

ANNUAL REPORT



Victims of Crime NT
supporting victims of crime



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Preamble

Victims of Crime NT Inc. is a community-based not for profit organisation that partners with others to provide information, support, crisis relief and referral services to victims of Crime in the Northern Territory.

We are an Association incorporated in the Northern Territory under the Associations Act. We are membership based and overseen by a Management Committee with strategic and governance expertise drawn from our membership. We have an annual turnover of approximately \$1.4m and the equivalent of 6 full time staff who work to meet the needs of victims of crime in the Northern Territory.

Our services are targeted to make our limited income stretch as far as possible by strategically partnering with industry, community and government to connect victims with the resources and services to assist in their return to a state of wellbeing and enabling them to move forward in their journey to recovery.

We partner with our volunteers assistant workers, other community service providers, government departments, trade services, Territory businesses, other community groups and Northern Territory Police. Among other things, these connections result in key value for money security improvements to reduce vulnerable peoples' risks of becoming victims of property crime and to resecure their homes if they have already been victims of property crime WE also provide a 24 hour a day telephone support service for victims of crime, crisis support and assistance and advice about available services and how to access them.

We also identify risks to Victim welfare and opportunities for improved agency and services for victims. We raise awareness and advocate through key submissions, media presence and lateral connections such as membership of Victims Services Australia.

Above and beyond anything else we stand for Victims.



Our Vision

People can return to the life they had before a crime.

Our Mission Statement

To support survivors of crime whilst creating a broader awareness of the need for this community to assist victims to rebuild their lives.

Our Values

Respect: Respect for the inherent value of all humans in pain and in need to receive social justice as valued members of this community.

Integrity: To behave in a manner expected of us by the community.

Care: Acting with empathy and sympathy toward all victims of crime and others affected by crime by supporting all victims to regain where possible the strengths and resources they had before they were affected by a crime.

Commitment: A commitment to the provision of support and advocacy to all victims of crime and to our volunteer network.

Equality: Treating all victims of crime in accordance with their needs, irrespective of race, religion, gender, or age.

Professionalism: A commitment to life-long learning for our staff and volunteers to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to deliver the services and support required to meet the needs of all victims.



Our Chairman's Message **Kevin Raby**

The 2015-2016 year has been a time of change and renewal for VoCNT. We commenced a new program, launched a new website, opened a new office in Alice Springs, farewelled our long serving Manager Mike Campbell and Administration Manager Karen Lucas and welcomed our first Life Member in former President Sharon Innes.

As the Treasurers report and audited financial statements show, the Association's turnover increased dramatically in the last 12 months. The Management Committee wisely dedicated much of its focus in 2016 to ensuring the systems and processes of the Association are robust and future proof. The role played by our Treasurer, Clare Milikins in persistently and conscientiously advocating for good governance was to the Associations benefit and we were rewarded by the successful negotiation and signing of three year funding agreements for the Victim Support Service and the Safe at Home Program.

Mike Campbell ended his relationship with the organisation in 2016. Mike was a passionate orator and has dedicated the past 9 years of his working life to supporting victims and advocating on their behalf. In his final year with Victims of Crime NT Inc. Mike was pivotal in ensuring that the proposed Sexual Offenders register would not include any information that risked the identification of victims. This was a very contentious and nuanced issue and Mike's persistent and well informed contribution to the debate was invaluable. His work in this regard was commended by the Management Committee and other victims' advocates in the Northern Territory. His work may also be of use to the broader Australian community if the newly elected Federal Senator Derryn Hinch honours his campaign commitment to introduce a similar proposal into the Federal Parliament. We wait and watch with interest

Throughout the history of Victims of Crime NT there have been some dedicated and talented members and non-more so than Sharon Inness. Sharon served as Chairperson of the Association for 4 years and was the lynch pin of much of the work throughout the last decade. In recognition of Sharon's efforts she was awarded life membership of the association in November 2015. Further about Sharon's contribution can be read later in the body of this report. We congratulate and thank her once again for her tireless community spirit and valued contribution to the Northern Territory and in particular Victims of Crime NT. Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank the members of the Management Committee for their tireless efforts throughout what has been a somewhat challenging period. To Sally Morris, Clare Milikins, Ken Cohalan (former Chair), Mick Myers and Jack Lewis, please accept my sincere appreciation for your advice and counsel throughout the previous 12 months and I look forward to exciting times ahead for our wonderful organisation.

Kevin Raby
Chairperson



Our Treasurer's Report **Clare Milikins**

2015-16 was a year of significant change for VoCNT with the commencement of the Safe a Home Program, relocation of its Darwin office and establishment of an office in Alice Springs. For the first time VoCNT's financial statements have been prepared in the form of a General Purpose Financial Report in full compliance with Australia Accounting Standards. This reflects the increase in the size and complexity of its operations and the associated need for greater accountability and disclosure. A copy of the Financial Statements and Auditor's Report for the year ended 30 June 2016 forms part of this Annual Report to members.

Income

Initial funding for the establishment of the Safe at Home Program of \$400,000, received in June 2015, has been carried into the 2015-16 financial year and was augmented by 2015-16 Safe at Home funding of \$900,000. VoCNT also received grant funded of \$167,000 to continue its Victims Support functions. Both Safe at Home and Victim Support are funded by the NT Government through the Department of Attorney General and Justice. Victim Support funding is also augmented by supported provided through the Correctional Services 'Sentenced for a Job' Program.

\$502,000 of the Safe at Home funding remained unexpended at 30 June 2016 and has been recognised as Unexpended Grants, which, subject to NT Government approval to carry it forward, will enable VoCNT to provide additional services in 2016-17.

Expenditure

Expenditure for the 2015-16 year has increased commensurate with the introduction of the Safe at Home Program representing a combined total of \$708,000 for the year with the remaining \$309,000 representing an investment in Victim Support Services.

Outcome

The result of VoCNT's activities of the year is a surplus of \$123,472 leaving the organisation with net equity of \$115,240, a marked improvement from past years.

Thanks to the continued support of the Northern Territory Government, VoCNT has assured funding until June 2019, ensuing it has the financial capacity to continue providing these critical services to the more vulnerable in our society.

Clare Milikins
Certified Practising Accountant



Report from Our Caretaker Executive Jacinta Stanford

I have been honoured to serve as the Caretaker Executive of Victims of Crime from April 28, 2016 – July 4 2016 and as the Acting Chief Executive of Victims of Crime since July 5 2016 until this day of writing and take pleasure in providing this report on the entire reporting period.

2015/16 has been an enormously busy time for Victims of Crime leadership and staff. We have restructured, recruited, reviewed, and renewed and we are now reinvigorated and revitalised ready to meet the future as a strategic association. The operational changes we have made reflect our commitment to deliver our new and existing services in an equitable and transparent manner and to make the funds we are given go as far as possible in helping Victims.

To this end we reviewed our internal controls, restructured our ledger, reviewed and amended our delegations, implemented new information management protocols, structured the process for Management Committee approvals, audited and reassessed the use of assets in light of our funding agreements and ensured that there is adequate role separation in financial activities. All this would not have been possible without the expert advice, guidance and support of our Management Committee who have given great service in the interests of these improvements whilst maintaining a considered approach to the many strategic issues pertinent to victims' rights that have emerged throughout the reporting period.

Notably the Management Committee responded to the government of the days call for the establishment of a sexual offenders register by supporting the Chief Executive Mike Campbell in advocating to protect the privacy rights of victims in cases where familial connections with the offender or where publication of other offender details would enable people to deduce the identity of the victims. Together the Management Committee and Mike walked a very fine line advocating against its funder to secure a victory for victims, with concessions being made by the government to accommodate these considerations before the Bill was debated. As it emerged the Bill was not passed and the register has not been established, but it is a credit to the former Chief Executive and the Management Committee that a respectful and cordial relationship was maintained between the Association and the Government of the day despite the difference of opinion.

Other leadership issues this year have included consideration of diversifying funding models to enable more responsive emergency relief services for Victims and the utilisation of social media in furthering the Associations reach.

**Jacinta Stanford
Acting Chief Executive**



Our Partners

NT Police Fire and Emergency Services

Victims of Crime NT (VOCNT) has a long standing agreement with the NT Police that victims of violent crime, family members of homicide victims, or indeed victims of any crime whom the attending officer feels is in need of further support are referred to VOCNT via the support link information system. They may also be referred by Members at the scene of an investigation. Police Officers hand victims the VOCNT card if crisis support seems to be required. Our Victim Assistance Workers (VAWS) carry a phone 24/7 to respond to these referrals.

This arrangement has been beneficial to victims who are contacted by our office within 24 hours for follow-up support. VOCNT staff and volunteers are absolutely committed to helping people recover from the trauma of crime and the seamless referral process with our partners NT Police helps us honour our commitment.

We are also honoured that the Commissioner of Northern Territory Police is our Patron. This year Commissioner Reece Kershaw attended the Management Committee Meeting and detailed his passion for victim management and ensuring his Officers provide a better service to all victims with a particular focus on Domestic Violence. This passion is behind the new NT Police strategy "Vision 2020" which focuses on relationships based on trust, communication, honesty and consultation. We look forward to complementing the new strategy with our services and partnerships.



Commissioner Reece Kershaw with VoCNT Committee Member Ken Cohalan and staff member Rathie Ramanathan at the NTPFES open day

Department of Justice and Attorney General

The Department of Justice and Attorney General is the pivotal organisation for Victim Support funding in the Northern Territory. They have responsibility for implementing the Crimes Victims Compensation Act under which victims of violent crime are entitled to claim monetary compensation for their injuries. We work closely with the Department and in particular the Victims Assistance Service to ensure that Victims access to this compensation is facilitated. It is through this Unit that we receive specific grant funding to allow us to have a full time coordinator to respond to victim's requests for support. It is also through this Unit that we were able to successfully pilot our Safe at Home program through a specific grant in the 2015/2016 financial year and through which we have been funded to continue this program for the next 3 years.

The Department also funds Anglicare NT's Resolve service who offer 8 free therapeutic counselling sessions for victims of crime in the NT. This is another valuable tile in the victim



welfare mosaic and we frequently refer clients who have need of ongoing support to this service.

We are honoured by this partnership and grateful that government has the right people in place to ensure that Victims are recognized and assisted on their journey back to wellbeing.

Department of Corrections

During this year we have been very grateful recipients of funding from the Northern Territory Correctional Services Sentenced to a Job scheme. This scheme with rehabilitative and restorative aims allows prisoners, of a particular classification and who demonstrate suitable personal attributes and commitments, to work at preapproved paid jobs during their time in custody. Among other deliverables under this program, participating prisoners are required to set aside 5% of any wages received for services to Victims of Crime. In 2016 our service was a beneficiary of grants under this scheme which enable us to meet extraordinary needs of some victims. Through this funding we were able to provide funding to enable the families of two murder victims to stay in Darwin to attend the full trial of the people accused of the murders. Both families felt it was imperative to their own return journey from the trauma of crime to bear witness in this way for their murdered children and with the help of the Department of Corrections we were able to make this possible. This funding has also been used to assist victims stranded in the Territory after their holidays have been interrupted by crimes which left them with nothing and to ensure that a traumatised woman urgently fleeing from her community to escape a violent partner was able to have telephone contact with her children whilst in hiding.

We commend the Commissioner of Corrections Mark Payne on this purposeful use of public moneys and look forward to working with him to have a positive impact on those who have been so cruelly drawn into the Justice system as victims of crime in the Northern Territory.



Our Volunteers

Our Volunteer Assistance workers manned the telephone support line for 5480 hours throughout the last 12 months. This is a phenomenal effort which ensures that Territorians have access to support services 24/7/365.

Alas our volunteer numbers have declined markedly in the second half of the reporting period with the loss of two valued volunteers Fran Windsor and Carol Wooldridge.

After more than nine years of selflessly volunteering with VOCNT Fran Windsor has resigned from VOCNT's pool of volunteers to pursue other interests. Fran was our longest serving volunteer with 9 years of service and has contributed much in assisting people and the organisation in many ways. It has been a pleasure having worked with Fran and we wish her safe journey into her future.

It was with great sadness that in September we saw the passing of Carol Wooldridge after a brief illness. Carol joined us in 2012 as a volunteer Victim Assistance Worker and has helped many people both over the phone and in person. A keen volunteer who has changed the lives of both clients and colleagues, Carol is sorely missed.

All of our VAW's are irreplaceable but these two ladies will always be held up as role models for our future volunteers.

The role of a VAW is wide and varied and encompasses:

- providing personalised emotional and practical support and information for victims at the time of the crisis.
- assisting the victim in identifying personal needs and support networks, providing information about relevant agencies and how to access specialist services.
- accessing external contactors, such as locksmiths or glaziers, to resecure properties to enable victims of break-ins to feel safe.

We will soon commence a recruitment drive for new VAWs seeking expressions of interest from people with an empathic nature and a commitment to make a difference. The nature of the work involved requires discretion and integrity and the recruitment process is accordingly quite rigorous. Upon successful completion of the interview process and police check, the new worker must attend VoCNT training and then complete a three month probationary period before graduating as a VAW. Ongoing training is provided for those wishing to revitalise their skills. VAWs can attend monthly training sessions as well as attending the office and speaking with clients face to face. This gives the Volunteer Coordinator an opportunity to provide support as well as monitor the quality of the intervention provided by the volunteer. It also gives the VAW the opportunity to develop in the field with the support of the agency.



Our Results

Victim Support Services

At VoCNT we strive to connect victims with the services that can meet their physical and psychological needs. We do this in a number of ways but our structure reflects the psychological need through our Victims Support Services. This year, 947 people benefitted from our trauma response and referrals service. This service provides an immediate triage of the victims needs following contact with our services and aims to connect them as quickly as possible with the service providers funded to deliver the relevant services to meet these needs.

The timeliness of connecting victims with appropriate services is often critical to minimising trauma and anguish. This is particularly true in relation to crimes committed against the person such as physical assault, sexual assault and domestic violence. It is common for people in these circumstances to ask: “Why me”? This will frequently result in people examining the circumstances of their assault with the inevitable outcome of blaming themselves in some way. This will manifest in sometimes highly illogical and unreasonable self-criticism such as: “Why did I look at that big bloke twice” or “Why did I let him in” or “I’m such an idiot.... I wasn’t going to go out that night – why did I”? This can lead to a feeling of shame because they feel at fault and the consequences of these feelings may include despair, depression, loss of self-esteem, feelings of worthlessness, and guilt. Ultimately this can lead victims to life-changing problems with clinical implications. Our Victims Support Service seeks to connect with people before these effects set in and get them in touch with the experts who can help.

We are also there to support people through the processes of Justice if they need us. We will walk beside them the whole journey including court attendance and compensation applications if they need our help. At the very least we make sure that victims are aware of their rights under the Victims Assistance Charter of the Northern Territory, particularly in relation to information about the investigation into the crime committed against them. In many cases our most valued service for victims comes after a conviction when they need assistance to complete a victim impact statement for consideration by the court in sentencing perpetrators. This can be a cathartic step towards recovery from trauma but can also re-traumatise people if not handled well. We strive to make it a step to recovery.

For a detailed breakdown of our Victims Support Services outputs for the reporting period see *Table 1. Victim Support Services quantified outputs.*



Service	Performance Measure	Reporting Requirement																																
Crisis Support for victims of crime	24 hour service	Total number of calls on 24 hour time line by time period: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Contacts</th> <th>QTY</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>A/H</td> <td>35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>B/H</td> <td>514</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>549</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Contacts	QTY	A/H	35	B/H	514	Total	549																								
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Information, Advocacy, Support and Referral for victims of crime, including information and assistance, Victim impact Statements, financial assistance, victims register and N.T. Charter for victims of crime.	Access for in person support, information and referral 8.30am to 4.30pm Monday through Friday in Darwin	Number of Clients during business hours by: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Group</th> <th>QTY</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>0 – 15</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16 – 25</td> <td>40</td> </tr> <tr> <td>26 – 35</td> <td>58</td> </tr> <tr> <td>36 – 45</td> <td>60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>46 – 60</td> <td>59</td> </tr> <tr> <td>60+</td> <td>116</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Unknown</td> <td>273</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>609</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Type of Service</th> <th>QTY</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Information</td> <td>513</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Referral</td> <td>198</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Counselling</td> <td>48</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Support</td> <td>137</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Interagency Liaison</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td>947</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Age Group	QTY	0 – 15	3	16 – 25	40	26 – 35	58	36 – 45	60	46 – 60	59	60+	116	Unknown	273	TOTAL	609	Type of Service	QTY	Information	513	Referral	198	Counselling	48	Support	137	Interagency Liaison	20	TOTAL	947
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Court Support for victims of crime in cooperation with Witness Assistance Service (WAS) and other services.	VoCNT presence at the Darwin Local Court on Friday morning	Number of days present at Court; 41																																
	Court days for on-site support to victims as required	Number of people supported 85																																
	VoCNT available for other court support on request, in collaboration with WAS and other services.	Number of requests: 7 attended																																

Table 1. Victim Support Services quantified outputs.



Safe At Home

The Safe at Home program is designed to start vulnerable people on their journey to restored wellbeing by facilitating the earliest possible re-secure and, if necessary, forensic cleaning of their home. As well as this the Safe At Home program has included a new service element that enables us to fund strategic security improvements to help vulnerable people reduce their risk of becoming a victim of break and enter. Where people are for one reason or another in reduced circumstances we frequently use both of these service elements to assist the victims to feel physically safe again in their home.

This has been the first full year of operation of the program and the response has been phenomenal. We have assisted 321 victims to re-secure their homes and 371 vulnerable people to reduce their risk of becoming victims or being re-victimised. We have also appraised 41 clients of their rights to have their home re-secured by other parties (landlords or real estate agents) which has enable us to be more effective with our funding.

The service is offered across the Territory but has been best utilised in the urban centres of Alice Springs and Darwin. (See *Figure 1. Services by Region*)

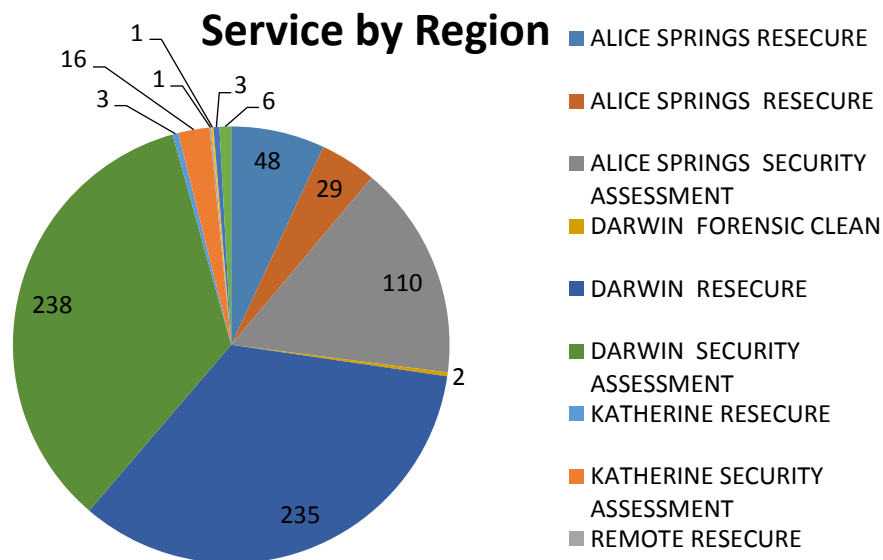


Figure 1. Services by Region

63% of clients across all Safe at Home Programs in the reporting period were females. Whilst we don't record client age staff advise that the most common client profile is women aged between 35 -60 and living alone. Men accessing our service are generally between 30 and 50 and seeking to secure a family home or older men living alone in rental accommodation seeking to improve the security of their home. See *Figure 2. Service by Gender*



Service by Gender

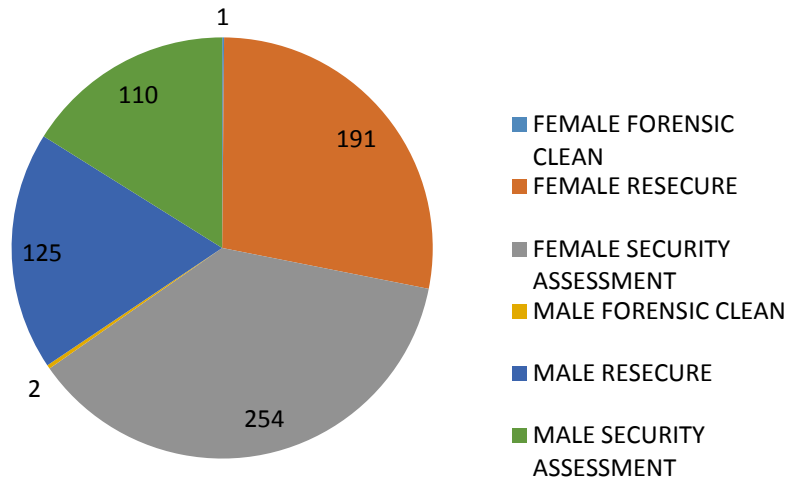


Figure 2. Service by Gender

Outreach and Education

We are committed to offering an equitable service and that means ensuring that information about our service is available in the right place at the right time. To this end we monitor how people have heard about the service. We also ensure that we are at major public events conducting education such as the Agricultural Shows and we conduct outreach activities to target vulnerable clients such as frail aged people.



A Remote Communities Policing Team Member with the winner of our Meet the Police at the Market -Safe at Home Competition

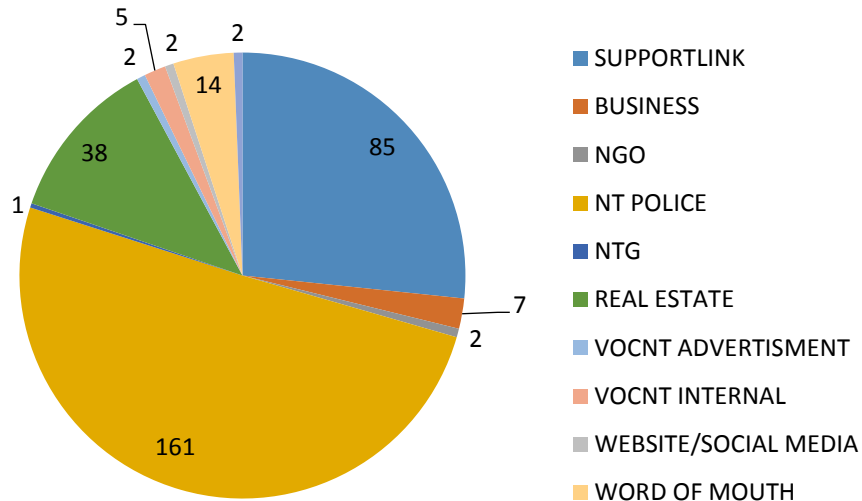


Figure 3. How clients found out about our Resecure services

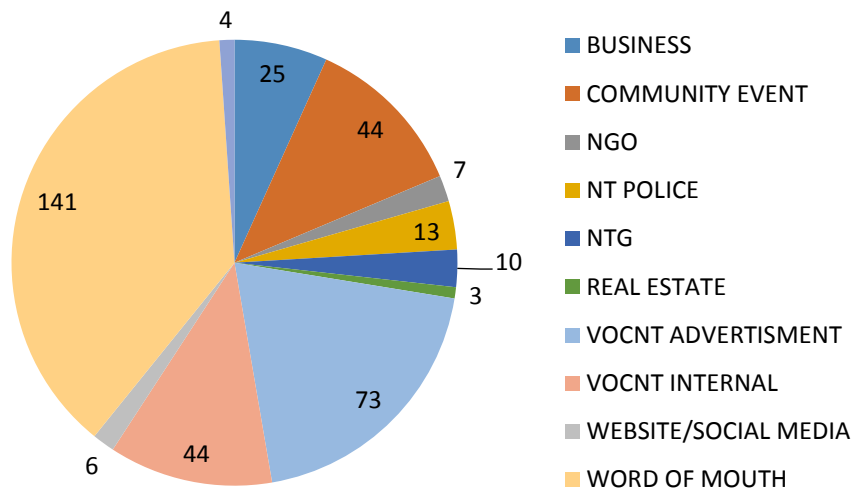


Figure 4. How clients found out about our Security Improvement Program



Remote Communities Safety Improvement Program.

The Safe at Home Program pilot included a remote communities component with a specific goal to increase personal safety and feelings of safety at home and in the community. Findings from consultations and literature review conducted by VOCNT indicate that the key concern in many remote communities is domestic and other physical violence. The strategies for overcoming this issue of course are many and complex, crossing many government and non-governmental agencies. We were determined not to duplicate work being done by others and chose to liaise with local authorities, remote communities, outstations and regional councils and other relevant service providers to identify crime reduction measures and then provided the resources to implement the measure as well as oversee the project. Whenever possible the program tries to develop mechanisms to build local service delivery capacity in remote locations through working with existing programs like CDP.

VoCNT believe that communities know what solution works best for them and involved local people in identifying culturally appropriate security arrangements for remote communities and townships as well as assisting in the provision of such arrangements to improve safety in remote areas.

The arrangements identified included:

- Improved street lighting
- Accessible and functional telephones
- Creating 'safe' internally securable rooms at key locations
- Personal Safety Device
- CCTV cameras
- Intercom and swipe card system

Using crime data and population size we selected communities to target and then established the connections necessary to assist in realising the project aim. The communities chosen were Maningrida, Yuendumu, Mutitjulu Kalkarindji, Wadeye, Borrooloola, Ngukurr, Ramingining, Gapuwiyak and Ali Curung.

We were extremely fortunate to acquire the services, albeit briefly, of a human dynamo in our Remote Communities project officer. Rathi Ramanathan partnered with police, local government, safety committee, night patrol, men's group, women's group, Government Engagement Officers, Night Patrol Managers, Safe House Coordinators, Shire Services Managers to achieve more in here 7 months with us than most people working with communities will achieve in a lifetime.

With the assistance of some innovative service suppliers Rathi delivered some excellent results in Maningrida, Yuendumu, Papunya, Mutitjulu, Kalkaringi, Wadeye, Borrooloola, Ngukurr, Ramingining, Gapuwiyak, Ali Curung.

Yuendumu Community have reported NIL incidents since the installation of CCTV Cameras through the Safe at Home Remote Program.

In addition the program has made it possible for the existing Safe Houses at Yuendumu & Papunya Communities (which were unsafe and unusable) to be secured and safe for victims of personal violence to seek safety and shelter. Other communities have improved lighting which has led to the reclamation of public spaces at night.



The funding for this program combined with Rathi's unique skills has made a difference to lives of many people.



The program also produced an illustrated conversation starter which facilitated discussions with community members about personal and community safety.



Community Members starting a conversation about Community Safety



Our First Life Member

Sharyn Innes

There are many people who work tirelessly for the benefit of others and we were privileged to have one of these people as a long term Committee member of our Association- Sharyn Innes. Sharyn has been involved with VoCNT since 2004 and joined the VoCNT management committee in 2006. She was a critical player in the Northern Territory hosting the seminal 2006 “Positive Ways: An Indigenous Say” Conference. In 2007 she was elected as our deputy Chairperson and led strategic planning and reviews for the Association and then in 2010 was elected Chairperson. Sharyn maintained this posting for 4 Years and nurtured the Association through some tricky times in relation to NGO funding in the Northern Territory. At the 2015 AGM Sharyn was awarded life membership of the Association in recognition of her commitment and dedication. Sharyn’s passion, vision and strategic focus helped position the organisation as one of influence and we thank her for her dedication.



Life Member Sharyn Innes with current Chairman Kevin Raby



Our Future

This was a seminal year for *Victims of Crime NT Inc*

The innovation doesn't stop here. Throughout the next 12 months we will be exploring business models that will allow the service to extend beyond the major towns into the heartland of the Territory to make a difference to the lives of trauma victims in the remote towns.

Our Committee will be keeping a watching brief on the Royal Commission of inquiry into Children in Detention in Protection in the Northern Territory. Aply led by our Committee member Jack Lewis we are interested to see if the review identifies the unmet needs of victims for justice and agency in the Northern Territory as a contributory element in creating a culture that has allowed children to become the victims of extreme measures when victims demand justice through retribution and punishment.

We also look forward to contributing to the Northern Territory Governments consultation on the establishment of Domestic Violence Courts in Alice Springs and ensuring that victims services are paramount in the model adopted.

Thank you all for another successful year.