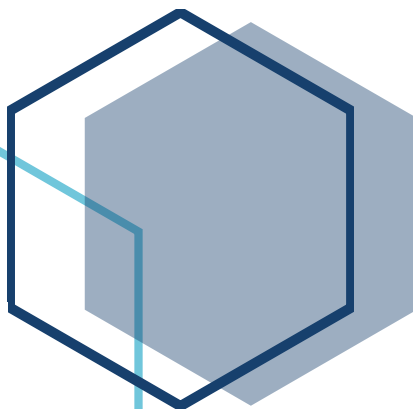




SOUTH WEST COUNSELLING INC.

2017 - 2018

ANNUAL REPORT



Our Partners

South West Counselling Inc. would like to thank the Government of Western Australia Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support, Department of Communities, Lotterywest and WA Primary Health Alliance for their support during 2018/19. Without these valuable partners we would be unable to provide the valuable services we do to the communities of the South West region.



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Communities**



WAPHA
WA Primary Health Alliance

phn
COUNTRY WA

An Australian Government Initiative

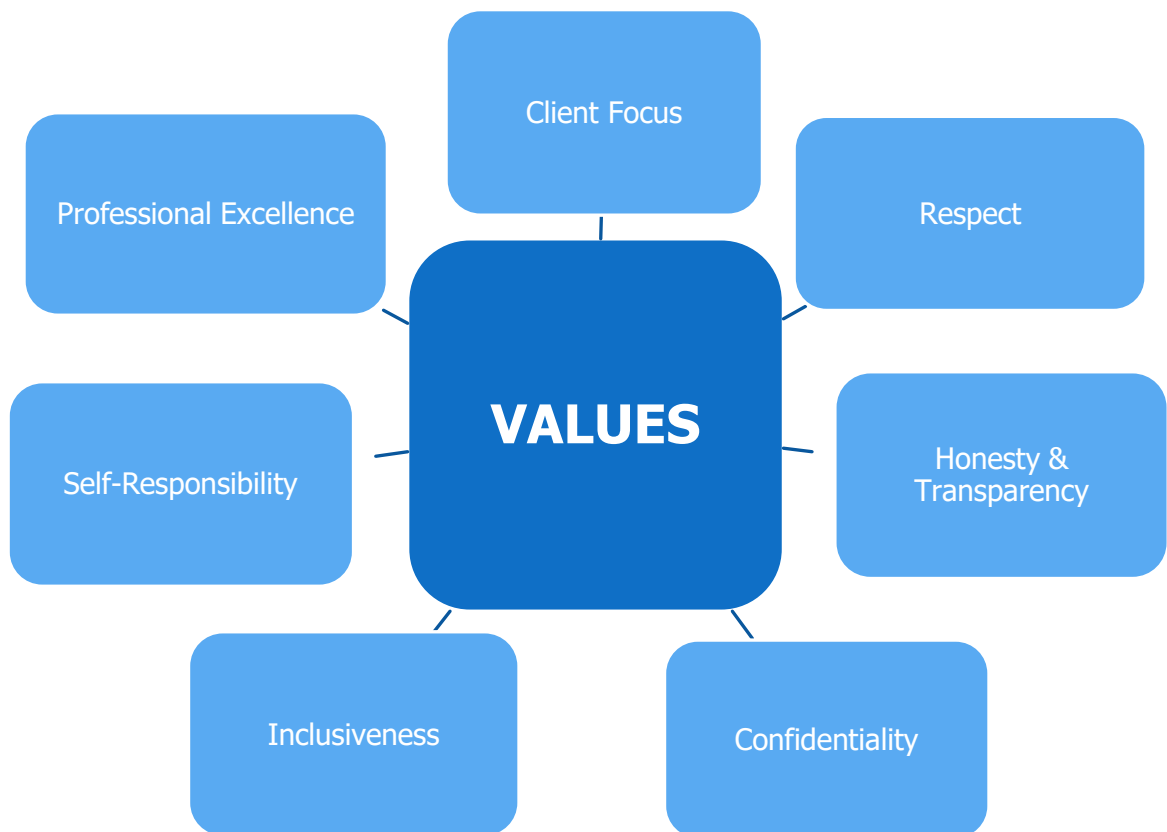


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Our Purpose & Values



To enhance the wellbeing and safety of individuals, families and children in the South West Region of Western Australia.



Service Area

For over 36 years we continue to be an integral agency in the South West; with a reputation for excellence in service delivery and a dedication to providing quality, confidential, accessible and affordable counselling, support, advocacy and a range of organisational services across the South West of WA; an area of approximately 23,000kms.

Offices are currently based in Busselton, Margaret River and Donnybrook with locations reviewed periodically to ensure they continue to provide maximum benefit to local populations.



Human Resources

SWCI is governed by a committed and highly competent Board which places significant emphasis on good governance and sound financial practices.

Board Members

<i>Chairperson</i>	Jo Fazakerley
<i>Deputy Chairperson</i>	Jennie Parrin
<i>Secretary</i>	Arvind Pillay
<i>Treasurer</i>	Paul Needham
<i>Member</i>	Helen Crain
<i>Member</i>	Libby Mettam
<i>Member</i>	Steve Carr
<i>Member</i>	Tessa Grimshaw
<i>Member</i>	Jodie Richards



We also maintain a consistent staffing group with all but 3 staff members having achieved long service leave. This lengthy staff tenure is attributed primarily to all staff holding a shared belief in the organisation's values and their commitment to clients accessing services. We also acknowledge our volunteers who provide us such valuable support when needed.

<i>Chief Executive Officer</i>	Karen Sommerville
<i>Client Services/Administration</i>	Kaye Ryan
<i>Client Services/Community Engagement</i>	Bev Atkinson
<i>Bookkeeper</i>	Vanessa Gibsone
<i>Senior Counsellor</i>	Debbie George
<i>Counsellors</i>	Susannah Pope
	Lindi Judge
	Shantell McClenaughan
	Amy Dyer
<i>Casual Staff</i>	Jaz Menegola, Bree Edwards, Bonnie Clark
<i>Students</i>	Bree Edwards, Bonnie Clark
<i>Volunteers</i>	Debbie Mastaglia, Joanne Shugg, Deb Jones, Kyle Roe, Paul Baxendale
<i>Therapy Dogs (non-human resources)</i>	Harry, Gracie

Environmental Commitment

At SWCI we recognise our responsibility to the environment beyond legal and regulatory requirements and are committed to reducing our environmental impact. Accordingly, we have Environmental *Policy and Procedures* devoted to environmental accountability. This policy is reviewed annually in consultation with Board and Staff members.

Our Environmental Policy commits us to:

- ✧ Comply with, and exceed, relevant regulatory requirements
- ✧ Continually improve and reduce environmental impacts
- ✧ Incorporate environmental factors into organisational decisions
- ✧ Increase employee awareness

We strive to improve our environmental performance as an integral part of our organisational strategy and operating methods, and encourage clients, suppliers and other stakeholders to do the same.

Over the past year we have reduced our environmental footprint by:

- ✧ Service brochures, business and appointment cards are now printed on recyclable paper
- ✧ All light globes in the Busselton office have been replaced with led light globes
- ✧ Lights and electrical equipment are switched off when not in use
- ✧ Heating and cooling systems are adjusted with energy consumption in mind
- ✧ Ordering of environmentally friendly and efficient products when possible
- ✧ Reusing and recycling what we can
- ✧ Cleaning materials used are as environmentally friendly as possible
- ✧ Starting a compost bin
- ✧ Client information is now in the Cloud negating the need for paper client files
- ✧ Shopping locally when feasible
- ✧ Reducing use of plastic

We also have two staff members who take responsibility for the implementation of this Policy and keep us all accountable.



Chairperson's Report



Uncertainties in WA Government funding and consequential ramifications have been a predominant focus for South West Counselling Inc. (SWCI) and its Board throughout the year. Funding was extended for a further year until March 2019, but the Department and Minister have been unable to advise in terms of continuity of funding acknowledged past this date. This is from a Government that has recently acknowledged and acted on the need for its long-term contract employees to have certainty of employment (and income) by making them permanent public servants. In our case, SWCI staff continue to provide quality and highly professional services that prevent suicides and keep families together, when they personally have no certainty of employment (or income) in five months' time. As Chair of the Board I find this unacceptable. Whilst making contingencies for worst case scenarios, in general the Board has continued to be positive about the organisation's future, signing off on the *Strategic Plan 2018-2020 and Business Plan and Growth Strategy 2018 – 2020*. These were developed in a combined workshop of staff and Board members and focus on four strategies:

1. What we do - Quality counselling and advocacy services and
2. How we do it - A dynamic and innovative organisational environment where staff are committed and valued
3. How we manage it - An efficient and effective organisation that embraces good governance and sustainability
4. How we future proof SWCI - Development of a commercial arm as a separate part of the organisation

Within this planning scenario the desire to have two operational streams has continued:

- a. Not for Profit arm delivering our traditional counselling services based on partnerships, corporate sponsorship and government funding; and,
- b. Commercial arm delivering a range of fee-paying services including employee assistance programs, critical incident management services, organisational development services, counselling and support, clinical supervision, training and seminars associated with creating a healthy workplace, individual, family and community wellbeing.

The Board belief that these two operating streams are necessary requirements to deliver a viable future was again tested at the Strategic Planning Session. It was upheld as it not only provides less reliance on government as the primary funding source, it also opens up new markets as the Commercial arm is not constrained by a designated geographical service area that is present in the current government funding agreement. Again, this does not lessen the value which SWCI places and will place in the future on delivering the counselling services funded by the WA Government.

During the year the Board has consistently highlighted the importance of having robust and quality internal practices, processes and overall outcomes. It has continued to maintain an oversight role, providing strategic policy and business direction, reviewing and monitoring risk, financial and operational performance and accountability. The Board is both robust and effective in its decision making and adheres to an Annual Planning Calendar for continuous review of important governance components. It has continued to meet monthly with quarterly reviews on the Business and Risk Management plans. The Audit Committee comprising Paul Needham, Treasurer and Jennie Parrin, Deputy Chairperson continues to be strong in its role and accountabilities, ensuring due diligence in all financial matters.

Jodie Richards and Steve Carr joined the Board this year and Tessa Grimshaw returned to the Board. Each have brought a wealth of knowledge, specific interests and skills to Board discussions. I never fail to appreciate this impressive and inspiring group with backgrounds in finance and insurance, family law, management, community service management, senior public service and politics. We have or are losing some Board members. Tessa

Grimshaw unfortunately resigned in September due to relocating to live in Darwin. Her input, particularly on Aboriginal matters has been extremely valued and valuable. I am also aware that Paul Needham and Helen Crain will not be renominating for the Board at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting due to their academic pursuits. I am indebted to these three members for their contribution over the years.

I would also like to thank Jennie Parrin as Deputy Chair who has ably stepped into my position at times when I have been unavailable or overseas. Most importantly, I wish to sincerely acknowledge and thank Karen Sommerville and all of her staff for their dedication, persistence and professionalism over the last year, as well as their enthusiasm and eagerness to embrace the new future direction of the Strategic Plan. Our staff continued to deliver highly professional counselling services to support the people of the South West of Western Australia, who are presenting with ever increasing complex issues. This has again been recognised by SWCI being a Finalist in the Community Service Excellence Awards 2018. I look forward to continuing to work with Board members, Karen and staff in the year to come.

Jo Fazakerley

Chairperson

2018

Chief Executive Officer's Report



This Annual Report publishes our achievements and highlights. It also provides me an opportunity for reflection on the past year and along with achievements there are challenges we continue to confront.

Now in our 36th year of service to the Western Australian community we have continued in our purpose to enhance the wellbeing and safety of individuals, families and children in the South West Region of Western Australia.

A constant challenge is maintaining an accessible service for the community when the South West continues to experience an increasing population, and particularly so in the Busselton area. From 2011 – 2016 the South West region experienced 10% in population growth. However, during this 5-year period the Busselton local government area experienced an increase of approximately 21% in its population. This growth included an increase of 18.5% of families in Busselton with children in their care. Further, for the period 2016 – 2018 this population has increased by a 8%.

With an increasing population and changing demographic we have experienced a significant growth in demand in Busselton and Margaret River. In an endeavour to meet this demand during 2018 there was a reallocation of human resources from Bridgetown and Manjimup to Busselton and Margaret River. While this has assisted with people accessing services in shorter time-frames the wait-list for Busselton continues to grow.

Counsellor feedback indicates that lack of work opportunities across the South West is impacting on the health and well-being of this population and contributes to people contacting us. Clients present with feelings of isolation, marginalisation, depression, family breakdown and may also be living in poverty. These clients in particular are at risk of self-harm and suicide.

The most significant increase in client services over the past year has been for people affected by trauma. Sadly, this increase was a direct result of the Osmington (Margaret River) murders/suicide that occurred late May 2018. As SWCI is a fundamental part of the community service sector in Margaret River we were part of the response for the local population. SWCI staff were also on site the day after this tragedy to provide a crisis response for front-line workers and other agency staff. This has had a profound impact on the South West community, and also our staff members who work tirelessly in endeavouring to prevent these types of tragic incidents.

With all clients we remind them of their value in this world and assist them to try and gain a sense of dignity and purpose, even when they appear to be experiencing overwhelming life events. Some may also be questioning their very existence. This work is not easy. Without our dedicated, professional and skilled staff who all possess a genuine belief in social justice and an individual's inherent worth in this society, we would not be able to continue this work day after day and year after year, to make a positive contribution and change to the lives of our clients and the broader South West community.

We have experienced however some wins throughout the year that have had a profound impact on our service delivery.

We were successful in securing a Lotterywest grant to upgrade our outdated IT hardware and software. This also means that all client information and documentation are now stored electronically.

We were successful in receiving a Women's Grant from the Department of Communities. This grant has enabled us to develop a *Women's Money Matters Workshop* for delivery across the South West region during the latter part of 2018. These workshops are being facilitated with support from Anglicare Financial Services.

Due to the culmination of research and project work conducted over the past two years, supported in part by a grant from the WA Primary Health Alliance, we have now commenced a weekly *LGBTIQ Youth Peer-Support Group* in Busselton. This project originally began after young people who identify as LGBTIQ advising there was no specialised support in local South West communities. As this group of young people are at a higher risk of self-harm and suicide than the general population of young people we felt compelled to offer support. It is also our intention to roll-out these peer support groups in other locations in the South West when possible. Additionally, the WA Children's Commissioner is aware of this initiative and has a visit planned to SWCI prior to the end of 2018 to discuss our work.

There is no doubt the delivery of community services in today's challenging economic environment is not an easy task. It requires stringent financial management, dedicated staff and a willingness to engage in collaborative partnerships with both the public, corporate and private sectors. It also requires a dedication and commitment to SWCI and its clients. I am proud to say this loyalty has been displayed by Board members, staff and volunteers in abundance throughout this year.

While the continuation of funding from the Department of Communities Child Protection and Family Support is unknown past the 31st March 2019 all staff have remained resolute in the provision of innovative and optimum service delivery. An unknown future however, yet again, remains a challenging and unsettling period for us all.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my appreciation for the commitment, support and guidance of all Board members. I wish to thank Board Chair Jo Fazakerley for her unwavering support and willingness to share her knowledge, skills and experience to enhance and sustain SWCI. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to all staff members. We make a remarkable team. Throughout this past year your dedication and support have been outstanding. You also help motivate me to be the best I can be for SWCI.

Karen Sommerville

Chief Executive Officer

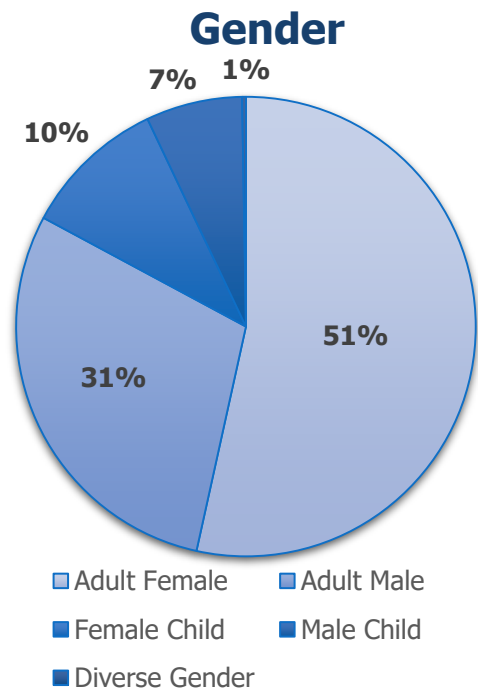
2018

Service Provision

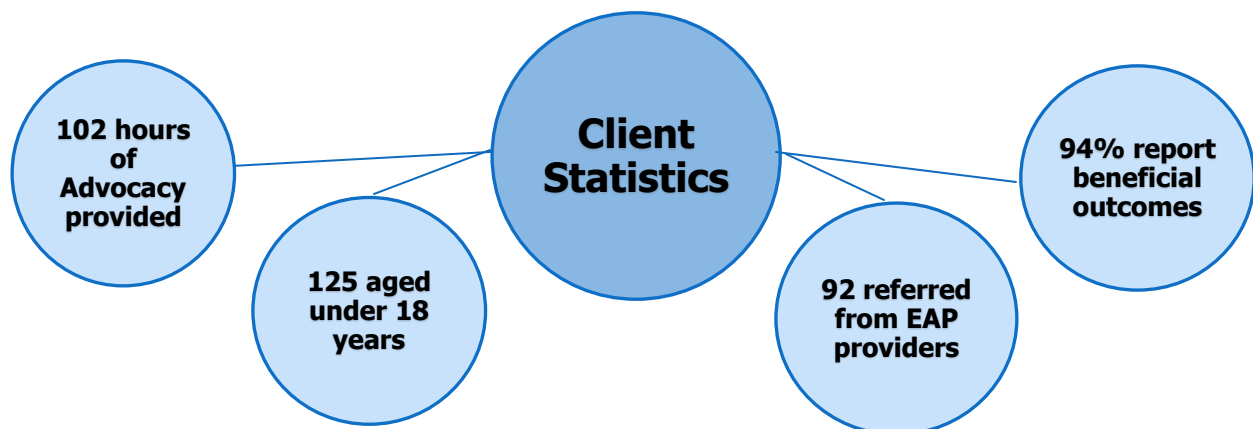
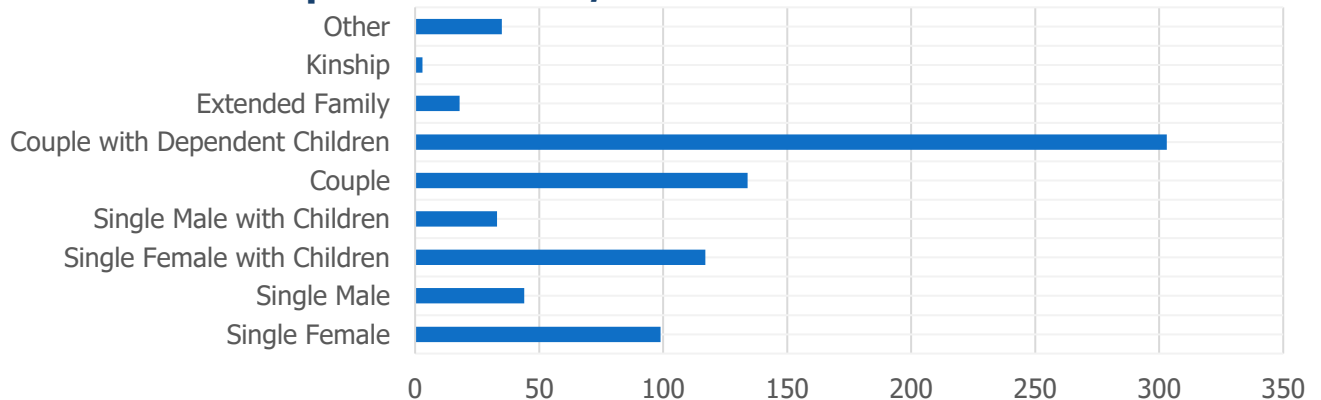
2017 – 2018

Our counselling clients are people from the South West region who access therapeutic support to manage the challenges impacting on their lives. Our clients include adults, young people and children.

786 women, men, young people and children attended SWCI for counselling, support, advocacy and/or group & workshop attendances. Further information is highlighted in the adjacent charts.



Household Composition - 2017/2018



Notable Outcomes

Early in the year the Board signed off on the *Strategic Plan 2018-2020 and Business Plan and Growth Strategy 2018-2020*. The Table below highlights some notable outcomes achieved over the past year.

Goals	Outcomes
Access funding for specific activities, programs and workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ 1-year extension on current Service Agreement ✧ 80% grant success ✧ 450% increase in grant funding from 2016/2017
Market achievements and successes to SWCI stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ 50% increase in Facebook followers ✧ Twitter account established ✧ 5% increase in client referrals ✧ Finalist in Community Services Excellence Awards
Increase representation on external committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Representation increased by 25% ✧ Chair of Vasse Human Services
Increase awareness of the SWCI commercial services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Distribution of 100 marketing packs ✧ 75% increase in EAP provider contracts ✧ Information placed on website
Improve staff career paths & reward mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Revised staffing structure ✧ Paid above award wages ✧ 25 professional development opportunities provided
Rationalise outreach office locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Increase of 1-day per week in Busselton & Margaret River ✧ Waiting list reduced in Margaret River
Update IT Hardware & Software	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Improved performance with reliable hardware ✧ No lost work hours due to server outages ✧ Client file storage now in Cloud

We were also nominated as a finalist in the 2018 biennial Community Service Excellence Awards. This recognition validates our work across the region and is third consecutive nomination in recent years.

Year	Category
2014	Small Organisation
2016	Medium Organisation
2016	Outstanding Commitment to Citizen Empowerment
2018	Regional Organisation

Community Engagement

Staff participated in a number of community events throughout the year:

- ✧ Anti-Bullying Day sausage sizzle at Busselton Youth Precinct
- ✧ South West Youth Festival
- ✧ Ride Against Domestic Violence dinner at Men's Shed Busselton
- ✧ Busselton Pride Event 2018
- ✧ Spring into Life Mental Health week event
- ✧ Mental Health Week Event
- ✧ Margaret River Community Mental Health Forum
- ✧ White Ribbon Day breakfast
- ✧ South West Wellness Expo
- ✧ Pridefest South West
- ✧ Big Pram Walk



Additional ways in which we have promoted SWCI and its services over the past year have included:

- ✧ Talks to Community Service students at Bunbury & Busselton TAFE campuses
- ✧ Hosting students on placement at SWCI
- ✧ WACOSS Conference Networking Day
- ✧ WACOSS Conference
- ✧ WACOSS CSEA Awards
- ✧ Busselton Chamber of Commerce After 5 Events

Activities

Groups, workshops and information sessions were offered to clients and the broader community:

- ✧ *Chronic Pain Support Groups*
- ✧ *Money Matters for Women Workshops*
- ✧ *Children's Anxiety Peer-Support Group*
- ✧ *Effective Workplace Communication Session*
- ✧ *Anxiety Support Group for Adults*
- ✧ *Mother-Baby-Nurture Groups*
- ✧ *LGBTIQ Youth Peer Support Group*
- ✧ *Family & Domestic Violence and Trauma session*
- ✧ *Sexuality & Gender sessions*



Staff Engaged in Regular Community Meetings:

- ✧ Department of Communities - CPFS
- ✧ Vasse Human Services Alliance
- ✧ Cape to Cape Youth Interagency Network
- ✧ Margaret River Community Network
- ✧ Mental Health Professionals Network
- ✧ Lower South West Mental Health Partnerships Group
- ✧ Rural Clinical School of WA Local Area Group Meeting
- ✧ White Ribbon Day Committee
- ✧ Holistic Health Network
- ✧ Family & Domestic Violence Coordinated Response Interagency Group



- ✧ Fathers who use Violence: 'Whole of Family' approaches where there is ongoing contact with children
 - ✧ Word Press Basics
 - ✧ Learning from the experiences of parents with children in care
 - ✧ Conference: Child-centred approaches to ending family violence
 - ✧ Creative Expression and Narrative re-authoring: working with children, young people and families & effects of trauma workshop
-
- ✧ Theory and Practice of Compassion Focused Therapy
 - ✧ Interpersonal Psychotherapy
 - ✧ DBT Training
 - ✧ Narrative Therapy Training
 - ✧ Gestalt Post-Grad Residential
 - ✧ PANDA Training
 - ✧ Solution Focused Brief Therapy
 - ✧ Natural Disaster Resilience Training for Community Service Organisations
 - ✧ safeTALK T4T
 - ✧ Living Works SJOG
 - ✧ Program Evaluation
 - ✧ Sexual and Gender Diversity and Mental Health
 - ✧ Writing successful Grants, Tenders & Submissions
 - ✧ Narrative and Creative Expression Therapy for Children, Young People and their Families
 - ✧ Mother-Baby-Nurture Facilitator Training
 - ✧ Gatekeeper Training
 - ✧ How to Write a Case Report
 - ✧ Targeting Anxiety in Youth
 - ✧ Evidence-based Treatments and Access for People Living with Borderline Personality Disorder
 - ✧ Completion of Certificate III in Community Services.

The Service works alongside our whole family - great with boundaries & professional approach yet balanced, friendly, non-judgemental, caring & kind. An invaluable service helping me to cope and learn skills, strategies, have support & teach the children also.

Client Feedback 2017

Everyone here is always so beautiful, kind and supportive. I am very grateful for the support I have received.

Client Feedback 2018

Thank you for this amazing service it has changed my life.

Client Feedback 2018

I really feel like this group got me through. I was so worried about not bonding with baby and not being good enough and this group helped me with those thoughts and feelings.

Mother-Baby-Nurture Group 2018

It has made such a difference in feeling understood and in understanding the issues that have gone on in my life. It has freed me from much distress from confusion & misunderstanding & helped me to be validated and accept things.

Client Feedback 2018



feedback

I have seen many counsellors in my life, but none have done a better job in providing effective support in my life than this service.

Client Feedback 2017

The sessions allowed me to get great perspective on where I was at. I was supported with coming up with activities to get clean and targets to aim for.

Client Feedback 2018

It has given me a safe place to talk about my concerns without being judged, whilst being supported by people who really understand. It provided time to reflect and gave me new perspectives on past situations.

Mother-Baby-Nurture Group 2018

Counselling helped me to leave a volatile relationship and to get my life back.

Client Feedback 2018

2017/2018

SNAPSHOT

SWCI Counsellor Amy
with baby Viv (born
24th January 2018)



Deb & Susannah
**Community Mental Health
Forum** Margaret River
October 2017.



Inaugural ***Busselton Pride*** Event
March 2018





South West Counselling **Street Library**
created and established 2018

We were visited twice by the
Paint the Cape REaD egg prior
to it hatching on the 13th October
2018.





Karen & volunteers Debbie & Joanne at the **Anti-Bullying Day** Sausage Sizzle
Busselton City Youth Precinct February 2018



Construction Play Day Vasse Primary School April 2018



Lindi & Bev at the ***South West Youth Festival***
January 2018

Board member Steve Carr with
CEO Karen Sommerville & the
Hon. Adele Farina MLC after a
meeting re our service
provision in the South West.





Finalists **Community Service Excellence Awards** May 2018

Staff **Away Day** September 2017



2017/2018

IN THE PRESS



Karen, Deb, Bev & Kaye

Service praised for LGBTIQ excellence

SOUTH West Counselling has been named as a finalist in the Regional Organisation category in the state's Community Services Excellence Awards.

The organisation's recent work with LGBTIQ youth helped them earn the finalist placing.

South West Counselling chief executive officer Karen Sommerville said part of their LGBTIQ project included a survey, which showed 90 per cent of LGBTIQ youth experienced bullying of some form.

"Since marriage equality was successfully finalised and the first Pride event in

Busselton, we do feel there has been a positive shift, however, if you are a young person struggling with issues around your sexuality - how do you know where to go for support," she said.

"This project finishes in May, but we are committed to work on this. We want to establish a peer support group for young people and continue to work with Out South West and Spectrum, who help guide us around LGBTIQ issues."

Awards winners will be announced on May 2 at the 2018 Western Australian Council of Social Service conference.

Financial help for women

■ Pierra Willix

A free financial workshop aimed at empowering women to better manage and plan finances will be held next month.

The Money Matters for Women workshop, hosted by Anglicare financial counsellor Sandie Groves and South West Counselling's Kaye Ryan, will teach participants about how to make the most of finances, budgeting, credit and debt, insurance and superannuation.

Ms Groves said the workshop was aimed at women of all ages.

"It is a very challenging world out there financially and we want to assist people," she said.

"It is more aimed at women who need to develop and enhance their financial management skills."

The workshop will be confidential and offer a basic assessment of finances and how to manage them.

Held at the People's Place,



South West Counselling's Kaye Ryan and Anglicare financial counsellor Sandie Groves. Picture: Pierra Willix

19-21 Kent Street in Busselton, it will run on Wednesday, August 1 from 10am-2pm and includes a light lunch and

refreshments. To register, contact Ms Ryan on 9754 2052 or email admin@swcounselling.org.au.

Future services at risk

BY EMMA KIRK

AFTER 35 years in the community, South West Counselling could be facing closure if they do not receive funding to continue their service next year.

The organisation provides a low-fee or no-fee counselling service to people in the community who otherwise may not be able to access professional services, including those aged under 18 years.

They are a generic counselling service supporting people affected by a broad range of issues including family breakdown, domestic violence, suicidal ideation, mental health and many other issues.

Last financial year the organisation supported 720 individuals in South West communities and there has been a 46 per cent increase in new client referrals this year.

A review of program funding within the Department of Communities Child Protection and Family Support means funding for South West Counselling could cease from March 31.



South West Counselling community development officer Bev Atkinson, Vasse MP and board member Libby Mettam and chief executive officer Karen Sommerville face an uncertain future.

South West Counselling chief executive officer Karen Sommerville said unfortunately if this occurred people who need support would potentially fall through the cracks.

"I would say the majority of services in the South West are working at capacity," she said.

"My greatest concern is if

we close the service, the real local connection would disappear. I am sure there are other services which could do the job but it is potentially that local connection that would be lost, I feel this is imperative in regional areas."

"We know our community and we work closely with people in the community."

Vasse MP Libby Mettam

said as a board member and local member representing the community she was concerned about the uncertainty around the future of this service beyond March.

Ms Mettam said not only was she concerned what this would mean for the community as a whole, but also in relation to the anxiety this brought to the valuable staff

who provide this service.

"I have written to the Minister for Child Protection and Community Services to ensure the future funding, beyond March 2018, for this vital community service," she said.

The Department of Communities were contacted for comment but did not respond by publication.

Manjimup-Bridgetown Times

YOUR REGION YOUR NEWSPAPER

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Counselling service in limbo

■ Cecilia Allen

A KEY counselling service which operates in Bridgetown and Manjimup and is used by people in Nannup could close because the Department of Communities is switching focus to early intervention strategies.

South West Counselling, which provides services in Busselton, Margaret River, Donnybrook, Manjimup and Bridgetown, is

funded by the State Government but chief executive officer Karen Sommerville told the *Times* she was unsure if the service would be funded from next year.

The service helps about 720 people across its five locations, dealing with issues such as depression and alcohol and substance abuse.

Ms Sommerville said the department asked South West Counselling to submit a report on how the service could align with the

department's early intervention strategies.

"In doing the report, we realised we do work very much with that strategy in mind," she said.

"We were told that we would hear by the end of the year, so we're waiting to find out."

"I'm hopeful that the department will come back to us and say they will provide further funding."

Ms Sommerville said the service offered about 250 counselling ses-

sions a year in Manjimup and the same in Bridgetown, which equated to about 100-200 clients across the two towns.

"There is a huge demand for counselling services in Manjimup and Bridgetown but it's also about offering people a choice too," she said.

Ms Sommerville said because there were only private services in Nannup, people often travelled to the South West Counselling offices

in Busselton, Manjimup and Bridgetown.

"We're a very generic service and offer a no-cost and low-cost service," she said.

"We don't charge a fee to anyone under the age of 18."

Ms Sommerville said South West Counselling could not keep up with demand and although it could refer clients to other services, those services were often at capacity too.

Service facing closure threat

■ Pierra Willix

The future of a counselling service that has operated in the South West for the past 35 years is in limbo, with the Department of Communities switching its focus to "early intervention strategies".

South West Counselling chief executive Karen Sommerville told the *Times* the organisation was funded by the State Government, but was unsure if it would be funded from next year.

The Department of Communities has asked services including South West Counselling to submit reports identifying how they could adapt to fit the renewed emphasis on early intervention.

Ms Sommerville said if funding was not secured, it was likely the organisation would have to shut its doors.

"I don't know what the other solutions are. We have grants, but they are only short term," she said. "It's a tough road at the moment. We can't employ anyone with this uncertainty

and so it is very hard to plan for the future if we don't know that we are going to be here."

In the past financial year, the service worked with 720 people and Ms Sommerville said it had continual waiting lists.

Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support acting assistant director general Jackie Tang said there had been extensions to the funding agreement with the service to ensure it continued to operate while the department was undertaking reviews, but said the department did not provide funding for similar services in Busselton.

Ms Tang said the department intended to discuss future funding with the organisation again by the end of the year.

In the six months from January to June last year, South West Counselling saw a 46 per cent increase in new clients.

Last week the *Times* reported similar uncertainty with Lamp's National Partnership Agreement Homelessness program.

