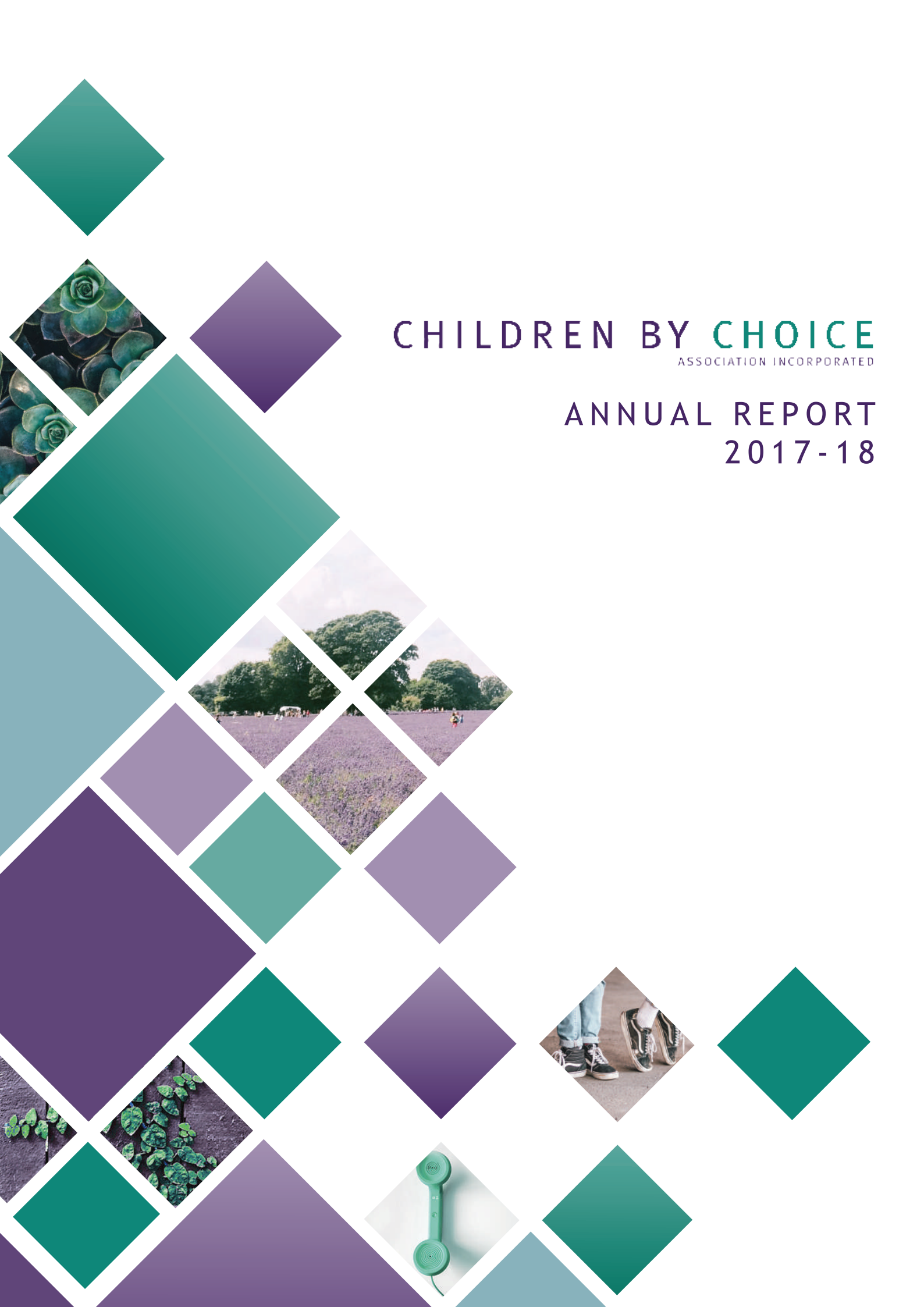




CHILDREN BY CHOICE

ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

OUR PATRONS

Senator Claire Moore *(ALP, Queensland)*
Sue Boyce *(Former Liberal Senator, Queensland)*
Larissa Waters *(Former Greens Senator, Queensland)*

OUR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

President

Bonney Corbin *BSc, MA*

Vice President

Dr Caroline Harvey *MBBS*

Treasurer

Paula Nixon *BA, Dip TESOL, Dip Accounting*

Secretary

Dr Nicola Sheeran *BPsych(Hons) , PHD(Clinical Psychology)*

Committee members

Carmen Seaby *BA/BJ*
Katherine Kerr *BA BSocWk LLB GDLP*
Laura Manton

OUR STAFF

Manager

Amanda Bradley *DipAppArts, MICDA*
Daile Kelleher *CertTAA, DipSustain, DipRM*

Resource Manager

Selina Utting *BA, MBA, AGIA*

Counselling team

Sian Tooker *BPsySc(Hons), GDAppLaw*
Michelle Reynolds *BA, M(Couns)*
Susan Stark *BSocSc*
Stephanie Chen *BA, M(SocWk)*

Community education team

Pamela Doherty *BA, MA(ComDev)*
Liz Price *BA, BSocWk(Hons)*
Kate Marsh *DipDes*
Molly Howes *BComm*
Sinead Canning *BA (Hon)*

Relief counsellors

Rosalie Robinson
Shannah Lundon

Finance officer

Shae Dalzell
Sarah Rogers *BBus/BCI, MPropfAccy*

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Hila, Lynn, Rohie, Annie (Finance and admin)
Chloe, Leah, Nat (Data and events)
Ross (IT)

OUR STUDENT PLACEMENTS

Brooke (Public Health)
Katie (Communications)
Alison (Social Work)



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YEAR IN REVIEW

Each year the importance and diversity of the work of Children by Choice is something that is difficult to effectively bring to life on the pages of an Annual Report. Each year brings its challenges and complexities of service delivery and organisational strategy and each year the work of the staff, Management Committee, members, supporters and volunteers is where the outcomes that make a difference in the lives of people accessing our service are made possible.

Our mission is: To be the leading voice for women's reproductive choices in Queensland.

We live this mission through our all options pregnancy counselling service, our evidence based education delivery across the state and our advocacy for abortion law reform in Queensland.

Here at the purple house, we are a busy service and have often been told that we 'punch well above our weight' in regards to the work we do. Our team is small but passionate, with everything we do centred on the people we assist and creating the best short and long term outcomes for them as individuals but also for systemic and legal change to fight the inequity and barriers faced by our clients.

As evidenced in our counselling statistics the number of clients contacted by Children by Choice has not increased over the years, but the amount of contacts and the complexities of each situation has increased our workload and counselling hours. Financial assistance has increased dramatically since 2016/17 from \$129,985 to \$228,052 this financial year. This is the result of more people struggling day to day and the barriers of seeking terminations or affording long acting reversible contraception significantly affecting vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

Screening to Safety - The 2 year project with abortion providers on screening for patients experiencing violence and reproductive coercion reached its conclusion in June 2018. The outcomes of this funded project will exist well after this project has finished, with a research report and resources on effective contraception for people experiencing violence essential reading for all women's services, clinics and GPs.

The biannual Children by Choice conference in August 2017 was a huge success and received fantastic feedback. The conference calls to action are essential reading for both industry and government. We have already started the preparation for our next conference in August 2019. Ongoing community and school education programs are essential to improve literacy in sexuality education across Queensland and the feedback we receive from participants proves how vital these programs are.

After the state election in November 2017, with the Labor government committing to a review of the archaic abortion laws in Queensland, the Queensland Law Reform Commission took submissions for the review. We submitted our answers to the prescribed questions and also assisted other services and organisations with evidence based responses. We have been fortunate enough to have received philanthropic funding, as well as released some organisational funds to employ a Campaign Coordinator to lead the campaign for abortion law reform in 2018.

All of the achievements within this Annual Report would not be possible without the support of the Queensland Government and the funding we receive through the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women. We must also take time to mention the Samuel and Eileen Gluyas Charitable Trust which funded the Screening to Safety project as well as the ongoing generosity of our members, donors and supporting organisations who recognise the importance of the work we do to assist women outside our funding parameters. Without your monthly donations, support of our abortion fund and gifts in wills, we couldn't fill the gap in access to reproductive health care experienced by many Queenslanders. Finally, we were humbled to be the beneficiary of a large donation from the liquidation of the Leontine Circle.

We are small but mighty and will continue to strive for our vision: That all women can freely make their own reproductive and sexual health choices.

Thank you to everyone who has supported or engaged with our organisation over the past 12 months, you are the ones who have made these pages come to life.

**A note about language.*

Whilst the term "woman" is used throughout this report it is recognised that people who are gender diverse, sexually diverse and/or live with intersex variation(s) can experience unintended pregnancies.

100
CONTACTS
WITH OUR
COUNSELLING
TEAM



68
CONTACTS
WERE WITH
PREGNANT
PEOPLE



2
ARE WITH
A MAN
INVOLVED IN
A PREGNANCY



1
CONTACT ASKED
ABOUT THE
LEGALITY OF
ABORTION



3
CONVERSATIONS
INVOLVED
PREGNANCIES
OVER 20 WEEKS
GESTATION



AN AVERAGE WEEK AT CHILD

\$1681
IN NEGOTIATED
DISCOUNTS
WITH ABORTION
PROVIDERS



\$922
IN NO
INTEREST
LOANS



\$1600
IN GRANTS
FROM US
AND OTHER
ORGANISATIONS

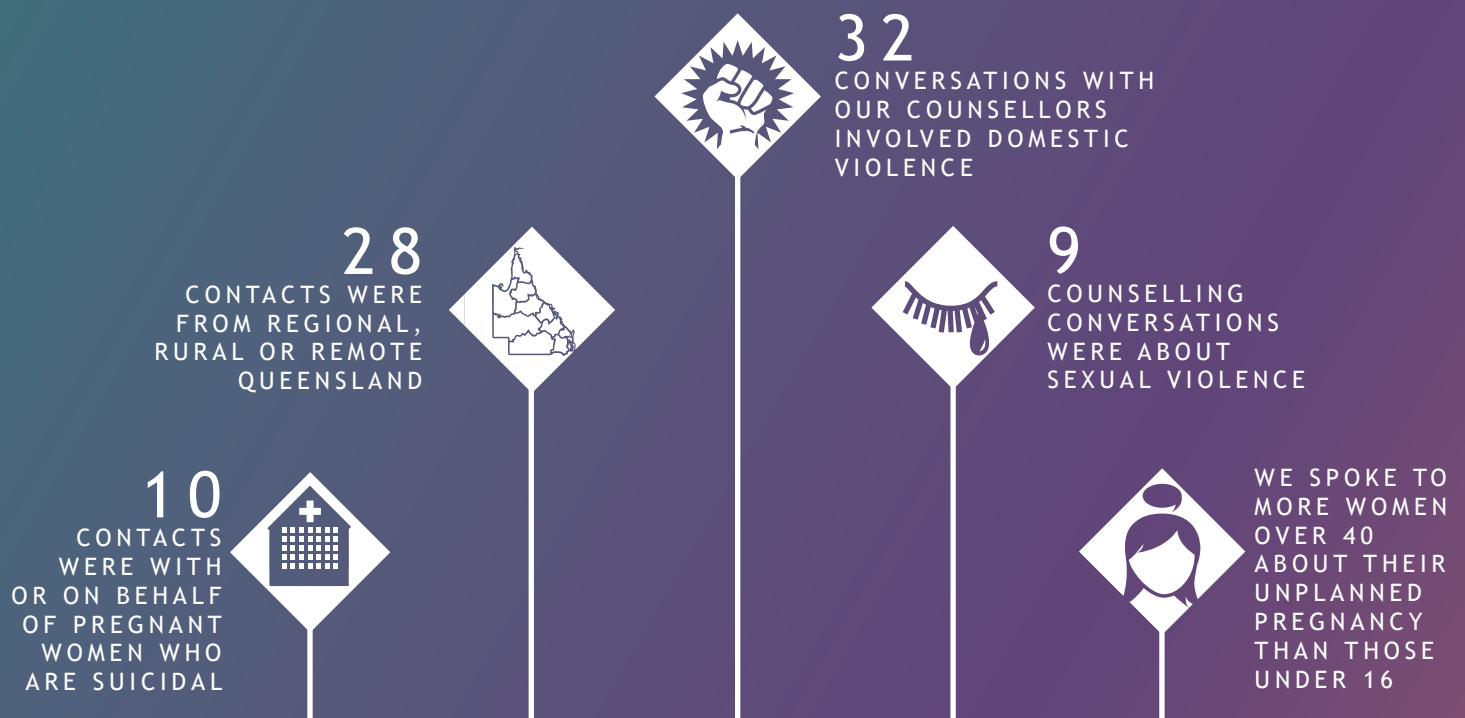


4
WOMEN RECEIVED
FREE OR LOW COST
LONG ACTING
REVERSIBLE
CONTRACEPTIVES

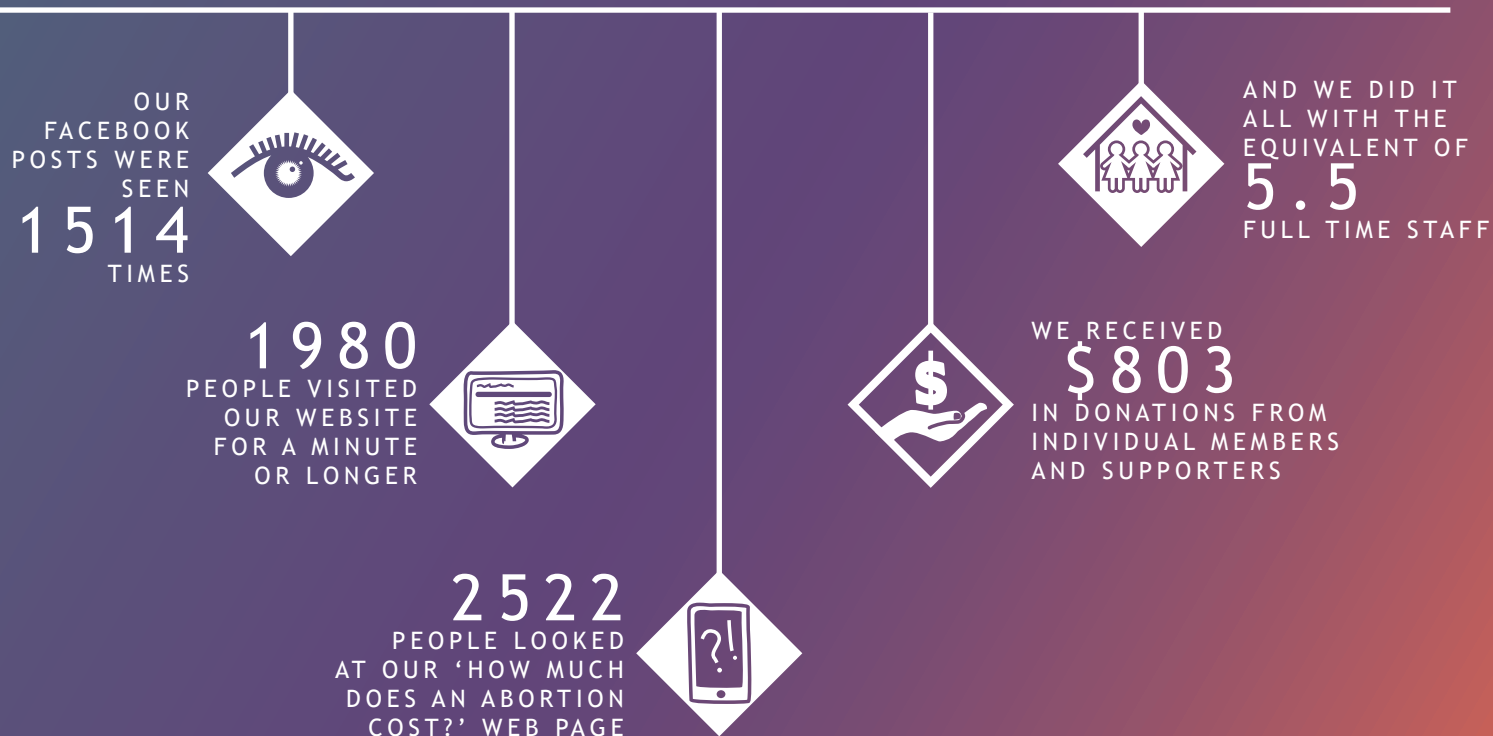


\$4560
IN FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE FOR
ABORTION AND
CONTRACEPTION





REN BY CHOICE IN 2017-18





Our second national Unplanned Pregnancy and Abortion in Australia conference was held in Brisbane on the 3rd and 4th of August 2017.

The conference included presentations by over 40 speakers from legal, clinical, academic, and community sectors around the country, including representatives from:

- five Australian universities;
- six public hospitals and health services;
- the Family Planning services from five states and territories;
- eleven abortion providers;
- three international reproductive health charities working in developing countries;
- domestic violence advocacy groups;
- the Human Rights Law Centre; and
- the National Alliance of Abortion and Pregnancy Options Counsellors.

The conference was opened by writer and broadcaster Jane Caro and included speakers from the Queensland and federal parliaments.

Over 200 delegates from across Australia and New Zealand attended, including members of the Queensland Law Reform Commission, the Royal Australian College of General Practice, the Royal Australian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and health and community professionals working with women experiencing unplanned pregnancy in schools, hospitals, sexual health clinics, and other fields of practice.

Evaluations from delegates after the conference concluded were overwhelmingly positive, with 85% reporting an extreme or significant increase in knowledge and connectedness, and 89% that the conference had an impact on how they would do things in their own role in future. Over 70% of delegates rated their satisfaction level as excellent.

Conference profits are being used to support our Queensland Abortion Fund, providing financial assistance to women facing extreme disadvantage for abortion and contraceptive access.

The conference report is available on our website at <https://www.childrenbychoice.org.au/forprofessionals/2017-conference>.



CONFERENCE: CALL TO ACTIONS

The following calls to action were endorsed by all delegates at the close of the conference:

We call on state, territory and federal governments to develop and implement a comprehensive, well-resourced, outcome-driven National Strategy on Reproductive and Sexual Health. This strategy should:

- provide a coordinating role across states and territories to ensure equitable access to information and services, particularly for those groups most vulnerable to poorer health outcomes;
- aim to improve maternal health outcomes, reduce rates of unplanned pregnancy, and reduce inequalities in access to pregnancy care, contraceptive choice and abortion services;
- complement and build upon related existing national strategies including those on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, women's health, men's health, sexually transmissible infections, LGBTI health, health and disability, migrant and refugee health, and violence prevention; and be underpinned by a human rights approach and a commitment to reducing stigma and enhancing reproductive and sexual health across the lifespan.
- The immediate decriminalisation of abortion in all Australian jurisdictions, alongside appropriate, evidence-based health regulations to ensure safe, timely and accessible abortion services.

The introduction of safe access zones in all Australian jurisdictions, to protect patients and professionals from harassment and intimidation while entering or leaving abortion provider premises.

The implementation of a national long acting reversible contraception guideline to improve uptake and remove barriers to effective contraceptive choices faced by vulnerable groups.

The introduction of a national de-identified data collection scheme to report on abortion rates and patient outcomes to enable better service planning and enhance policy responsiveness.

For public health systems, health departments and policy makers to take responsibility for ensuring everyone in their region has equitable access to abortion services (including second and third trimester procedures) and contraceptive services, in particular for rural, regional and remote areas and those experiencing disadvantage and financial difficulties, by utilising a range of care models including GP and nurse led service models.

For transparency in pregnancy counselling advertising to be legislated at a national level to prevent deceptive practices by services ideologically opposed to abortion and to enable health consumers to be informed about the services they access. We also call on government funding to be allocated only to pregnancy counselling services that provide unbiased and evidence-based support on all pregnancy options, including abortion.

A national commitment to a long-term funding increase in Australia's aid program which has dedicated gender equity targets and includes guaranteed designated funding for reproductive health programs in developing countries to improve the health outcomes for women and girls – including the provision of unbiased and evidence base information and services relating to contraceptive choices, pregnancy and maternity care, birthing, and abortion, according to the laws of the country in which programs are being delivered.



SUPPORTING WOMEN'S CHOICES: PREGNANCY COUNSELLING

Children by Choice first opened its doors in 1972, in the past 46 years it is estimated that, as a service, Children by Choice has assisted over 200,000 women and pregnant people across Queensland with decision making counselling, accurate information about their pregnancy options, referrals, financial assistance, advocacy and post-abortion support.

In 2017-18, we had 5033 contacts with or regarding 1693 clients. 67.2% of these contacts were over the phone, 1.5% face to face, and the remainder via email, text and fax.

It is evident in the organisational data that many clients require more than one contact or conversation to resolve their issues. This illustrates the complexity of client cases and the extent of the barriers many of them face while attempting to access services and support.

28% of first contacts this year were for counselling, either for decision making (25.6%) or post abortion (2.7%).

Children by Choice extracts organisational data from our counselling service on a regular basis. This data is de-identified and used to identify emerging trends which we then use to inform our practise and increase the support we offer. Due to limitations with this data we cannot track individual clients through our system, instead we track contacts with our service, the information they request along with other metrics for each conversation.

48.9% of our contacts this year were in relation to a first trimester pregnancy. Only 3.1% of our work was with women whose pregnancies were over 20 weeks gestation.

The most commonly requested information was abortion procedures and availability (54.5%), contraception (19.8%), loans for abortion and/or contraceptive access (19.1%), and abortion provider details (16%).

It is routinely reported to us that information and/or support for abortion has been difficult for our clients to find. Therefore, it is no surprise to us that a majority of our clients focus on this need. Women and pregnant people are entitled to both reliable and accurate information regarding all their options, inclusive of abortion.

Women from disadvantaged groups - including regional and remote women, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women generally require a higher average number of contacts per client to resolve their issues. Women living with violence need two to three times the number of conversations with our counsellors than our overall client pool.

Clients of Children by Choice come in contact with the counselling service in various ways and we expect this to continue to change with the landscape of the sector.

Our largest source of referrals in 17/18 was abortion providers (22.9%), followed by other community organisations and non-profits (15.9%), and GPs (4.8%). 4.7% of our referrals came from word of mouth.



EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES: EDUCATION AND TRAINING

As part of our unplanned pregnancy prevention work, we offer sexuality education for young people through schools and youth services, and online through our youth-specific site know4sure.org.au, with comprehensive information on sex, relationships, contraception and pregnancy in youth friendly language.

In 2017-18 we delivered 18 education sessions to almost 300 young people. We also held information stalls at 2 high schools. These stalls provide an opportunity to introduce our service to young people and debunk common myths about unplanned pregnancy.

Our education work with young people focuses on those most vulnerable to poorer sexual health, particularly those who have disengaged from mainstream schooling. This year 17 of our 18 sessions were delivered outside of mainstream education settings. Our ongoing strong partnerships with youth and community services providing alternative education, behavioural support services and other programs are pivotal to engaging with these young people.

Participants in all of our sessions are invited to complete a feedback form at the end of each session. 100% of respondents said that they felt included and comfortable in the session and 99% reported an increase in knowledge.

Our community education team provides training and information to professionals and tertiary students across Queensland through workshops, university guest lectures, conference presentations, video conferencing and information stalls at sector events.

In 2017-18 we provided training and information to over 750 professionals (this figure excludes provision via the Screening to Safety Project and our Unplanned Pregnancy and Abortion Conference). The Unplanned Pregnancy and Abortion Conference and the Screening to Safety Final Reports are available on our website.

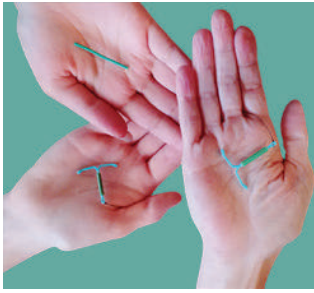
The professionals we support through these training activities include GPs, midwives, nurses, social workers, and School Based Youth Health Nurses. Topics include best practice counselling strategies for supporting women with an unplanned pregnancy; legal aspects of pregnancy termination, including medical abortion and provision of services to young people; the intersection between domestic violence, unplanned pregnancy and abortion; and evidence-based information on all pregnancy options, including referral pathways. As a small organisation this professional development training is one of the ways we work to improve the support provided to people experiencing an unplanned pregnancy and reducing barriers to reproductive choice.

We conducted 9 workshops, 1 Unplanned Pregnancy Counselling Training Day, 1 state-wide video conference and 2 video conference series'. We also engaged with over 620 professionals at information stalls at state-wide or national events.

Much of our training with professionals is delivered thanks to ongoing partnerships with peak bodies including True Relationships and Reproductive Health (formerly Family Planning Queensland) and Queensland Health.

This year we supported the Pre-Vocational Obstetrics & Gynaecology Society to hold a Manual Vacuum Aspiration workshop at their national conference on the Gold Coast. We also presented on the legal status of abortion in Australia and held an information stall at this 2 day conference which was attended by over 120 attendees.

We hosted 3 university student placements in the disciplines of social work, communications, and public health this year.



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE: WHAT WE PROVIDE

Children by Choice has been running a financial assistance program for disadvantaged women seeking abortion or long acting contraception since 2000. The fund was set up as part of our commitment to the reproductive autonomy of all Queensland women and pregnant people. In the last eighteen years this program has continued to grow,

In 2017-18 we provided \$228,052 to 412 women for abortion and long acting reversible contraception. This is almost double what we provided in the previous year.

Our financial assistance program includes grants that women do not have to repay, no interest loans, negotiated discounts from abortion providers, and support from other organisations. Many women need support from multiple avenues to access the abortion they seek.

Despite the rapid growth in the financial value of the assistance we provide, the numbers of women supported each year remain relatively stable, demonstrating the growing complexity of their cases. We can offer grants to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people coming to us for financial assistance because of the incredible generosity of donations from our members and supporters. These grants don't have to be repaid by the pregnant person and bridge a gap for those whose pregnancy outcome is financially out of reach.

This year we funded grants of \$40,142 through our online Queensland Abortion Fund which has almost doubled from 2016/17 and is solely funded by donations from our supporters.

Our Women's NILS 4 Health program is an accredited No Interest Loan Scheme for women who are seeking abortion or long acting reversible contraception. Loan amounts and repayments are considered on a case by case basis and our main priority is making sure that we don't worsen a person's financial situation by approving a loan they are going to find hard to repay.

\$46,118 of no interest loans were given to women, pregnant people and sometimes their partners or family members to either fund an abortion or long acting contraception.

Children by Choice has fostered working relationships with a number of organisations within the sector. These organisations work with us to support our clients' reproductive autonomy. These relationships will continue to strengthen and grow.

This year \$39,897 was provided by our partner organisations for financial assistance, up from \$32,667 last year.

An aspect of our financial assistance program which often comes as a surprise is the significant contribution made by abortion providers who provide negotiated discounts for our most disadvantaged clients. Without their support many of our clients experiencing extreme hardship would not be able to access a service, and we're very grateful for their compassion.

Hardship grants by abortion providers contributed \$84,081 to our financial assistance program. This amount has more than doubled in the last year.

This year, 179 women - almost half our financial assistance clients - were provided with free or low cost long acting reversible contraception at the time of termination of pregnancy.



Prices for terminations within the first trimester of pregnancy can cost up to \$800. The higher the gestation the higher the cost of the procedure meaning that clients presenting into the second trimester or clients that are forced to travel to access a provider are generally left with a small window of time in which to collect a large sum of money, this can be thousands of dollars.

In an attempt to raise this large amount of money in a short time, clients often report disclosing their situation multiple times, and in doing so experience judgement from others. Clients often feel forced into asking a violent or unsupportive man for help, suffer an escalation of existing mental health issues, increased poverty from trying to raise the funds and an increase in gestation.

This year the average amount of our financial assistance per client was \$528, and for each day we were open, we funded an average of \$912.

In order to be eligible for our financial assistance program, clients must be living in Queensland and have a Health Care Card (or equivalent). Within this group there are certain clear themes which emerge: financial assistance clients are more likely than our general client pool to report violence, and Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, as well as culturally and linguistically diverse women are over-represented. Many will need support from several different sources before they are able to gather the sum of money they need.

21% of our financial assistance clients identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Our financial assistance clients are, on average, able to provide just over half the funds they need themselves (including not only their own money, but also that borrowed from friends or family, or provided by a loan from us which they will repay). Generally speaking, the level of support they are able to expect from the man involved in their pregnancy is low or non-existent, although in a small number of cases we were able to provide a male partner with a no interest loan to assist in abortion access.

In the last year to June 2018, in the 412 financial assistance cases, 36 included contributions from the man involved in the pregnancy. That's less than 8.7%.

In the two years to June 2017, 34.7% of financial assistance clients experienced violence with the man involved in the pregnancy, and almost half the funds provided through our financial assistance program went to women living with domestic and/or sexual violence.

Women with physical and mental health problems are over-represented amongst our financial assistance clients. Many reported that their mental health worsened as a result of the barriers to abortion access they experienced and the pressure of trying to find financial and other types of support in a limited amount of time.



RESPONDING TO VIOLENCE: OUR CLIENT DATA

This year 32% of our total contacts disclosed domestic violence. 15% involved reproductive coercion, and 9% sexual assault. There is a significant overlap between some of these issues, and in the two years to June 2018 over 22% of the work of our counselling team was with women reporting both domestic and sexual violence.

Our data also shows that 38% of our contacts reporting domestic violence are in turn experiencing reproductive coercion, which explains the link between domestic and partner violence, unplanned pregnancy, and abortion.

The term reproductive coercion is used to describe a range of perpetrator pregnancy controlling behaviours, which can range from contraceptive sabotage, to emotional manipulation or blackmail around ending or continuing a pregnancy against the pregnant woman's will, to forced sex and rape.

In the two years to June 2018, compared to contacts in the southeast Queensland region, contacts from rural, regional and remote parts of the state are more likely to report domestic violence (34.4% v 33.6%).

26.1% of our contacts disclosing reproductive coercion did not report other forms of violence, but for the majority, reproductive coercion is just part of the spectrum of violence they live with.

Our client data shows that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, are more likely to be reporting reproductive coercion, as well as other types of violence. In the two years to June 2018, 41.1% of our Indigenous contacts reported domestic violence, with almost 10% disclosing sexual assault. Culturally and linguistically diverse contacts are also high risk with almost 40% reporting domestic violence and 16.6% reporting sexual assault.

Although only a small proportion of our work - around 4.6% in the two years to June 2018 - was with women with a disability, they were more likely to report domestic violence (33.5% v 32%) and much more likely to report sexual assault (19.6% v 8.2%) than our general client pool.

Women presenting with issues of violence or coercion are more likely to be associated with second trimester pregnancies, showing the effect violence and coercion can have on accessing timely counselling and medical care.

Of the 12% of our total contacts with pregnancies of 16 weeks gestation or higher, almost two thirds report domestic violence, sexual assault, and/or fetal anomaly.

Women living with violence often need more support than our general client pool, no matter which pregnancy option they choose, and can experience greater financial disadvantage and social isolation, making accessing services more difficult. Almost half our financial assistance funding for abortion access goes to women living with violence, as they are generally unable to access a publicly provided termination through a hospital in Queensland.

This year our client data also allowed us to track the proportion of women coerced to pregnancy vs those coerced to abortion. This data shows that of contacts reporting reproductive coercion, 60.3% reported coercion to pregnancy, 34% reporting coercion in the direction of abortion, 6 clients reported both forms of reproductive coercion. Those who disclosed coercion to pregnancy contacted counsellors an average of 4.8 times, and those reporting coercion to abortion contacted an average of 2.9 times. This data will be further analysed and findings shared.

RESPONDING TO VIOLENCE: SCREENING TO SAFETY PROJECT

This year saw the conclusion of our two year Screening to Safety project, funded by the Samuel and Eileen Charitable Trust managed by Perpetual. The principal aim of the Screening to Safety project was to build the capacity of private abortion providers in Queensland to identify and respond to domestic violence with a particular focus on reproductive coercion.

The project reached 569 professionals and sought to build the capacity of the women's sector in Queensland to identify and respond to reproductive coercion and unplanned pregnancy risk. Project initiatives included:

Supporting abortion providers to:

- Become aware of the indicators of violence in women attending for abortion care into abortion provision setting.
- Establish environments that support disclosure.
- Respond to disclosures of violence and reproductive coercion through knowledge of referral pathways and contraceptive information and access.

Community education:

- Raising awareness and conducting training in the women's sector, among abortion providers and other health care practitioners to increase knowledge and skills.
- Training and education initiatives for the youth sector and young people.

Development of a screening tool:

- The development of a domestic and sexual violence screening tool for Queensland abortion providers.

A fuller discussion of these initiatives and outcomes is contained in the project report available on our website. This project has made inroads into enhancing the capacity of private abortion providers to identify and respond to the needs of women experiencing violence and control who attend for abortion care.

The combined project initiatives have increased knowledge, skills and confidence among abortion providers and other medical professionals in the following areas:

- The link between domestic violence, reproductive coercion and unplanned pregnancy and abortion.
- The screening process for women experiencing domestic violence.
- Providing referrals to specialist domestic and sexual violence services, and contraceptive support to women.

The suite of resources developed by the project will continue to be available to abortion providers. A major challenge is maintaining the profile of these issues and to retaining the skills and knowledge within abortion provision settings. A challenge for Children by Choice is to continue to build on this work in the absence of designated resources or funding.



In support of our formal education and training programmes Children by Choice undertakes broader community education work both online and in public spaces. Our website www.childrenbychoice.org.au contains over 100 pages of information for pregnant and support people along with information for professionals covering all aspects of pregnancy options, services and support.

In 2017-18 we received over 99,000 visits of a minute or longer on our website.

There are five pages on our website that consistently account for almost half our web traffic. The pages are reflective of the issues our counsellors get asked most often, over the phone and in face to face sessions. This year, it is no surprise that 'How Much Does An Abortion Cost?' accounted for the most traffic followed by 'Australian Abortion Law and Access'.

Information on abortion costs was the most visited page across 2017-18 (accounting for 18% of traffic), followed by abortion laws around Australia (10%), information on medication abortion (9%) and clinic locations (5%) with surgical abortion procedures also at (5%).

Australian Government, Department of Health website 'Health Direct' has been our top online referrer for 2017/18. Along with national mental health website Reach Out, Royal Australian College of GPs online learning hub and True Relationships and Reproductive Health (formerly Family Planning Queensland).

As well as our website, we communicate regularly with our members and supporters, as well as the broader community, through our email bulletins and social media activity. Our social media engagement continued to grow in 2017-18 and we're now connected to over 3000 supporters on Facebook and Twitter.

In 2017-18 we continued to use our social media to call for donations to assist specific clients with financial assistance for abortion and contraceptive access. Over the course of the year, our financial assistance appeals were some of the most engaging content across our social media.

Other popular social media content over the year included an article on reproductive coercion about an actor flushing his wife's pills, a video of our flooding backyard and a piece by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in rebuttal to the ABC on long acting reversible contraception.



CHANGING ATTITUDES + SYSTEMS: ABORTION LAW REFORM

As ever, Children by Choice has been advocating for change within the sexual and reproductive health sector. Working through this with both community and government via consultations and submissions, in the aim of supporting women and pregnant people towards better healthcare outcomes.

On behalf of Pro Choice Queensland we submitted to the Australian Labor Party (ALP) Gender Equity Submission to address reproductive choice as a way of improving gender equality. While decriminalising abortion is part of the ALP policy, Members of Parliament are still allowed a conscience vote on this issue and, some ALP MPs do not identify as pro-choice. This has a significant impact on advancing legislative reform.

Children by Choice also made a submission to Marie Stopes Australia: Reproductive Coercion White Paper in February 2018, with recommendations for continued progress toward universal screening for and responding to reproductive coercion.

The Queensland Law Reform Commission (QLRC) invited Children by Choice to make a submission on the review of the termination of pregnancy laws. We made an organisational submission to the QLRC and also assisted other services, peak bodies, groups and individuals with submissions.

In the ongoing campaign to decriminalise abortion in Queensland, Children by Choice partnered with and participated in many events and activities. As an organisation, we gave comment to a variety of media outlets and had countless meetings with key stakeholders such as MPs, women's services, domestic violence peak bodies and government agencies.

With the QLRC report on the review of termination of pregnancy laws on 30 June 2018, we expect to see legislation recommended to the Queensland Parliament that will decriminalise abortion for both the pregnant person and the medical professional, as well as introduce safe access zones.

The success of the Termination of Pregnancy Bill 2018 will depend on support from MPs across all parties to be successful. The legislation is expected to be voted on before the end of 2018.

Children by Choice has also supported the Pro Choice Queensland Clinic Defenders who voluntarily work closely with termination clinics to ensure the safety and minimise the harassment of women and staff entering the facility. It is hoped that the legislation to introduce safe access zones will be passed and the intimidation of people accessing basic healthcare will cease in Queensland.

Children by Choice are often called upon to present at conferences, panels, professional settings and schools, which is a testament to how highly regarded we are as an organisation within the community.

In the 2017/18 financial year, we presented at the ANROWS (Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety limited) conference, spoke at an abortion panel alongside Tanya Plibersek and held education sessions at multiple schools.



Our 2017-2020 strategic direction remains unaltered this year as we continue to focus on our three outward focused strategies: support, empower, change; and our two enabling strategies: relationships and sustainability. Strategic planning with our staff and Management Committee allowed for this framework to be integrated into activity planning, budget forecasts, and monitoring and evaluation processes.

Our vision:

That all women can freely make their own reproductive and sexual health choices.

Our mission:

To be the leading voice for women's reproductive choices in Queensland.

Our key strategies:

We will provide all options pregnancy counselling, information, referral and advocacy for Queensland women. Our service can provide material aid and practical assistance to disadvantaged pregnant women to improve equitable access to contraception and abortion.

We will empower individuals and groups to exercise their reproductive health choices. This includes capacity building through education, training, and providing evidence based information and resources.

We will work to reduce the discriminatory social, legal, clinical, and policy barriers that women may face when seeking access to accurate information, support and services for their reproductive choices.

Our enabling strategies:

We will develop and utilise strong relationships with groups and individuals who can support us to achieve our vision and mission.

We will support our people and manage our resources sustainably into the future. We will value our history and embrace contemporary, flexible, responsive, evidence based practice.

Our three key strategies are reported on throughout this Annual Report. In regards to our two enabling strategies, in 2017-18 we have, among other things:

Worked hard to strengthen and formalise our partnerships for financial assistance. And maintained our membership of key networks at local, state and national levels, including Ending Violence Against Women Queensland, Women's Health Services Alliance of Queensland, Equality Rights Alliance, the Australian Abortion Network, and the ANROWS Practitioner Engagement Group.

OUR FUNDERS AND DONORS



Children by Choice has been funded for over 20 years by the Queensland Government to deliver our counselling and community education services. This year we celebrated securing an increase to our core funding for the second year in a row. This additional funding enables us to maintain staff hours across the counselling and community education teams to help address the growth in demand for our services.

We also secured grants from:

- The Leontine Circle, who granted us their wind down funds;
- the Samuel and Eileen Gluyas Trust, managed by Perpetual, for our Screening To Safety project;
- Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) who funded a print media campaign in collaboration with the Screening To Safety project; and
- the Estate Late Harold Corbould who gave us funds with which we commenced the implementation of a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. The new system will be used to record our interactions with clients, professionals, organisations and other groups. This improvement upgrade has been complex but will streamline our processes to allow us to provide even better support to the community. We aim to have the system fully implemented by the end of 2018. Xtreme Productivity has been supporting us on this journey and we thank them for their support.

Receiving Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status continues to have a positive impact on our donor program. We have had some significant donations from private individuals which we are extremely grateful for. These donations help support our unfunded work particularly our financial assistance program, which we certainly could not facilitate without the generous donations of our individual and organisational supporters.

Some of the increases in donations may be partially explained by the campaign for abortion law reform during 2016-18 and the increased media attention on the barriers to abortion access. We have successfully built on this through a fundraising strategy which utilises the reach and instancy of social media platforms to run urgent appeals for specific financial assistance clients while illustrating the barriers to access they've experienced. An unexpected but positive outcome of this strategy is that it has created a space where women are able to pass on thanks to their donors, and donors words of positivity and encouragement to women who are struggling, all through a platform that while being public still protects the recipient's anonymity. As a service, we will continue to work on strategies that encourage spontaneous donors to become regular ones.

Along with our committed individual donors, other organisations who help financially support clients to access terminations are a vital part of our programs. In recent years we have been working to solidify and formalise these partnerships, with the result that we now have a growing number of organisations who give us a sum of money to use for financial assistance for specific clients each year - for example, a domestic violence organisation which provides us with \$3000 a year to assist women living with violence to access an abortion when that is their choice. Arrangements like this can considerably streamline the process of seeking financial assistance from other organisations, for women who fit the criteria of participating partners, making for faster approval processes and more manageable workloads for staff and volunteers.

OUR FUNDERS



and a program grant from the
Samuel and Eileen Gluyas
Charitable Trust managed by



OUR EVENT PARTNERS



We acknowledge and
thank our conference
sponsors and
supporters.

“

I FEEL HUMAN AGAIN. I HOPE TO BE ABLE TO HELP OTHER WOMEN ACHIEVE THEIR CHOICES BY DONATING TO THIS CAUSE EVERY FORTNIGHT ONCE MY LOAN IS FULLY PAID OFF. THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR EVERYTHING.

”

“

FROM THE FIRST MOMENT I SPOKE TO THE CHILDREN BY CHOICE TEAM, I FELT TRULY SUPPORTED. THEY LISTENED AND PROVIDED ALL THE INFORMATION THAT I NEEDED TO MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION.

”

“

I JUST WANT TO THANK YOU FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART FOR ALL YOUR HELP TODAY YOU HAVE MADE A VERY HARD DECISION A LITTLE EASIER FOR ME I HOPE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU DO AS A JOB REALLY HAS A BIG IMPACT ON PEOPLES' LIVES. THANK YOU AGAIN FOR EVERYTHING NOW I CAN MOVE FORWARD AND TRY TO HEAL.

”

WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAID

“

MY COUNSELLOR WAS MY SAVIOUR. SHE WAS AMAZING, SHE LISTENED TO EVERYTHING I HAD TO SAY SHE LET ME RAMBLE ON AND ON ABOUT EVERYTHING IN MY HEAD. SHE HELPED ME CLEAR MY HEAD TO MAKE A CHOICE AND THEN WENT TO ALL EXTENTS TO SUPPORT ME WITH MY CHOICE. CHILDREN BY CHOICE IS AMAZING AND I HAVE ALREADY REFERRED PEOPLE AND WILL ALWAYS REFER PEOPLE.

”

“

I AM EVER SO GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT AND HELP FROM CHILDREN BY CHOICE, THE SAME LADY WHO ENGAGED WITH ME THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS WAS VERY HELPFUL, KIND, AND SHOWED COMPASSION FOR MY PREVIOUS 3 MONTHS OF MY LIFE. I'M VERY GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT AND COMPASSION I GOT SHOWN. THANK YOU CHILDREN BY CHOICE.

”

“

YOUR STAFF ARE ANGELS' THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR ALL YOUR HELP
AND SUPPORT THROUGH THIS DIFFICULT TIME.

”

“

MY CONTACT WHO DEALT WITH ME WAS AWESOME. SHE WAS EXTREMELY
HELPFUL, ESPECIALLY IN MY CURRENT SITUATION. KEEP THE AWESOME
WORK UP AND GOD BLESS. THANK YOU GUYS AGAIN FOR YOUR HELP.

”

“

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR SAVING MY LIFE AND ALLOWING SUCH
OPEN NON-JUDGEMENTAL SUPPORT. I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER AND
RECOMMEND YOU ANGELS, THANK YOU FOR BEING SO POWERFUL,
CANDID AND TRUE CHAMPIONS OF CHOICE FOR WOMEN. THANK YOU
FOR BEING HERE XXX

”

ABOUT US IN 2017/18

“

THE PHONE CALLS, THE SUPPORT, THE CARING & THE HELP I WAS
GIVEN WAS MIND-BLOWING. IT GAVE ME FAITH THAT THERE IS HELP
THAT'S NOT BASED ON A \$ FIGURE BUT ON THE CARING AND TRUE
SUPPORT OF A REAL HEART. THE WOMAN THAT CARED FOR ME HAD NO
JUDGEMENT AND A PASSION TO DO AS MUCH AS SHE COULD.

”

“

CHILDREN BY CHOICE MADE A DIFFICULT SITUATION FOR US A SMOOTH
AND STRESS FREE ONE! WE WERE NOT JUDGED AND COMMUNICATION
WAS FANTASTIC. WE SPOKE TO ABOUT THREE DIFFERENT STAFF
MEMBERS AND THEY WERE ALL ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT. EXTREMELY
HELPFUL AND HAPPY TO LISTEN AND GIVE ADVICE. I WILL FOREVER BE
GRATEFUL FOR THE HELP CBC GAVE US XX

”

AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF CHILDREN BY CHOICE ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Children by Choice Association Incorporated, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2018, the statement of profit & loss and other comprehensive income, statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the certification by members of the committee on the annual statements giving a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the association.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of Children by Choice Association Incorporated has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012 and the Associations Incorporation Act (QLD).

- 1) Giving a true and fair view of the associations financial position as at 30 June 2018 and of its performance for the year then ended; and
- 2) Complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Regulation 2013.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the association in accordance with the Auditor Independence Requirements of the ACNC Act and ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES110: code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist the association to meet the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012 and the Associations Incorporation Act (QLD). As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of the Committee for the Financial Report

The committee is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012 and the Associations Incorporation Act (QLD), and for such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the committee is responsible for assessing the association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the committee either intends to liquidate the association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the committee.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the committee's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the association's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the association to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the committee regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.



PETER GESCH
HAYWARDS CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS
Level 1 / 488 Lutwyche Road
LUTWYCHE QLD 4030

Dated this 26th day of October 2018

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

	<u>Note</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Cash at Bank - On Hand	3	830,615.74	516,601.60
Debtors & Prepayments		27,927.72	23,465.00
Inventory		-	413.27
Total Current Assets		858,543.46	540,479.87
Fixed Assets			
	4	446,581.79	440,093.29
Total Fixed Assets		446,581.79	440,093.29
TOTAL ASSETS		\$1,305,125.25	\$980,573.16
LIABILITIES			
Current Liabilities			
Creditors & Accruals		65,938.96	110,180.88
Employee Provisions		62,690.11	81,794.06
Income Received & Unexpended		319,180.92	233,091.07
Total Current Liabilities		447,809.99	425,066.01
TOTAL LIABILITIES		447,809.99	425,066.01
NET ASSETS		\$857,315.26	\$555,507.15
MEMBERS FUNDS			
Retained Surplus		857,315.26	555,507.15
TOTAL MEMBERS FUNDS		\$857,315.26	\$555,507.15

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
30 JUNE 2018

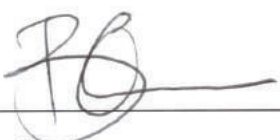
	<u>Note</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>
Revenue	2	1,106,854.03	764,522.98
Other Income	2	7,872.84	4,884.03
Employee benefits expense		(583,380.48)	(544,693.57)
Depreciation and amortisation expense		(8,510.00)	(7,010.52)
Insurance		(8,427.27)	(8,683.51)
Motor vehicle and travel expenses		(3,263.51)	(3,199.64)
Property Expenses		(17,957.86)	(17,493.22)
Staff training and development expenses		(5,582.96)	(3,948.09)
Audit, legal and consultancy fees		(4,000.00)	(2,500.00)
Client support services expense		(123,526.49)	(112,606.20)
Other operating costs		(58,270.19)	(53,739.63)
Current year surplus before income tax		301,808.11	15,532.63
Income tax expense		-	-
Net current year surplus		301,808.11	15,532.63
Other comprehensive income		-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year		301,808.11	15,532.63
Total comprehensive income attributable to members of the entity		\$301,808.11	\$15,532.63

RESPONSIBLE PERSONS' DECLARATION

The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 financial Statements.

- In the opinion of the committee the financial report as set out on pages 1 to 7 are in accordance Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012 and:
 - Comply with the Australian Accounting Standards applicable to the entity; and
 - Give a true and fair view of the association's financial position as at 30 June 2018 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note financial statements.
- At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that Children by Choice As Incorporated will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This Declaration is signed in accordance with Subs 60.15(2) of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Regulation 2013.



President

Children by Choice acknowledge the traditional owners of country throughout Queensland and their continued connection to land and community. We recognise the three separate cultures of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander people.

As women, we believe that women need to respect traditional owners, to communicate this respect to them, and to recognise the dispossession of the land and its ongoing effects on Aboriginal peoples today.

As a women's service, we acknowledge the sorrow of the mothers of the Stolen Generations and apologise for the removal of their children by white Australians.

Always was, always will
be Aboriginal land.

