



## **ANNUAL REPORT 2020 - 2021**



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# Introduction

**Why we exist:** To help people in regional, rural, and remote areas of WA experiencing family and domestic violence.

We are here to help anyone living with family and domestic violence in regional, rural and remote Western Australia (WA).

Family and domestic violence (FDV) comes in many forms and can occur in any life stage and lifestyle. Some people who experience family and domestic violence don't recognise the forms of violence they are experiencing. They just know 'it's not right'.

We assist people who are experiencing family and domestic violence so they can make informed choices that enhance their personal safety. In the future, we will help those using violence to make positive behavioural choices and end their abuse of others. We also support family members and friends of those impacted by violence.

**People in remote areas are 24 times more likely to be hospitalised for domestic violence when compared to those in major cities.\***

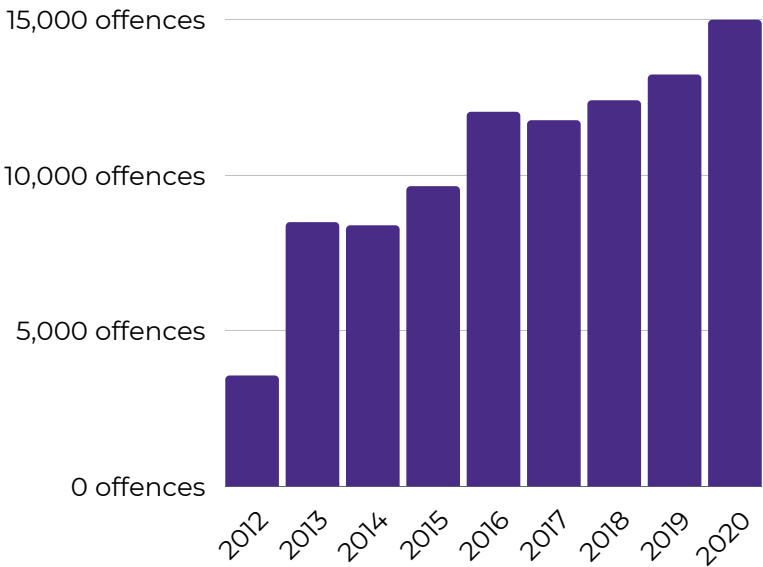
\*ABS' Personal Safety Survey (2013) <https://www.police.wa.gov.au/Crime/CrimeStatistics#/>

To visually display the severity of this situation, the orange circle is a to-scale representation of the chance of being hospitalised in a regional area.



**In the last decade, recorded family violence related offences in regional WA have steadily increased by 43%, totaling 14984 offences committed in 2020.**

\*Assault (family), Threatening behaviour (family) and Breach of Violence restraint orders  
5,501 offences in 2010-2011 to 12,723 in 2018-2019, a 43% increase.  
\*WA Police reports  
[https://www.police.wa.gov.au/Crime/CrimeStatistics#](https://www.police.wa.gov.au/Crime/CrimeStatistics#/)





## What we do: Make local connections, educate, and provide counselling.

Our support is considered within the context of ongoing risk assessments, safety planning, and through a trauma informed lens. Our services include:

### OUR WEBSITE.

The DVassist website is at the core of our service offering. It is so much more than a digital brochure. Our network and clients describe the site as an educational tool and resource centre about family and domestic violence.

This custom-built online information hub provides online localised directories guiding people to local area assistance for a range of services related to family and domestic violence from crisis support, emergency accommodation, counselling, legal and financial advice, aged care, LGBTIQ+, multicultural, through to mental health and alcohol and drug support services. It is updated regularly by the DVassist team. This hyper localised information, that has not been available before, advises site visitors who they can turn to in their local area. The website is a connector that helps people identify how to get help and how to act on that. Even when the first step is 'just a chat'.

The key features of the website are:

- suggested pathways to find safety
- online quizzes
- safety planning tips
- escape bag checklists
- information for staying safe online
- how to obtain violence restraining orders
- how to terminate a lease on FDV grounds
- tip to help stay safe during COVID-19
- how to obtain legal and financial advice
- information for friends and family who may witness FDV and suggestions of how they may be able to assist.

### OUR COUNSELLING.

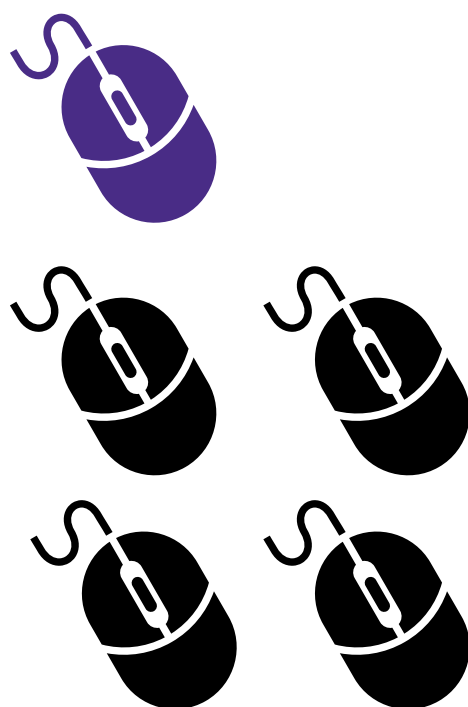
Supporting people experiencing family and domestic violence is the start of our strategy and approach to counselling. As we were founded in the country, DVassist has always focused on understanding what it means to live in the country. In WA, this is different in all the regions of the State. How the town of Albany operates as a community is very different to that of Broome. Our geographical and cultural diversities are very real.

Our free and confidential counselling services are available with a FDV Specialist, via telephone or web chat, to explore issues such as risk, safety concerns, and current needs with the aim of identifying possible solutions, referral pathways, and positive support strategies, within a single session format, and a scheduled multi-session format depending on the individual's preference.

Short-term case management sessions are also available and involve identifying needs and clear goals self-determined by the individual accessing this support. The case manager then works alongside the individual to plan, support, and provide advocacy when needed to ensure that practical support is available, and goals are being achieved.

This is why the team of counsellors are all experienced with country communities and are either from a regional area, have lived in a regional area, or worked closely with regional clients. All our specialist FDV Counsellors follow the national West Australian Family and Domestic Violence Risk Assessment and Risk Management Framework - a National best-practice approach to assess and manage family violence. This applies to all counselling – over the phone and via web-chat.

**20% of all DVassist website visitors (1 in 5) are looking online to understand what type of relationship they are living within.**



SOURCE: DVassist  
website analytics



“

**I didn't think it was domestic violence because they didn't hit me. After 2 years, you're the only one who has listened.**

*DVassist caller.*

”



## How we present:

### We are committed to helping.

At the end of FY20 we were on the cusp of launching into the new presentation and progression of the core vision of Breaking the Silence. **DVassist** was approved as the new name and registrations were made to lock in the entity's future. The holding company remains as Breaking the Silence Ltd.

## A NEW BRAND

The name DVassist received full Board support after a review of many other options and variations. It speaks plainly to our core purpose and why we exist. To embody the name, a new brand was developed that presents a further visual explanation of why the organisation exists.

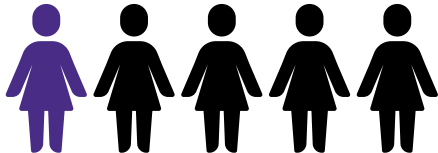
## EXPANDING CHANNELS

We need communities to know we exist and to understand how we help. We have undertaken a program of outreach and local marketing into the 16 regions. Over the last 8 months we have learnt much about which channels have an impact and over the next year we will intensify our outreach with more concentrated community connections.

**1 in 5 women (23%) who live outside of capital cities have experienced violence from an intimate partner since they were 15 years old.**

**In comparison, 3 in 20 (15%) women who live within a capital city have experienced violence from an intimate partner since they were 15 years old.**

### Regional:



### Metro:



\*ABS' Personal Safety Survey (2013)  
<https://www.police.wa.gov.au/Crime/CrimeStatistics#/>

## How we operate:

### Work to world class standards.

## OUR BOARD

Our Board are a team of corporate and FDV professionals focused on leading our strategy and governance. We have an audit and risk committee, clinical committee and fundraising committee to advise the Board.

## OUR OFFICES

The base for our administration and counselling team is our office in Subiaco that is the centre of service delivery, with capacity to accommodate growth for the next few years.

## OUR SYSTEMS

Over the last 12 months we have created world class systems to ensure our team's focus is on service delivery. We have also achieved several significant administrative milestones with the official registration of DVassist as a charity with the ACNC, endorsement by the ATO for Charity Tax Concession (TCC) and as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR), and the approval for a Charitable Collections Licence with DMIRS.

# Our year in numbers



**26,830**

website visitors accessed  
our Online Information Hub  
for support.



**798**

service providers  
were registered in  
our website portal.



**559**

helpline and  
counselling calls.



Our average weekly reach  
on social media was

**6453**

people



We visited

**6**

regional community  
outreach towns.



**371**

messages into the  
community (press print,  
press digital, radio, and  
television).



Our total reach through  
Google Ads was

**45,145**

people



# A message from the Chair

The past 12 months have been significant for DVassist and I am proud of all that the Board and the operational team have delivered. We are at the start of our journey to providing access to counselling and support services for anyone impacted by family and domestic violence in regional, rural and remote Western Australia.

In FY21 we launched all our core services including our online information directory, online resources centre, phone counselling and web chat service. All delivered within a tight timeframe and budget. Well done to our Chief Executive Officer, Esther Schwald and her team.

Today DVassist is the first focussed family and domestic violence service with a directory that maps all family and domestic violence (FDV) services in the 16 targeted regions. We are the first virtual regional counselling service that is FREE across the State.

There is no state organisation delivering the same services in other regional parts of Australia. We break new ground because of our determined focus on understanding regional communities.

DVassist have completed the first 10 months of delivering our core information hub and local directory service on the DVassist website, and 8 months of delivering a free counselling helpline. There is much that has been achieved and learned along the way.

We have extended our service delivery to 10am to 10pm weekdays and launched the live web chat service. Anyone experiencing family and domestic violence (FDV) in the 33 regions of regional, rural and remote Western Australia, today have ways to reach out for help. Our outreach activity is growing thanks to our networks with funding partners.

Though DVassist is still in the early phases of its journey to supporting those in need, the future is bright. Without doubt there are people suffering that can be helped. The support of the Australian Government under the Department of Health Community Health and Hospital Program grant has enabled our Founders vision to take shape and DVassist to grow as a leading organisation within regional, rural and remote WA. We are extremely grateful for this funding.

After joining the Board in late 2020, we renewed our focus through a strategic workshop process, that has locked in our focus on targets around service delivery, ongoing knowledge development, partnerships, team growth, community engagement and awareness and financial stability.

We would like to sincerely thank our outgoing Board directors Dr Mike Mears, Dr Shelley Smith, Kelly Stracevich, and Bev Blakemore. Their strategic guidance, dedication, and support has been greatly appreciated by all at DVassist as we continue to expand our services.

We would also like to thank outgoing Board director and our Founder, Fleur McDonald, without whom DVassist would not exist. We are deeply grateful for Fleur's drive to first begin the Breaking the Silence directory and for her passion and knowledge of rural Australia. Fleur's contributions have been invaluable in providing such an important service to the people of regional, rural, and remote Western Australia.

Thank you to our Foundation Chair Peter Fitzpatrick and the original Board for establishing solid basis on which to build. Thanks also needs to go to our Patrons, the Honourable Kim Beazley AC, Governor of Western Australia and the Honourable Liza Harvey.

DVassist operates with a small team led by our CEO, Esther Schwald, who has led the team with excellence and determination. Her commitment and tenacity are much appreciated by the Board.

The organisation has continued to evolve the resources without compromising our commitment to acting without judgement and with respect, compassion, collaboration and empathy, because we recognise our consistent, quality support can deliver social change for vulnerable people.

DVassist's community engagement has also been a big focus over the last year. We have been meeting with sector colleagues and local FDV support services across the 16 regions to form close working relationships and create referral pathways. The next steps in FY22 will see us making even deeper connections into these communities, including broader discussions with the police, refuges and ambulance services as well as community groups and clubs.

We have a deep understanding of the unique role we play amongst our complementary services, all of whom are striving for changes toward healthy, safe households. DVassist has a long established and collaborative relationship with DVConnect in Queensland, who have been instrumental in helping us create efficient service delivery with high impact. 1800RESPECT, Headspace, Relationships Australia, Lifeline, the Salvation Army and many more, refer people from regional, rural and remote WA who are in need to our services. The Police and country health services also provide our details to those they work with in need.

The organisation has strong governance structures in place, a clear vision, is appropriately resourced, growing in profile and ready to deliver the much needed support. Thank you to the Board for your determination and role in shaping this focus. Collectively, we are committed to our purpose.

Looking forward, DVassist has much to do in the areas of extending the hours to access counselling, consulting and building relationships with indigenous communities, and scoping and delivering support to perpetrators.

We have big goals because we appreciate the scale of need and we know our services are making a difference.

**Jane Cutler**  
Board Chair



“

**It's so wonderful to know you exist.**

*DVassist caller.*

”



# A message from the CEO

The past year has been rewarding, challenging and exciting. It has been a privilege to lead DVassist in its first year of operation and I look forward to more to come. The success DVassist has experienced was made possible through the generous funding by the Australian Federal Government and the Department of Health, with the goal to first launch a pilot project in 10 WA regions. Since then, DVassist has grown significantly and now covers 33 regions across all regional, rural, and remote WA.

The Board, led by Jane Cutler, have been a supportive and encouraging team, guiding me to ensuring we deliver our goals and are making an impact with our services. Thank you.

Work on our governance structures, led by the Board has also continued and seen the Audit & Risk Committee operational from April, we have engaged a fund raising focus to boost our additional sources of support and a Clinical reference team created that includes Board members and leaders in the field. Policies are progressively being finalised to ensure we operate at a high standard. This active support from the Board has been significant in ensuring we have achieved what we have in the period.

What has continued to surprise us all, is the scale of trauma being experienced in the regional, rural and remote areas of Western Australia. Every month, as we have moved closer and closer to our 16 regions, we have had the data confirmed. We are growing our appreciation of why it is that people in remote areas are 24 times as likely to be hospitalised for domestic violence when compared to those in major cities. Based on calls for support, we now better appreciate why 1 in 5 women outside of capital cities have experienced violence from an intimate partner. And have heard the frustration of people that have been previously facing up to 3 month wait times to secure any type of counselling or GP appointments. We also can understand why the Women's Domestic Violence Helpline call volumes March 2019 to March 2020 have grown 47%.

As calls commenced last October and web chat in April, our counsellor conversations has seen that regional specific issues are very real and include concerns around confidentiality and anonymity; geographical and social isolation; limited access to work, transport, refuges and finances; serious concerns about gun ownership and the impacts of drinking and drugs. Several callers have commented that they didn't think anyone cared about the people in the country and that they had given up because it has just been too hard and too long to wait for them to be heard.

So we expanded our support service from single sessions to multi-sessions and case management, to ensure we meet the needs of those reaching out.

Our web activity has also been growing. Many use the educational tools. Our most active pages discuss the first phase of understanding what is family and domestic violence. The service directory has been busy. Click throughs to calling and web chat are growing and as a team, we constantly fine tune the material within the site. This website includes the first directory that maps all FDV services in the regions and our counselling service is the first FREE virtual FDV counselling service across the state.

Our Community Engagement program has also been impacted because of our caller feedback. Our framework that was finalised last September, ensures we form close working relationships with communities and both FDV and non-FDV service providers on the ground. It's very clear to us that the broader community can all assist someone in making informed decisions about steps towards a safe and healthy household. FY22 will see activity in this area grow significantly.

We secured corporate funding from CBH and NAB to extend our services into an additional 17 regions. This scale of outreach is achievable because of our clearly mapped processes, operational efficiencies and solid foundations. This will mean for FY22, DVassist will support a total of 33 regions. Our work in developing the detailed localised service databases and planning outreach is well underway. Soon we will be able to launch into these communities to let them know where there is tailored and localised support available.

The commitment of our small team to create the operating systems including our CRM, phone, website, web chat and marketing, really has meant so much when it comes to expanding into new areas.

With so much delivered in FY21, we know we must stay vigilant as there is much more to do to ensure our service delivery is empowering. We are constantly listening, checking our online tools and their use, reviewing our detailed localised lists and the accuracy of the service provider contact information, trialling new hours and services, monitoring local level community engagement and support pathways. We know that helping someone at the right time can make all the difference and that we play a role in a process of change, alongside other service providers, within this space.

Looking at FY22, we have plans to progress in strengthening our engagement with service providers and sector partners in existing and new regions, growing the awareness of our services across all 33 regions, trialling an additional extension of hours, and ensuring our services are culturally relevant and appropriate for Indigenous people.

## DVassist has delivered :

- the first regional WA domestic violence helpline
- the first regional WA domestic violence webchat service
- the first regional WA area localised online service directory
- an online localised information hub
- a team of 4 family and domestic violence RRR counsellors, 3 operational staff, 12 support contractors, a CEO and a Board of 6.

We have no doubt that as the next year progresses, we will continue to better understand how support is effectively provided to people living with family and domestic violence in regional, rural and remote WA. These insights will guide us towards delivering our purpose and we look forward to sharing and collaborating with communities and service providers to deliver the outcomes we are all seeking.

## Esther Schwald

Chief Executive Officer





# Our Board of Directors

DVassist is a Public Company Limited by Guarantee, governed by a Board of Directors who volunteer their time and are responsible for ensuring strategic direction, implementation of governance policies, adherence to regulatory obligations and oversight of performance and management activities.



## **Jane Cutler - Chair**

Jane is a dynamic and respected leader with 30 plus years of board level and senior executive experience.

Formerly the CEO of the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority, Jane is recognised for her ability to drive transformational change through transparent stakeholder engagement, ethical governance, and robust decision making.

Jane's diverse leadership roles have seen her at the helm of public, private, and non-profit organisations in the oil and gas, financial services, maritime, environment and technology industries.

As a WA Division Councillor for the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Jane upholds the belief that society can be strengthened through world-class governance.

Currently Jane is also a Non-Executive Director with the Southern Ports Authority and ChemCentre, and as the Institution of Chemical Engineers' Deputy President.



## **Jenny Bloom PGDipBA, GAICD - Company Secretary**

Jenny has an extensive business background with experience in Western Australia and Victoria's public and private sectors. She is a business owner as well as a Non-Executive Director of the Australian-based resource company, BCI Minerals Ltd and is Chair of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee.

Jenny was most recently a member and Deputy Chair of the Waste Authority of Western Australia for eight years.

Living for 25 years in Broome, Jenny was a former Councillor and Deputy Shire President for the Shire of Broome and an independent director of a Broome-based Aboriginal Corporation. Jenny has first-hand knowledge of the challenges and opportunities facing communities in rural, regional and remote areas of Western Australia.



## **Hanif Ibrahim - Treasurer**

Hanif is a business strategist with nearly 30 years' experience in leadership positions across Western Australia's public, private, and not-for-profit sectors. He has built his own companies in finance, science and biotech and has been the CEO of Datatel Communications. Hanif currently serves on the board of Fairbridge Western Australia Inc.

Hanif brings with him a strategic and solutions-focused approach backed by a strong reputation

for building positive, productive workplace cultures and achieving consensus among key stakeholders. Hanif has driven growth and created solutions for complex business problems across a wide variety of industries, including biotech, finance, and contracting.



## **Lachlan Hunter - Non-Executive Director**

Lachlan Hunter hails from a mixed cropping and livestock farm near Bruce Rock in Western Australia's Central Wheatbelt region.

He has extensive experience within politics and government having worked as a Senior Policy Adviser for a number of State and Commonwealth government

Ministers. He has also worked in the private sector within the agricultural industry holding mid-tier management roles. Mr Hunter has a long history of volunteering within agriculture, community and mental health organisations. He is passionate about the future development of Regional and Rural Australia particularly in education, agriculture and technology.



## **Dr Kate Ferguson - Non-Executive Director** **BSc, MBChB, MForensMed, AFCFM (RCPA)**

Kate works at the Sexual Assault Resource Centre (SARC) in the specialised area of Clinical Forensic Medicine, where she provides forensic and medical care to sexual assault victims and assistance to health professionals and police throughout rural, remote and regional WA.

Kate is an Associate Member of the Faculty of Clinical Forensic Medicine of the Royal College of Pathologists (Australasia) and a director and co-founder of Forensic Clinical Care.

Kate provides education to the WA Police, emergency staff, social workers and the judiciary on the topic of non-fatal strangulation (NFS). She has co-authored the NFS e-learning package to support the implementation of legislation in WA for the Department of Justice and sits on the NFS working group for the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (WA).



## **Dr Katy Templeman - Non-Executive Director** **MBBS (UWA) FRACGP AFRACMA MHA (Monash)**

For over 20 years, Katy has been at the frontline of delivering health services across Western Australia's diverse and vast Midwest Region. As a local general practitioner with expertise in emergency medicine, women's health, and Aboriginal health, she has seen the physical and emotional toll family and

domestic violence takes on individuals and their families, and the broader community.

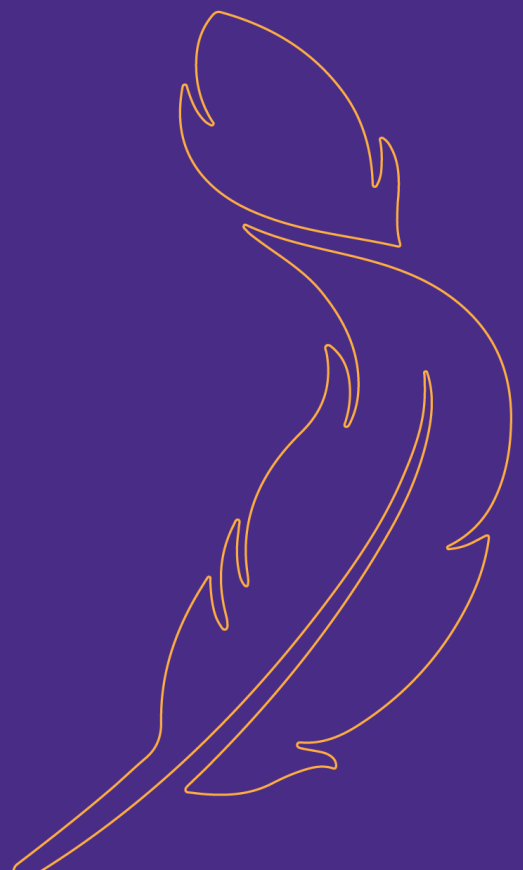
Since 2018 Katy has been the Director of Medical Services at Geraldton Hospital she has developed opportunities for more education and support to health and social services workers providing care and assistance for people impacted by family and domestic violence. Katy is also the Chair of the WA Primary Health Alliance Midwest Clinical Committee.

“

**I feel a lot more relieved now  
than before I rang.**

*DVassist caller.*

”



# New Strategic Plan and Priorities

Our primary focus is supporting anyone in regional Western Australian who is facing or experiencing domestic violence, regardless of age, gender, sexuality, religion, ethnicity, or ability.

Thanks to a Commonwealth Government grant we have been able to launch a regional domestic violence telephone counselling service, an interactive website with live web chat, and a comprehensive online information hub and online directory initially focusing on 16 regional areas.

Our strategic plan outlines where we will go from here and our **five strategic priorities** for FY2122, guided by our purpose, our aspiration, and our objectives at DVassist.

## OUR PURPOSE

To provide access to counselling and support services for anyone impacted by family and domestic violence in regional, rural, and remote Australia.

## OUR ASIPIRATION

To stand beside and empower those impacted by family and domestic violence.

## OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

### QUALITY SERVICES

Our client focused, independent services are innovative and reflect leading family and domestic violence practice.



### KNOWLEDGE SOURCE

We will gather evidence of the needs of people in RRR Australia to influence change.



### BRAND RECOGNITION

We will ensure that regional, rural and remote Australia knows, trusts, and recommends DVassist.



### OUR TEAM

We will have credible, skilled and experienced people delivering the governance, leadership and services of DVassist who understand RRR Australia.



### PARTNERSHIPS

We will seek and nurture mutually beneficial partnerships that enable us to deliver our strategy and expand our services.



### FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

We will have a sustainable business model that is financially responsible, identifies opportunities and manages key risks.





# New Strategic Plan and Priorities

- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1 – DELIGHT OUR FUNDERS.**

We must deliver on the existing funding contracts.

We currently have contracts covering 16 local government regions and funding carries us through until 20 June 2022.

- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 – DRIVE BRAND/SERVICES RECOGNITION.**

We must increase the awareness of the DVassist brand and its services in the 16 regions where we currently operate.

This will increase usage of the service and assist us to measure demand. We have limited funding to devote to marketing, so we must be innovative in the way we get our message across; ensuring high ROI for every dollar spent and utilising the networks and resources of others wherever we can.

- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 – SECURE FUNDING COMMITMENTS.**

Our current funding expires in June 2022.

So we are focused on:

1. Secure committed funding to extend DVassist services to all LGA regions in RRR WA; and
2. Secure committed funding to continue to operate post June 2022 for the next 3-year period to June 2025.

The total commitment required to operate across all regions is:

- \$1.25M to expand to all LGA regions in RRR WA.
- \$7.24M to operate across all LGA regions in RRR WA for 3 years.

- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4 – MEASURE SOCIAL IMPACT.**

We must develop and implement a social impact measurement and reporting framework which is relevant to DVassist.

DVassist is in a unique position as a start up to capture data from its inception regarding community need, individual impact from service provision and community impact from service availability.

- **STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5 – ENSURE INDIGENOUS RELEVANCE.**

We must ensure that DVassist's services are relevant and culturally appropriate for Indigenous people.

Regional, rural and remote communities are significantly populated by indigenous Australians and research shows that FDV is a significant challenge for many of these family groups and communities. DVassist must seek indigenous expertise to ensure that there are no cultural barriers to indigenous communities engaging with the services that DVassist delivers.

# Reflecting on FY21

FY21 saw DVassist come to life. It's been a defining year, setting the foundations for the organisation's delivery of support to people experiencing family and domestic violence in regional, rural and remote WA. Like any new venture, there was much to be done and we are proud of what has been delivered.

## JULY

- New office set up.
- Final testing of new website.

## AUGUST

- Phone system trialling.
- Brand change from Breaking the Silence to DVassist.

## SEPTEMBER

- New website launched with 16 regional hubs local services directories.

## OCTOBER

- Jane Cutler becomes Board Chair.
- New offices and call centre facility opened by the Hon. Nola Marino.
- Telephone counselling freecall 1800 – launched, 10am to 7pm.
- Attended the inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence, facilitated by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs.

## NOVEMBER

- Case management services trials commenced.

## JANUARY

- Multi-session counselling launched.

## FEBRUARY

- Briefed the Hon. Kim Beazley, Governor of Western Australia.

## MARCH

- Telephone counselling from 10am to 10pm launched.

## APRIL

- Attended the Regional Roundtable Event hosted by National Drought and North Queensland Flood Response and Recovery Agency.
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet meetings.
- "Live Chat" launches on the website.
- First newsletter distributed.
- First major private donation secured.
- Strategic plan 2021 to 2022 approved by Board.

## MAY

- Integrated CRM system trialling commences.
- First donation made through the website.
- Senator the Hon Ann Ruston visits the DVassist offices.
- The Hon Melissa Price MP visits the DVassist offices.

## JUNE

- NAB and CBH confirms their support to DVassist.
- Ongoing Case Management services launched.

# Our new brand

## Orange:

Orange is the colour that gives you shelter in tough moments, by not allowing you to sink into grief or disappointment. It brings a high degree of positivism, always rejuvenating us in the most difficult moments.

## Purple:

Purple fosters creativity by awakening our senses while promoting intuitive, insightful observations.

Purple's rarity in nature has given it a supernatural aura for centuries. Purple is also the most powerful wavelength of the rainbow and the colour of family and domestic violence awareness.

## The Feather:

A powerful symbol that signifies trust, strength, freedom, and flight. A light object that represents the heavy subject. Something that is found across Australia and is very visible in regional, rural and remote areas.

The movement in the feather reflects change, taking on a different perspective, and seeing things in a new light - which is the challenge for all our stakeholders.





# More learnings about RRR FDV

Many people experiencing domestic violence within the home don't realise they are experiencing domestic violence, because to them, it is a normal way to live. After a conversation with one of our counsellors, we hear the gratitude and have confidence in our path.

Once people understand that domestic violence comes in many forms, the barriers for individuals in regional, rural and remote WA are then exacerbated by the nuances of each regional area.

## Hurdles faced by people in regional, rural, and remote areas include:

- Lack of anonymity
- Confidentiality difficulties
- Limited specialised service options
- Longer wait times for any support
- Community support of perpetrators considered to be respected individuals
- Limited, if any, refuge options
- Geographical isolation
- Social isolation
- Natural disasters
- Reduced transportation options
- Increased access to firearms
- Use of alcohol and other drugs and limited access to related support services.
- Limited employment opportunities
- Complex financial arrangements
- Variable access to internet and communications

This means that reaching out and receiving assistance is not easy. Knowing where to look locally for assistance can be difficult. Finding a path to safety can seem insurmountable.

There is also often a lack of funding to relevant services, meaning some services may only be available for a limited period of time, making it very difficult for those experiencing violence to find a reliable support service.

**61% of our calls are from Geraldton, Kalgoorlie and Bunbury.**

\*Since the service launched in September 2020



■ Geraldton, Kalgoorlie, Bunbury ■ Other Regions

**42% are from remote, rural, and regional areas outside our 16 targeted regions.**

\*Since the service launched in September 2020



■ Outside Target Regions ■ Within 16 Target Regions

# More learnings about RRR FDV

Family and domestic violence is both a crime and a fundamental breach of human rights which can lead to long term social, health, psychological, financial and economic damage for victims of abuse at great cost to the community.

The statistics speak for themselves.

Data from the Western Australian Police, State welfare departments, the Australian Bureau of Statistics, charity groups and our own community feedback all confirms that there are significant and real differences between the support available in city and regional areas.

Over the last year we have experienced this feedback first hand and understand the process, the integrations and steps we need to undertake.

The diversity of our vast state adds complexity to the issues. Every region and town is different. We can not apply a 'cookie cutter' approach to delivering meaningful support.

That's why we are stepping into an integration strategy that will allow the DVassist team to better tailor information, services, and support to all the regions we can.

In 2022, we know we can reach out with tailored support into 33 regions, thanks to the funding we have secured to date from the Federal government and our corporate partners. There is so much more to do and DVassist is keen to continue to grow, but we will need ongoing support.

Our program of education and understanding extends beyond supporting those experiencing domestic violence. We are committed to ensuring the voice of those facing difficulty is heard and as a community, collectively we can do more.

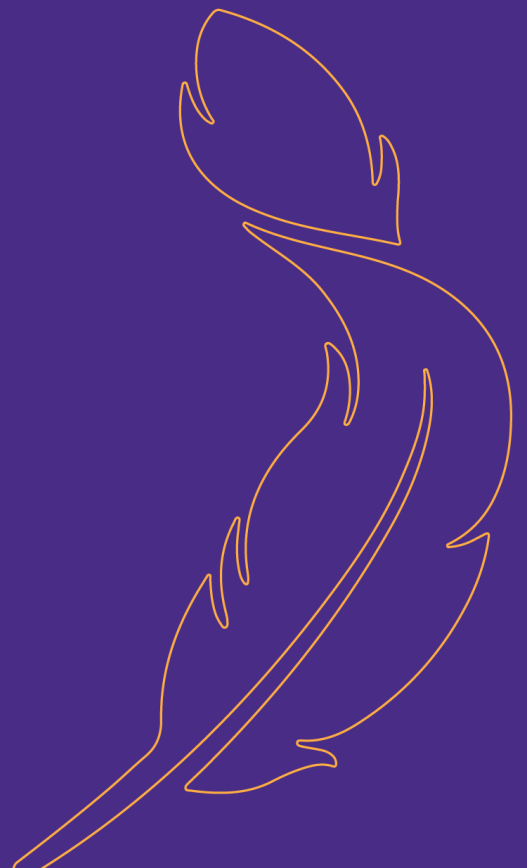


“

**I didn't think anyone cared about the people in the bush. You made me feel listened to.**

*DVassist caller.*

”



# The next 12 months

For the next 12 months we are clear on what has to be achieved. Our initial funding will come to an end in June 2022, so our main priorities are:

- **Service delivery** into the regions we service today and growing into the rest of RRR WA, thanks to our corporate partner support.
- Secure our **broader funding base** to underwrite our future into 2023 and beyond.

With the organisation now delivering to the initial scope, we are confident that we have delivered on the Commonwealth government support objectives. Our experiences have led us to wanting to do more. Which is why we aim to also extend our services into our existing areas with local community outreach and relationship development.

In FY21 we have secured major additional funding from NAB, CBH and an anonymous private donor, which has meant we are able grow our regions. This is very encouraging as this additional support was achieved by our initial very small team.

As we launch into FY22, we have engaged specialist resources to assist us define a strategic and focused approach for securing stable funding from a range of sources – government, corporates, foundations and philanthropists.

This financial stability will underpin the ongoing expansion into regional, rural and remote areas as detailed below, as well as important extensions on our services.

- **Extending hours of service.**

Our experiences with callers and web chat users, aligned with our website and social media activity points to a need to have our specialist counsellors available for longer extended hours.

- **Indigenous Strategy.**

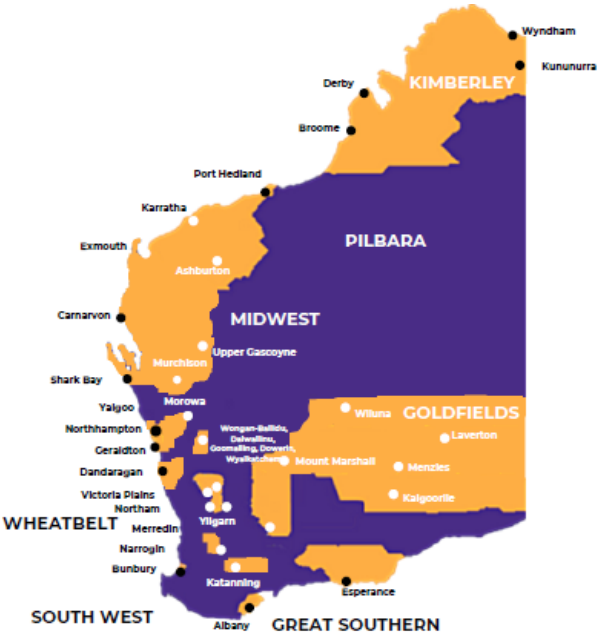
We have been reviewing the best approach to consulting and developing a tailored program of support into the Indigenous communities in our regions. We respect there are many reasons for differences in these communities and appreciate we can do better with a culturally appropriate approach for those in these communities that are experiencing violence.

- **Regional Expansion.**

Because of the generous funding from CBH and NAB, DVassist will be expanding our services beyond our 16 regions to 33 regions. DVassist's ever-growing coverage is indicated by the orange portions of the map below.

We will start to offer services into the Shires of Morowa, Katanning, Narrogin, Merredin, Carnarvon, Upper Gascoyne, Shark Bay, Exmouth, Northampton, Wiluna, Laverton, Menzies, Dandaragan, Victoria Plains, Yalgoo, Murchinson and Mount Marshall.

This represents a population of over 32,000 people, many of whom have been affected by natural disasters over the last year including tropical cyclone Seroja and related flooding.



# The next 12 months

## Further develop our Community Engagement.

To listen effectively to each regional community we recognise the need to be more present in these communities in FY22.

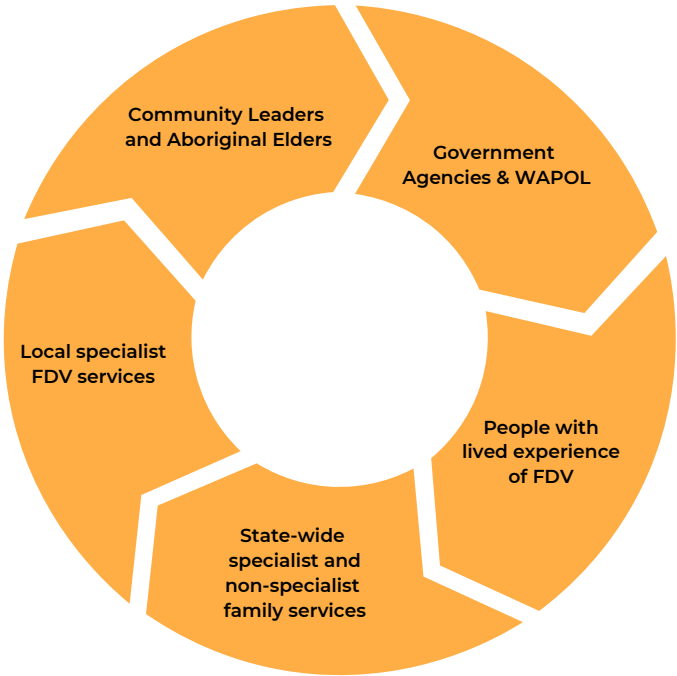
With our new Community Coordinator on board, we are commencing our next round of regional visits that started in July 2021.

Then we move to engaging counsellors in the regions.

These community connections will extend to groups outside FDV service areas and making deeper community connections to ensure we are increasing referrals from FDV, Non-FDV, and community sector organisations.

This increased grass roots integration will grow our website usage and increase calls and contacts with our specialist counselling teams.

## Key Stakeholders to consider in our Community Engagement



## Perpetrator Support.

We will be extending services to those using violence, because they are the other side of the family and domestic violence equation. We support and value the capacity for change.

We believe that perpetrators can develop a better understanding of their responsibilities and the impact of their actions. Education, listening and connection to the right support can make a significant difference and we aim to be part of that process in regional, rural and remote WA.

Most of the plans for FY22 do require additional funding and the DVassist team is already discussing support from a number of groups.





# The Financial Report

BREAKING THE SILENCE LIMITED  
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)

AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION UNDER DIVISION 60-40 OF THE AUSTRALIAN  
CHARITIES AND NOT-FOR-PROFITS ACT 2012 TO THE BOARD OF  
BREAKING THE SILENCE LIMITED

I declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief, in relation to the audit of Breaking the Silence Limited for the year ended 30 June 2021 there have been:

- i) no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 in relation to the audit; and
- ii) no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

NOT FOR PROFIT ACCOUNTING SPECIALISTS  
KESWICK SA 5035



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Nicholas Matsis CPA  
Registered Company Auditor No 77466

18/10/2021

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Date



# The Financial Report

## Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

	2021	2020
	\$	\$
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Grant Income	870,000	650,000
Donations	20,334	-
	<u>890,334</u>	<u>650,000</u>
<b>OTHER INCOME</b>		
COVID-19 Government Stimulus Income	-	44,178
Sundry Income	703	-
Interest Received	1,041	-
	<u>1,744</u>	<u>44,178</u>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE AND OTHER INCOME</b>	<u>892,078</u>	<u>694,178</u>
	<b>2021</b>	<b>2020</b>
	\$	
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Depreciation	25,791	-
Employee Benefits	415,851	121,606
Other Expenses	288,220	56,127
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<u>729,862</u>	<u>177,733</u>
<b>NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR</b>	<u>162,216</u>	<u>516,445</u>
Other Comprehensive Income	-	-
<b>TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME/(LOSS) FOR THE YEAR</b>	<u><u>162,216</u></u>	<u><u>516,445</u></u>

# The Financial Report

## Statement of Financial Position

	2021 \$	2020 \$
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash & Cash Equivalents	647,289	425,994
Trade & Other Receivables	-	2,340
Financial Assets	100,000	100,000
Other Assets - Rental Bond Paid	6,000	-
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<u>753,289</u>	<u>528,334</u>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Right-of-Use Asset	28,291	-
	<u>28,291</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<u>781,580</u>	<u>528,334</u>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Trade & Other Payables	63,919	9,237
Provisions	12,654	2,652
Lease Liability	26,346	-
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<u>102,919</u>	<u>11,889</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<u>102,919</u>	<u>11,889</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u><u>678,661</u></u>	<u><u>516,445</u></u>
<b>EQUITY</b>	<u><u>678,661</u></u>	<u><u>516,445</u></u>

# Acknowledgements and a thank you to our supporters

We graciously thank our founder, patrons, supporters, specialist partners, and staff for their on-going support of DVassist.

## **Our Founder.**

Our journey first began in 2017 when our founder, Esperance-based author Fleur McDonald, established an online information directory of family and domestic violence services called Breaking the Silence.

We are very grateful to Fleur McDonald and the Parnell Foundation for their initial start-up funds and contribution to Breaking the Silence, without whom DVassist today would not exist.

## **Our Patrons.**

We are grateful for the continued support provided by our patrons The Honourable Kim Beazley AC – Governor of Western Australia and Honourable. Liza Harvey, former Leader of the WA Liberal Party.

## **Partnerships.**

DVConnect – A gracious thank you to DVConnect CEO, Beck Connor, and her incredible executive team, for their encouragement, support and collaboration to assist us with establishing our telephone counselling services.

McCusker Centre for Citizenship - We had the privilege of hosting six interns this year from the UWA McCusker Centre for Citizenship and look forward to hosting additional interns over the coming year. The interns provide a valuable additional resource for project related work.

## **Staff.**

Creating a team in a start-up operation is critical to any teams success.

Some have been with us from the beginning and others are new team members that will facilitate our growth. All of the DVassist team are more than just employees.

We have a passion to see change and know our role in the process is bringing that about more quickly than ever before for people experiencing FDV. Thank you to all that have been and will continue to be part of DVassist.

DVassist is part of a network of services and supporters that want to see an end to family and domestic violence. We exist to help facilitate care and support to those experiencing FDV in regional, rural and remote WA. We are humbled by the support that has been provided over the last 12 months and so respectfully acknowledge and thank this incredible network of partners that have been critical in the creation and growth of DVassist.

# Acknowledgements and a thank you to our supporters

## Financial Partners.

Our Financial Partners, who facilitate our operation.

The DVassist project is supported by funding from the Australian Government, Department of Health under the Community Health and Hospital Program.

We would also like to thank the following organisations for their generous funding.



## Community Partners.

Our Community Partners, who help us connect to those in need and raise awareness of our services.

DVConnect  
BeyondBlue  
1800Respect  
Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development  
Department of Communities  
WA Country Health Services  
headspace  
Western Australian Council of Social Service (WACOSS)  
Desert Blue Connect  
Lifeline WA  
Women's Council  
Anglicare

Mission Australia  
Centrecare  
Rural West  
Country Women's Association of Australia  
Domestic Violence Action Centre (DVAC)  
Playgroup WA  
Linkwest  
YourToolkit  
Women's Legal Service WA  
QLife  
The Rural, Regional, Remote Women's Network of Western Australia.

## ProBono Partners.

Our ProBono Partners, who also have a passion to support change.

Thank you to all our partners that have been vital in our service establishment and brand development. The support of this group has meant DVassist saved on over \$400,000 in costs.

Google  
SearchSmart  
DVConnect

Norton Rose Fullbright  
OoH Media

GWN7  
Ron Farris Real Estate

PR Collaborative  
McIntyre, Management, & Marketing

Board Business

Kate O'Hara  
The Criddle Family Group

Jenny Bloom  
Verb Advertising  
Wallace Family  
Hit Geraldton

Gatecrasher  
Ian Bird  
IGA Geraldton  
Amy Bowdrey

Walker and Scoble  
McCusker Foundation  
Kelly Marlow  
Daisy Chains

DVassist values equity and diversity in its workforce and with our stakeholders and communities we serve. We are committed to the development and sustainability of an environment that is inclusive and equal for people from all backgrounds and lifestyles, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people from culturally diverse backgrounds, people of diverse sexuality and/or genders, and people with disabilities.

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DVassist respectfully acknowledges and celebrates the Traditional Owners / Custodians throughout Australia and pays its respects to Elders, children and young people of past, current and future generations.



@DVassistau



@DVassist



@DVassist

**[dvassist.org.au](http://dvassist.org.au)**

