



ANNUAL REPORT 2021- 2022



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INTRODUCTION

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

Family and domestic violence comes in many forms, occurring in different types of relationships and at any stage in life. Violence can happen between couples, former partners, family members, and between carers and people with a disability or an elder. For many complex reasons, some people in abusive relationships do not recognise what is happening as a form of violence, however, do know things are 'not right'.

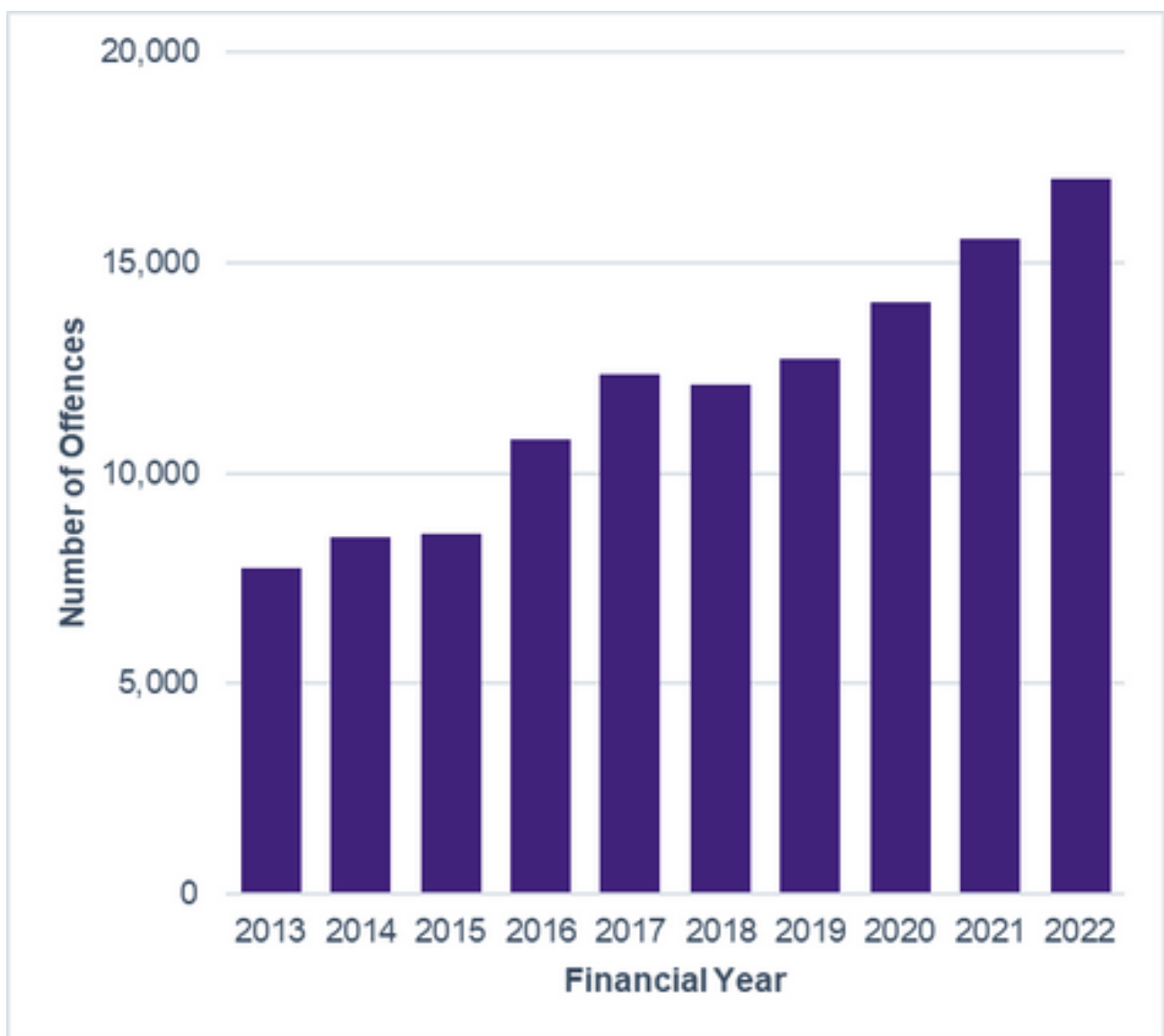
At DVassist we support people who are experiencing family and domestic violence (FDV) so they can make informed choices that will enhance their personal safety. We also support family members and friends of those affected by violence. Additionally, we provide education and training to professionals who interact with people impacted by FDV, as well as peer support and debriefing.



People in rural and very remote Australia are more than 24 times as likely to be hospitalised for domestic violence as are people in major cities.

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

In the last decade in regional WA, recorded family related offences and breach of violence restraint orders have increased by 220%, totaling 17,005 offences in the 2022 financial year.



Assault (family), Threatening behaviour (family) and Breach of Violence restraint orders
7,729 offences in 2012-2013 to 17,005 in 2021-2022 *WA Police reports https://www.police.wa.gov.au/Crime/CrimeStatistics#

WHAT WE DO: MAKE LOCAL CONNECTIONS, EDUCATE, AND PROVIDE SPECIALIST FDV SUPPORT SERVICES.

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

OUR WEBSITE.

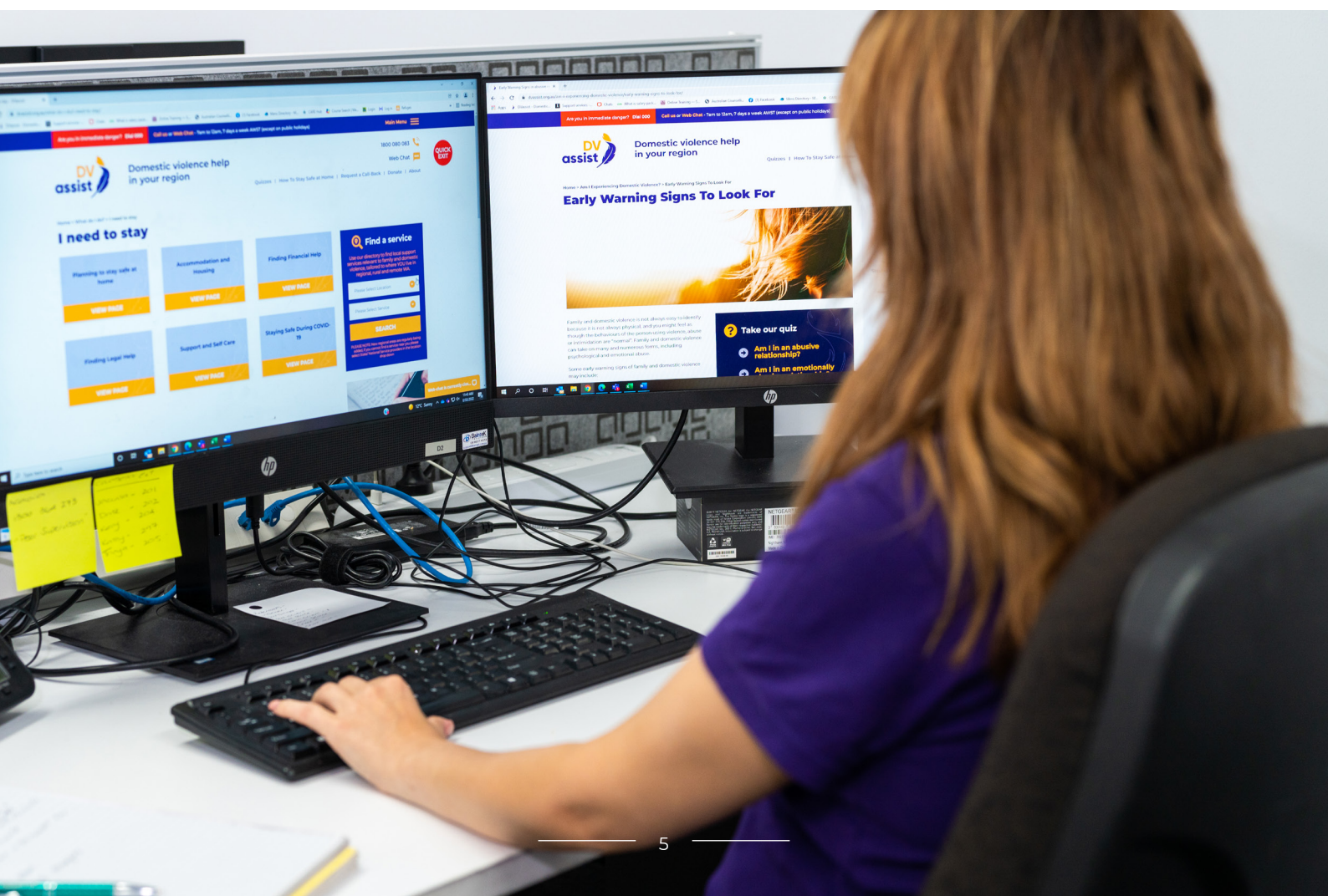
The DVassist website is at the core of our service. Our network and clients describe the site as an educational tool and resource centre. Our website and directories are updated regularly by the DVassist team to ensure information is accurate and current.

Our custom-built information hub provides localised directories, assisting people in rural, regional and remote (RRR) WA to obtain a range of services related to FDV.

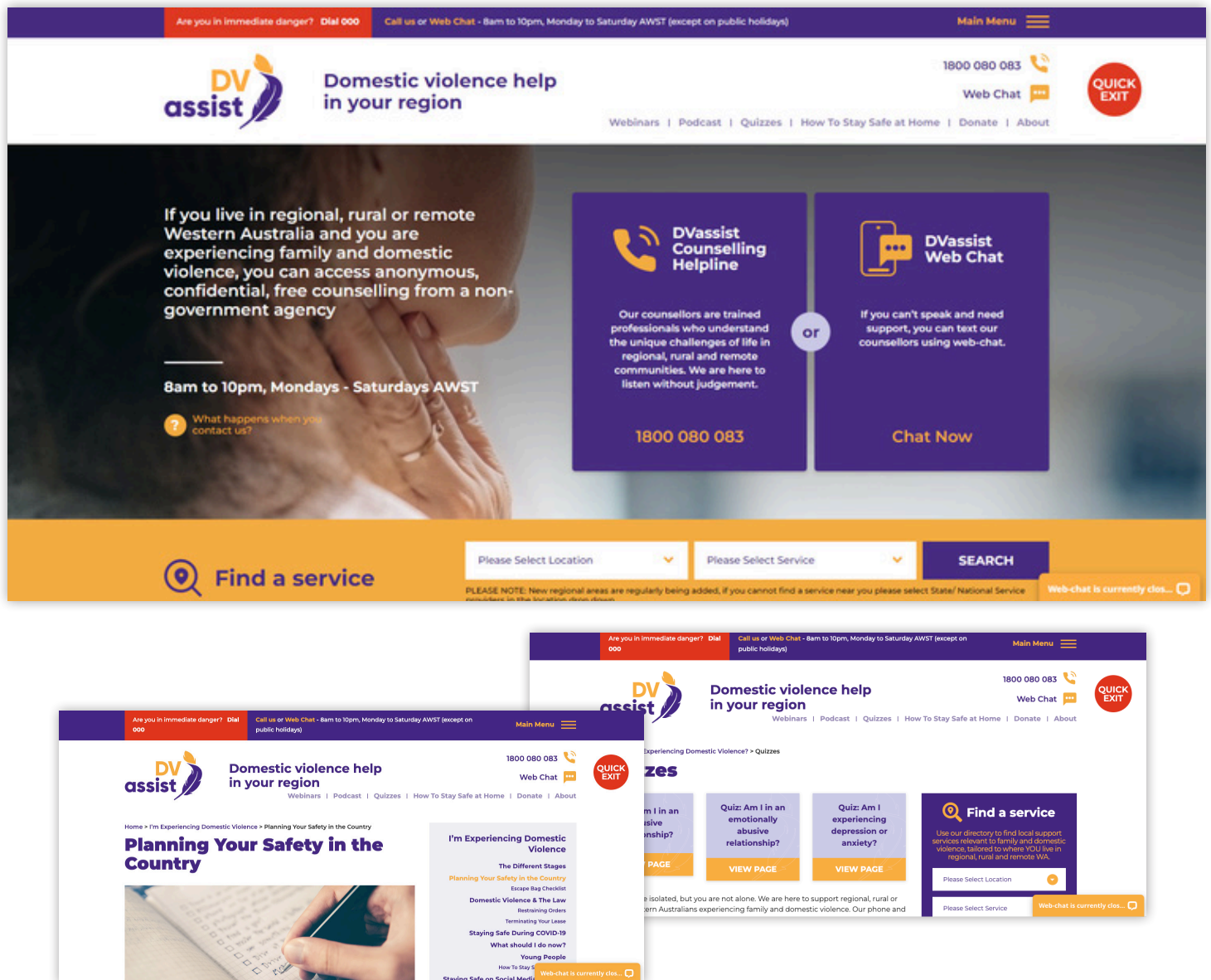
Included in this list are emergency accommodation, counselling, legal and financial advice, aged care, LGBTIQ+, multicultural, and mental health and alcohol and other drugs support services.

40% of all DVassist website visitors (2 in 5) are looking online to become educated regarding various forms of domestic violence and to determine if this applies to them, in particular emotional abuse.

SOURCE: DVassist website analytics



The website strives to be a connector for people, identifying how and where to access help.



The DVassist website also provides essential information to help people understand more about FDV and increase their safety. This includes:

- 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
- Tips to help stay safe during covid-19
- How to obtain legal and financial advice
- Information for friends and family who witness FDV
- And how they might be able to assist.

OUR COUNSELLING SERVICES

Supporting people experiencing FDV is the start of our strategy and approach to counselling. Founded in the country, DVassist has always focused on understanding what it means to live rurally. In WA, this is different in all the regions. How the town of Albany operates as a community is very different to Broome. Our geographical and cultural diversities are significant. Our team of counsellors are all experienced with country communities and are either from a regional area, have lived in one, or have worked closely with regional clients.

DVassist's unique services provide tailored and trauma informed intervention for people impacted by FDV in RRR WA. DVassist practices a person-centred model of service and supports each person to establish and work towards their own goals. We are committed to a strength-based approach in all aspects of our work and celebrate individual skills and strategies for survival.

Our **counselling services**—free of charge and confidential—are available with a FDV specialist, via telephone or web chat, to explore issues such as risk, safety concerns, and current needs. Our specialists provide referral pathways and support people to identify possible solutions and positive strategies.

The service is available in single or multi-session formats, depending on the individual's preference and needs. The objective of the single session model is to address the presenting concern particular to the individual's experience of FDV from a trauma informed framework- with a strong focus on immediate safety, emotional support, information, and referral pathways to access local supports. The DVassist multisession counselling model provides assistance in the form of a purposeful conversation with an FDV Specialist over approximately six sessions.

DVassist short-term **case management services** can be provided as a standalone service or in partnership with multisession supportive counselling. The objectives of the DVassist case management model include identifying needs, exploring referral pathways, clear goal setting, and advocacy. Case management support may involve the following: completion of a risk assessment, education, ongoing safety planning, provision of information and options, and facilitating assisted referral pathways. DVassist counselling and case management clients are either self-referred or referred by other services. DVassist staff are working collaboratively with other professionals, within the bounds of confidentiality.



The DVassist Counsellor was very empathetic and helped me realise that I am not alone, and that my circumstances are not my fault. She arranged further support beyond our conversation. Thank you.

DVassist caller



HOW WE PRESENT: WE ARE COMMITTED TO HELPING.

OUR BRAND

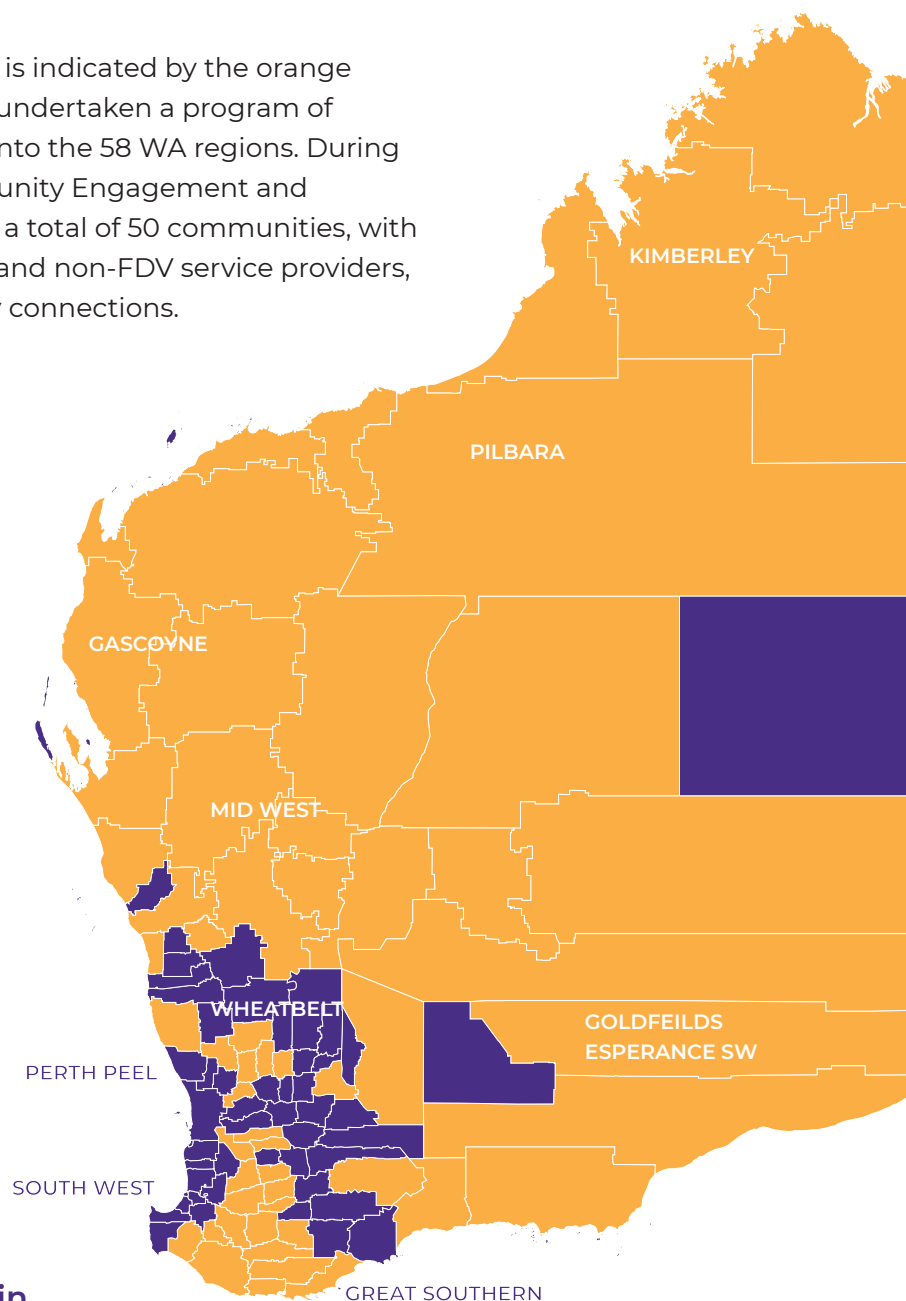
The name DVassist speaks plainly to our core purpose and why we exist. Our branding is designed to make our service easily recognisable and accessible for those in need.

EXPANDING CHANNELS AND GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

Communities need to know we exist and to understand how we can help. Because of the generous funding from our various donors, DVassist is now operating in 58 shires in RRR WA. We offer services to over 348,850 people living in those shires.



DVassist's increasing coverage is indicated by the orange portions on the map. We have undertaken a program of outreach and local marketing into the 58 WA regions. During the past 12 months, the Community Engagement and Development Team has visited a total of 50 communities, with a focus on linking in both FDV and non-FDV service providers, and strengthening community connections.



Shires DVassist operates in

Albany	Derby	Leonora	Sandstone
Ashburton	Dowerin, Wyalkatchem,	Manjimup	Shark Bay
Boyup Brook	Dundas	Meekatharra	Upper Gascoyne
Bridgetown-	East Pilbara	Merredin	Victoria Plains
Greenbushes	Esperance	Menzies	Wagin
Brookton	Exmouth	Morowa	Wandering
Broomehill- Tambellup	Geraldton	Mount Magnet	Williams
Broome	Goomaling	Mount Marshall	Wiluna
Bruce Rock	Halls Creek	Murchison	Wondan Ballidu
Bunbury	Irwin	Nannup	Wyndham/East
Carnarvon	Kalgoorlie	Narrogin	Kimberly
Cranbrook	Karratha	Northam	Yalgoo
Cue	Katanning	Northampton	Yilgarn
Dalwallinu	Kojonup	Plantagenet	
Dandaragan	Lake Grace	Port Hedland	
Denmark	Laverton	Ravensthorpe	

HOW WE OPERATE: WORKING TO WORLD-CLASS STANDARDS.

OUR BOARD

Our Board consists 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

Our administration and counselling team is based in our Subiaco office, the centre of service delivery.

OUR SYSTEMS

We have created world-class systems to ensure our team's focus is on service delivery. DVassist is registered with ACNC, endorsed by the ATO

for Charity Tax Concession, and Deductible Gift Recipient, and approved for a Charitable Collections License with DMIRS.

OUR STAFF

DVassist operates from the understanding that having mentally-healthy staff, a positive team culture and strong leadership, will improve the results for people seeking our services. As part of this approach, we prioritise ongoing supervision for all staff, providing opportunities for education and professional development, and a supportive and involved management team.



OUR 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.



OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS



83,834

website visits of our Online
Information Hub



1,541

service providers
were registered in
our website portal.



2,242

helpline and
counselling calls.



Our average weekly reach
on social media was

47,351

people



We visited

50

regional
communities



470

webchats



31,662

quizzes and resource
sessions were
completed on our
website



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Jane Cutler
Board Chair

In another uncertain and challenging year in Western Australia, I am pleased to report that DVassist has further developed our practice framework and program models to reduce barriers to accessing our services, and minimising gaps for people affected by FDV. The initial services provided under the Commonwealth funding agreement have been extended to provide meaningful assistance to 58 regional, rural and remote areas of WA.

DVassist is the only FDV specialist service with a regional focus in WA. We understand the unique challenges of living rurally in WA. DVassist is also working on prevention and early intervention by providing education and training opportunities to professionals and community members.

Some key features of our services include:

- **'no wait' access to our counsellors**
- **a trauma-informed practice where multi-session counselling clients can access the same counsellor, providing consistency of service, the creation of a therapeutic relationship and a reduction in re-traumatisation**
- **short-term case management sessions**
- **a community engagement program that establishes close, working relationships between communities and both FDV and non-FDV providers**

- **a comprehensive interactive website that maps all FDV-related services in the regions where we operate**
- **webinars and social media information with a focus on regional, rural and remote FDV education.**

Research shows that early intervention reduces the escalation of FDV. DVassist is a niche and differentiated service that uniquely services the regional, rural and remote areas of WA and is making a measurable difference. We have expanded our relationships with other FDV support services and networks to strengthen existing services and fill in gaps.

Over the past year, we have seen significant growth in the demand for our services. The data demonstrates the increased need for and use of our services.

With up to 11 FDV staff - available seven days a week from 7am to midnight- DVassist uses technology to connect quickly and effectively with those most in need. Our advanced communication systems and highly-skilled clinical team's understanding of regional, rural and remote areas make a real difference.

In 2021, we welcomed Greg Hebble to DVassist, and farewellled our inaugural Chief Executive Officer, Esther Schwald, who took the service from a start-up to fully operational. I thank Esther and Greg for their contribution to the success of DVassist and their commitment to people living

in regional, rural and remote WA. I also take this opportunity to thank outgoing board member, Hanif Ibrahim, throughout his time as treasurer.

Staff at DVassist have worked extremely hard, and the Board could not have wished for a more professional and dedicated team under the leadership of the Operations Manager, Ella Ailenei.

In the current climate, securing recurrent funding is challenging. We are grateful to the Commonwealth Government for their support by way of pilot funding, which concluded on 30th June 2022. We thank the private and corporate funders who have made valued contributions.

What we have achieved in a short period of time through hard work and determination, in line with our strategic plan, has delighted our donors and attained brand and services recognition. It has enabled us to measure our social impact and work towards ensuring Indigenous relevance.

Starting from a pilot program, DVassist has opened many opportunities and broken new ground. We have demonstrated that there are highly effective ways to better connect with people in regional, rural and remote WA experiencing domestic violence. We have enabled people to gain a greater understanding of the resources and support available. Support that is relevant, timely and easily accessible.

I am proud and honoured to present the DVassist Annual Report for 2021-2022.

Taking the time to run through a safety plan with me has helped. I feel more prepared and less overwhelmed.

DVassist caller





A MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING CEO

Acting Chief Executive Officer
Ella Ailenei

As Acting CEO, I am pleased to announce the past financial year was marked by significant progress and achievements. We have seen exponential growth of DVassist services, the launch of new initiatives and geographical expansion. The growth and development accomplished by DVassist is reflected in the hard work, dedication, and innovation of our operational team, supported by the Board. I would personally like to thank our Board of Directors, led by Jane Cutler, for providing essential guidance and leadership. The remarkable and passionate DVassist Board are always happy to roll their sleeves up and help when needed.

Most importantly, I offer many thanks to all our staff. The team has been relentless in their work, fierce in their passion, and unwavering in their commitment to support those in need.

This past year saw DVassist expand our service area from 16 to 58 regions in RRR WA. This means we are now providing our Online Directory and Specialist Counselling to people living in 89% of the total landmass of WA. The expansion into 42 new areas was made possible through our generous donors. Many thanks to Northern Star Resources Limited, Stan Perron Foundation, CBH, Roy Hill and Atlas Iron, Horizon Power, NAB, and private donors.

While DVassist has grown during this period, the need to support those experiencing FDV in RRR Western Australia has also increased. Police statistics indicate a 16% rise (above the 5-year average) in WA for family-related offences this financial year. These statistics form just a small

part of the picture, as many people do not report abuse to the police.

In early 2021, we extended our counselling program to provide multi-session counselling. People experiencing violence living in RRR WA can access up to six, free counselling sessions with a specialist practitioner. This has been a highly-utilised service. To increase access, people can now request a call-back at a time that suits them via our website.

A strong focus for the past 12 months has been on education and training for professionals who interact with, or support, people affected by FDV. Our staff have been trained to deliver three specialist FDV training packages that enhance FDV literacy. We look forward to continuing to provide training and FDV specialist support to professionals working in government and non-for-profit sectors, as well as education to community members.

DVassist staff also developed in-house training, which was provided to various organisations, including St John Ambulance, WA Country Health Services, and a Community Legal Centre. Training topics included how to recognise, respond and safely-refer a person experiencing FDV; the impact of trauma, such as FDV on the brain, and how to best provide trauma-informed support, and self-care.

There is currently a significant need for tailored FDV support for people with disability. DVassist hopes to launch a program for frontline workers,

providing essential training on recognising and responding to FDV concerns.

Aligned with continuous service improvement policy and best practice, DVassist has partnered with the Centre for Social Impact UWA to develop an outcomes-measurement framework. The DVassist program logic has been reviewed and implemented by The Centre to determine output indicators and availability of data resources to measure changes in short, medium and long-term outcomes.

Through this work, a comprehensive Evaluation Framework Report was completed, which examined how to reliably measure the effect of DVassist programs at the individual, organisational, community, and societal level. In the next stage, the Centre for Social Impact will evaluate the DVassist Pilot Program from its inception until end of June 2022.

We are looking forward to the report to further develop our practice model and add valuable insight into improving our support for people experiencing FDV in RRR WA.

Along with the achievements already mentioned, DVassist has proudly:

- **Finalised our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)**
- **Developed and launched an app for people experiencing FDV**
- **Launched a series of 10 educational videos**
- **Developed a series of webinars and podcasts for people experiencing FDV**
- **Grew to a team of six specialist FDV RRR counsellors, two community engagement and development staff, two operational staff, 12 support contractors, an Operations Manager, a CEO and a Board of six Directors.**

We are looking forward to the 2022 to 2023 financial year and DVassist remains committed to providing our essential and unique services. We will continue to work closely with local communities and services to offer support tailored to the experience and requirements of the individual.

As part of this vision, we will strive to continue our high standards that are client-focused and driven by communities' needs.

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 who brings more than 30 years of board level and senior executive experience to her role as Chair of DVassist. Formerly the CEO of the National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority, she 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. Having managed projects and workforces with extensive national footprints, she has come to know many of Australia's regional, remote and rural communities and the specific issues they face.



Jenny Bloom PGDipBA, GAICD –Secretary

Jenny has an extensive business background with experience in Western Australia's and Victoria's public and private sectors. She is a business owner and has held non-executive Board roles including publicly-listed and government positions. 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 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 (Retired in May 2022)

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.



Dr Kate Ferguson AFCFM (RCPA) – Non-Executive Director BSc (St Andrews), MBChB (Manchester)

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 regional, rural and remote WA. 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 for the Department of Health to support the implementation of legislation in WA. In 2021, she was invited to contribute to the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children at the WA jurisdictional workshop. She currently also consults to the East Metro Health Service working group to improve health responses to those impacted by FDV.



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 mid-west 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, their families, and the broader community.

Kathy has been the Director of Medical Services at Geraldton Hospital. She was also the Chair of the WA Primary Health Alliance Midwest Clinical Committee. 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. Currently, Kathy works as the Deputy Director of Clinical Services with Royal Perth Bentley Group.



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 in the agricultural industry, holding mid-tier management roles. Mr Hunter has a long history of volunteering in agriculture, community, and mental health organisations. He is passionate about the future development of regional and rural Australia, particularly in education, agriculture and technology.

I felt that I was passed from service to service, and no one wanted to take my case on because it's too complex. DVassist was there for me, when no one else was.

DVassist caller



STRATEGIC PLAN AND PRIORITIES

Our primary focus is supporting anyone in regional Western Australian who has experienced 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, as well

as an online directory. The initial focus was on 16 regional areas and later expanded to cover a total of 58 shires.

Our strategic plan outlined the expansion of DVassist and our five strategic priorities for FY2122 were guided by our purpose, aspirations and objectives.

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 ASPIRATION

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.

CURRENT 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. Additional funding was received from a range of sponsors and donors, which supported service delivery and geographical expansion.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 – DRIVE BRAND/ SERVICES RECOGNITION.

We must increase the awareness of the DVassist brand and its services in all the 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. **Securing committed funding to extend DVassist services to all LGA regions in RRR WA**
2. **Securing 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 families 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 FY22

In the FY22, DVassist consolidated and grew exponentially. It's been a significant year of growth, providing vital support to people experiencing FDV in RRR WA. Like any new venture, there was much to be done and we are proud of what has been achieved.

JULY 21

- Funding received from private donor improve cultural safety in our services for First Nations People

AUGUST 21

- DVassist is awarded NAB Foundation Community Grants

SEPTEMBER 21

- Attended the Bringing Children and Young People into View, Family and Domestic Violence Conference
- Increased opening hours to 10am – 10pm, 7days per week

DECEMBER 21

- Three years funding received from Northern Star Resource Ltd
- Visited four Cyclone Seroja Recovery Hubs in the Midwest

NOVEMBER 21

- Welcome new CEO, Greg Hebble
- Welcome new Operations Manager, Ella Ailenei
- DVassist increases the provision of services into 8 new areas with funding from Horizon Power
- Two years funding awarded by the Stan Perron Foundation

OCTOBER 21

- DVassist celebrates their first birthday
- Funding received from Horizon Power
- DVassist increases the provision of services to 17 new areas in regional WA funded by the NAB and CBH grants

JANUARY 22

- Finalised CRM data collection and reporting capability
- Funding received from Roy Hill Holdings

FEBRUARY 22

- DVassist extends hours to 7am – midnight, seven days per week.

MARCH 22

- DVassist successfully recruits their first counsellor living in regional WA
- DVassist staff complete 'Bystander Train the Trainer' provided by WACRH

JUNE 22

- In partnership with Centre for Social Impact UWA, developed a Social Impact Measurement Framework
- Launched a specialised FDV informational app.

MAY 22

- Released a 5-webinar series
- Reflect RAP completed
- Released a 7-podcast series
- Organised a Round Table event at Government House

APRIL 22

- Expansion of services into a further 17 regions facilitated by funding from Stan Perron and Roy Hill Holdings
- Finalised filming of 10 short educational videos

MORE LEARNINGS ABOUT FDV IN RRR WA

DVassist's contact with people affected by FDV in RRR communities has increased significantly. While this has meant our staff has been busy in their work, it has also been a time for reflection. This year, we focused on integrating past learnings and new experiences, letting our work in the community fuel our passion and planning for the future.

Isolating particular knowledge for discussion is challenging, as our work across communities in RRR WA has highlighted many key issues. Below, we explore a few of the standout issues, which have reinforced our commitment to providing specialised support for RRR WA.

Living in RRR WA is different. People who reside in RRR WA experience both increased rates of FDV and additional barriers to accessing support, compared to those living in metropolitan areas. The 2020 'Path to Safety Report' found that in the 2018-2019 period, 1204 FDV-related assaults were recorded per 100,000 people in regional WA—nearly triple that of the metropolitan average of 472 per 100,000 (Government of Western Australia, 2020). People in remote areas are also 24 times more likely to be hospitalised due to FDV (AIHW, 2019).



MORE LEARNINGS ABOUT FDV IN RRR WA

In addition to increased rates of FDV, accessing support in regional WA can also be further complicated by:

- **Lack of anonymity and confidentiality difficulties**
- **Limited specialised service options and longer wait times for support**
- **Increased shame and stigma associated with seeking help in regional areas**
- **Roles and positions of perpetrators within communities**
- **Limited crisis accommodation options**
- **Geographical and social isolation**
- **Impacts of natural disaster and national crises**
- **Limited access to resources such as public or other transport options**
- **Increased access to firearms**
- **Use of alcohol and other drugs, and limited access to related support services**
- **Limited employment opportunities**
- **Complex financial arrangements**
- **Reduced phone and internet coverage.**

The increased rates of violence and barriers to seeking help can often mean connecting with the most appropriate service is not straightforward for those living in RRR WA. Finding a path to safety can seem overwhelming and confusing, with many of our clients saying they 'do not know where to start'. Therefore, our online directory is essential in the DVassist model, providing up-to-date and comprehensive information to assist people in finding local and relevant support. Access to our specialist counsellors—available outside of normal business hours—means people experiencing FDV can rely on confidential, anonymous, and free support.

The understanding that each person's experience of FDV is different is a core component of the approach all DVassist staff work from. Different aspects of a person's identity such as gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability and class, can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation (Victorian Government, 2021).

This concept known as intersectionality is not a new one. However, we are acutely aware that there is a lack of specialised and accessible FDV support for people who are affected by overlapping systems of discrimination and disadvantage. There is a significant demand for increased specialised support options and improved pathways to safety.

DVassist recognises that developing excellent services occurs when the experiences and knowledge of affected communities are our focal point. We are dedicated to establishing partnerships with local services providers, peak bodies, and community groups, to enhance our professional skills, and challenge discrimination in all forms.

SOME FACTS

First Nations women experience violence at more than three times the rate of violence against non-Indigenous women.

36% of women with disability reported experiencing FDV, compared to 21% of women without disability.

People from culturally and linguistically-diverse backgrounds can face additional barriers to support: such as language, lack of understanding of systems and laws, discrimination, and fear of authorities.

Elder abuse can often be hidden and go unreported. Between 2-14% of older people in WA are experiencing, or have experienced, some form of abuse.

LGBTIQA+ people experience barriers to support further complicated by living in RRR W.A. These include discrimination, stigma, and service providers lack of understanding of LGBTIQA+ issues and/or inability to view violence outside of a heterosexual framework.

Younger women (those aged under 35) are the most likely group to experience FDV.

When visiting RRR communities across WA, we have heard that social stigma, unaffordable housing and a lack of consistent services are significant issues for people escaping violence.



Social Stigma

Information from clients has consistently shown that social stigma remains a significant factor in preventing people from contacting FDV support services.

Sadly, research indicates community attitudes in Australia continue to condone violence:

- One in three people believe that if a woman does not leave her abusive partner, she is responsible for the violence continuing
- One in five people believe much of what is referred to as 'domestic violence' is really just a normal reaction to day-to-day stress and frustration
- One in five people believe violence results from a woman making a man so angry that he hits her when he didn't mean to.

Source: Path to Safety, Western Australia's Strategy to reduce family and domestic violence 2020-2030



Housing

Through our community engagement work we have continuously heard a lack of housing has been a significant issue for many people this financial year. Housing unavailability was a significant factor for many of our clients in their decision whether or not to leave the person perpetrating violence. Limited housing availability also means the options for many people are to move to areas that are more isolated, with fewer services, a lack of public transport, and limited phone or internet coverage.



Covid

Covid-19 coincided with the onset or escalation of violence and abuse for many women (AIC, 2020). Factors such as changes to service delivery and mandatory isolation also had a significant impact on access to support in RRR WA. A report by the Australian Institute of Criminology (2020) found 36.9% of people who experienced violence wanted

to seek support but could not do so due to health-safety concerns. For people in RRR WA who were unable to leave their home or access local support, services such as phone and web chat counselling became increasingly important.



Service consistency

A lack of consistency in services in RRR areas has been highlighted through our service directory and community engagement, with many areas experiencing significant absences in available support. DVassist is working to address this issue by regularly updating our service directory; developing strong referral pathways and networks across WA; and supporting people who access our phone and web chat services.

In the development of new programs and services, DVassist also explores what communities see as important to focus on. During our regional trips, many agencies (including Aboriginal Health Services, Community Legal Services, Aboriginal Development Organisations, the Police, Shires and Youth Services) expressed interest in community education and training programmes. They wanted to learn more about what bystanders can do when witnessing disrespectful behaviours in the workplace and community.

Additional feedback identified the need for secondary prevention programs for people perpetrating violence, as well as the need for intervention and education programs addressing FDV in young adults. The community engagement team is keen to work with youth services to develop a program for workers to build their skills and confidence in discussing FDV with young adults.

CONCLUSION

Family, domestic, and sexual violence is a major national social, health and welfare issue, which can have lifelong effects. Currently, Western Australia has the second highest rate of reported physical and sexual violence against women in Australia (Path to Safety, 2020). In 2018-2019, WA's Family and Domestic Violence Response Teams triaged 47,623 reports of family violence. It is important to note when looking at these deeply concerning statistics that for every incident that is known, many more go unreported.

There are significant differences between the support available in the city and those in regional areas. The diversity of our vast state adds complexity to these issues. Every region and town is different. We cannot apply a 'one size fits all' approach to delivering meaningful support.

Over the last year we have worked intensively to expand our services and continue to meet the needs of people living in RRR WA. The DVassist services extend beyond assisting those experiencing FDV. Community education and specialised training to front line workers are paramount. They can both contribute to preventing FDV by challenging violence-supporting attitudes, as well as increase the availability of appropriate support for those experiencing FDV. We are committed to ensuring those facing difficulty are heard, and that as a community we work collectively to do more.



*It's good to know there is someone I
can reach out to if I need to.*

DVassist caller



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

As auditor for the audit of Breaking the silence Pty Ltd for the year ended 30 June 2022, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

- no contraventions of the independence requirements of Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit; and
- no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

Elderton Audit Pty Ltd

Elderton Audit Pty Ltd



Rafay Nabeel
Audit Director

Perth

29 September 2022

THE FINANCIAL REPORT

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

	2022	2021	2020
	\$	\$	\$
REVENUE			
Grant Income	924,309	870,000	650,000
Donations	158,003	20,334	-
	<u>1,082,312</u>	<u>890,334</u>	<u>650,000</u>
OTHER INCOME			
COVID-19 Government Stimulus Income	-	-	44,178
Sundry Income	51,599	703	-
Interest Received	116	1,041	-
	<u>51,715</u>	<u>1,744</u>	<u>44,178</u>
TOTAL REVENUE AND OTHER INCOME	<u>1,134,027</u>	<u>892,078</u>	<u>694,178</u>
	2022	2021	2020
	\$	\$	
EXPENSES			
Depreciation	32,525	25,791	-
Employee Benefits	904,718	415,851	121,606
Other Expenses	567,897	288,220	56,127
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>1,505,140</u>	<u>729,862</u>	<u>177,733</u>
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	<u>(371,114)</u>	<u>162,216</u>	<u>516,445</u>
Other Comprehensive Income	-	-	-
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME/(LOSS) FOR THE YEAR	<u><u>(371,114)</u></u>	<u><u>162,216</u></u>	<u><u>516,445</u></u>

THE FINANCIAL REPORT

Statement of Financial Position

	2022 \$	2021 \$	2020 \$
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash & Cash Equivalents	227,182	647,289	425,994
Trade & Other Receivables	6,612	-	2,340
Financial Assets	-	100,000	100,000
Other Assets - Rental Bond Paid	6,000	6,000	-
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	268,420	753,289	528,334
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Right-of-Use Asset	-	28,291	
Plant and equipment and vehicles	88,110	-	
Intangibles	38	-	-
	88,148	28,291	-
TOTAL ASSETS	356,568	781,580	528,334
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade & Other Payables	34,895	63,919	9,237
Provisions	15,734	12,654	2,652
Lease Liability	-	26,346	-
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	50,822	102,919	11,889
TOTAL LIABILITIES	50,822	102,919	11,889
NET ASSETS	305,746	678,661	516,445
EQUITY	305,746	678,661	516,445

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 FOUNDERS

Our journey 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 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 – previous Governor of Western Australia and Hon. Liza Harvey previous Leader of the WA Liberal Party.

PARTNERSHIPS

DVConnect - thanks to DVConnect for their ongoing collaboration and support to deliver our telephone counselling services.

McCusker Centre for Citizenship - We had the privilege of hosting five interns this year from the UWA McCusker Centre for Citizenship. The interns provide a valuable additional resource for project related work.

STAFF

Creating a cohesive team in a start-up operation, followed by the ongoing development and expansion of services, is critical to any organisation's 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 under the stress of 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 FDV. We exist to help facilitate care and support to those experiencing FDV in RRR 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 continuous growth of DVassist.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 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
The University of Melbourne
Preventing Violence Together
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 WA
Mission Australia
Centrecare
Centre for Social Impact UWA
Rural West
Country Women's Association of Australia
Domestic Violence Action Centre (DVAC)
Playgroup WA

Linkwest
YourToolkit
Women's Legal Service WA
QLife
WA Police
Centacare Family Services
WA Centre for Rural Health
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, brand development and ongoing operations of Dvassist.

Norton Rose Fullbright

McCusker Foundation





dvassist.org.au

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.

ABN 80 392 422 300 ACN 634 589 834

t: (08) 6146 2518

e: admin@dvassist.org.au

PO Box 8130 Subiaco East WA 6008

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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.

