

Liberty
domestic & family violence
specialist services

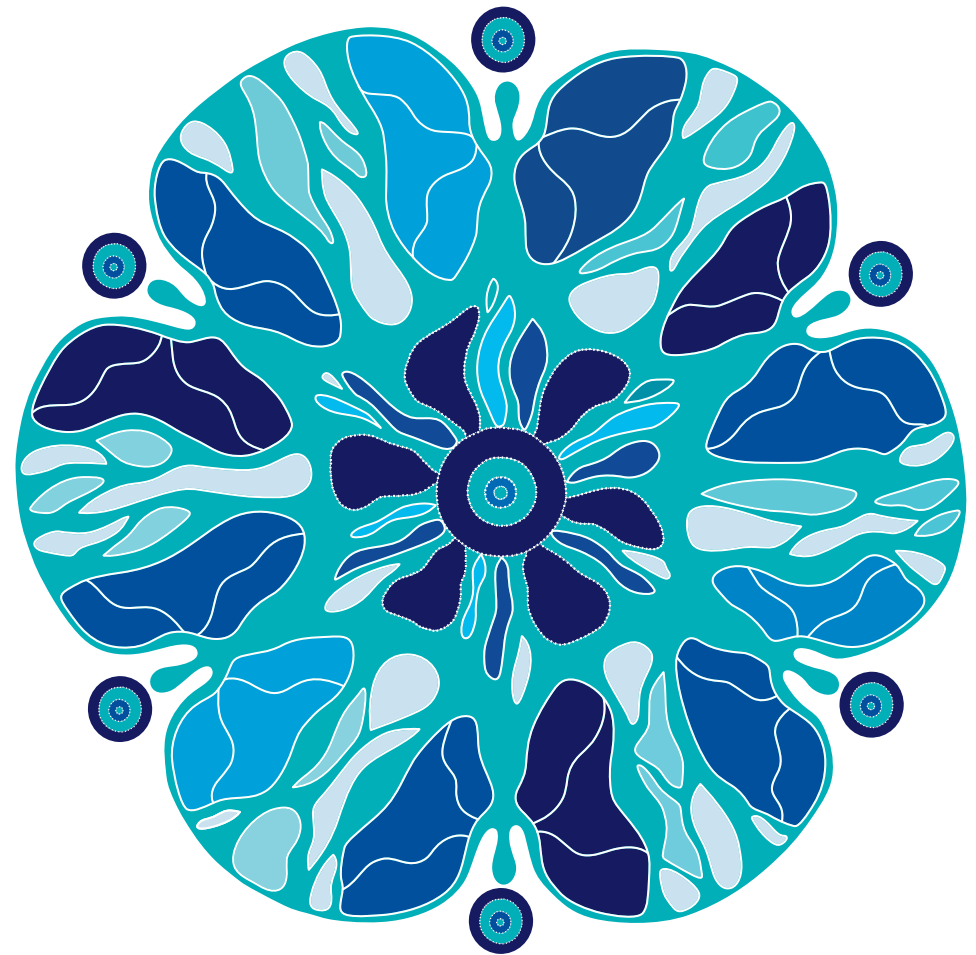
Annual Report

2022-2023

For more than 40 years Liberty Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Services has worked on the land of the Birpai people.

We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ancestors, Elders, and people in our community.

We acknowledge the enduring wisdom of the world's longest continuing culture, the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and their deep connection to Country for 65,000 years.



Galbaan Wakulda 'Women As One' by Birrbay Artist Angela Marr-Grogan®

Galbaan Wakulda is a feminine, nature-based piece, symbolising growth and transformation, strength and unity. The artwork represents Liberty as an organisation, as well as the families we support on their journey to safety.



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“

I was very scared to take the step. Liberty was so reassuring and gave me the confidence I needed. The information, kindness and support I received was amazing.”

Message from our Chair

It is with admiration that I have observed Liberty's continued commitment to implementing the organisation's vision of a community where women and children are empowered and safe from domestic and family violence.

As Chair of the Liberty Board over the past year, I have found the role to be rewarding on so many levels. It has been wonderful to see the efforts of the whole team, under the leadership of our CEO Kelly Lamb, receiving the accolades they deserve in the recent local and regional business awards. It goes without saying that the work of the Liberty team is challenging and often goes unnoticed, so this recognition is well deserved.

During the period, we implemented our organisational activity under the final year of our Strategic Plan 2021 – 2023, successfully delivering against Our Purpose and Our Intention. The key Focus Areas of this strategy across the past three years have been Outcomes-focused Service Delivery, Team Culture, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Families, Strategic Stakeholder Relationships, and Strong Governance.

Looking forward, our Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026 will see Liberty focus on Specialisation, Primary Prevention, Healing and Recovery, Financial Sustainability and Strong Governance.

The Board has already commenced a collaborative and inclusive planning process, to develop a progressive, robust and future-focused next strategy to guide our operations across the 2023-26 period. Our goals include ensuring our organisational structure and governance capability is aligned to growth, strengthening risk management and succession planning. A significant focus of the Board will be the assessment, strengthening and monitoring of cybersecurity risk. Additionally, we will look at funding diversity, including philanthropic strategies.

A key focus area of the Board is ensuring strong governance. I would like to thank my fellow Board members for the continuing passion and commitment they bring to the governance role. Each member of the Board brings a diverse range of specialised skills covering legal, finance, health, policy development and community sector experience. Each member of the Board gives freely of their time and energy to provide effective guidance and governance for the organisation. We welcome our newest Board members Vanda Jarzabek and Anne Moddero to the governance team.

The Board has been proud to witness our organisation's effective response to challenges and innovative approach to pursuing all avenues for expansion to meet the needs of women and children. Domestic and family violence is the leading cause of homelessness in Australia. After a challenging and extensive planning process and with a strong collaborative effort, I am proud to say that the Core and Cluster program will deliver safe housing, compassionate support, cultural awareness and the comprehensive provision of services to women and children all under the 'one roof'.

As we move forward, the Board, in collaboration with the Liberty team, will leverage our specialist skills to ensure the continued efficacy of our governance and leadership role.



Catherine Vallentine
Chair

Message from our CEO

The 2022-23 year involved a significant evolution of our service as we adapted to changing circumstances and leveraged opportunities for growth in response to increasing demand. Throughout this expansion, we have kept our clients at the centre of all we do.

Domestic violence occurrences continue to rise in New South Wales, with a 13.5% increase in the last five years, as reported by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR). The ongoing housing crisis and increasing costs of living have placed additional pressures on the sector and our service.

As we faced these challenges, Liberty continued to innovate to provide quality outcomes for clients. This included additional crisis accommodation and transitional housing announced last year. Liberty is implementing an integrated service delivery model, which involves working closely with other service providers to provide collaborative responses to meet client needs.

We are establishing a number of co-locations which will see Liberty staff working alongside our community partners to improve client service and share specialist skills. Our positive partnership with Port Macquarie-Base Hospital provides hospital patients with access to domestic violence support in the emergency department and across wards.

We have redesigned the Welcome Space at Liberty Cottage into a Resource Hub where women can access a range of services in one place, with funding from a Resilience NSW Capacity Building Grant and a ClubGrant from Panthers Port Macquarie. This model will be replicated in the Core area of the new Core and Cluster Refuge set to open soon.

Over the past year, Liberty has invested significantly in preparation and planning for the commencement of the Core and Cluster Refuge, Djiyaganbaa (Sister Place in Gathang language), which marks the largest expansion in our organisation's 43-year history. We were pleased to welcome former Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Natalie Ward to Port Macquarie for the announcement in December 2022.

We look forward to welcoming our first clients into the purpose-renovated, client-centred and culturally-safe space, providing much-needed crisis accommodation for our growing community into the future.

While keeping the safety of women and children firmly in view, Liberty has continued our work with men who use violence. Following the completion of a perpetrator case management pilot program with the Department of Communities and Justice and NSW Police, we secured funding from the Paul Ramsay Foundation and Australian Communities Foundation for a tailored perpetrator intervention program, Safer Men Safer Families, which works with men to stabilise dynamic risk factors while offering wrap-around support to current and ex-partners and children.

As we design new evidence-based programs and revise existing programs such as Dusk and Kids Club, we are guided by the voices of women and children which are upheld through our client survey, Liberty Client Advisory Group and Yarning Circle for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients.

We have invested in systems to support our expansion, including rental management software which can assist clients to transition to the private rental market, a CRM system to support the strengthening of our purpose-driven partnerships, and HR software to streamline processes as our team grows.

During this period of growth, I am proud that our commitment to quality service delivery was reaffirmed with a second 100% rating in the Australian Service Excellence Standards, providing accreditation for the next three years.



Kelly Lamb
CEO

The elimination of domestic and family violence requires that families, businesses and the community face the challenge together and I am incredibly grateful for the support Liberty receives.

Seeing hundreds of people walk together wearing white at the annual Coastal Walk Against Domestic & Family Violence warms the heart. The financial support we receive from sponsors, donors and fundraising events such as Port Medical Aesthetics event Toxtails and the International Women's Day breakfast enables our service to continue our vital work. The take-up of our workplace development and training program tells us that our community understands we all have a role to play in improving the safety of local families.

Thank you to State Member for Port Macquarie The Hon. Leslie Williams MP for being a tireless champion of our cause and for continuing your commitment as Shadow Minister for Women, and Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Thank you also to our Federal Member for Cowper Pat Conaghan MP, Shadow Assistant Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, for highlighting Liberty's achievements in Federal Parliament.

Thank you to Aunty Rhonda Radley, our First Nations Cultural Advisor, whose guidance has meant a great deal to me personally and has helped Liberty to establish meaningful connections with the local Birpai community, as well as provide culturally-sensitive spaces and services.

Thank you to our team members who show up every day with courage to face the difficult work of supporting women and children who have experienced violence and abuse. Thank you for creating our positive workplace culture, which is underpinned by our shared values, the unique contributions of individuals, and our collective commitment.

Thank you to the Board for your strategic guidance and support under the leadership of our Chair Catherine Vallentine. Thank you also to the Executive Leadership Team for the specific expertise you bring to shape our organisation.

With recent legislation changes to domestic violence leave, the upcoming criminalisation of coercive control and continuing increases in reported abuse, domestic and family violence will remain a significant issue for our community and there is much work ahead.

We remain committed to our purpose to lead the community in recognising, responding to and preventing domestic and family violence, motivated by the women and children who share their stories with us, their hopes and dreams, their very human right to dignity, self-determination and safety.



Kelly Lamb, Member for Port Macquarie Leslie Williams, Aunty Rhonda Radley and former Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Natalie Ward announcing funding for a Core and Cluster Refuge for Port Macquarie

Who We Are

Liberty Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Services provides specialist support and housing services to women and families affected by domestic and family violence and homelessness in the Port Macquarie Hastings region.

The organisation was formed in 1980 as the Hastings Women and Children's Refuge Inc. and has since evolved and expanded to provide a wide range of services to those in need of domestic violence and homelessness support.

Our specialist support team help families through all stages of their journey towards safety. From helping a woman in the peak of crisis secure a safe place to stay, through to supporting her as she navigates the various services available, and walking beside her towards recovery and healing.

We also work towards eliminating domestic and family violence by providing prevention and education programs in the local community.

At Liberty we take a whole of family and whole of community approach – while remaining focused on our central goal of keeping women and children safe.



Our Services

- Specialist domestic and family violence support
- Emergency supported accommodation
- After-hours responses
- Homelessness/housing support
- Transitional housing
- Safety planning for women and children escaping domestic and family violence
- Case management/case coordination planning for women and children
- Brokerage and links to other services
- Dusk – support group for women
- Kids Club – support group for children
- Ngathuwa – Aboriginal cultural connection program
- Everybody's Business – workplace training and development and respectful relationships sessions for schools
- Safe Pets – crisis accommodation for pets
- Community Partnerships Program – integrated service delivery model
- Safer Men Safer Families – program for men who use violence, support for their families

Our Vision, Purpose and Values

Our Vision

A community where women and children are empowered and safe from domestic and family violence.

Our Purpose

To lead the community in a whole of family approach to recognise, respond and prevent domestic and family violence.

Our Values

- Respect – we have respect for self and others and value diversity
- Empathy – we acknowledge the unique experience and feelings of others
- Integrity – we model ethical practice that is honest and engenders trust
- Empowerment – we enable people to make choices and develop personal capacities that will lead to lasting positive change in their lives
- Quality – our systems, standards and supports are current and consistent to deliver positive outcomes for families and community
- Innovation – we lead change and promote flexibility and creativity in all we do

What does Liberty mean to you?

lib.er.ty noun

The quality or state of being free:

- the power to do as one pleases
- freedom from physical restraint
- freedom from control
- the positive enjoyment of various social, political or economic rights and privileges
- the power of choice

www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/liberty



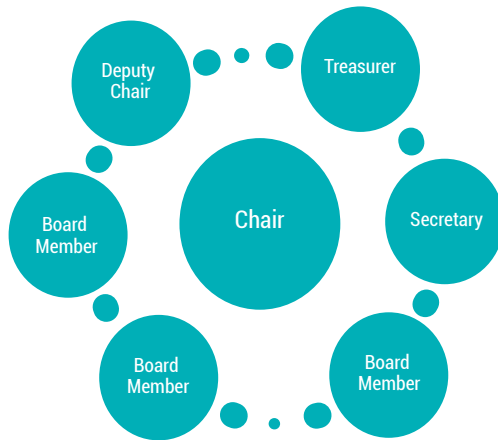
Herstory

In 1980, a group of local women created a safe place for women and children affected by domestic and family violence in the community. Now, 43 years later, Liberty provides a broad range of specialist domestic violence and homelessness support services.

- 1980** Temporary refuge established in a Council property on Savoy St.
- 1983** Relocated to Council property on Murray St, Killara House.
- 1984** Department of Housing purchased a property for the Hastings Women and Children's Refuge.
- 1985** Department of Community Services funding under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program.
- 1988** Department of Housing funding for the land, design and construction of a new refuge. Block of land purchased.
- 1990** A design for the new refuge accepted by the Management Committee.
- 1994** Relocated to a new purpose-built refuge. Department of Housing provided the existing property as medium-term accommodation.
- 2007** Innovation and Investment Funding Project.
- 2009** Funded under Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Services Program to deliver a new project, Community Partnerships Against Domestic and Family Violence.
Opened Outreach Centre – Liberty Cottage on Gordon St.
- 2015** Successfully tendered to pilot Men's Behaviour Change Program – Engage2Change Mid North Coast along with Kempsey Family Support Services and Warrina Domestic and Family Violence Specialist Services.
- 2017** Purchased property in Table St for relocation of Liberty Cottage.
- 2018** Liberty Cottage relocated to specially-renovated premises in Table St. Launched new name, Liberty Domestic & Family Violence Specialist Services, and refreshed logo.
- 2019** Fixed Address Men's Behaviour Change Program launched, with Women NSW Innovation Funding.
Established Joining the Dots Aboriginal service providers network.
Winner of the Greater Port Macquarie Community Services Award.
- 2020** Achieved full registration with the Practice Standards for Men's Behaviour Change Program.
Implemented Adapted Service Delivery Model for continuation during COVID-19 and achieved COVID Safe registration.
Achieved Australian Service Excellence Standards Accreditation.
- 2021** Launched Safe Pets crisis accommodation at Galbaanbaa.
Launched Ngathuwa Connecting to Culture program for Aboriginal women and children.
Participated in DCJ trial program DVSTP – Intensive Case Management for Men, Liberty's 'Men's Behaviour Change Case Management Program'.
- 2022** Winner Greater Port Macquarie Business Awards – Outstanding Community Organisation and Community and Social Services.
Secured funding for a Core and Cluster Refuge as part of State's largest investment in DFV.
Launched Liberty Links Mobile Outreach Service.
Rebranded Liberty to complement artwork, Galbaan Wakulda, 'Women as One' by Birrbay artist Angela Marr-Grogan.
Accommodation expansion – Galbaanbaa (Women's Place), Djiyaganbaa (Sister Place), Bunabaa (Beach Place) and Murapanbaa (Flower Place).
- 2023** Winner Greater Port Macquarie Business Awards – Business of the Year, Outstanding Community Organisation, Community and Social Services.
Winner Mid North Coast Business Awards – Business of the Year, Outstanding Community Organisation, Employer of Choice (under 20), Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion.
Secured funding for Safer Men Safer Families program.
Reaccredited with the Australian Service Excellence Standards.

Organisational Structure July 2022 to September 2023

Board of Management



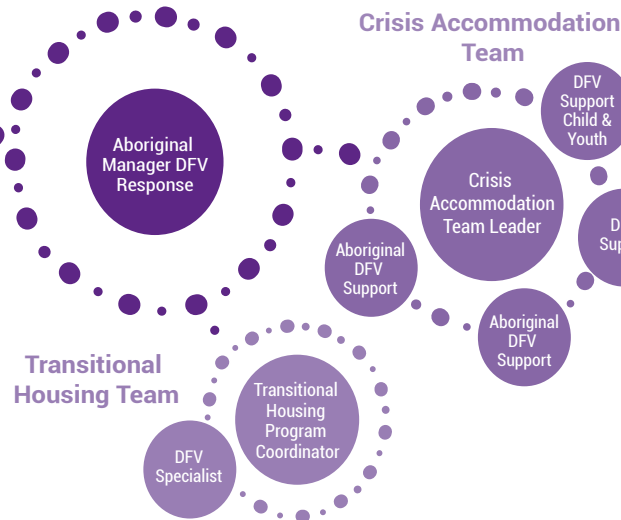
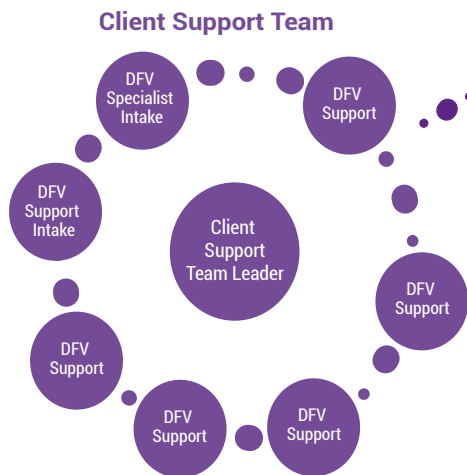
Executive Leadership Team



Executive Support Team



Response Team

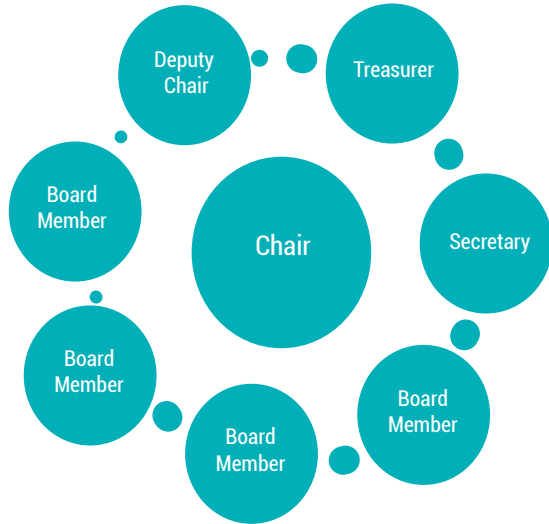


Prevention Team



Organisational Structure September 2023

Board of Management



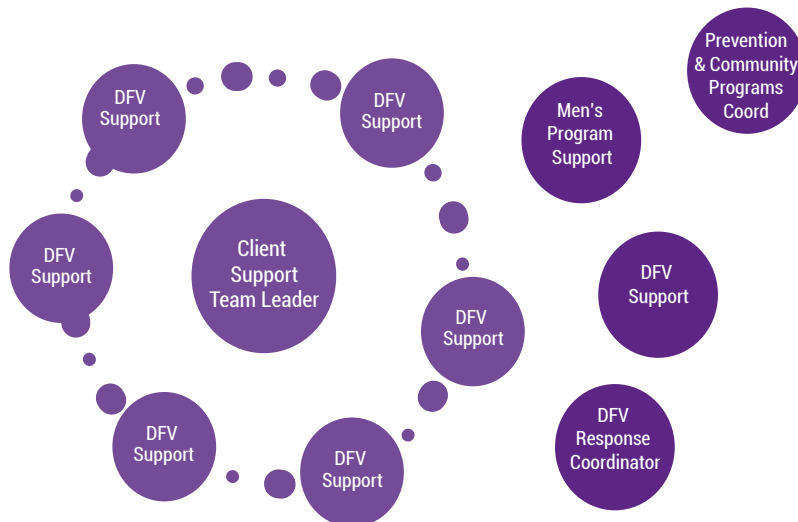
Executive Leadership Team



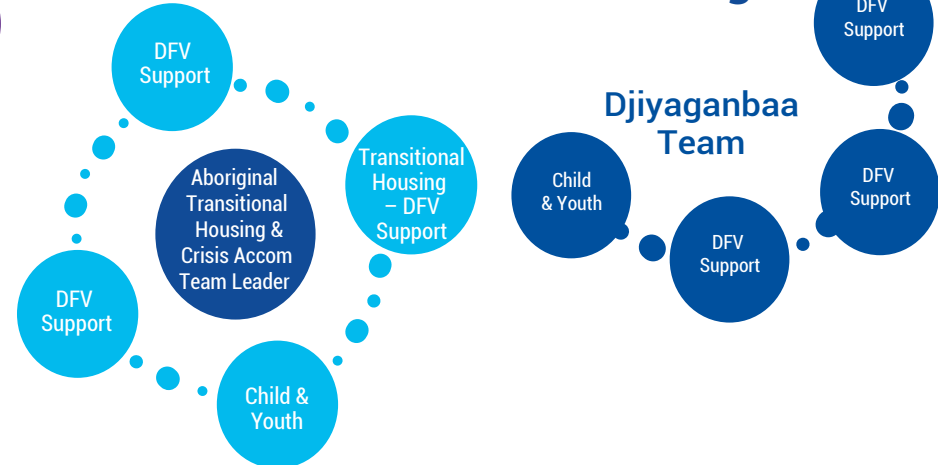
Executive Support Team



Aboriginal Manager DFV Response



Accommodation Manager



Board of Management



Catherine Vallentine
Chair



Jacinta Spry
Deputy Chair



Sandra Magann
Treasurer



Margaret Carey
Secretary



Wayne Anderson
Board



Julia Shearsby
Board



Vanda Jarzabek
Board



Anne Moddero
Board

Thank you to our previous Chair, Debbie Moore, who vacated the Board at the AGM in October 2022, following four years on the Board.

Liberty Team

We thank those team members who worked with us during the 2022 - 2023 Financial Year. Meet our team as at October 2023:



Kelly Lamb
Chief Executive Officer



Brooke Maggs
People & Culture Manager



Tracy Brenton
Finance Manager



Melanie Eadie
**Compliance & Operations
Manager**



Donna Harper
**Aboriginal Manager
DFV Response**



Rebecca Farvis
Accommodation Manager



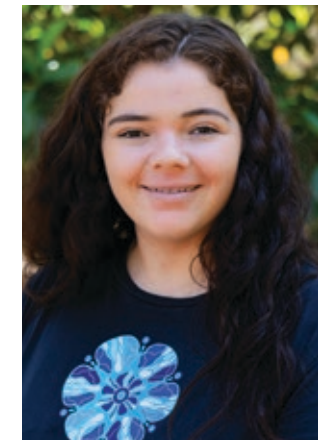
Michelle Parker
**Community &
Communications Advisor**



Aunty Rhonda Radley
**First Nations
Cultural Advisor**



Noleen Turner
**Compliance & Operations
Support**



Sarah Ashley
**Aboriginal Transitional
Housing & Crisis
Accommodation Team Leader**



Kelly Wyatt
**Prevention & Community
Programs Coordinator**



Abby Mackenzie
**Domestic & Family
Violence Support**



Christine Adams
**Domestic & Family
Violence Support**



Emily Acheson
**Domestic & Family
Violence Support**



David Steadman
Men's Program Support



Julie Atkiss
**Domestic & Family
Violence Support**



Lani Bedforth
**Domestic & Family
Violence Support**



Madeleine Thorpe
**Domestic & Family
Violence Support**








Melinda Luff
**Domestic & Family
Violence Support**



**Penny McKinley-
Rodgers**
**Domestic & Family
Violence Support**

Away: Brooke Pilbeam, Domestic & Family Violence Support.
Thank you to Lucy Humphries Photography for generously providing our team photographs.

Strategic Plan 2021-2023

Focus Area	Goal	Objectives	Key Achievements
 <p>Outcomes Focused Service Delivery</p>	Services and programs designed and delivered for outcomes and sustainability	Outcomes measurement framework Building service capacity and integration Safe pets programs Sustainable housing options	Expanded crisis, transitional and temporary accommodation Embedded Personal Wellbeing Index client evaluation Established Over 50s Transitional Housing Program Developed standardised evaluation process for programs Secured funding for Safer Men Safer Families Expanded Community Partnership program
 <p>Team Culture</p>	A capable, satisfied and cohesive workforce	Workforce capacity Team wellbeing and satisfaction Team cohesion	Revised wellbeing and flexible working policies Participated in PERMAH Wellbeing tool trial Completed HBDI team profiling
 <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Families</p>	Recognised as a culturally safe organisation	Cultural competency	Commenced Innovate Level Reconciliation Action Plan Convened RAP Aboriginal Reference Group Co-designed Ngathuwa Connecting to Culture Program
 <p>Strategic Stakeholder Relationships</p>	A diversified and increased support base	Partnerships with purpose Sustainable connections and communication Diverse income streams	Implemented Stakeholder Engagement Strategy Developed values-aligned Stakeholder Relationship Matrix Launched new fit for purpose website Refreshed Liberty's visual identity with new branding Secured Customer Relationship Management software
 <p>Strong Governance</p>	Governance systems and processes aligned to best practice	Manage risk Decision making Leading practice Maintain compliance with systems and processes	Participated in Social Sector Transformation Fund Governance Health Check Consolidated Board documents to remove data redundancy Revised Constitution against Department of Fair Trade best practice Board Training Day on Risk Management

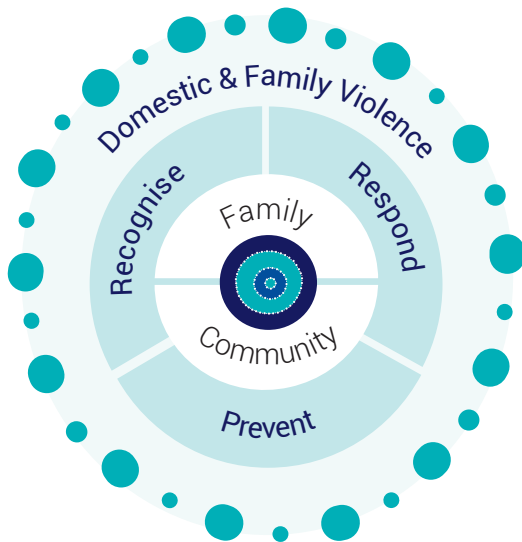
Strategic Plan 2023-2026

Our Vision

A community where women and children are empowered and safe from domestic and family violence.

Our Purpose

To lead the community in a whole of family approach to recognise, respond and prevent domestic and family violence.



Our Values

Respect

We have respect for self and others and value diversity

Empathy

We acknowledge the unique experience and feelings of others

Integrity

We model ethical practice that is honest and engenders trust

Empowerment

We enable people to make choices and develop personal capabilities that will lead to lasting positive change in their lives

Quality

Our systems, standards and supports are current and consistent to deliver positive outcomes for families and community

Innovation

We lead change and promote flexibility and creativity in all we do

Our Focus Areas for 2023 to 2026



Specialisation

We demonstrate leading practice; we are known for our expertise



Primary Prevention

We advance gender equality and strengthen positive, equal and respectful relationships in community



Healing and Recovery

Victim-survivors are well supported through trauma-informed, culturally safe and accessible services that support long-term recovery



Financial Management

We have modern and dynamic financial management for long-term growth



Strong Governance

We are positioned for growth

Partnerships with Purpose



We are committed to maintaining strong networks with other service providers, both government and non-government, within our community to improve outcomes for clients. Over the past year, Liberty has strengthened existing relationships and formed a number of new productive partnerships.

Bearlay Aboriginal Interagency

Liberty's Aboriginal Domestic and Family Violence Response Manager, Donna Harper, is the Chair of the Bearlay interagency group which seeks to foster collaboration between services helping the Aboriginal community.

Communities and Justice

Our domestic violence support workers are co-located at the Department of Communities and Justice offices to provide immediate support to clients in need of domestic violence services.

Community Housing Limited

Community Housing Limited provides transitional housing properties for our clients and partners with Liberty to provide a number of accommodation options for clients.

DVNSW

Liberty's CEO Kelly Lamb is Deputy Chair of the peak body for specialist domestic and family violence services in NSW. People & Culture Manager Brooke Maggs is a member of the Sector Development Member Advisory Committee which aims to provide guidance and advice regarding domestic and family violence training and resource development.

Local Primary and High Schools

Liberty has formed partnerships with Mackillop Senior College (Years 8 and 12) and St Joseph's Primary School (Years 5 and 6) and delivers tailored Respectful Relationships education sessions to students.

Mid Coast Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service

Our partnership with the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service continues to provide clients with legal, social and welfare supports in the judicial system.

NSW Police Mid North Coast Local Area Command

Liberty continues to work in partnership with Police in the Safety Action Meeting, and through our Safer Men Safer Families program.

Port Macquarie-Hastings Domestic Violence Committee

Liberty is Chair of this collaborative committee including government and non-government agencies who work to raise awareness and prevent domestic and family violence in the Port Macquarie-Hastings region.

Port Macquarie Base Hospital

Liberty is represented on the Mid North Coast Local Health District Aboriginal Advisory Group and has established a Community Partnership which sees Liberty's domestic violence workers co-located with health professionals at the hospital.

Our team is actively involved with numerous interagencies and committees including:

- Bearlay Aboriginal Interagency
- Child and Family Interagency
- DCJ Interagency Case Discussion Meetings
- District Homelessness Implementation Group
- Hastings Community Networking
- Hastings Homelessness Interagency
- International Women's Day Committee
- LGBTIQ+ NSW DFV Interagency
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Domestic Violence Committee
- Safety Action Meetings

“

I had such an amazing experience working with this team of the most incredible kind-hearted individuals who have helped me turn my life around.”



Liberty connecting with community at the Nyiirun Djiyagan Wakulda Women's Festival 2023



Sponsors and supporters of Liberty's Coastal Walk Against Domestic & Family Violence 2022

Improving Inclusion

Domestic violence doesn't discriminate. Liberty's services are accessible to all members of the community, including those with disability, seniors, young people, LGBTIQ+ people and people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

We have been working hard over the past few years to improve our capacity as an inclusive, culturally aware and safe organisation by creating an environment of diversity and respect.

We were honoured to have our efforts recognised as the Winner of Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion at the Mid North Coast Business Awards in 2023. This recognition reflects our commitment to ensuring that everyone who needs our support feels welcome and safe.

Our work towards improving cultural competence in our provision of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and supporting our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff exemplifies our commitment to inclusive practices.

Liberty recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are at greater risk of homelessness, more than three times more likely to be victims of domestic and family violence, and more likely to underreport and seek support.

We acknowledge the ongoing impacts of colonisation, the stolen generations, racism and discrimination within the context of our work to recognise, respond to and prevent violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.

We commit to being a culturally safe, aware and competent organisation for our clients, team members and the broader community, underpinned by a deep respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements.

We honour the knowledge of local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, elevate the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and embrace Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture into our ways of working as we actively contribute to lasting change.

Our Vision for Reconciliation

"A community that has the courage to know and accept the truth of our shared history and is committed to ending racism and discrimination; where the cultural strength and wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is elevated and celebrated; and, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights to self-determination are upheld as we walk together towards a just, equitable and safe future."



Flag raising ceremony at Town Green during NAIDOC Week 2023

Liberty's Commitment to Reconciliation



Values and rights

- upholding Aboriginal self-determination, empowerment and cultural respect in our policies and procedures, including our Client Charter
- Acknowledgements of the Traditional Owners of the Land and/ or Welcome to Country in alignment in Birpai cultural protocols at team meetings and events
- visible Aboriginal symbols are displayed within the organisation including our visual identity and staff uniforms



Governance

- recruitment strategy for Aboriginal representation
- documented partnerships with Aboriginal organisations involving consultation and collaboration



Feedback and planning

- Yarning Circles with Aboriginal clients and stakeholders to advise, provide feedback, and guide decision-making to respond to the needs of Aboriginal staff, clients, families and communities
- Aboriginal people and organisations are properly remunerated for their expertise



Awareness and education

- leaders model and communicate inclusive values to staff
- staff and Board members receive cultural training and education
- commemoration and celebration of dates of significance in the workplace such as NAIDOC Week, National Sorry Day, Reconciliation Week, Aboriginal Children's Day and International Women's Day for Aboriginal women

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are also known as Australia's First Peoples, Indigenous Australians, Aboriginal people and First Nations people. We also use the term Aboriginal in the context of our local community.



Service access and delivery

- service delivery involves the client's family, community and collaboration with various service providers
- process to identify and prioritise Aboriginal service users
- Aboriginal people are supported to identify and practice their culture, for example our Ngathuwa Connecting to Culture program
- kinship mapping in the intake process
- cultural practices are understood and respected by staff
- relationships with Aboriginal services to improve referral pathways and strengthen partnerships



Inclusive workforce

- Aboriginal representation at Board, Management and team levels
- Aboriginal Identified positions
- cultural leave, enrichment, supervision and self-care provisions for Aboriginal staff
- engagement of First Nations Cultural Advisor Aunty Rhonda Radley



Weaving with Aunty Rhonda during National Reconciliation Week 2023

Community & Communications Report

The elimination of domestic violence requires our entire community to work together. Liberty is proud to lead our community in a collective commitment to improve understanding of the types and drivers of violence, challenge beliefs and behaviours that perpetuate abuse, and empower survivors within a network of support.

We rely on the tremendous support, encouragement and engagement of our local community to overcome the challenges of government funding gaps, the housing crisis, cost of living pressures and increasing rates of violence. Relationships with organisations who share our values make our work possible. Thank you to every kind and generous person I have had the pleasure of connecting with over the year.

Shining a Light

We are grateful to the local media including Port Macquarie News, ABC Mid North Coast, Prime, NBN, Super Radio and Focus for helping us bring the issue of domestic and family violence out of the shadows.

Liberty continued to engage with our community on social media during FY22/23 on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.



Michelle Parker
Community & Communications Advisor

We were incredibly proud to receive the recognition of our community for the important work of our committed team at recent local and regional business awards, and proud to represent our region at the State Awards in November.



2023 Greater Port Macquarie Business Awards – Business of the Year, Outstanding Community Organisation, Community and Social Services



2023 Mid North Coast Business Awards – Business of the Year, Outstanding Community Organisation, Employer of Choice (under 20), Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion

Community Support

Liberty relies on the generosity and support of our community to meet the needs of local families experiencing domestic and family violence.

Preventing and responding to domestic and family violence requires a whole of community approach. We are grateful for the donations, sponsorships and in-kind support we receive from businesses, community organisations, and recreation groups.

Special thanks to our major supporters:

- Port Macquarie Medical Aesthetics
- The Lewis Foundation
- Investing for Charity
- Maureen Cooke
- Hastings Business Women's Network and International Women's Day Committee



International Women's Day 2023
Evokative Photography

Thank you to everyone who supported us:

- Blokes Notes
- Busways
- Burlesqfit
- Camden Haven Quilters
- Charles Sturt University
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
- CommBank
- CWA Port Macquarie
- Deadly Science
- doTERRA Healing Hands Foundation AUNZ
- Elders Real Estate
- Focus Magazine
- Gem Socials
- Hastings Auto Restorers
- Hastings Ladies Social Golf Club
- HEM Property
- Inside Out Café
- J A Fashions
- Just Better Care Mid North Coast
- Kendall Community Op Shop
- Kew Ladies Golfers
- Lake Cathie Women's Bowling Club
- Lantern Legal
- Linked Community Services
- LUSC Friendship Quilters
- LUSC Ladies Social Golf Club
- Lucy Humphries Photography
- Macquarie Barracks
- Mackillop College Legal Justice Committee
- Men and Women at Work
- North Haven Pharmacy
- Ocean Club Resort
- Pet Rescue
- Pillowtalk
- Port Macquarie Golf Club
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
- Red Rocket
- Red Shed Hire
- Ritchies Community Benefit Program
- Rotary Club of Port Macquarie
- Rotary Club of Port Macquarie Sunrise Inc.
- Rotary Club of Port Macquarie West
- Slater and Slater
- Sleep Safe
- Snap
- St Andrews UCA
- St Columba Anglican School
- Tacking Point Lions Club
- Wauchope Ladies Chat & Do
- Woolworths



Country Women's Association
donation presentation



North Haven Pharmacy with their
donation of toiletries for clients

Events and Activities

Liberty initiates and leads community events that increase awareness of domestic and family violence and the services available locally.

We also participate in events held by other services providers and organisations that contribute to a safer community. Our team members proudly represent Liberty at many events, engaging the community in important conversations, and making meaningful connections.

We were pleased to take part in community events including Nyiirun Djiyagan Wakulda Women's Festival, the Hastings NAIDOC Family Fun Day, and Homelessness Week.

On 3 May 2023, we paused to remember the 13 lives lost to domestic violence in Australia at that date. The quiet gathering at Town Beach on Domestic and Family Violence Remembrance Day was a chance for the Liberty team and members of the community to express their grief and call for an end to domestic violence.

Liberty's annual Coastal Walk Against Domestic & Family Violence returned after two years of COVID impacts, with more than 400 people wearing white and taking important steps towards a safer community on Sunday 27 November 2022.

The community came out in huge numbers to walk in solidarity with victim-survivors to show that we are committed to a future where violence-supporting attitudes, beliefs and behaviours are not tolerated.

The 2023 event will be held on Sunday 3 December.

The annual International Women's Day breakfast on 8 March 2023 brought the community together to raise funds for Liberty and hear from 1 Million Women founder Natalie Isaacs.

In June 2023, Liberty CEO Kelly Lamb presented at a Business Port Macquarie and Hastings Business Women's Network event about paid domestic and family violence leave changes for small business.



NAIDOC 2023



Domestic & Family Violence Remembrance Day 2023



Coastal Walk 2022



Domestic Violence Legislation Lunch 2023

Domestic & Family Violence Response Report

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the whole team at Liberty. I thank you for constantly showing up to meet the needs of the women and children we support. Your advocacy, strength, and reliability are a true reflection of Liberty's values and vision.

It is an absolute pleasure to work alongside you every day as we aim to assist in creating a world where women and children can live free from violence and abuse.

Thank you to the women and children who have stepped through Liberty's doors this year. It is our honour always to meet you where you are at and be guided by your needs on your journey. You have all shaped our service in some way and a piece of your story will remain with us forever. Your bravery and resilience drive us to continue to do the work now and into the future..

Client Support

This year Liberty has seen the awareness of domestic and family violence in our community grow and we have worked extremely hard on securing trust with all clients and external stakeholders.

We have taken a deeper look into the way we support women and children and adapted to meet the requirements and wishes expressed by the women themselves.

Changes have included employing more Aboriginal staff, working remotely in locations identified through our referrals process and partnering services.

Liberty continues to strive to meet the needs of our community regardless of all the challenges that arose, such as the ongoing housing crisis. The team at Liberty met all the challenges head on and continue to find ways to support women and children in crisis due to domestic and family violence.

The women and children who walk through our doors are the heart of Liberty. The stories shared each day reflect the journeys of resilience and resistance of violence that many women and children take. We walk beside our clients as they find the strength to take each important step

forward towards a life free from violence.

Liberty has been working closely with Police, health professionals at Port Macquarie Base Hospital, the court support team at the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, housing coordinators at Community Housing Limited and many others as we lead our community to recognise the signs of abuse, respond safely and refer to specialist services.

Over the past year the team have built their cultural knowledge to better support Aboriginal and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse clients who walk through our doors. This comes with a specialist skillset in domestic and family violence as staff understand connection to Country and culture and navigate supports for women on Visas.

The team are working hard to support the organisation's expansion as we have added a range of crisis, transitional and temporary accommodation options for clients and work towards the commencement of the new Core and Cluster refuge.



Donna Harper
Aboriginal Manager
– Domestic & Family
Violence Response



Crisis Accommodation

Liberty's accommodation has grown to include multiple safe accommodation options for women and children in crisis fleeing domestic and family violence. These locations are our original refuge, Galbaanbaa (Women's Place) and now Djiyaganbaa (Sister Place), and Bunabaa (Beach Place).

Our crisis accommodation locations are secure, safe and nurturing spaces for women and children, providing a pathway to alternate accommodation once women are ready to move on and grow in their independence and resilience.

Our accommodation team ensure a smooth entry into our service and allow opportunities for each woman to explore her hopes and dreams for herself and her family.

Many of the women and children who stay in Liberty's crisis accommodation are Aboriginal. Our staff take pride and care in hearing and understanding culturally sensitive stories.



Transitional Housing

Liberty's transitional housing program assists women and children into medium-term accommodation of up to 12 months.

Our transitional housing includes Liberty's own model of transitional housing for women over 50 at Murapanbaa as well as access to other properties in collaboration with social housing providers.

It is designed to provide women and children with medium-term accommodation and support from Liberty while they find long-term accommodation and identify goals that are important to them.

This allows women to start making long-term plans for their future while living independently. Liberty staff may assist women and children to access a broad range of supports and services including, health and wellbeing, education, employment and financial and legal services.

The transitional housing program allows women to overcome challenges such as having had their rental tenancy sabotaged by the perpetrator.

More than one third of transitional housing clients identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.



Community Partnerships

The Community Partnerships program has been expanded to include new community partners. Evaluation of this program informed us that a co-location model will improve access and capacity, response times, and safety outcomes for clients, with direct support delivered by a Liberty domestic and family violence staff member.

This model has seen the strengthening of relationships with our community partners where the Liberty team are building the capacity of other services, demonstrating best practice and role modelling DFV-informed and trauma-informed practice that aligns with a strengths-based framework.

Our expansion in the Community Partnership program is working smoothly. Through the voices of women and robust evaluation we are confident we can build on this first stage of expansion and build greater capacity in our community to respond to domestic and family violence.

“

I am in my 50's and have experienced domestic violence for the first time. I truly don't know what I would have done without this service and the beautiful, kind, caring staff. Thank you.”

Domestic & Family Violence Prevention Report

The Liberty team created an inclusive, welcoming environment and provided safe and empowering programs to support women and children in their recovery from the violence, abuse and control they have experienced.

I would like to thank the team for their commitment, innovation and professionalism as we expanded our domestic and family violence education program. Your ability to connect with our participants, opening their eyes to the realities of domestic and family violence and how they can be part of change is admirable. It is a privilege to do this work alongside you to make the places where we learn, live, work and play safer for women and children.

Prevention and Community Programs

We delivered many awareness sessions to service providers and organisations in our local government area this year with a goal to improve the way our community responds to women and children experiencing domestic and family violence, ensuring their dignity is upheld and their safety improved.

Our education program to the disability support sector, in conjunction with the Port Macquarie Hastings Domestic Violence Committee, was a highlight of the 22-23 year. Sharing knowledge took us one step closer to reducing the additional barriers that women with disabilities face when accessing services.

Our evidence-based support and education program, Dusk, supported many women this year to heal and recover from the violence and abuse they have experienced. A program refresh strengthened how facilitators highlight participants' strengths, resilience and resistance and provided participants with more accessible wellbeing practices that they can come back to long after the program has finished. This program helps women make sense of their experience and reminds them that they are more than the abuse they have endured.

We continue to innovate to increase engagement and outcomes for children aged 7-11 attending our Kids Club program, including developing new evidence-based materials and strengthening referral pathways.

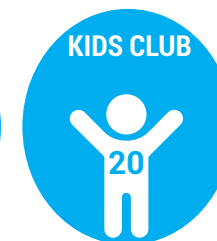
Kids Club was supported by the Children and Young People Wellbeing Recovery Initiative of the Department of Regional NSW.

Our Ngathuwa program saw participants meet with Liberty's First Nation's Cultural Advisor, co-designer and facilitator of the program Aunty Rhonda Radley for an empowering 8-week program that supported reconnection with their culture.

We are grateful to the local organisations who opened their door to Liberty Links, our mobile outreach service providing domestic violence services to outlying communities in the region including Wauchope, Camden Haven, Comboyne and Lake Cathie. They warmly welcomed our staff into their organisations and provided safe, private spaces for client appointments. The program was financially resourced with time-limited funding and has now concluded, however, Liberty remains committed to providing accessible services for women and children in those communities ongoing.



Brooke Maggs
Manager – Prevention & Community Programs,
Manager – People & Culture



Everybody's Business

Liberty's Respectful Relationships education program continued with several schools in our local area engaging us to deliver sessions to years 4 –12. We have enjoyed developing fun activities that help children and young people better understand power and control. It has also been challenging to engage them in a deeper conversation about respect and equality at their different levels of maturity and understanding.

We worked with a diverse range of sectors this year in our workplace training program, Everybody's Business, including construction, roads and traffic management, training and education providers, federal government and not for profits.

“

During my time with Liberty, I have grown as a person with confidence. I couldn't and wouldn't be where I am today without all the support from the Liberty Team. Thank you. You have helped change my life for the better.”

It is encouraging to see so many businesses being proactive in their approach to supporting employees experiencing domestic and family violence. Knowing that almost 2/3 of women experiencing domestic and family violence are in the workforce, it is critical that workplaces play their role in sustaining their employment, where possible, as both a way to prevent risk from escalating and to provide financial freedom as they recover from the violence, control and abuse.

The introduction of paid Domestic and Family Violence Leave this year led to a significant increase in enquiries for consultation and workplace training. Many businesses grappled with how to operationalise the leave in ways that worked for their business size and workforce composition.

In addition to our awareness training program, we provided consultation to guide organisational Human Resources processes, developed tailored domestic and family violence policies that balanced legislative requirements with business needs, and upskilled leadership teams on how to create a culture of safety and respect where employees who are experiencing domestic and family violence feel comfortable to disclose their situation and access leave, knowing they had the support of their employer.



Domestic and Family Violence Awareness Sessions for Disability Support Workers

Getting the workplace response to domestic and family violence right can change the trajectory of a woman's life and Liberty is looking forward to working with more businesses in 2024 and beyond as we walk together to change the story on violence and abuse in Australia.



Men's Programs

Liberty has a rich history of providing men's behaviour change interventions.

We completed our two-year pilot Men's Behaviour Change case management program in 2022/23 in which we successfully built partnerships with NSW Police and Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) to support men who have used violent and controlling behaviours with their families become safer partners and fathers.

We thank NSW Police and DCJ for their ongoing support of this work in referring men to our program and look forward to our continued working relationship in 2023/24.

Our work with men who use violence continues in a remodelled program that has been informed by Liberty's practice experience, sector research, stakeholder and participant feedback. This evaluation led to the design of the Safer Men, Safer Families Program.

The Safer Men, Safer Families Program is a voluntary program that supports men to change their violent, controlling, and abusive behaviours against their intimate partner/s, ex-partners and children.

A key component of the program is the involvement of a specialist domestic and family violence worker who offers support to current and former partners and families of the program participants.

For up to 12 months, participants work with Liberty's Men's Program Support worker to address the factors that influence their choice to use violence and abuse.

In a case management model, the program explores the impacts of domestic and family violence, power and control imbalance, cycle of violence, and self-awareness strategies to promote non abusive behaviour.

Men receive access to tailored wrap-around supports from Liberty and partnering services such as mental health, drug and alcohol, housing, health services and counselling to be safer partners and/or parents.



Liberty delivers Respectful Relationships education sessions at local schools



Liberty team at the 2022 Coastal Walk Against Domestic & Family Violence





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 LibertyDFV

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Support Liberty and local families

We are grateful for our generous and supportive community.

Head to our website to find out how you can donate, fundraise or partner with us to support local women and children and contribute to a safer community.

libertyservices.org.au

