



A new modern look and a brand new location

Welcome to our first newsletter in our new look

It has been an incredibly busy 6 months as we refreshed our brand and moved to our new Crisis Accommodation. We have now fully transferred to our new name, **Kara Family Violence Service (Kara FVS)**, and updated our website, social media and brochures. The result reflects the values that have underpinned Kara House for the past 43 years, and captures our plans and vision for the future.

We are beginning to provide crisis accommodation at our new facility. The site was purpose built by the **Victorian Government** to provide a safe and secure location for victim survivors. The Board and Kara FVS Team would like to thank the **Department of Families, Fairness and Housing** and **Family Safety Victoria** for developing such an incredible site, which will provide safety and comfort while clients are supported to work towards longer-term outcomes.

The team is now co-located with clients, enabling 24/7 responsive support. The client units provide privacy and comfort, while shared spaces such as the multipurpose room and playground offer space for leisure and relaxation, as well as providing an environment for support meetings and groups.

Julie Kitto, a proud Wurundjeri and Bunurong woman and representative of the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather, delivered the "Welcome to Country". We were honored to welcome **Gabrielle Williams MP** as our first visitor on site and I was pleased to show her around the site and walk through the units and grounds.

I'd like to personally thank the wonderful donors who stepped up to provide the funds that helped us create this amazing environment that will provide so much opportunity. And finally, I would like to thank Veronica and the team for all their hard work in getting the site ready to welcome clients.

Catherine Lockstone
Chair – Kara Family Violence Service Board



Our new Crisis Accommodation is ready to welcome clients



After one or two delays we are excited to finally share with you our new Crisis Accommodation

Located in Melbourne's Eastern suburbs, it will offer secure and safe accommodation for people impacted by family violence and in need of relocation to ensure their safety. The site was built by the **Victorian Government** in response to the 2015 Royal Commission into family violence that recognised the shared refuge model was not conducive to the recovery of victim survivors. One of the many recommendations was to rebuild every refuge right across Victoria into the new core and cluster model – providing separate units for each client or family group with a central "core" for clients to meet and receive assistance.

The site is made up of six separate units to suit different client groups

- 2 x one-bedroom units
- 1 x two-bedroom disability unit
- 3 x three-bedroom units

Each unit offers large kitchen, dining and lounge areas, spacious bedrooms, as well as an outdoor courtyard or private balcony.

There are office and meeting spaces to meet with clients

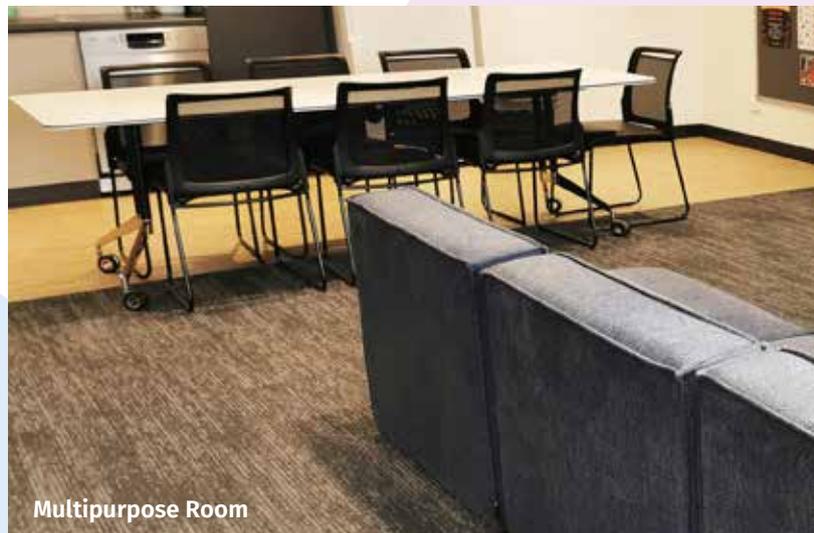
- Office space
- Meeting and interview rooms
- Multipurpose room
- Outdoor courtyards
- Children's play area and courtyard
- Overnight sleepover room

New and secure meeting rooms and outdoor courtyards will afford team privacy when meeting and working with clients one-on-one.

A sleepover room will provide team members with a comfortable space to stay overnight enabling Kara FVS to offer 24/7 support for clients in residence.

The multipurpose room will be open for clients during the day, with access to a children's play area, library, kitchen, and computers. It will be also used to facilitate activities like cooking, art and specialist children's groups.

The new Crisis Accommodation provides a safe and secure environment that is purpose built to respond to the specific needs of victim survivors.



Multipurpose Room



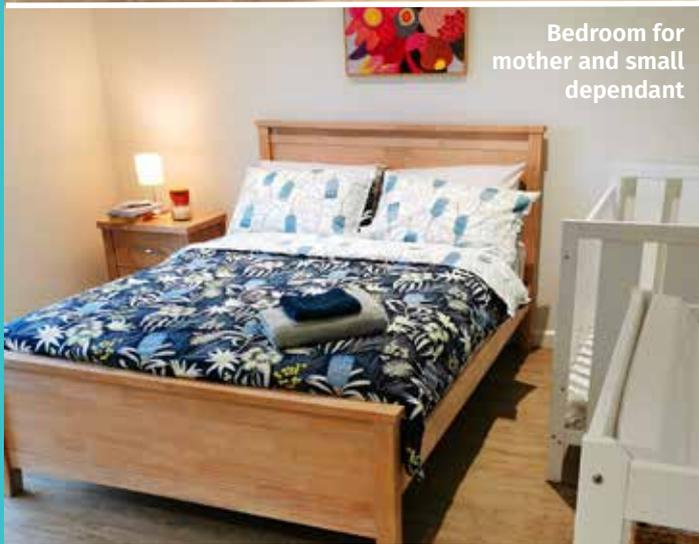
Dining area in one bedroom unit



Kitchen in three bedroom unit



Lounge in three bedroom unit



Bedroom for mother and small dependant



Kids bed in three bedroom unit



12 quick facts about the new development

1. How long will the clients stay?

We aim to provide crisis accommodation for a period of approximately 6 weeks, while our practitioners provide support and services.

2. How many clients can stay at one time?

The site can accommodate 20 women and children, with units built to house different size families.

3. Where do clients go next?

We work with clients to identify suitable next steps, according to their circumstances. They can move on to transitional housing, public housing, or private rentals.

4. Is the accommodation safe and secure?

The address of the site is undisclosed and has an industry leading security system to ensure the safety of clients and the team.

5. How do clients come to hear about Kara FVS?

The clients are selected by the state referral agency Safe Steps with referrals accepted based on the availability of our units."

6. How many people do you assist?

Last year Kara FVS supported 489 women and 339 dependents. One third of our clients were supported with crisis accommodation, and two thirds were supported in the community through outreach.

7. We provide 24/7 on site support

The addition of a sleepover room will enable a Kara FVS team member to remain on site after hours and to support clients' safety and wellbeing.

8. Opportunity for immediate response

The Kara FVS team are now co-located with the clients, enabling a more efficient response to their individual needs.

9. Multipurpose room meeting place

Clients will have access to the large multipurpose room to use computers, library, activities and meet with others clients.

10. Central playground for children

A large central playground is designed to stimulate and engage the children while providing a fun area to meet up with others.

11. Private outdoor spaces in each unit

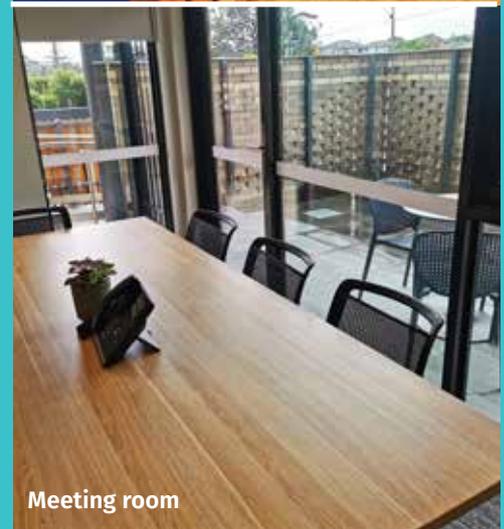
Each unit offers either an outside balcony or courtyard, giving clients the space to get some fresh air and relax outside.

12. Pets are now welcome in the units

Leaving pets behind can be very difficult and may prevent a client leaving an abusive situation. All our units can now accommodate pets of most types.



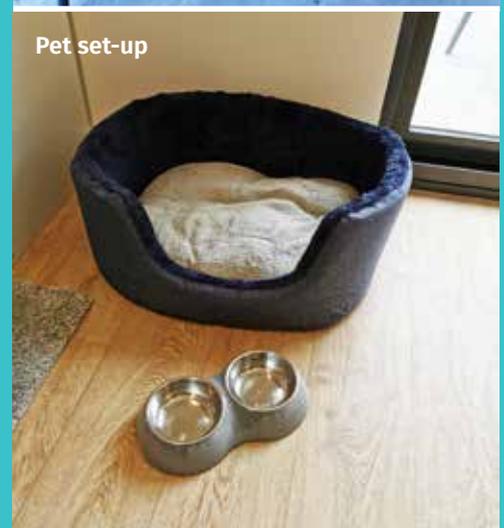
Play area



Meeting room



Unit courtyard



Pet set-up

Welcome to Country

Welcome to Country

Julie Kitto, a proud Wurundjeri and Bunurong woman and representative of the Traditional Custodians of the land we gather on, delivered a "Welcome to Country". The Kara Family Violence Service team were honoured to be part of this incredibly important and beautiful moment in the journey to welcoming clients to our new crisis accommodation.

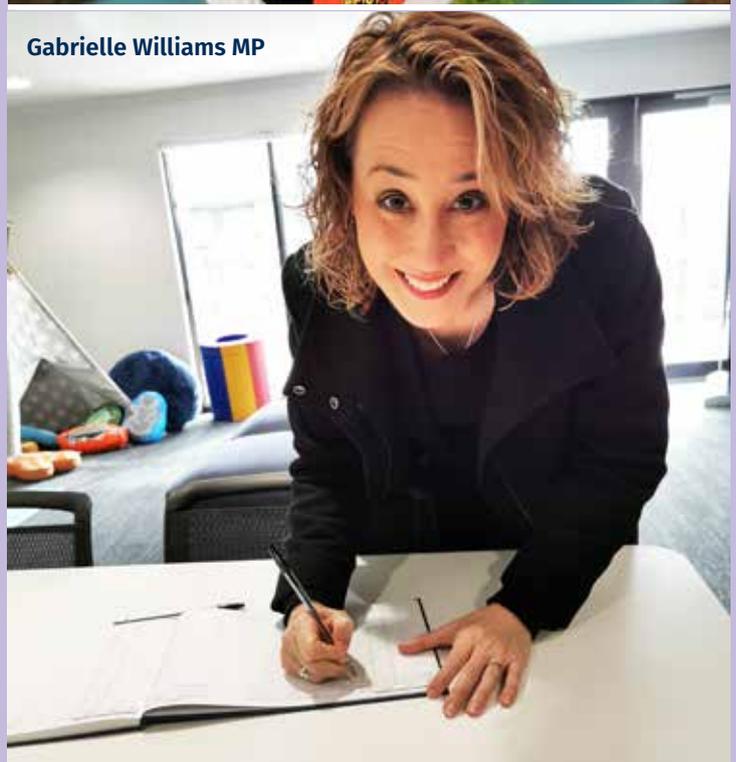
Our first visitor Gabrielle Williams MP

We were honoured to welcome **Gabrielle Williams MP** as the first visitor to sign into our new crisis accommodation. As the Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, Minister for Women and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, she had a keen interest in viewing the site and seeing what it will offer clients in the future. Our Chair **Catherine Lockstone** took the Minister for a walk through the units and grounds.

We are grateful to the **Victorian Government** for developing and building our industry leading crisis accommodation, which will make significant difference to the outcomes of people impacted by family and domestic violence. Thank you to Minister Williams for your ongoing advocacy and support of Kara Family Violence Service



Julie Kitto



Gabrielle Williams MP

Thank you to our amazing donors



With the help of a generous group of donors we were able to take the accommodation to a whole new level of style and comfort.

Providing a safe, warm and inviting environment can make significant difference to the long-term outcomes of our clients. Research shows it can reduce the likelihood of a client returning to an abusive situation. As part of the build, the Victorian Government provided an establishment fund to cover all basic furniture and whitegoods. With the help of donors we were able to take the units to whole new level of style and comfort.

The projects included:

Outdoor area makeover: Tables, chairs and plants on balconies and in courtyards.

Desks in each unit: Study desks, lamps and stationery for students and adults.

Finishing touches: Lamps, vases, bowls, painting, artwork, books, cushions and throws.

Storage shed: Shelving and fit out of shed to store material aid on site.

Huge thanks to our wonderful donors:

- Box Hill Golf Club – Ladies
- Starcorp Corporation
- Bronwyn Burgess
- Women in Business – Mornington Peninsular
- Boroondara Rotaract Club
- Stephen Crosby
- Drew Flowers
- Andrea Dillion
- Bethany Witcher
- James Maurer
- Lyndsay Stewart
- Susan Goldie

Desks in units



Courtyard furniture



Finishing touches

Our suppliers helped make it all happen

As part of the build the **Victorian Government** provided an establishment fund to purchase the basic items to set up the crisis accommodation. This covered office furniture, white good and furniture in all the units. With the help of a group of amazing suppliers we were able to make the most of the budget with their generous discounts which enabled us to purchase better quality items. The build faced huge delays due to the closures associated with the pandemic and the suppliers kindly stored and held stock for months and then installed them all on time.



Patrick and Gil from Nunawading Bed Shed

FREEDOM

The Kirsti and team from Freedom- Richmond



Fisher Lane mobility



Lucianna and the team from Krost furniture



Jason Fan and the E&S Team



The Good Guys Commercial division



IKEA – helping to create the best looking environment

Putting together a stylish look on a small budget wasn't in our skill set. Thankfully the design team from **IKEA** generously came on board and provided mood boards and colour concepts. They put a lot of thought into selecting items that not only worked together, but were available in light of the current stock shortages everyone was facing.

The results are a modern, comfy and co-ordinated environment. Items like kitchenware and cutlery will be easy to match and replace in the future.

A huge thank you to Matt, Rhianna and Jake from the **IKEA Business Team** for making this happen not only within our budget but on time!



IKEA tableware

Team profile: Katie



Katie - Specialist Family Violence Practitioner

Q: What made you decide to pursue a career in family violence?

I have always been very passionate about social justice. Growing up in a family surrounded by a lot of strong women, I've had a particular interest in gender equality and working in a field where I have the opportunity to support women and empower women. I previously worked in the homelessness sector, where I supported women and children who had experienced family violence. This made me realise it was the kind of work I wanted to do and so I became a Specialist Family Violence Practitioner.

Q: Explain your qualifications and how you achieved them?

I completed my Diploma of Community Services with Chisholm in 2018 while working as a case manager in a homelessness service in Gippsland. I was fortunate to complete my second-year placement with Kara FVS and successfully applied for a position as a Specialist Family Violence Practitioner after receiving my diploma. I have recently started a Bachelor of Social Work with Deakin University and it's great being able to bring my experience to my study, as well as what I'm learning with my degree to my practice.

Q: How does Kara Family Violence Service work with the LGBTIQ+ community?

Kara FVS offers safe and appropriate support to members of the LGBTIQ+ community who are experiencing or have experienced family violence. We attend network meeting and sector events to build relationships with specialist LGBTIQ+ services and stay current with best practice. Our staff attend training and professional development opportunities to make sure we can provide relevant and inclusive support.

Q: What's the favourite part of your role?

I enjoy working with women to educate, build skills and empower them to make change. Getting to hear the pride and joy in their voice when they achieve their goals and get the outcomes they are hoping for stays with me and reminds me why I do this job on the harder days.

Q: A bit about yourself – how do you wind down after a long day at work?

I enjoy listening to music and podcasts on my way home from work to provide a bit of a buffer between my work life and my home life. After work and on the weekends I like to spend time outdoors with my dog (pictured) going for walks or to our local dog park.



Spade and buckets for the sand pit

The outdoor play area includes a wonderful sandpit especially for our littlest guests. A huge thanks to our long-term supporters the **Zonta Club of Melbourne's East** for donating the funds to purchase buckets, spades toys and games to keep them entertained. They'll be stored in a box nearby for the children to have access to and enjoy.

For more information about how to refer a client and service we provide:

T: 1800 900 520

E: admin@karaFVS.org.au

W: www.karaFVS.org.au

Kara House Inc. ABN: 20 305 734



We would like to thank the Victorian Government who provide our operational funding under the Funding and Service Agreement and to the staff in the Eastern Region who have assisted with their donation collections and ongoing support. Kara Family Violence Service is a child safe and child focused organisation.



In the spirit of reconciliation Kara Family Violence Service acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

Kara
family violence service