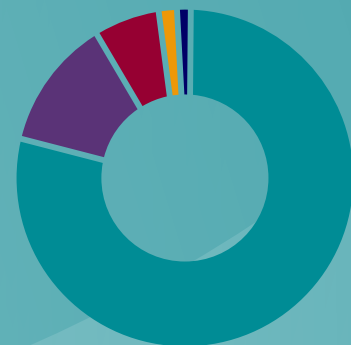
WHERE THE MONEY CAME FROM:



- 85%** (\$1,998,535) Tasmanian Government
- 13%** (\$297,600) Australian Government
- 2%** (\$38,006) Other Income Including Donations

TOTAL REVENUE: **\$2,349,666**

WHERE THE MONEY WENT:



- 79.1%** (\$1,780,510) Employee Expenses
- 12.4%** (\$279,951) Administration and Other Expenses
- 6.4%** (\$144,421) Occupancy Expenses
- 1.35%** (\$30,495) Motor Vehicle Expenses
- 0.69%** (\$15,563) Depreciation and Asset Write Off

TOTAL EXPENSES: **\$2,250,940**



19%

Increase in Total Net Assets/Reserves

CEO's Report

This year has been defined by truth telling and soul-searching as we witnessed more shocking stories and statistics of child sexual abuse, sexual assault, exploitation and sexual harassment shared within our state and beyond.

The Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has been a trying time for victim-survivors and their supporters. The hearings have identified momentous failures of the Tasmanian Government. I am thankful for the considered work of the Commissioners and their team and appreciated the opportunity to share the experience of Laurel House at Hearings in May 2022.

Further, I joined the chorus of people sharing stories of violence experienced by people with

disabilities and the barriers to effective support as part of public hearings for the Disability Royal Commission. The scale of the abuse experienced by people with disabilities is staggering, and there is much to do in addressing the intersecting underlying drivers of violence including gender inequality, ableism and other forms of discrimination such as ageism, homophobia, transphobia, racism and classism.

Sexual violence is sadly omnipresent – in our homes, our schools, in universities, health services, detention centres, our workplaces – in every part of our communities! But there is hope – we have seen victim-survivors and others fighting for change and pushing for reform and programs that will promote equality, prevent sexual violence and improve responses for



KATHRYN FORDYCE
Chief Executive Officer

victim-survivors. And at Laurel House we are doing our bit too!

Our Disability Project led by Kim Atkins has drawn on the collective expertise of people with disabilities, victim-survivors, health professionals and other service providers to develop a suite of training resources that increase the awareness of the prevalence of sexual harm experienced by people with disabilities, and to promote trauma-informed responses to disclosures of sexual harm. I am thankful to all of the people who generously

“We have seen victim-survivors and others fighting for change and pushing for reform and programs that will promote equality, prevent sexual violence and improve responses for victim-survivors.”





Laurel House Staff and Board celebrating International Women's Day 2022 at House of Anvers in Latrobe.

contributed their expertise to the project and I look forward to further opportunities to partner to create impact and equip the community to act.

Under the leadership of the Counselling Leads, Suzanne Hart in the North and Sharon King in the North West, we have increased our visibility in the community through expanded outreach and enhanced engagement in networking and sector engagement activities. We have attracted new counsellors in both regions who bring a wealth of experience, knowledge and skills, and have invested heavily in building the capacity of our staff. The Counselling Leads have worked together to improve a range of systems and processes to ensure that Laurel House provides an excellent service victim-survivors of sexual violence and is compliant

with the National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence Practice Standards and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

In late April, the Burnie office was flooded due to a burst hot water system. Thanks to the flexibility and tenacity of our team and our learnings from COVID, we were able to pivot quickly to remote working where clients continued to have access to services in off-site locations or via telepractice, and alternative methods were utilised for supervision, debriefing and collegial support. Big thanks to all the Burnie team, especially Jen, and to Lisa and Markeeta for creating a safety net while Jen was knee high in water and negotiating with tradies!

During this year, we welcomed the announcement of the introduction of Multidisciplinary Centres in Tasmania. Our team are highly

engaged with the project team and other service partners in the planning, are championing the principles of trauma-informed care – safety, choice, empowerment, trustworthiness and collaboration. We are committed to the success of the pilot in the North and are hopeful for a North West announcement in the future.

I wish to extend my heartfelt thanks to all the Laurel House Board, Staff and partner organisations for their support and encouragement during 2021/22. I have learned from each and every one of you and am buoyed by your commitment to driving change through counselling, education and advocacy. There is much to be done to ensure that everyone acts to prevent and respond to sexual violence, but I know we have the right team to do our bit!

Disability Workforce Support Project

The Disability Workforce Support Project is an Australian Government funded project that is addressing a significant gap in the disability service sector’s understanding of, and response to sexual abuse. The project has taken a co-design approach and has developed a toolkit of educational resources and training to build workforce capacity to respond in a rights-based, trauma-informed way.

Mission Accomplished!

2021-22 has been a busy year for the Disability Workforce Support Project, which has delivered its toolkit, training, and website of resources to clinicians, disability support workers, service managers and others across Tasmania.

The toolkit of resources can be found at: <https://laurelhouse.org.au/our-projects/disability-workforce-support-project-resources/>

Throughout the codesign process it was recognised that one of the key barriers for people with disability to disclosure of sexual assault and to getting the support they needed was communication, including service providers valuing their communication style and taking the time to truly hear what they were saying. This need led to the development of two short films codesigned with and featuring people with disability discussing the barriers and enablers to successful communication.

Take Time to Communicate was produced locally in Tasmania with the support Andy Del Vecchio from DoubleSee Media, Laurel House Project Officer Deb Wilson and the stars of the film Pen Brake, Paul Letchford, James Newton, Nicole Pirlot and George



DR KIM ATKINS
Education Manager

van Dijk. The film was launched in Launceston among friends and family, and the film participants all spoke of their pride in being involved in the project.



Pictured are film participant, George van Dijk with Laurel House Board member, Nicole Crook, at the Launceston launch of ‘Take Time to Communicate’.

Take Time to Communicate



CREDIT ALLEN KOPPE ACS



Film poster featuring Quang Nguyen.

CREDIT ALLEN KOPPE ACS



Gretta Serov on the set of 'Hear Me'.

CREDIT ALLEN KOPPE ACS



Lauren Patrick on set.



Pictured are film maker Julian Neuhaus with Kathryn Fordyce and Rebecca Ripperger at the Sydney launch of 'Hear Me'.

The other film, *Hear Me*, was produced in Sydney utilising the expertise of Julian Neuhaus from Ironbark Films in partnership with Bus Stop Films (an inclusive film company), Laurel House Project Officer Rebecca Ripperger, writer, creative concept developer and interviewer Emily Dash, and the most extraordinary cast, Lauren

Patrick, Gretta Serov and Quang Nguyen. *Hear Me* was launched at a special event in Sydney and was attended by a great crowd. There was huge support for the films development and the launch and Laurel House thanks Ironbark Films, Bus Stop Films, Legs on the Wall Theatre, Allen Koppe Photography, ZigZag Post and the Australian Actors Centre. Both films are available on the Laurel House website.

The Disability Workforce Project culminated in statewide toolkit launches in May 2022. The launches provided participants with an opportunity to familiarise themselves with

the toolkits, and featured guest speakers and performers from a range of organisations including Mark Deverell (Migrant Resource Centre), Malcolm Schyvens (Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal), Emily Dash (Artist and Activist), an expert panel from SpeakOut and Second Echo Ensemble. The launches were well attended with Launceston and Burnie fully subscribed well ahead of the event. The feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive with many keen to share the resources and films with colleagues and friends.

CREDIT ALLEN KOPPE ACS



Quang Nguyen on set.

The Project received a time-only extension until 31 December 2022. Work is continuing on a Guide for Registered Nurses, and training videos on decision-making and supported decision-making. Training continues to be provided, most recently to Community Corrections staff (Department of Justice), paediatric nurses and midwives in the Tasmanian Health Service. The project has a number of organisations that volunteered to be 'trial sites' and will help evaluate the project. Workers at trial sites have completed a pre-toolkit survey and received the toolkit and training. The post-toolkit survey will be open until the end of October 2022. Information from the surveys will be analysed to see if there is a measurable improvement in confidence, skills, and knowledge of workforce.

We are hopeful for ongoing funding for the project from the Australian Government as there is still much to be done in building awareness of the prevalence of sexual violence towards people with disabilities, and to ensure that all people with disabilities experience a trauma-informed response when they seek to disclose sexual harm.

Address and endorsement by the President of the Tasmanian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (TASCAT), Malcolm Schyvens (pictured here with Jane Cook, Registrar, Guardianship Stream).

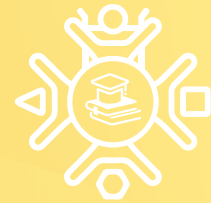
PROJECT STATISTICS



14 individuals with disability involved in the development of materials



19 support organisations involved in the development of materials



55 organisations attended training

75

medical practices provided with Guides



130

disability support organisations provided with Guides

A panel from SpeakOut discussing friendship. Pictured here are, from L to R: Sophie Gamble, Larry Simpson, Kiara Lavin and Judy Huett.



A performance by Second Echo Ensemble.



North West Counselling and After Hours Support



SHARON KING
Counselling Lead - North West

The NW team has undergone significant staffing changes throughout 2021/22. We have increased our counselling staff numbers to seven and have two additional team members who work only with our after-hours team. We welcomed Kandice to the Laurel House team in November 2021, Joanne and Sarah in March 2022, Loretta made the move from New Zealand to Tasmania to join us in April 2022, and Caroline joined our after-hours team in May 2022.



A significant flood caused by a faulty hot water system affected the Burnie office from April 2022. The team worked tirelessly to minimise the impact of the flood on clients, but the disruption certainly created additional demands and challenges on our team, especially those who were new to the organisation and settling into their roles at the

time of the flood. As a team, we developed alternative ways of working with clients via phone, video counselling and from off-site locations, and creative ways to offer peer support, debriefing and supervision while the team was working from home and outreach locations. We were lucky

to have the support of a range of organisations, especially the team at the Burnie Library to offer face-to-face counselling, but we can't wait to return to the building in early August. I want to acknowledge all the counselling team and our administration coordinator Jen, on their flexibility and responsiveness to manage challenges as they eventuated.

During 2021/22, we have been focused on expanding outreach offerings to support access for victim-survivors across the coast. We have engaged with providers on King Island and regular outreach is due to commence in August 2022. Similarly, we have commenced discussions with West Coast service providers with a view to increase Laurel House's presence and to develop and nurture important working relationships with other service providers.

“As a team, we developed alternative ways of working with clients via phone, video counselling and from off-site locations, and creative ways to offer peer support, debriefing and supervision while the team was working from home and outreach locations.”

The NW After-Hours Counselling Team continue to provide a necessary and excellent service. While we said goodbye to Nyssa, stability and flexibility was provided by Mel and Karina, and we are grateful for the skills and knowledge Loretta and Caroline bring to this role having held similar roles in other organisations interstate and overseas.

I thank the whole of the NW counselling team for the work they do - Loretta, Joanne, Sarah, Kandice, Karina, and Margaret, along with Jen, Mel and Caroline. I acknowledge the support the NW team provide to their clients often when they are at their most vulnerable. I acknowledge their skills in this trauma-informed therapeutic space.

This is an exciting time to be part



of the Laurel House leadership team, with Kathryn as CEO building a positive energy in the service. Kathryn brings intelligence, a commitment to wider visibility in the community and to advocating for our clients and others who have

been affected by sexual harm, a willingness to invest in the skills of staff and the quality of services offered by Laurel House, and to providing a consistent support and a secure base for our team to deliver trauma specialist support to victim-survivors.

NORTH WEST STATISTICS



428
Clients



1,672

Appointments Attended



3,591

Direct Client Hours



7
Forensic
Examinations

ADULTS

♀ **214** Female

♂ **34** Male

♂♀ **1** Other

CHILDREN

♀ **148** Female

♂ **29** Male

♂♀ **2** Other



106
After Hours
Phone Calls

North Services Counselling and After Hours Support



SUZANNE HART
Counselling Lead - North

In the North we have established a stable, committed and dynamic counselling team and in the after-hours space. We currently have a total of seven counsellors and three additional team members who work only with our after-hours team. In the last 12 months, we welcomed Jess and Ebony to the team and were pleased to see Kate return after some interstate travel.

During 2021/22, we have extended our outreach to the East Coast and now provide

fortnightly visits to Beaconsfield, George Town, Scottsdale, St Marys and St Helens. Outreach continues to be an area of service delivery we monitor closely with the goal of ensuring that the whole of the Northern Tasmanian community can access specialised, face-to-face counselling as needed.

The After-Hours Counselling Team continue to provide a necessary and excellent service and we have been fortunate with

a stable team over the past year. Monica, Keva, Nina and Corrina provide a safe and supportive service for clients in this space. We continue to support the team in ensuring they are included in training and supervision opportunities, and I am grateful to the skills and knowledge they bring to our service.



On 1 March 2022, the Tasmanian Government announced the introduction of Multidisciplinary Centres (MDCs) in Tasmania. The MDCs will provide integrated, trauma-informed support for victim-survivors of sexual violence. It is intended that the MDC service delivery model will put victim-survivors at the centre, prioritising their needs and choices and recognising that each victim-survivors pathway will be different. Laurel House will be a key partner at the MDCs providing counselling and support services and working collaboratively with police, child safety and other service providers to ensure that victim-survivors have access to the support they want when they need it. Laurel House will play a critical role in equipping police and other providers (both within and beyond the MDC) with the right knowledge, skills, and confidence to respond sensitively and consistent with trauma-informed care principles to victim-survivors of sexual harm. The North Team are actively engaged in discussions and planning for the Northern MDC and we are looking forward to building on our existing positive relationships with police, child safety and other providers to improve the experience of victim-survivors.

Additionally, the North team are eagerly anticipating our long-awaited move York Street in early September 2022. We have well and truly outgrown Union Street and it really is the right time to move to a bigger premises that is more accessible and visible in the community. We look forward to settling into our new premises and to welcoming clients and service providers to our new location with a focus on strengthening the support we offer to the Northern Tasmanian community.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the team – Amanda, Corrina, Ebony, Jess, Kate, Keva, Lesley, Lisa, Monica, Nina and Rachel. I feel incredibly privileged to be a part of Laurel House, and I am particularly grateful to be a part of an exceptional and committed leadership team headed up by our fearless CEO! The work is hopeful and highly rewarding and I am looking forward to the year ahead.

NORTH STATISTICS



509 Clients



1,492 Appointments Attended



3,185 Direct Client Hours



37 Forensic Examinations



110 After Hours Phone Calls

ADULTS

 **298**
Female

 **47**
Male

 **3**
Other

CHILDREN

 **135**
Female

 **24**
Male

 **2**
Other

Acknowledgments

OUR FUNDERS:



Our core services are supported by the Crown through the Department of Communities Tasmania.

Our disability project is funded by the Australian Government's Department of Social Services.

OUR 2021/22 DONORS:

Launceston Church Grammar School

Knight Frank | Launceston

Aurora Energy | Launceston

Services Australia | Burnie

Rob Coles





**Laurel
House**

Laurel House

1800 697 877

NORTH: 6334 2740

NORTH WEST: 6421 9711

www.laurelhouse.org.au

info@laurelhouse.org.au