



Community Champion for "Pregnant Pause"...



Senior Health Professional/Midwife – Anne Brown

Karinya House: 23/4/2002 to 30/10/2020

Bi-Annual Report – December 2020

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Currently at Karinya House

Over the Christmas Period, Karinya House has been home to a diverse group of pregnant women and women with babies and children. Indicative of the times that 2020 has brought to our community, residential and outreach caseloads remain full.

Across the festive period, (including public holidays), Karinya House has remained fully operational and available, providing consistent care and support. This has included supporting one young woman who came to Canberra escaping domestic violence, was homeless and who was unable to access any other service due to services reducing their capacity over the festive season. While the Karinya House residential service was full, we were able to provide this young woman with safe hotel accommodation, thanks to the generous financial support of you, our community. Casework staff are continuing to advocate for and with this woman.



We have been fortunate in Canberra, and more broadly across Australia, in comparison to the global COVID-19 context, that is certain. There is little doubt however, that the times we are in, have increased the stress, tensions and complexities of lives of the women we walk alongside.

During the period 1 July to 31 December 2020, Karinya House, with the tangible support of our community, has walked alongside 114 women providing full casework management. Another 45 individuals were provided short term contact and appropriate cross referral if further assistance was required.

And to conclude, from a woman who spent time at Karinya recently with her little boy, during a difficult and lonely patch, “My life changed positively since I joined Karinya House... it is part of my family.”

Best wishes for 2021
Marie-Louise Corkhill
Executive Director

The 2020 Annual General Meeting with the Annual Report 2019-20

The Karinya House Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on Monday, 16 November 2020. The Association reflected on a challenging year through which shone the support for the women we walk alongside. Given the end of 2019, and the impact of the bushfires across our Region, the year had already been shaping up as a significant year in the history of Karinya House. As was reported in the June Bi-Annual Report however, whilst the challenges to service delivery remained at the forefront, with the arrival of COVID-19, the support for Karinya House from our community remained constant and strong. This continued into the latter half of 2020 and the AGM reflected the relief brought by the tangible value of the services of Karinya House by the community in which we live.

The Committee following the AGM comprises:

President: Sarah Kelly

Committee Member: Cassandra Keller

Vice-President: Esther Bogaart

Committee Member: Kathleen Buckley

Treasurer: John Lewis

Committee Member: Dave Burnet

Secretary: Rosemary Lee

Committee Member: Kate Harkins

Committee Member: Margaret O'Donovan (Public Officer)

Committee Member: Marie-Louise Corkhill (Executive Director)



The 2019-20 Annual Report was tabled and evidences the continued services provided by Karinya House through 2019-20, as well as the support for Karinya House that has been received. You can read the report [here](#):

[Karinya House Annual Report 2019-20](#)

Strategic Planning Day

The AGM followed a very successful Strategic Planning Day held in October 2020. The Strategic Planning Day was facilitated by Chris Nightingale and attended by all members of the Committee as well as Executive staff. The purpose of the day was to reflect on the current Strategic Plan which is ending and to begin planning for the next 3-5 years.

The planning day included discussions about opportunities and risks for Karinya House in the coming years, evolving government policy and funding settings and reviewing the overall vision and purpose of the organisation. At the end of the day the Committee re-confirmed the focus of Karinya House being to support women who are pregnant or new mothers, with the core purpose of providing tailored casework, recognising the unique circumstances of each woman.

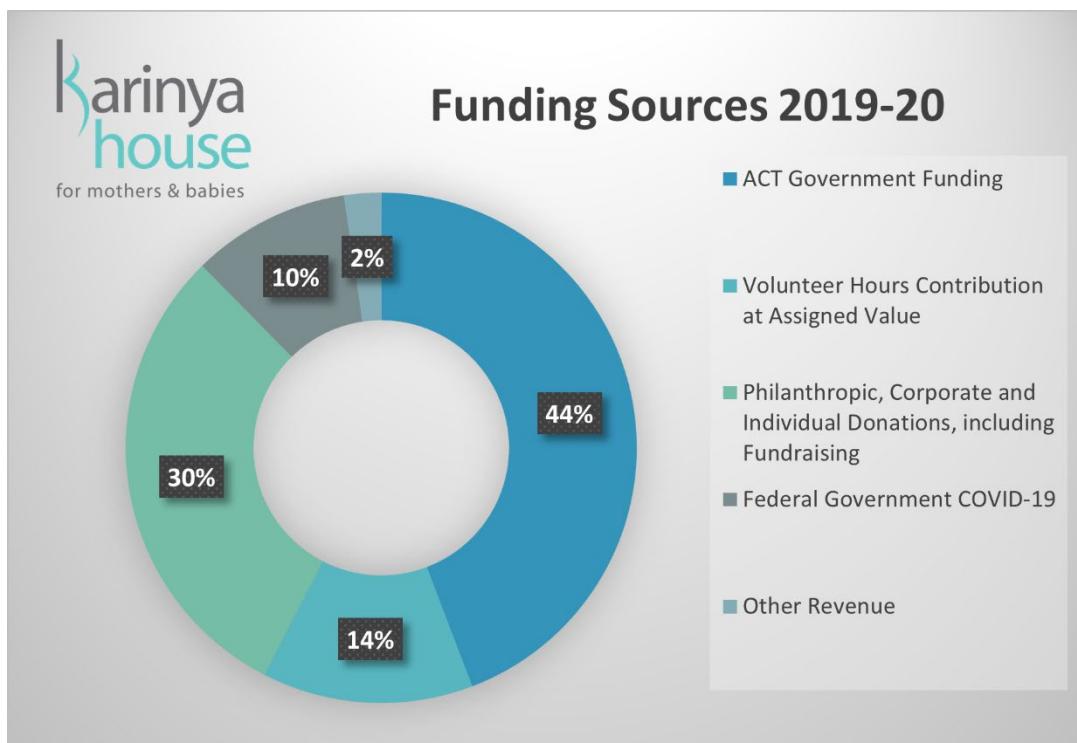
The draft goals of the Strategic Plan are:

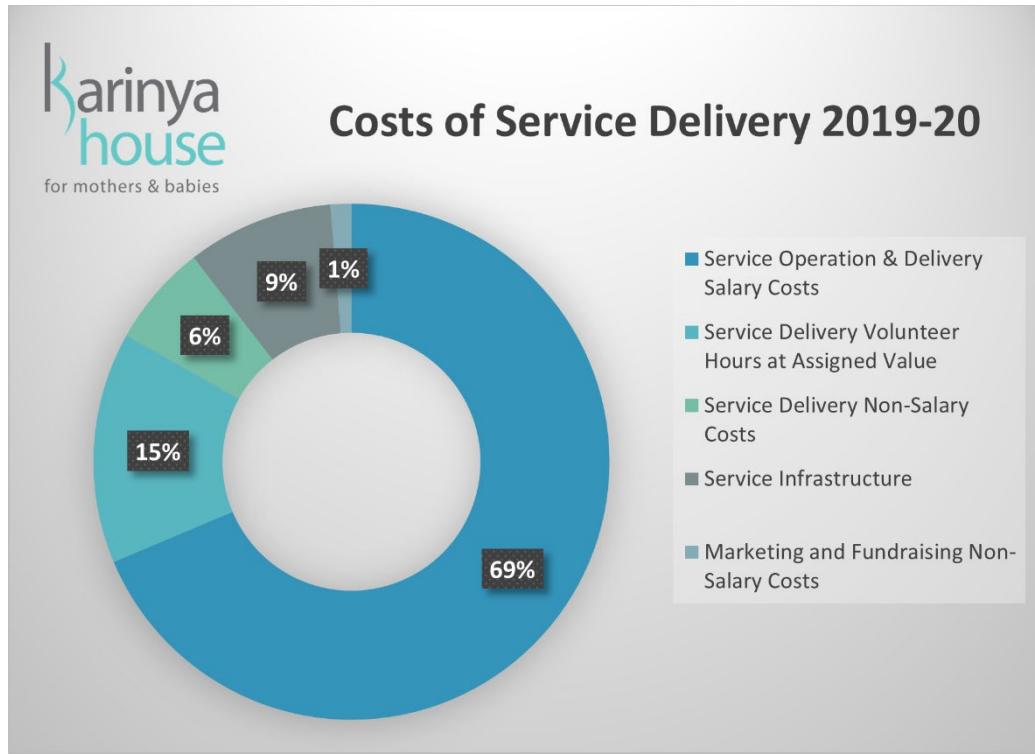
- Karinya House can demonstrate the benefits of an early intervention model of practice within a framework of care and compassion.
- Karinya House has the workforce capability and culture to deliver specialist supports to women with diverse and complex needs.
- Karinya House has a governing Committee with the capacity and mix of capability to deliver its long-term strategic vision.
- Karinya House will grow its net equity position by \$1million by 2025/26

The Karinya House Strategic Plan 2021-2025 and accompanying action plans are now being finalised with the assistance of Chris Nightingale and we look forward to sharing the new plan with you in the coming months.

Financial Outlook

The Annual Report 2019-20 provided the following analysis of the Karinya House funding framework.





Financial results for the half year to 31 December 2020 remain positive, reflecting the continuing support of our community, together with the ACT Government. Further, the Commonwealth Government COVID-19 stimulus packages have supported Karinya House through to September 2020. In addition, the ACT Government extended rent relief for all housing service providers through to 31 December 2020. Karinya House has extended this relief in full to all women in residence.

Unexpected philanthropic support came from the Shaw and Partners Foundation. During September 2020, Shaw and Partners celebrated 5 years of fundraising, raising over \$3 million for Australian. In 2020 they aimed to raise \$500,000, and their efforts resulted in \$819,100 that was donated to charities Australia wide. The Canberra Office selected Karinya House to receive a donation of \$25,000. We believe this represents the largest single *general* donation Karinya House has ever received and certainly was a morale booster during a particularly challenging time.

During September, the annual Double Up Appeal was held, inviting donors to have donations made during the month of September doubled, with thanks to our matched giving corporate partners. This included donations in support of the **Mercy Walk for Women**, as well as our regular recurring donations. The matched funding pool of \$50,000 came from Chadwick Designs, Clarke Keller, Connect3i, Corkhill Bros, Pat's Plumbing First Choice, Riverview Projects (ACT), Sharwood Hampers, Solace Creations and Successful Alliances. The month of September saw donations almost match this amount. All corporate partners remained committed to their full matched funding amount and a total of \$90,310 of funding support was accordingly generated.

The Mercy Walk for Women, which was held online as a virtual event, had 110 participants register and commit to walking 23 Kilometers over the month of September. The “Yass Road Crew” from Boorowa, who are the event organising Committee, did in fact do the actual Mercy Walk (Boorowa to Galong) in a COVID-safe manner on the nominated event day for 2020, despite the wind and the rain, celebrating at the end with bubbles and the most donations raised! We remain grateful to this “Crew” and all who participated in this year’s event raising funds and awareness for Karinya House.

The Christmas Appeal also exceeded expectations with a total of \$23,397 in financial donations (against a target of \$20,000). In Kind Support valued at \$17,590 was so generous with many of the women we currently walk alongside being provided with Hampers and Gifts matched directly with sponsor families. A number of Karinya Staff and Volunteers also sponsored families with Hampers and Gifts. Other donors provided general gifts and food hampers. Every woman was supported over Christmas through packages put together by the casework team, from all these gifts, to ensure each woman and every member of her family were in thought, through gifts this Christmas.

Mental Health – A response with support from the James N Kirby Foundation

You may recall a segment in the June 2020 bi-annual report highlighting an intensification of mental health concerns amongst women during the 2020 year. Most women we work with have some experience of mental health issues, often due to experiences of trauma. **One of the challenges during COVID has been accessing consistency in mental health support.** Many services ‘down-scaled’, which in some cases has meant an individual has been allocated a different health worker for every appointment. In other cases, mental health support is being offered virtually, which for some women is not appropriate or accessible. This has meant the time, care and patience our caseworkers offer women has been paramount.

In October 2020, Karinya House was successful in an application for a James N Kirby Foundation Emergency COVID-19 grant. The \$25,000 grant will be used to fund mental health care and support, through the acquisition of a specialised, consistent mental health practitioner. An end of year fundraising event held for Karinya House has also generated over \$11,000 to add to this pilot project. The grant and funds raised will allow Karinya House to pilot a model over a six-month period. The pilot can then hopefully be leverage as a proof of concept for a larger longer-term grant. Expressions of Interest will be called for in February for a specialist practitioner to undertake this project with Karinya House during the first half of 2021. If you know of someone who may be interested, please ask them to contact our Executive Officer (Belinda.Munn@karinyahouse.asn.au).

Senior Health Professional Team Leader (Midwife)

At the end of October 2020, we wished our long serving and much-loved midwife, Anne Brown, well in her retirement. Anne has worked at Karinya House since April 2002 and has contributed to the lives of close to 2,000 women over her years of service at Karinya. Anne was farewelled formally at our end of year Karinya gathering. Anne received a Medal of Service Recognition from the Governor General for her service in "significantly contributing to lifting up those around her and making the community better". Normally such a presentation would occur at Government House, however due to COVID-19 this medallion has been received at Karinya House for an internal presentation to Anne.



Alexandra Ball, has since been appointed to the role of Senior Health Professional/Team Leader (midwife) and is due to start at Karinya House in February 2021. In her application Alexandra stated: "*I grew up only ever wanting to be midwife.*" It was clear from her interview and subsequent discussions with Alexandra that she has a strong understanding of working in partnership with women. Alexandra reflected that the role of Karinya House is to 'make the hard more bearable', a comment that struck members of the selection panel. Alexandra has been a registered midwife since 2013 and has undertaken postgraduate qualifications in both counselling and Child and Family Health to pursue her interest of Perinatal and Infant Mental Health, early brain development, bonding and attachment and the importance of early intervention to ensure optimal maternal and child outcomes. Alexandra is currently a registered midwife at QEII, where she has worked for the last 5 years.

Costing Report

Chris Nightingale has been engaged to update the costing report with 2019-20 financial and statistical data. The initial costing project report received in late 2019 was instrumental in the negotiations which secured further funding for the contract extension of the Mother and Baby Unit, as part of the ACT Government's *A Step up for our Kids Policy*. The contract was extended for eighteen months to 30 June 2022 and is being fully funded based on the costing report. The Committee confirmed this revision project. Firstly, some data collection processes have been refined since the first costing project was undertaken at the end of 2019 based on 2018-19 data. Secondly, we are hopeful the updated costing report will further substantiate the results of the initial costing report.

We have a proposal for a more in-depth analysis of client data to determine more accurately the economic, social and environmental returns to support investment in the services of Karinya House, to build the evidence-based narrative, as well as develop a business case to support other related sustainability projects. This project would incur a pro-bono investment (financial and in-kind) and we will seek philanthropic funding for this project in 2021. (*If you are interested in sponsoring a project of this nature please do let us know.*)

Recognition of the Services of Karinya House

Work Health and Safety

The bi-annual safety audit by David McCooey from Ablaze Safety was held in September. There were no major issues identified during the audit with David commenting in his report that:

"The general condition of the Property was excellent and WHS procedures remain proactive and approaching best practice."

ACT Government

Housing ACT

"The Homelessness Team at Housing ACT really appreciate your thoughtful email and kind words.

I agree this has been very challenging period for us all as a whole community; with many impacts across our specialist homelessness services in ensuring the continuation of quality services to many vulnerable members of our community.

During this difficult period we have really appreciated Karinya's ongoing communication and collaboration, your regular updates and proactive continuity planning.

I sincerely thank you the Karinya team for all your efforts during these difficult times and look forward to catching up with you all again soon."

Kim Williamson

A/g Assistant Director, Homelessness Services, Housing and Community Services
Community Services Directorate

Donor Gail

Every new online donor receives a personal thank you email, in addition to the automated electronic receipt and thank you email. We usually ask if donors would like to share why they have donated to Karinya. This was Gail's response after donating in support of the Mercy Walk for Women:

"Thanks for your email.... I have a particular respect for Karinya. I was on the ACT Children and Youth Ministerial advisory committee for some years and was at times familiar with the important work Karinya does with mothers and their young children. I have a long history of working in this area and I greatly admire the collaborative work that is done by committed and highly skilled staff in the intersection between child and family health, and child protection services. I also admire the entrepreneurial spirit of the organisation and its ability to get a wide cross section of the business sector on board. I love the courageousness of the women who live there and the way in which they are able, with all hands on deck, to overcome many barriers to stay with their children and achieve education and jobs that might not otherwise come their way."

The 2021 Gala Dinner

The Karinya Team have been pondering this event for 2021. The date of this event, if it went ahead would be Friday 30 April 2021. Given the ongoing impact of COVID-19 the current thinking is to postpone the event until 29 April 2022. It is important to note that the running of the Gala is managed entirely by members of the Karinya staff in addition to their normal duties. Karinya does not engage an event manager and whilst the event does generate fund raising returns, these returns are negated substantially when taking into account the cost of staff time. This was highlighted in the costing report. Increasing the ticket price is not seen as a long term viable option as the event should remain accessible. It is noted the Gala event is also recognised as one that celebrates the partnerships and the community who sustain Karinya, year upon year.

Some feedback from our funding partners in regard to the position being taken with the Gala would be valued. We would of course need to run a digital May Day Appeal as we did in 2020. This may include perhaps an emphasis on hosting your own Gala Dinner at Home which might highlight those 'master chefs' out there and also include guests making a donation to Karinya House as part of the menu options. We would hope to garner support from all of our Gala regulars for this appeal again in 2021. If you do have a view, please email Jo (jo.saccasan@karinyahouse.asn.au) at your convenience.

#humansofkarinya



As always, we leave you with words from the women we have walked alongside over the past six months...

Midwife Anne, (just before her recent retirement!) accompanied a woman for her pre-induction at hospital. The woman said it made all the difference and was exactly what she needed. She said, Anne was so lovely and calm.

A woman visiting Karinya recently said "I am so happy that Anne told me about <particular GP practice>; they are all so lovely to me and my baby"

Overheard at the Group Program during November 2020 - "Thank you to Nichola for having me at group, it was my first time and I really enjoyed it. It made me feel less lonely."

One of our Support Workers, Kim, asked us to thank all of our supporters, because "Without you (our supporters) we would not be able to provide this sense of 'home' and community support, a tangible sense of self-worth and opportunities for new learning for us all ..."

A young mother recently transitioned from Karinya House into her own home. When her caseworkers (Ana and Sonya) visited they noticed a beautiful vase of flowers on the table. The young mum said she had copied Karinya House as she enjoyed having fresh flowers in her home. She was going to purchase some but decided instead to pick and arrange some from her new garden!

An expression of gratitude from one of our Senior Caseworkers, Catherine: "When recently moving a woman from Karinya House into their own home, it struck me that the whole household was able to be set up with the goodwill of our community. From household goods, furniture and baby items, gift cards and groceries, she has started her new life off with a huge amount of community generosity."

One of the Karinya Team suggested this often heard quote that perhaps could be used by everyone in the Karinya Village – from our donors and partners through to the women who pass through our doors – in a continuum and in a circle.. “Thank you for your part in my journey.” Something to ponder...

'Sometimes it's the simple things that mean so much.' A woman told one of our Senior Caseworkers, Catherine, how she was so nervous about catching a bus for the first time with her new baby. She then went on to say she was so grateful and relieved that her Caseworker, Kim, was going to do it with her.

Recently two of our Caseworkers attended orientation at childcare with a woman who had been assisted by them to access childcare through the Children's Services Program. The woman asked how much it would normally cost for a day of childcare - when the childcare centre staff answered \$109, the woman began to cry and thanked everyone for the opportunity, saying "there is no way [my child] would get to do this without help".

One of our Caseworkers was discussing playgroup options with a mum recently and she said she finds it very hard to socialise and make friends but loves the Karinya House Group because she feels comfortable. She said, "they are my family, my people". This mum said that at the Karinya Group she doesn't feel different to everyone else and she knows everyone has their own story, making her comfortable to share hers.

Marie-Louise, our Executive Director, was chatting to a woman just before Christmas... a woman from a past time at Karinya, who touches base with Marie-Louise regularly. Christmas time and other times can be a particular struggle, and the reflections from the woman were in part ... “about her Karinya family, and this place of belonging, especially at Christmas.”

A woman we are walking alongside said to Luisa, “I could not believe that as well as gifts for my baby, there were Christmas gifts for me too!”

After handing out a Christmas Hamper: "You've really made me and the boys feel so special and loved. Thank you for all you have done for us. We are going to have such a nice Christmas".

"If someone was to ask me last year around the same time, 'How are you?', I would have replied, 'I don't know.' Today if someone asks me the same question, I will say: 'Life works in mysterious ways!'. Karinya. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you for stopping and noticing me and giving me a chance. Thank you for giving me and my children a foundation for the future. I love you all very much. In all your unique ways, you have inspired me to be a better person."

Message from a woman who was previously a resident and is being supported in an outreach capacity currently...
"Thank you to every one of you. You are family and you mean so much to me through this hard journey. I am really grateful for the love and support you have shown and given to me and my son."

Thank You for walking alongside with us!