


ANNUAL REPORT | 2011 - 2012

FLAT  OUT





**EDUCATION NOT
INCARCERATION**

Flat Out INC
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“fighting to protect the human rights of women in prison”

Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm except Public Holidays

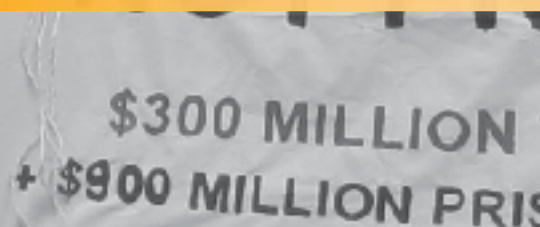
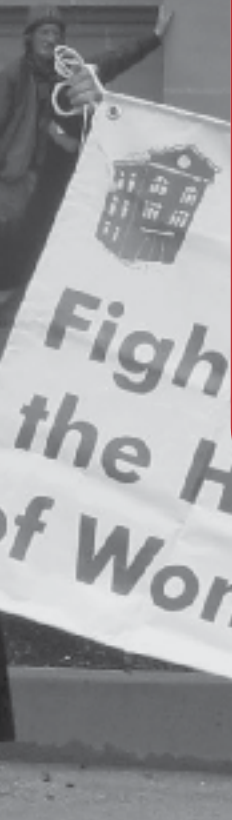
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FLAT  OUT

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Formal acknowledgement of Traditional Ownership

Flat Out acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first peoples of Australia. We pay our respects to the Wurundjeri people of the Woi Wurrung Language Group both past and present that make up part of the Kulin Nation, as the traditional owners of the land on which Flat Out is housed.

We acknowledge the Elders, families and forebears of the tribes of the Kulin Nation who were the custodians of the land which we occupy. We acknowledge that the land on which we meet was the place of age old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal and that the Kulin Nation people's living culture had and has a unique role in the life of this region.

We recognise the loss and grief held by Indigenous people in Australia caused by alienation from traditional lands, the loss of lives and freedoms, and the forced removal of children.

We defend the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to live according to their own beliefs, values and customs and the importance of their contribution to strengthening and enriching the heritage of all Australians.

We believe that equal partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are integral to addressing the needs of communities.

We believe that that ignorance, apathy, resistance and opposition still exists about reconciliation and the need to overcome Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage is great.

We believe that through understanding the spiritual relationship between the land and its first peoples, we share our future and take the steps towards living equally in harmony with dignity and respect.



Thank You To Our Funders

COMMONWEALTH & STATE GOVERNMENT FUNDING

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AGEING, NGOTGP (Non-Government Organisation Treatment Grants Program) NIDS (National Illicit Drug Strategy)

Laurie Morcom, Senior Project Officer, Health
Strategies Branch

Kit Burton-Senior, Contract Manager, Health
Strategies Branch

April Pertev, Contract Manager, Health Strategies
Branch

Eileen Bleakley & Cheryl Heath, Program
Co-ordinators, NGOTGP and Improved Services

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – ADIS

Ian C. Thomas, Senior Information Analyst,
ADIS Helpdesk

Anne-Marie Cupples, ADIS Helpdesk

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES – Formerly SAAP (Supported Accommodation and Assistance Program), Now Specialist Homeless Service arising from the National Affordable Housing Agreement

Sarah Langmore & Dayle Schwartzfeger, Program and
Service Advisors, Community Programs Unit, North
& West Metropolitan Region

Department of Human Services – ICMI (Intensive
Case Management Initiative)

NON-GOVERNMENT FUNDING

The R E Ross Trust
The Reichstein Foundation
Sidney Myer Fund
Street Smart Australia
Street Smart – Café Smart Grant; and
Grassroots fundraising and donations

DONATIONS

Peg A
Valerie D
Parent Line
Doris J
Amanda G
FOFO supporters

Special Thank You

To all the women who have been criminalised, thank you for your involvement in Flat Out over the past year. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to work with you. Thank you for sharing your stories, insights, advice and strength. Without you we would not be here.

Flat Out would also like to thank the following individuals and organisations for their support, advice, assistance, contribution of time, skills and resources to Flat Out and CHRIP

- Aboriginal Liaison/Koorie Court
- Adam Robinson, Street Smart
- Adona El-Murr, Flat Out Management Collective
- Amanda George, Flat Out Management Collective
- Anarki, DJ
- Angela Daddow, Victoria University
- Anthony Kelly and Tamar Hopkins & the team at Flemington Kensington CLC
- Antoinette Braybrook, Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal Service
- Arthur Bolkas, Five8
- Aunty Margaret Gardiner, Wurundjeri Tribe Land Compensation Cultural Heritage Council
- Barbara Whalen, Freehills
- Belinda Lo, Eastern Community Legal Centre
- Blake Dawson (now Ashurst)
- Caesars Mirror
- Cam Nguyen, Australian Vietnamese Women's Association
- Cassandra Shaylor, Critical Resistance USA
- Charandev Singh, human rights advocate, activist and educator
- CHRIP Working Group: Lorena Solin, Emma Russell, Rachel Barrett, Terri Silvertree and Liz Patterson
- Claire Waghorne, Samantha Ryan and the programs team at DPFC
- Common Equity Housing Ltd (CEHL)
- Council to Homeless Persons (CHP)
- Community Housing Federation Victoria (CHFV)
- Debbie Kilroy, Sisters Inside
- Dianne Barton
- Dinkums Printing, Carlton
- Don Spectre, Prison Law Office, USA
- Donna Williamson
- Eastern Emergency Relief Network
- Emma Russell, Monash University
- Federation of Community Legal Centres
- First Step Clinic
- Fitzroy Legal Service
- Fitted for Work
- Foodbank Victoria
- Forensicare
- Freehills
- Glen Fairweather and Prison Fellowship
- Good Company
- Grill'd Healthy Burgers, Local Matters Program
- Gsource, DJ
- Hanover Cheltenham Housing Services
- Harm Reduction Victoria
- Hip Sista Hop DJs, 3CR
- Holly Hammond, Plan to Win
- Homeground Services
- Hugh De Kretser, Federation of Community Legal Centres
- Inside Access at the Mental Health Legal Centre
- Janice Miller, WISE Employment, Richmond
- Jessie Boylan, photo-media artist
- Jill Prior, Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service
- Jo Smith, Flat Out Management Collective
- Jobs Australia-in particular Caroline Ryan
- John Walsh, Bridge of Hope Foundation
- Karren Walker, Flat Out Management Collective
- Karina Czaplinski, Women's Housing Ltd
- Karrina Nolan, community cultural development
- Kay Dyson, Flat Out Management Collective
- Kayla Ta, Women's Housing Ltd
- Laurie Nowell, media consultant
- Leanne Renfree, Gay and Lesbian Switchboard
- Liz Shield, Flat Out Management Collective
- Local Area Service Network (LASN), North & West Metropolitan Region
- Loremma, DJ
- Mari Kundalini, DJ
- Marketa Lyell, Sokol Melbourne Inc. (Czech Club) North Melbourne
- Meghan Fitzgerald, Fitzroy Legal Service Inc.
- Mehran Erfanian, Centrax Computer Services
- Michelle McDonnell, Smart Justice
- Minter Ellison Lawyers
- Nadia Gavin, Harm Reduction Victoria
- Newton Daddow, Fiona, Marcus Curnow and family - Newmarket Baptist Church, Flemington
- Paul Arnold, Inside Access at the Mental Health Legal Centre
- PILCH Homeless Persons Legal Clinic (HPLC)
- PILCH CONNECT
- Public Interest Law Clearing House (Vic) Inc. (PILCH)
- Print Together, North Fitzroy
- Prison Fellowship
- Prison Network Ministries
- QICSA team
- Richelle Hunt, ABC
- Rotary Lions Club Op Shop, Flemington
- Royal District Nursing Service Homeless Persons Program
- Sally Goldner, Transgender Victoria
- Salvation Army Housing Services, Eastcare
- Salvation Army, SASHS
- Sista Zai, DJ
- Sisters Inside, QLD
- Still Waters Women's Storytelling Collective
- St Kilda Crisis Centre
- TOLL
- Tom Civil, artist, graphic designer
- Una Stone, RMIT
- Vincentcare Community Housing, Glenroy
- Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (VACRO)
- Vince Chadwick, the 'AGE'
- Yarra Community Housing
- Wayne Muir, Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service
- Women's Housing Ltd

In Kind Support

A number of organisations and individuals have provided us with advice and support. We apologise if we have neglected to include you in the above list.

FLAT OUT MANAGEMENT COLLECTIVE MEMBERS JULY 2011 – JUNE 2012

Adona El-Murr, Amanda George, Crystal McKinnon, Jo Smith, Karren Walker, Kay Dyson and Liz Shield

FLAT OUT STAFF

JULY 2011 – JUNE 2012 – CURRENT

Annie Nash

Manager

Elise Pointer

Outreach Support and Advocacy

Jennifer Eva

Outreach Support and Advocacy, (parental leave February 2012)

Lorena Solin

Locum Outreach Support and Advocacy

Michelle Montague

Finance

Michele Old

Administrative Resource

Phoebe Barton

Centre for the Human Rights of Imprisoned People Project

Sarah Jones

Outreach Support and Advocacy

Sharon Villanueva

Intensive Case Management Initiative

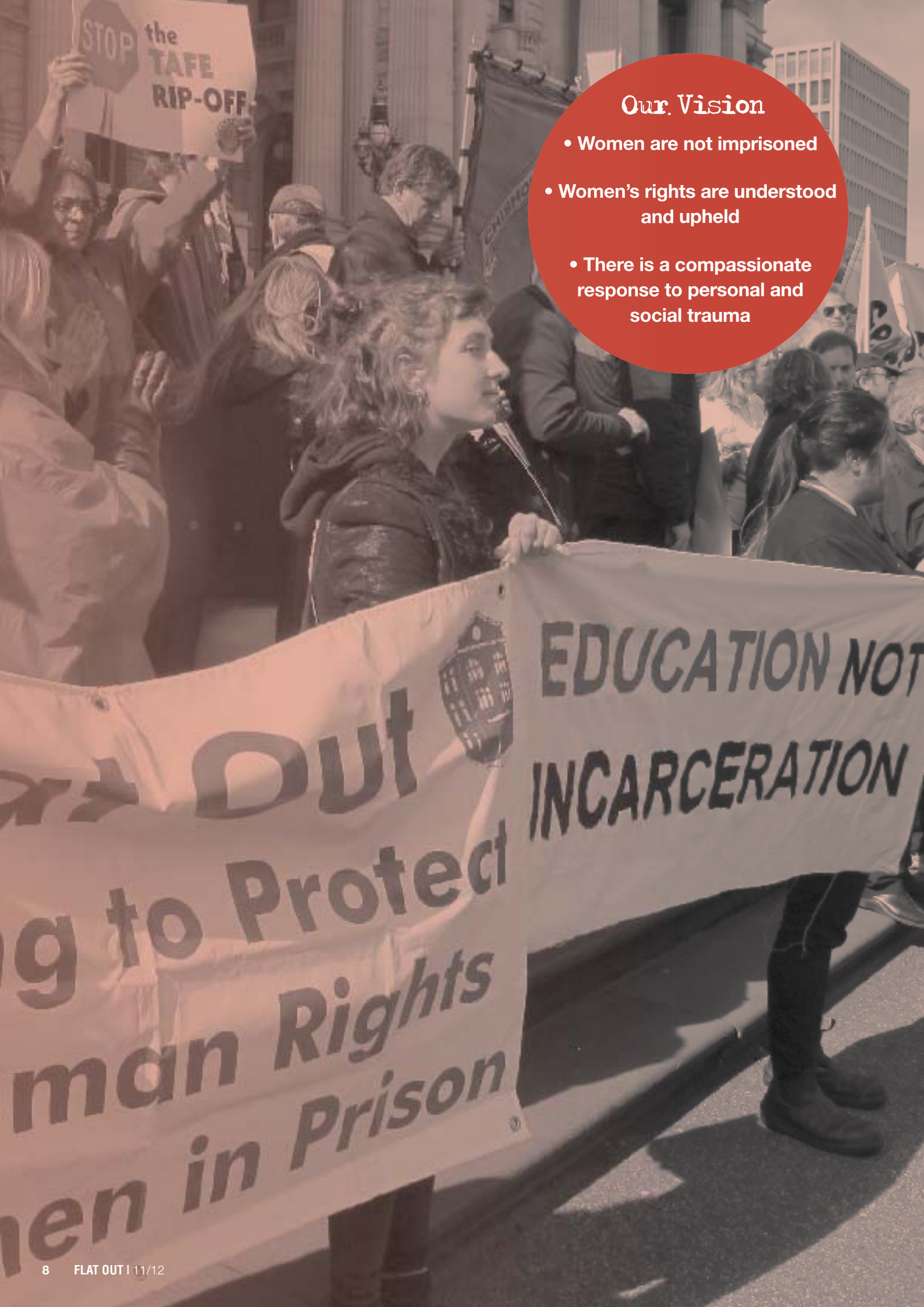
PREVIOUS STAFF

JULY 2011 – JUNE 2012

Tanja Hoger

Finance





Our Vision

- Women are not imprisoned
- Women's rights are understood and upheld
- There is a compassionate response to personal and social trauma

The origin of Flat Out

Flat Out was first established in 1988 with the aim of developing housing opportunities for women exiting prison. Now in our 24th year of operation, Flat Out continues to advocate for more and better housing for women. We are a support and advocacy service that works with women who are criminalised, with a focus on women pre and post release prison. We also focus on women with a broad spectrum of support needs, with a focus on women needing intensive support to address the underlying circumstances of criminalisation.

Primary Task

- To support women who are exiting prison or who are at risk of being imprisoned, by providing access and referrals to appropriate and affordable transitional, supported, private, public or community housing
- To provide and link women to appropriate support, education and information to re-establish them in the community post-release
- To work with women to prevent their re-incarceration

Service Overview

Flat Out is a state wide advocacy and support service for women who have had contact with the criminal justice and/or prison system in Victoria. Flat Out receives government funding through the Department of Human Services, the Department of Health and Ageing and occasional project funds from various sources to enhance its capacity to provide innovative and effective services and advocacy.

Flat Out is a community based organisation that is anti-hierarchical; in keeping with its feminist philosophy and principles. Flat Out embraces fairness and equality through the essential roles of governance, management and leadership that are underpinned by a comprehensive set of policies, procedures and delegated authority.

Flat Out leads and participates in research and community education, seeking to inform the community and other service providers about the issues that occur for women in the prison system. Flat Out advocates for women who have experienced incarceration, and works towards improving the rights and conditions of women in prison. Flat Out works towards preventing women from going to prison, and keeping them out of prison once they are released.

Through community involvement and education, advocacy and research, Flat Out works towards having a strong voice in the prison abolition movement in Australia, in the hope that eventually prisons will not be seen as a legitimate arm of the justice system, but will be viewed as an antiquated, cruel and ultimately ineffective institution.



Core Work

The Flat Out approach to organisational and program development is underpinned by a commitment to feminist philosophy, continuous quality improvement and best practice. Flat Out's current Strategic Plan 2010 – 2013, comprises of seven Key Result Areas:

- **Direct Support Services**
- **Organisational Development**
- **Partnerships and Projects**
- **Innovation and Service Development**
- **Financial Sustainability**
- **Involvement of Women's Lived Experience**
- **Public Profile and Systemic Advocacy**

DIRECT SUPPORT SERVICES

Flat Out's direct service activities to women who have had contact with the criminal justice and/or prison system in Victoria comprises a range of support and case planning services including: information and referral, outreach and intensive case management support for women with high and complex needs.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As a small community organisation, Flat Out operates on a limited pool of dedicated employees and collective members to achieve the organisation's vision and purpose. The new mandatory requirement to achieve accreditation as part of Department of Human Services Victoria funding, now means there is an added dimension to all operational aspects including the identification of internal system gaps and the development of new and improved systems for organisational business and service operations. As part of this process Flat Out has identified the need to further refine its organisational structure, role and purpose, and further strengthen systems for effective management of its financial and human resources.

PARTNERSHIPS AND PROJECTS

Partnership development is seen as an important aspect of maintaining a strong, healthy and sustainable organisation. Partnerships will frequently translate into improved access to resources and services for the women Flat Out seeks to support, as well as a heightened ability of the organisation to contribute to innovation, best practice and systemic advocacy.

INNOVATION AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Flat Out has more than 24 years experience in delivering support services to women at risk of incarceration or who are exiting the prison system. Over this time the organisation has built a solid reputation for service quality and professionalism as well as an ability to effectively engage with women within a strengths-based practice framework. Innovation and a commitment to on-going service development are seen as core components to maintaining a relevant and unique service.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

While Flat Out receives recurrent government funding as well as funding and grants from non-government sources for specific initiatives, the organisation is not adequately funded for service development, administration or infrastructure costs. Although Flat Out has continued to grow, dedicating resources to organisational development and improved services, further work needs to be achieved to generate diverse income sources in order to achieve the future directions of the organisation.

INVOLVEMENT OF WOMEN'S LIVED EXPERIENCE

Flat Out is committed to ensuring that the voices of women with a lived experience of the criminal justice system are both heard and valued. This has been evident in a number of past Flat Out publications including '*Flat Out – A Brief Herstory*' and '*Call Me By My First Name*' and the '*Digital Story Telling Project*'. Flat Out believes that women's lived experience also needs to be incorporated into the way the organisation reviews and develops programs and services, as well as to educate and politicise the broader community.

PUBLIC PROFILE AND SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

Over its 24 years of operation Flat Out has achieved a unique and respected position within the sector as a systemic advocate for and on behalf of women at risk of incarceration and women who are exiting prison. This role is an important part of Flat Out's commitment to the abolition of the prison system and to the human rights of all women involved in the criminal justice system.

Flat Out has now reached its 24th year of operation. Throughout this past year we have continued to provide high quality individualised support services and systemic advocacy, with the highest level of skill, commitment and enthusiasm. The Management Collective of Flat Out are privileged to have an extraordinarily hard working, innovative and committed team of employees to undertake the demanding and various daily work of the organisation.

Over the past year we have affirmed and improved Flat Out's funding with the majority of our funding now contracted through until June 2015. This is notwithstanding many services losing funding during this period. Like many other organisations, Flat Out has had to meet the challenge of continuing to provide high quality services whilst at the same time meeting stringent funder reporting and tender deadlines.

The Flat Out Management Collective is very grateful for the funding and support we have achieved.

An effective Management Collective recruitment process has further ensured that the Management Collective has been maintained with a strong complement of skills required for the effective governance of the organisation. During 2011-2012 we welcomed Crystal McKinnon to the Management Collective. Crystal brings research, policy and communication skills to the Management Collective.

Tanja Hoger, our Finance Worker for almost two years, left Flat Out to take up a position as an accountant. We wish Tanja all the best in her future endeavours, and thank her for her enormous contribution to Flat Out, in particular for her work in developing the Flat Out Finance Worker Manual.

We welcomed a new Outreach Support Worker, Sarah Jones (replacing Jennifer Eva, Outreach Support Worker on parental leave), and we welcomed a new Finance Worker, Michelle Montague. Jennifer Eva has a beautiful new baby daughter, Georgia. Welcome Georgia.

The new management structure that has evolved over the last 2 years has shown itself to be appropriate,

flexible and effective. Over the past year the Management Collective has met regularly to ensure it meets its core responsibilities:

- Ensuring that the legal and financial requirements of the organisation are met
- Setting the overall direction of the organisation
- Accountability for organisational activities and decisions
- Ensuring that employment conditions comply with relevant legislation and awards and in particular the move from SACS to SCHADS
- Ensuring that employees perform to job descriptions and organisational policies and procedures
- Participation in relevant Management Collective working groups

In November 2011 Flat Out Inc. adopted its revised constitution which was developed with the kind pro bono assistance of Blake Dawson (now Ashurst).

The main changes included:

- Improved formatting of the document
- Content amendments that are reflective of changes to relevant policies, laws and contemporary good governance
- Separation between governance and operational activities, in particular defining the roles of Management Collective (MC) members and employees, (employees do not have voting rights on the MC but are invited to be associate members and attend MC meetings where there is no conflict of interest)
- A reaffirming of the values of Flat Out being an organisation that is run for and by women
- A stronger definition and eligibility for membership including the development of an associate membership base distinct from full members with voting rights

The Flat Out Management Collective members have furthermore supported the work of Flat Out through participation in a range of activities relating to our mission of ending women's criminalisation and imprisonment, as well as being active in community and sector development opportunities including:

- ASU Fair Pay Case rallies and events
- CHRIP activities including advocacy and activism trainings

- The Management Collective and CHRIP Volunteers were active in organising and running FOFO: Friends of Flat Out women's dance parties at the Czech Club which were a fundraising event and also an opportunity to have fun and showcase the talents of DJs who donated their skills
- Public speaking engagements and community activities and actions as representatives of Flat Out
- Participation in relevant training opportunities
- Effective use of mainstream and social media

Our expanded premises at 52 Pin Oak Crescent has been fitted out with a work station, meeting and training space and a confidential space for meeting with women and individual supervision with employees. A number of community organisations have also used this space. We are very grateful to our funders for supporting these important improvements.

With unprecedented expansion of police and prisons in Victoria, the challenges for Flat Out continue. There has been a higher demand for our services and Flat Out has exceeded all funding targets. Sustainable funding for the Centre for Human Rights of Imprisoned People has continued to be an important focus for Flat Out as we can continue to maintain our vital systemic advocacy work and community education. In particular we need to refute law and order campaigning and the trend toward more police and prisons as a primary solution to creating safer communities.

The Management Collective and employees are to be commended for their commitment and enthusiasm in continuing to support the individual and systemic advocacy needs of criminalised women and women exiting prison.

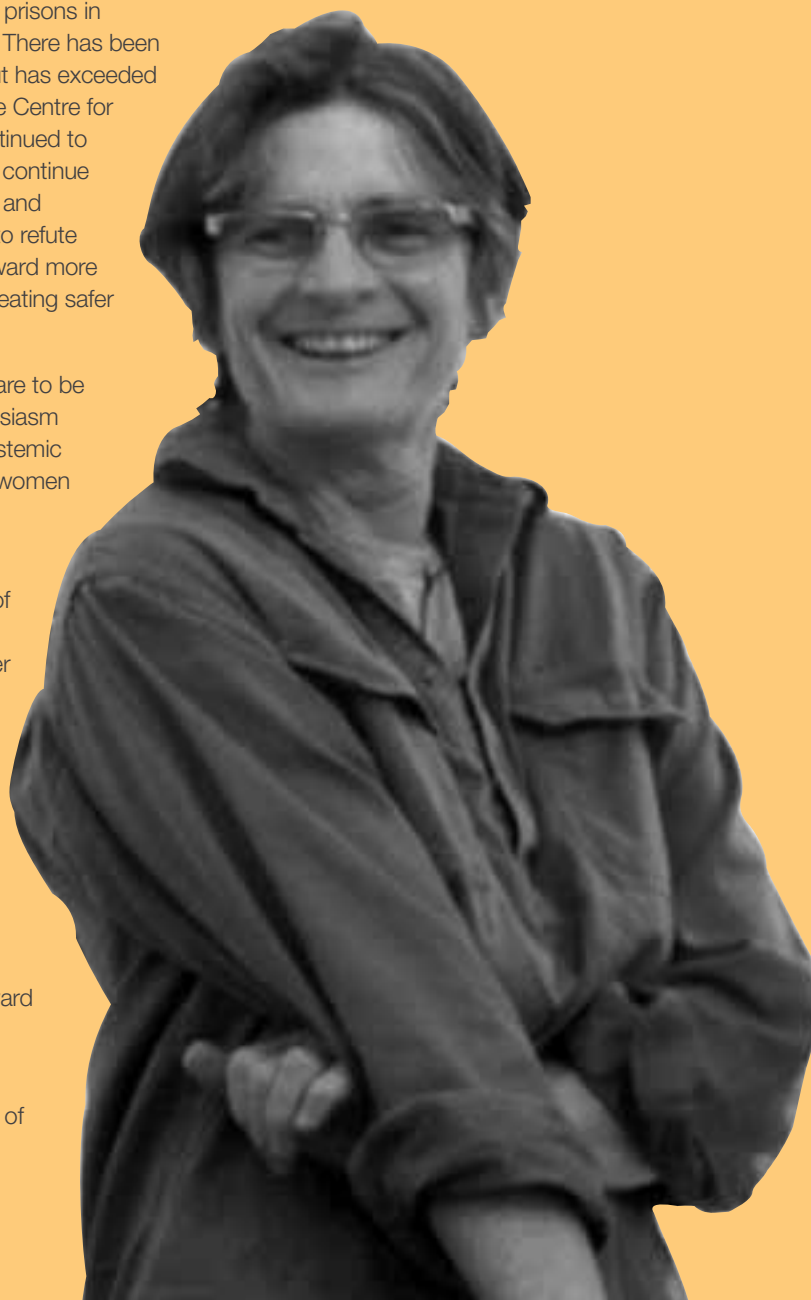
Thank you to all the individuals and organisations that have supported the work of Flat Out over the past year. We look forward to your ongoing support and involvement over the coming year; your support sustains us in many important ways.

We would particularly like to thank a very kind individual donor, Peg, who has made a significant contribution to our systemic advocacy and social change work. This donation has enabled us to leverage other funds toward this work. Thank you, Peg.

Flat Out is in a strong position and looks forward to another great year.

Amanda George and **Liz Shield**, On behalf of the Flat Out Management Collective

“Thank you to all the individuals and organisations that have supported the work of Flat Out over the past year. We look forward to your ongoing support and involvement over the coming year; your support sustains us in many important ways.”



I continue to be very proud and feel fortunate to be part of Flat Out. Flat Out has a 24 year tradition of speaking out; in fact there has never been a moment in Flat Out's history where employees and Management Collective members have not been prepared to speak out about the injustices women who are criminalised experience.

I have thought a lot about what it is that makes Flat Out such a courageous organisation. It's the women we work with. They are gutsy and determined and they never give up. They face incredible adversity, but they keep going. This compels us to do the same. I therefore begin in acknowledging the strength they bring to us individually and as an organisation. I further commend the hardworking team and Management Collective of Flat Out. It's been a great year.

There is also an unfailing focus within Flat Out on engaging the broader community in and behind our work. We are extremely grateful to all the organisations and individuals who have worked with us over the past year. Whilst we are a small organisation in funding terms, we have an extraordinary base of volunteers, pro bono providers and partnering organisations that enable us to punch way above our real weight. Together we have built a multimillion dollar, independent, community organisation that is advocating for an end to homelessness, and an end to prisons. Good Work!

Over the past year we dedicated significant resources to securing our core funding for service delivery, and philanthropic funding to support our systemic advocacy and social change work. Government funding is now secure through until June 2015, (with a slight increase), and funding for our systemic advocacy work is guaranteed until the end of December and likely to be ongoing in 2013. This combination of funding is critical to the sustainability of Flat Out and the effectiveness of our model in doing service delivery alongside social change work. Thank you to our funders and to the many people and organisations that have supported us getting and sustaining our funding.

Early in 2011 Flat Out was formally accredited by QICSA. As part of this process the reviewers identified future quality improvements; we are pleased to report that the key recommendations for this and our mid cycle review have been implemented or are on track. Unfortunately, with changes to government and reduced availability of new funds, anticipated increases in funding to meet the costs of implementing these improvements were not realised. This has meant that Flat Out is going into the next year with a small operating deficit. We remain hopeful that government will acknowledge the need to adequately resource continuous quality improvements and service development in line with the increasing demand for our services.

A key highlight of this reporting period has been the expansion of our premises, we are now located at 52-54 Pin Oak Crescent, Flemington.

Our new space provides:

- **Privacy and confidentiality when meeting with women we support**
- **Privacy and confidentiality for employee supervision**
- **A creative space for showing Flat Out/CHRIIP art works**
- **A small meeting room for trainings and networking events**

This space has been for hire at reasonable rates for community and self-advocacy groups which complements other fundraising activities.

We thank the Department of Human Services for providing a small grant toward the fit out of this space.

We also thank Freehills law firm for important assistance with drafting and negotiating our new lease agreement with the lease now confirmed through until October 2015.

Other improvements have included ergonomic assessments of workstations, the purchasing of new ergonomic office equipment, stronger frameworks for supporting employees, continued membership to a number of external organisations (including Jobs Australia and an Employee Assistance Program), and a strong focus on creating a learning environment by encouraging employees to participate in a whole range of training and professional development opportunities, conferences and events associated with homelessness, drug and alcohol support and treatment, education and social change work and organisational development.

Flat Out has also implemented systems for the early identification of risks related to the provision of support services to women. These systems will be further developed alongside QICSA as we move through the process of re-accreditation.

The Flat Out website has been redeveloped with pro bono and professional assistance obtained through the services of GOOD COMPANY and White Dog Green Frog, (our website host). Flat Out has also increased its use of social media, in particular through our face book presence.

Flat Out has once again exceeded its funding and service contract targets and commitments.

Where Flat Out is unable to provide relevant housing or support through internal capacity, Flat Out has supported women to locate alternative and appropriate housing and support. We have an internal policy of 'warm referral' or the provision of interim task related responses for women where we do not have capacity to provide ongoing support. We also respond to significant numbers of requests for secondary consultation in working with other organisations who are seeking to work with women who are criminalised. It's critical to expand this work; particularly in a climate of unprecedented prison expansion and where changes to sentencing practices are leading to more and more women having their lives significantly disrupted through being imprisoned for short periods of time.

It's critically important for all specialist homelessness services, community legal centres, drug and alcohol treatment services and all other relevant services to advocate strongly for the maintenance of community based services to women who are imprisoned. This is critical to ending the cycle of re-criminalisation and a return to jail. We are very pleased that through the work we have done through our education and advocacy program that more and more services are seeing the importance of maintenance of housing and support for temporarily imprisoned women.

Flat Out has maintained and expanded its partnerships, protocols and MOU's with a range of organisations. We have protocols with 7 housing agencies and a total of 15 nomination rights to transitional housing properties. As Flat Out does not provide 7 day, 24 hour support, we have a support protocol with the 24 hour St Kilda Crisis Centre. All women are given information and contacts for the state-wide Opening Doors Access Points, Women's DV Crisis Service Victoria, Direct Line and Psychiatric Triage. We have protocols with community legal centres for front door access to appropriate legal advice and assistance - alongside strong working relationships with a number of individual private lawyers, barristers and firms, and a protocol with the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre for our Women's Leadership Program.

“The women we work with are gutsy and determined and they never give up”

Flat Out continued to work on developing links to a range of services to ensure that women are adequately supported in all areas of their development. The focus for 2011-2012 was in developing partnerships with education and employment networks and alcohol and drug treatments services and peer support groups. This important developmental work is setting the ground for future work in the area of us walking the talk in relation to centring women's involvement as leaders of Flat Out.

Flat Out is working to increase opportunities for women to access transitional and long term housing. In the past year we have maintained nomination rights to transitional housing which has been a critical opportunity in offsetting some of the discrimination that exists for criminalised women obtaining housing. Over the past year we have continued to work on connecting women with Common Equity Housing Limited, (with one woman successfully housed through this model), and a small number of women have applications afoot. The proposal seeks to further 'open up' common equity rental housing co-ops to the women we support. This includes co-operative housing for single women and women seeking to reunite with their children.

We are supporting the further development of two models; an intentional community or newly established co-op for approximately 15 women with opportunities to access a range of housing types/stock throughout Victoria, and the second model seeks to open access for women to vacancies in existing housing cooperatives.

Unfortunately we have not progressed work on this partnership as we'd planned due to staff changes and our internal focus on maintenance of funding.

A further highlight of the past year has been the extraordinary work achieved through the formal adoption of the Centre for Human Rights of Imprisoned People, CHRIP, (originally an auspiced project of Flat Out). This work intrinsically links the direct service delivery of Flat Out with the systemic advocacy work of CHRIP, and is a powerful and tangible example of the strength of the partnership which has led to a full integration of this work. Throughout this report there are many examples of the collaborative nature and importance of this work. Please read the CHRIP report herein for an overview of achievements.

Last year I foreshadowed a much stronger attention and commitment on developing an independent and sustainable funding model for CHRIP. We are very pleased to report we increased our funding base significantly over the past year, with strong indications from donors and funders for longer term support. (Please see individual acknowledgments at the beginning of this report). We look forward to your ongoing support and commitment to this vital work.

As part of this work we launched a new social enterprise; FOFO women's dance parties which have been an opportunity to raise funds and give women who are friends of Flat Out the opportunity to dance toward our vision. These events have been enormously successful with more than 80 women attending each event.

In May this year we ran training on effective community campaigning which has led to our critical involvement in the TAFE4ALL campaign. It's widely acknowledged that access to education is a crucial determinant in any person's capacity to achieve economic

independence, social wellbeing and freedom from criminalisation. We applaud the role of TAFE in building a learning environment for our people who need it most; our working class and unemployed people, our communities of people who are non-English speaking, our people of colour, our people with disabilities, our city people, and our people in regional Victoria.

TAFE has also proven to be crucially important in providing a safe place, a culturally significant place, and for many students, young and old, a 'second chance' to access education.

Flat Out has also been active in supporting the ASU fair pay case which was an important victory for community workers. The case was lodged by the Australian Services Union on March 11 2010 to address the gender-based undervaluation of the community services sector and deliver long overdue pay increases.

On February 1st 2012, ASU Assistant National Secretary Linda White said "this was a day community workers around Australia would never forget."

"After many years of appalling pay this decision finally gives them the recognition they deserve. These workers do crucial work in our communities and yet up until now they have been paid more than 30 per cent less than those performing comparable work in other sectors."

"It is the undervaluing of female dominated sectors such as the social and community services sector that has held back improvements to this pay gap...it has been 30 years since such a significant decision was last handed down for equal pay, but today we have made history."

Congratulations and warm appreciation to everyone who has contributed to Flat Out and CHRIP 2011-2012.

We look forward to working with you in the coming year.

Over the coming year we will continue to provide high quality services, support and advocacy.

Annie Nash
Manager



Flat Out assists in developing women s skills to enable them to re-establish an independent life in the community, to regain self-esteem and to attain some degree of financial security to break the cycle of poverty, crime and punishment – Flat Out Inc: A Brief Herstory by Mary Cotter

Flat Out is a support, advocacy and research organisation that works alongside women with lived experience of imprisonment. We are a small team of dedicated and passionate women with varied strengths and diverse backgrounds and experience. We aim to be flexible, sensitive and non-judgemental in our approach.

We strive to empower women by informing them of their rights, listening to their individual needs and advocating for better outcomes and opportunities. We understand that women’s experiences are unique; therefore employ an ‘outside of the square’ framework of support as the ‘one size fits all’ model is proven to be ineffective. The team is challenged by the high number of women incarcerated and seeking support post release from prison. With more resources we could do more. The intensive outreach support and advocacy model is invaluable in contributing to a positive impact on the women lives, their families and the community.

The women we work with demonstrate incredible strength, resilience and courage in the face of extreme adversity and tragic circumstances. Their lives and that of their families are disrupted when women are imprisoned and the rebuilding of life is often a painstaking process. Flat Out draws on decarceration strategies as a critical foundation of our work, and strongly opposes imprisonment of women as a solution to their personal crises.

The vast majority of women we support are homeless, experiencing poverty, domestic violence, histories of childhood abuse, sexual assault and discrimination. The culmination of multiple traumas’ can sadly lead women into the cycle of incarceration and recidivism as the community fails to address these issues. Flat Out understands that there is no simple solution; however it is very clear that prison expansion, locking more women up, is not the answer.

Flat Out continues to challenge the systems that are patriarchal in structure and punitive in response. Our vision is that women will no longer be invisible; their voices will be heard; and we will walk with them to ensure that as a community we address the underlying social issues that underpin women’s criminalisation and imprisonment. There is no compelling argument for putting women in jail.

Flat Out receives funding from various sources. The majority of our funding for women’s support and advocacy comes through the Department of Health and Ageing, National Illicit Drug Strategy (NIDS) Non-Government Organisation Treatment Grants Program, (NGOTGP), and Specialist Homelessness Service funding arising from the National Affordable Housing Agreement. The Victorian Department of Human Services administers this funding. We are also funded .8EFT through the Intensive Case Management Initiative (ICMI). The combination of funding enables Flat Out to work intensively and flexibly in terms of the type and timeframe of support provided.

“There are long wait lists for suitable therapeutic programs. Women are forced to stay in situations of drug dependency until services are available. It’s a revolving door back to prison and a no brainer to fix.”

Over the past year, Flat Out has supported criminalised women of all ages; however the trend for 2011/12 was the majority of women supported were in the age bracket of 25-39 years. A total of 83 women were supported during this reporting period. Flat Out receives referrals from various sources; however the most common source of referral were women self-referring, followed by referrals from workers at prison, (mainly the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre), and community and other non-government organisations.

Women came to Flat Out with a wide range of complex support needs with the most common reason for women seeking assistance being homeless after recently leaving prison, followed by financial difficulties/hardship. Other common reasons for seeking assistance included eviction from accommodation, excessive rent and problematic substance use. Many of the women we support have intellectual disabilities, mental health issues and acquired brain injuries associated with violence and substance use. Flat Out also works extensively with women in reunifying them with children and other family members and building community connections and supports. Flat Out recognises that separation of mother from child is one of the greatest contributing risk factors associated with re-criminalisation and a return to prison, and thus an important core component of our support and advocacy work. In 2011-2012, through the strength and determination of a number of the women that Flat Out supports, we saw a number of women having their children returned into their care.

NATIONAL ILLICIT DRUGS STRATEGY (NIDS) NGOTGP, OUTREACH SUPPORT SERVICE FOR WOMEN

NGOTGP (NIDS – National Illicit Drug Strategy) is a funded Commonwealth Government Initiative. Flat Out has received NGOTGP funding since 2003.

Flat Out has exceeded the number of women it aimed to support during the twelve month period.

There were a total of 72 ‘Episodes of Care’ (EOC), compared with a target of 32 EOC.

All the women we supported were supported to engage with appropriate health services.

TRENDS AND POINTS OF INTEREST:

- The vast majority of Flat Out clients were self-referred
- We worked exclusively with women (and their children) who are criminalised, with a focus on women exiting prison
- All Flat Out clients had an initial assessment to establish their strengths and support needs. Flat Out discussed with each woman what Flat Out can offer, to ensure that our service matched to their expectations
- During the assessment process Flat Out informed women of alternative and complementary supports available in the community. In situations where Flat Out was unable to meet women's needs due to capacity or appropriateness of service, Flat Out made 'warm referrals' to appropriate services
- The number of women being supported has been assessed fortnightly through outreach team meetings, and re-assessed regularly through individual supervision with the Manager. Flat Out has maintained a flexible number of women being supported to ensure that we have worked within service capacity
- Flat Out has worked with women to develop support plans that included a range of holistic supports that deal with the range of underlying circumstances that led to criminalisation and homelessness
- We linked all women with appropriate housing services; this was the highest demand for support in this reporting period
- Flat Out's nomination rights to transitional housing has ensured we have met this need
- Flat Out has recently adopted a new case management system as part of our adoption of the Specialist Homeless Data Collection (SHIP/SHOR) system. The Flat Out team has been trained in all aspects of the system. The new system has improved the quality of our 'case management' system; it is an extremely user friendly system that enables the team to systematically track the work and achievements against agreed plans with women. The reports generated from this system have given us a deeper understanding of our day to day work and our impact
- The tracking features of the system enable the team to undertake a higher level analysis of the trends in types and time requirements of support being provided to women
- All Flat Out ongoing clients had an agreed plan. 100% of ongoing clients were co-supported with appropriate health services

THE FLAT OUT MODEL: WHAT WORKS?

- ✓ The assertive outreach model is extremely successful in working with women dealing with drug dependency who often have busy 'justice' schedules. The outreach support team will make every endeavour to locate women if they are difficult to contact by phone or through visits. We see women's engagement with Flat Out as a mutual responsibility. This is vital to the success of the service, because women will regularly be without finances for transport and phone. Many of the women we support have experienced being 'dumped' by services that will ascribe notions of 'non engagement' 'as a valid reason for 'exiting' them from their essential services and support.
- ✓ Flat Out has had very successful engagement with clients - women rarely miss appointments – this is enhanced through meeting women on their turf, in their time.
- ✓ The periods of support that we offer are critical to our success. Most of the women we support are supported for longer periods. Many services disengage after twelve months; this can be detrimental to women seeking to address a myriad of long term underlying issues associated with criminalisation.
- ✓ All outreach support staff are well trained and experienced and they have a good working knowledge of other services and supports.
- ✓ Flat Out strives to be a learning organisation that encourages employees to undertake a range of professional development and training opportunities alongside their work.
- ✓ Flat Out has a multidisciplinary approach, and is skilled in support planning and coordination.
- ✓ Women trust that Flat Out will advocate for them and for the systems to be improved. Flat Out recently engaged an independent evaluator who interviewed women being supported, these consultations confirmed this proposition.
- ✓ Flat Out regularly supports women in court by writing court reports, and attendance at court – attending court with a woman will often result in a non-custodial sentence where we are able to confirm with the magistrate there is an alternative to prison.
- ✓ Flat Out has extensive relationships, partnerships and protocols with organisations as a means of addressing the broad ranging needs of women; this approach also enhances our overall capacity.
- ✓ Flat Out has sourced independent funding to assist women with meeting their basic needs of food, shelter, medication and maintaining pharmacotherapy. This fund has been particularly important in situations where women are primary care providers where they will often put the financial needs of their children ahead of their health and therapeutic treatment.

- ✓ Flat Out has continued to maintain a focus on working with Aboriginal and Vietnamese women: both groups are severely over represented in the criminal justice system.

Challenges, what can be improved:

- There is a dire need for more and better affordable housing. Long housing waiting lists are causing grid locks in support service systems
- Women who are criminalised and have criminal histories are discriminated against throughout the community and also through many publicly and privately funded service systems. We need robust laws and policies and procedures to end criminal records discrimination
- There is a dire need for more community based alcohol and drug treatment services across all regional areas. A lack of suitable treatment services increases the risk of women being re-criminalised and returning to prison
- The current child protection system leans to removal of children in circumstances where appropriate and adequate support would enable families to stabilise and stay together. There needs to be a full review of this system to ensure that there is a genuine focus on best interests of the child.

FLAT OUT WOMEN'S FEEDBACK PROJECT

In 2012 Flat Out engaged the Council to Homeless Persons Peer Education Support Program (PESP) to seek feedback from women about the services we provide. PESP is an independent and peer service that worked with us to ensure that women we support had the opportunity to talk honestly and critically provide feedback about their experiences of Flat Out and the ways in which our service can improve. Flat Out will use the findings of this report to inform future work, including our re-accreditation review with QICSA, June 2013, and annual and strategic planning scheduled July/August 2013. Most heartening from the feedback was an affirmation of our service model, our focus on working with women to obtain appropriate safe and affordable housing, our non-judgemental approach to our work, and our strident advocacy. Some women said we could improve our service through making complaints procedures clearer and more accessible, and through having more funds available to assist them through financial crises.

ICMI (INTENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE)

ICMI is a developmental project where services provide support and brokerage funds for creative approaches to work with people who have high and complex needs. Flat Out has received funding through the ICMI program since September 2008. Hanover has been the lead agency of the ICMI pilot project, (with funding and support from the Department of Human Services, Victoria). This funding was extended through until June 2012, and has since been made recurrent alongside our specialist homelessness service funding.

Flat Out extends its gratitude to Hanover for the support and guidance it provided to Flat Out during the early stages of the project. We also extend our gratitude to DHS and service providers who reached agreement on the best way forward when we were all faced with a cut to ICMI funding. Flat Out and all other ICMI services funding have been reduced from 1EFT to .8 EFTS. The Flat Out Management Collective decided to absorb the costs and not reduce services for the period 2012-2013, to be reviewed in following years based on funding.

Over the past 12 months we supported 17 women against a target of 12.

The goals of ICMI are:

- To provide assistance to clients who have high and complex needs to stabilise their personal circumstances and assist them out of homelessness
- To provide a creative and flexible service response
- To contribute to the development of a model that promotes planning, coordination and sustainable assistance to high and complex needs clients

WOMEN'S INFORMATION, LEADERSHIP AND SELF ADVOCACY PROGRAM AT DAME PHYLLIS FROST CENTRE (DPFC), (Victoria's maximum security women's prison)

Unprecedented prison expansion has enormous ripple effects into the community; not just in terms of numbers of women going to prison, it impacts on all levels of support and services available to women in and beyond the prison system. Flat Out is under immense unrelenting pressure to be able to provide services to meet the needs of all women seeking our support.

In 2010 we developed an idea for a Flat Out/CHRIP program in the DPFC prison where we would have the opportunity to meet with up to 15 women in a workshop environment to empower them with information, prior to release, to maximise their opportunities to exercise choice in finding and selecting services and support.

At the end of 2010 we sought input from women in the prison about topics for the program, and with the support and assistance of program staff at DPFC, we signed a protocol with the prison in early 2011. The Women's Information, Leadership and Self Advocacy Program at DPFC has now been successfully running for approximately two years and we have begun planning sessions with women inside for the leadership program for 2013.

Information and educational opportunities are crucial to women's capacity as leaders and self-advocates

We also see this model as an opportunity to get input from women about the types of services and support they are seeking; an innovative model for seeking feedback and direction from women about what needs to be available to them post release prison.

This program also allows Flat Out to reach out to a wider range of women and is a grass roots approach to education and advocacy by involving women in directing the content of the program. This program runs monthly with community 'specialist' guest speakers on a wide variety of women's concerns.

Topics for this year included:

- **Changes to Suspended Sentences and Home Detention**
- **Criminal Records Discrimination (with a focus on employment)**
- **Housing and Homelessness – navigating the system**
- **GLBTI Services and Support**
- **Family Violence**
- **'Have Your Say', a workshop session developing the program for 2013**

Future topics through until the end of 2012 will include:

- **Finding the Right Lawyer**
- **Navigating the Child Protection System**

A number of individuals and community organisations have assisted Flat Out in providing information sessions to women in prison. We thank you for your involvement.

Most importantly, Flat Out would like to acknowledge the women imprisoned at DPFC who have participated in this project.

STREETSMART

Flat Out is very grateful to StreetSmart for funding we used to support women coming out of prison.

The primary purpose of this grant was to optimise opportunities for homeless women post release prison.

The main outcome of this project has been to have necessary funds available for the purchase of essential personal items for women upon release, which directly connects to women's capacity to obtain and maintain housing and avoid re-criminalisation.

Essential personal items have included:

- Underwear
- Toiletries
- Proof of identification documents
- Mobile phones and phone cards (we work on an assertive outreach model, phone contact is essential to this model)
- Met tickets/MYKI
- Emergency food where Foodbank Victoria and other sources aren't available
- Pharmacotherapy and other prescription medication
- Manchester: sheets/doona/pillows
- Diaries (in particular for women with memory loss associated with ABI)
- Warm clothing and footwear
- Carry bag for departure from prison (women currently leave prison with corrections issue plastic bag)
- Children's essential items including food, nappies and bedding.



The Centre for the Human Rights of Imprisoned People.

The Centre for the Human Rights of Imprisoned People (CHRIP) is a project of Flat Out focusing on education, community capacity building, and systemic advocacy. The work of Flat Out and CHRIP builds on the intrinsic connections between service delivery and systemic social change work that has been present since Flat Out's inception. This model ensures that the individual needs of women who are criminalised, imprisoned or recently released from prison are met alongside work to address broader structural issues such as poverty, institutional racism and violence against women.

The CHRIP project was initiated in the community legal sector in 2007 with seed funding from the Reichstein Foundation. The project was originally auspiced by the Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre (BMCLC) and had a strong focus on legal capacity building.

In 2008, CHRIP became an auspiced project of Flat Out and two years later transitioned to an ongoing project of the organisation. CHRIP's work with Flat Out falls into two broad areas: Public Profile and Systemic Advocacy, Community Education and Capacity Building and organisational development.

CHRIP's work over the past year has included the following highlights:

- Initiating and co-organising with Flat Out, Inside Access, Smart Justice and the Federation of Community Legal Centres the free public forum: *Why more prisons are not the answer to reducing crime and disadvantage: the argument for a prison moratorium in Victoria*. The forum was held on 23 September 2011, and attended by over 100 people;
- Publishing the CHRIP *End to Prisons* poster with accompanying articles in two magazines. Articles co-written by CHRIP volunteer Emma Russell, including: online human rights magazine *Right Now*, and the May 2012 edition of *Parity: Policing Homelessness*;
- Running dedicated *Effective Advocacy Training Programs* in 2010 and 2011 with participants including students, community sector lawyers and advocates, women who have been impacted by the criminal justice system and family members of imprisoned people. Topics included Introduction to Imprisonment in Victoria, Effective Community Campaigns, Media and Public Speaking, Holistic Health Advocacy, Art for Community Power, Housing Advocacy, Corrections Resource Centre Tour, etc;
- Sustaining the Victorian Decarceration Network, including monthly E-bulletins, with 280+ organisations and individuals working on imprisonment and associated issues, sharing information and resources;
- Organising the public event, *No More Prisons; An Evening of Art, Information and Discussion* with talks from Cassandra Shaylor (USA) and Debbie Kilroy (QLD), art by the Just Seeds Collective (USA, Canada, Mexico) and performance from the Still Waters African Women's Storytelling Collective. This was held on 23 August 2011 in solidarity with California's prison hunger strikes, at the Arena Project Space in Fitzroy;
- Writing a submission for the *Violence Against Women Action Plan Consultation Framework*, focusing on structural/institutional violence that women experience;
- Participating in the Flat Out FOFO fundraising dance parties (thanks to the CHRIP Working Group for fabulous catering!)
- Co-organising the Flat Out *Women's Information, Leadership and Self-Advocacy Program at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre*. These are monthly sessions to equip imprisoned women with information to support their self-advocacy and transition to the community. Program topics are chosen by women inside, and run with support from community organisations with relevant expertise. Topics have included: Criminal Record Discrimination and Employment Pathways, Changes to Suspended Sentences and Home Detention, Family Violence, Homelessness and the Housing Sector, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Intersex Community Programs, etc;
- Working with Flat Out to re-develop the Flat Out website including a dedicated page for the CHRIP project;
- Convening the newly established Flat Out Communications and Public Profile Working Group.

Homelessness and Criminalisation: The Dangerous Intersections of Gender, Race and Class

**Authors: Phoebe Barton and Emma Russell,
(first published May edition, PARITY).**

Flat Out is a Victorian state-wide support and advocacy service founded in 1988 for women who have had contact with the criminal justice system. Flat Out's vision is that women are not imprisoned; women's rights are understood and upheld; and there is a compassionate response to personal and social trauma. Flat Out's work with women includes providing access and referrals to appropriate and affordable housing; and proving (or linking women with) support, education and information to re-establish them in the community post-release, and prevent their re-incarceration. The organisation leads and participates in research and community education, seeking to inform the community and other service providers about the issues that occur for women in the prison system and post-release. Flat Out has a strong voice in the prison abolition movement in Australia, in the hope that eventually prisons will not be seen as a legitimate arm of the justice system, but will be viewed as an antiquated, cruel and ultimately ineffective institution.

The Centre for the Human Rights of Imprisoned People (CHRIP) is a project of Flat Out focusing on education, community capacity building, and systemic advocacy. The work of Flat Out and CHRIP builds on the intrinsic connections between service delivery and systemic social change work that has been present since Flat Out's inception. This model ensures that the individual needs of women who are criminalised, imprisoned or recently released from prison are met alongside work to address broader structural issues such as poverty, institutional racism and violence against women.

'AN END TO PRISONS' POSTER

In 2011 Flat Out published the poster 'An End to Prisons' with a volunteer CHRIP working group. The poster is aimed specifically at the community sector and provides information and analysis about who is imprisoned in Victoria, the harms of imprisonment, the social and economic costs to the community, and decarceration strategies for community organisations. As a community resource, the poster is a form of creative outreach and political education providing practical and realisable strategies for change. It continues conversations about the longer-term goal of abolishing imprisonment and finding alternate responses to pressing social issues, and encourages community organisations to use their voice, knowledge and resources to educate and advocate for decarceration.

We include the poster as an insert in this edition of Parity, *Policing Homelessness*, because the issues of homelessness and criminalisation are closely tied to imprisonment.

We take up the concept of 'intersectionality' to understand the complexities of these issues in relation to systems of

oppression.¹ Intersectionality refers to experiences of harm defined by multiple oppressions. People who experience the impacts of multiple forms of oppression are particularly vulnerable to policing and the likelihood of imprisonment. In Australia, Indigenous women are one of the fastest growing prison populations.² Indigenous women live in the dangerous intersection of gender and race. They are more likely to be arrested and re-incarcerated at a higher rate than non-Indigenous people for 'crimes' of disturbing the 'good order,' i.e.: offensive behaviour, sleeping in public places, failure to pay fines resulting from dog-control or parking infringements, or drinking in public places.³ The criminalisation of Indigenous women occurs in the context of ongoing dispossession of Aboriginal people and the repression of resistance to structures of colonisation.⁴ In material terms, the intersectionality of oppression creates conditions of limited employment, education and healthcare; high incidences of poverty and homelessness; vulnerability to physical and sexual violence; and police surveillance and harassment. The ways that policing practices disproportionately target marginalised communities, such as Indigenous, refugee, migrant, LGBTQ, and homeless communities, reflect the impacts of intersecting systems of oppression.⁵

1. Crenshaw, Kimberlé (1989) 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color,' University of Chicago Legal Forum, pp. 140; bell hooks (2000) *Where we Stand: Class Matters*, Routledge: New York, NY; Ortiz, Victoria and Elrod, Jennifer (2002) 'Construction Project: Color Me Queer + Color Me Family = Camilo's Story,' in *Crossroads, Directions, and a New Critical Race Theory*, ed. Francisco Valdes, McCristal Culp, Jerome and Harris, Angela, Temple University Press, Philadelphia.

2. Atkinson, Judy (1996) 'A Nation Is Not Conquered,' in *Indigenous Law Bulletin* vol. 10(3), pp. 85; Payne, Sharon (1992) 'Aboriginal Women and the Law,' in Cunneen, Chris (ed.) *Aboriginal Perspectives on Criminal Justice*, Sydney, The Institute of Criminology Monograph Series, No. 1, pp. 31-39; For a discussion of intersectionality and the law, see Davis, Angela, (1998) 'Violence against Women and the Ongoing Challenge to Racism,' in Joy James (ed.) *The Angela Y. Davis Reader*, Australia: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 138-48. See also Smith, Andrea (2005) *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*, Brooklyn: South End Press, pp. 151; Thomas, Carol and Seife, Joanne (1992) 'Aboriginal Women and the Law,' in *Aboriginal Justice Issues*, proceedings of Australian Institute of Criminology Conference, 23-25 June, pp. 169.

3. Mackay, Michael and Smallacombe, Sonia (2006) 'Aboriginal Women as Offenders and Victims: The Case of Victoria,' in *Indigenous Law Bulletin*, vol. 4 (3), pp. 21-29; Hunt, Emma (1998) *Waiting to be Heard: a Discussion of Feminism, Criminology and Aboriginal Women Offenders*, Thesis: Masters of Criminology, Melbourne University, pp. 250.

4. See, the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) (1999) *Final Report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody: The 2001 Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) Social Justice Report* found that "Aboriginal women remain largely invisible to policy makers and program designers with very little attention devoted to their specific situation and needs." Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) 2001 Social Justice Report (2001); see also Kelly, Loretta (2002) 'The Rights of Indigenous Prisoners,' in Brown and Wilkie (eds.) *Prisoners as Citizens: Human Rights of Australian Prisoners*, Annandale NSW: Federation Press, pp. 21-37; Behrendt and Behrendt (1992) 'Recommendations, Rhetoric, and Another 33 Aboriginal Deaths in Custody: Aboriginal Custodial Deaths Since May 1989,' in *Aboriginal Law Bulletin*, vol. 2(59), pp. 4-12; Langford Ginioti, Ruby (1999) *Haunted by the Past*, Australia: Allen & Unwin.

5. Cunneen, Chris (2001) *Conflict, Politics and Crime: Aboriginal Communities and Police*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney; Smith, Bec and Reside, Shane (2010) *Boys you wanna give me some action? Interventions into Policing of Racialised Communities in Melbourne*, Springvale Monash Legal Service, Fitzroy Legal Service, Western Suburbs Legal Service; Victorian Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby (2000) *Enough is Enough: A Report on Discrimination and Abuse Experienced By Lesbians, Gay Men, Bisexuals and Transgender People in Victoria*, Fitzroy

HOMELESSNESS, VIOLENCE AND IMPRISONMENT

Women living in conditions of poverty and homelessness have significant interactions with police and the criminal justice system. Flat Out recognises that homelessness is one of the most significant issues precipitating imprisonment and reimprisonment for women.⁶

The causes of homelessness include severe financial hardship and lack of access to adequate income support, unemployment, lack of affordable housing, domestic and family violence, mental illness, lack of access to health care, drug and alcohol misuse, lack of access to drug treatment services, problem gambling, discrimination, disability and evictions. Evidently, these issues are complex and are often inter-related.

The Salvation Army suggest that violence is the primary issue that leads to homelessness and is a continuing issue for women in the context of homelessness. Women describe multiple experiences of violence including physical and sexual assault, racist violence, verbal abuse, sexual harassment, intimidation, sexual exploitation, fear and lack of safety, witnessing violence, and domestic violence.⁷ Women also report homelessness directly influences their drug misuse. Susanne Davies and Sandy Cook found that 45 out of 93 women who died post-release in Victoria between 1987 and 1997 died of drug-related causes. Due to issues of poverty and homelessness, 17 of the women died in temporary accommodation and another 12 died in public spaces including in car parks, railway stations and on the streets.⁸

Policing, criminalisation and imprisonment are punitive and reactionary responses to social and economic inequities. Such responses risk exacerbating existing harms (poverty, histories of violence, poor mental and physical health) and adding further layers including trauma, criminal record discrimination, and family and community fragmentation. Investing in community supports and critical social services rather than expanding the criminal justice system's reach, is a more effective way of creating community safety. By community safety, we mean a world where everyone has access to housing, food, employment, education and freedom from violence. Strategies for decarceration (reducing the number going to prison and returning to prison) that are based on support, compassion, and addressing the causes of structural inequalities, is a crucial, ongoing and long-term project.

6. Flat Out/CHRIP (2010) 'Submission to the Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee' Inquiry into the Impact of Drug-Related Offending on Female Prisoner Numbers

7. The Salvation Army (2009) Somewhere Safe to Call Home; Hanover Welfare Services (2003) Women Experiencing Homelessness

8. Davies, Susanne and Cook, Sandy (2000) 'Dying Outside: Women, Imprisonment and Post-Release Mortality,' Paper presented at the Women in Corrections: Staff and Clients Conference convened by the Australian Institute of Criminology in conjunction with the Department for Correctional Services SA and held in Adelaide, 31 October – 1 November

CREATIVE POLITICAL EDUCATION

'An End to Prisons' is a poster that reflects a critical stance on imprisonment issues and provides a blueprint for community action towards decarceration. It is a form of creative political education evoking 'the transformative power of personal expression in concert with collective action.'⁹ Educational posters utilising art and graphic design tools can inform, influence and inspire grassroots organising for social and economic justice. From its initial conception, CHRIP's 'An End to Prisons' poster draws strong influence from an INCITE! and Critical Resistance poster from the U.S.A. The poster depicts their 2001 joint *Statement on Gender Violence and the Prison Industrial Complex*.¹⁰ The *Statement* outlines critical issues of interpersonal and state violence (including criminalisation, police violence, imprisonment, domestic violence, sexual assault) and recommends concrete steps toward transformative change. INCITE! and Critical Resistance use compelling graphic design to incorporate a large volume of text whilst retaining artistic appeal. This makes their poster a relevant and effective tool for other organisations and collectives to access even 11 years after its original publication.

For the 'End to Prisons' poster we chose the medium of a creative and informative poster to increase the visibility of local imprisonment issues and abolitionist perspectives. We present information in an accessible and aesthetically pleasing format to complement existing research reports, journal articles and factsheets. We hope community organisations will display the poster in spaces visible to workers and people accessing services, to spark conversation and reflection rather than be shelved away and forgotten. We are able to engage people with visual culture that might otherwise not be exposed to information about prisons and the abolition movement. This approach draws on histories of grassroots collectives and community organisations in Victoria linking art and political posters to awareness-raising and social change. We hope community organisations in Victoria will display the poster and use it as a tool both in responding directly to issues of imprisonment, and to incite dialogue about transformative changes in our community.

The 'End to Prisons' poster referred to in this article can be downloaded from:

www.flatout.org.au/learn-more/

Poster Authors: Centre for the Human Rights of Imprisoned People (CHRIP) Project Worker: Phoebe Barton and Working Group: Emma Russell, Lorena Solin, Terri Silvertree, Liz Patterson, Rachel Barrett

9. Just Seeds, Who We Are, http://justseeds.org/about/who_we_are.html

10. Critical Resistance and Incite! Women of Color Against Violence (2001) Joint Statement on Gender Violence and the Prison Industrial Complex, <http://www.incite-national.org/index.php?s=92>

Flat Out Protocols & Nomination Rights

FLAT OUT HAS PROTOCOLS WITH THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES:

- Common Equity Housing Ltd (CEHL)
- Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (DPFC) Women's Information, Leadership and Self-Advocacy Program
- Flemington Kensington Community Legal Centre
- Hanover Cheltenham
- Hanover ICMI program
- Homeground
- Local Area Service Network (LASN), North & West Metropolitan Region
- Newmarket Baptist Church, Flemington
- Melbourne City Mission, WISP Program
- Vincentcare Community Housing, Glenroy
- Salvation Army, EastCare
- St Kilda Crisis Centre
- Women's Housing Limited
- Women's Housing Limited Private Rental Brokerage Program
- Yarra Community Housing

FLAT OUT HAS NOMINATION RIGHTS TO TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROPERTIES WITH THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES:

- Homeground
- Salvation Army SASHS Western
- Salvation Army EastCare Housing Services
- Vincentcare Community Housing, Glenroy
- Women's Housing Limited
- Hanover Cheltenham
- Yarra Community Housing

Training and professional development undertaken by Flat Out

- AHURI Homelessness Research Conference
- ANEX Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder seminar
- CHFV Managing Work Priorities training
- CHRIP Effective Advocacy Training Program
 - Art for Community Power
 - Drug & Alcohol and Mental Health Advocacy
 - Fearless Individual and Systemic Advocacy
 - Effective Community Campaigns
 - Housing Advocacy
 - Introduction to Imprisonment in Victoria
 - Introduction to Imprisonment in Victoria – re-run due to demand
 - Media and Public Speaking
 - Wolf in Sheep's Clothing: Working in and around the Non-Profit Industrial Complex to Defeat the Prison Industrial Complex
- Council for Homeless Persons (CHP) Policing Homelessness Parity launch
- Department of Justice NWM Region: brimbyn barring wilam (find path home): Koori Prison Transition forum
- DHS Preparing for review against the DHS Standards
- DHS Resource Register training
- DHS Segmented 1 Housing – Homelessness with Support training
- DHS Service Agreement module presentation
- DVRCV Just Say Goodbye: parents who kill their children in the context of separation
- Flat Out's Women's Information, Leadership and Self Advocacy Program at DPFC
 - Criminal Record Discrimination & Employment Pathways
 - Changes to Suspended Sentences & Home Detention
 - Family Violence
 - Homelessness & the Housing Sector
 - LGBTI Community Programs
- Funding Futures workshop
- IMARA advocacy real solutions to racial profiling forum
- iTANGO Information Communication Technology workshop
- Life Drawing classes
- Monash University 'Implementing Human Rights in Closed Environments' conference
- National Council for Single Mothers and their Children- 'Diversity, Dignity & Determination' conference
- North West Metropolitan Housing Region (NWMHR) Consumer Participation training
- Reintegration Conference
- Remand Prisoner Housing workshop
- Specialist Homelessness Sector (SHS) training
 - Managing Budgets
 - Case File Notes
- Specialist Homelessness Services Collection training
 - SHIP Reporting
 - SHOR Web Portal
- The Change Agency – Advocacy for Social Change
- Turning Point - Fatal & Non-fatal overdoses in ex-prisoners seminar
- University of Melbourne, Mental Health First Aid-Training & Research Program course
- VCOSS Clever Ideas forum
- VCOSS Foresight Strategic training
- Vicarious Trauma training
- VLAFF CLAD Early Intervention is the way to go Forum
- 'Why more prisons are not the answer to reducing crime & disadvantage' moratorium
- WISP Quarterly Practice forum

Statement of Cash Flows

(For the period ending 30th June 2012)

Cash Flow from Operating Activities	2012	2011
Receipts for Monies in Trust	86,000	-
Receipts from grants etc.	425,209	543,273
Receipts from interest	19,966	15,088
Payments to suppliers and employees	(536,017)	(457,375)
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities (Note 2)	(4,842)	100,986
Cash Flow from Investing Activities		
Proceeds from (payment for) property, plant and equipment, and motor vehicles	(10,213)	(6,406)
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	(10,213)	(6,406)
Net increase (decrease) in cash held	(15,055)	94,580
Cash at beginning of year	410,632	316,052
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Cash at end of reporting period (Note 1)	395,577	410,632

Notes to the Statement of Cash Flows

NOTE 1. Reconciliation of cash

For the purposes of the statement of the cash flows, cash includes cash on hand and in at call deposits with banks or financial institutions, investments in money market instruments maturing within less than two months, net of bank overdrafts

(a) Reconciliation of Cash

Cash at the end of the reporting period as shown in the statement of cash flows is reconciled to the related items in the balance sheet as follows:

	2012	2011
Cash at Bank	395,002	410,122
Cash on Hand	575	510
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	395,577	410,632

NOTE 2. Reconciliation of net cash provided by operating activities to operating profit

	2012	2011
Operating Profit (Loss)	62,064	23,580
Depreciation/Amortisation	12,697	11,614
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	5,432	4
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	(12,489)	(6,534)
Increase/(decrease) in provisions	15,141	12,935
Increase/(decrease) in income in advance	(165,578)	59,387
Assets change-over	(8,109)	-
Increase/(decrease) in Funds in Trust	86,000	-
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	(4,842)	100,986

Flat Out Balance Sheet

As at 30 June 2012

	2012	2011
	\$	\$
Equity		
Committed Funds	292,638	230,573
Total Equity	292,638	230,573
Represented by:		
Current Assets		
Cash on Hand	200	285
Bond - Cabcharge	500	500
Main Cheque A/C		2
Bendigo Cheque A/C		31
HEF A/C		618
ANZ Online Saver	133,400	241,902
ANZ Term Deposit	257,990	161,834
ANZ Cheque A/C	3,612	5,737
Outreach Workers Floats	375	225
Trade Debtors		955
Other Debtors		4,477
	396,077	416,566
Non-Current Assets		
Motor Vehicles	45,780	60,731
Less Accumulated Depreciation	3,432	24,408
	42,348	36,323
Office Furniture & Equipment	29,246	28,230
Less Accumulated Depreciation	21,878	20,465
	7,368	7,765
	49,716	44,088
TOTAL ASSETS	445,793	460,654
Current Liabilities		
Sundry Creditors	-	172
Trade Creditors	659	2,230
Funds in Trust	86,000	-
Provision for Annual Leave	22,487	21,979
Provision for Long Service Leave	20,928	11,996
Provision for Sick Leave	17,053	11,352
Provision for GST	2,245	10,897
Accrued Charges	3,783	5,877
Income in Advance	-	165,578
Total Liabilities	153,155	230,081
NET ASSETS	292,638	230,573

Flat Out Income Statement

For the Year ended 30 June 2012

	2012	2011
	\$	\$
Income		
Auspice/Management Fees	15,983	7,950
Trust Income	-	3,314
Donations Income	14,782	7,693
Interest Received	19,960	15,088
Establishment Grant	10,909	-
Other Revenue	1,869	2,552
Dept of Health & Ageing Grants	183,931	152,705
Dept of Human Services Grants	170,851	151,153
HEF Grants	6,489	6,393
Hanover Grants (ICM)	93,708	90,270
Reichstein Foundation Grants	10,000	10,000
R E Ross Trust	-	42,955
Melb City Mission - WISP	12,396	9,990
Other Grants	37,189	(1,093)
Sidney Myer Foundation	30,000	-
Profit on Sale of Non-current Assets	8,112	-
	616,185	498,970
Expenditure		
Auditor fee	1,731	1,751
Auspice/Management fees	13,550	7,950
Bank Charges	100	268
CHRIP	3,814	9,060
Cleaning	2,914	2,023
Client Expenses	9,522	3,037
Collective Expenses	781	3,409
Consultancy Fees	-	2,637
Conferences	2,583	1,818
Computer Expenses	2,211	765
Depreciation	12,697	11,614
Establishment Cost	4,175	-
Fire Services	320	-
FOFO Expenses	669	920
HEF Expenses	6,217	6,362
Holiday Pay	284	2,803
Insurance	1,036	944
Light & Power	5,082	3,238
Long Service Leave	9,614	6,214
Meeting Expenses	1,196	327
Motor Vehicle Expenses	19,127	15,021
Office Equipments	-	966
OH & S Expenses	2,202	164
Promotional Materials	125	-

Notes to and Forming Part of the Financial Statements

For the Year ended 30 June 2012

Postage	735	835
Printing & Stationery	4,947	4,718
Relief Staff	5,683	-
Resources	52	23
Rent	48,943	35,943
Repairs & Maintenance	24	356
Rental Payments	1,583	-
Salaries	324,862	293,800
Security Costs	377	1,409
Sick Leave	4,764	4,344
Supervision	45	-
Staff Amenities & Welfare	3,369	2,365
Staff Training	3,445	631
Staff Recruitment	757	259
Sundry expenses	73	577
Subscriptions & Memberships	2,814	1,689
Superannuation Contributions	28,324	24,677
Telephone	10,602	9,793
Trust Payment	145	1,144
Travelling Expenses	4,271	4,531
Workcover	8,355	7,005
	554,120	475,390
OPERATING PROFIT	62,065	23,580

Flat Out Statement of Changes in Equity

For the Year ended 30 June 2012

	2012	2011
	\$	\$
Committed Funds at the beginning of the financial year	230,573	206,992
Profit (Loss) Attributable to Members	62,065	23,580
COMMITTED FUNDS AT 30 JUNE 2012	292,638	230,573

NOTE 1 – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

This financial report is a special purpose financial report that has been prepared in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards, Urgent Issues Group Consensus Views and other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board.

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historical costs and does not take into account changing money values or, except where stated, current valuations of non-current assets. Cost is based on the fair values of the consideration given in exchange for assets. The accounting policies have been consistently applied, unless otherwise stated.

The following is a summary of the material accounting policies adopted by the economic entity in the preparation of the financial report.

FIXED ASSETS

Each Class of fixed assets is carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets are depreciated using the prime cost method or the diminishing value method over their useful lives to the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

EMPLOYEE ENTITLEMENTS

Provision is made for the association's liability for employee entitlements arising from services rendered by employees to balance date. Employee entitlements expected to be settled within one year together with entitlements arising from wages and salaries, annual leave and sick leave which will be settled after one year, have been measured at their minimal amount. Other employee entitlements payable later than one year have been measured at the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made for those entitlements.

Contributions are made by the association to employee superannuation fund and are charged as expenses when incurred.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of the GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office. In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of the acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of the expense. Receivables and payables in the Balance Sheet are shown inclusive of GST.



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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the members of FLAT OUT INC.

Report on the Financial Report

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of **FLAT OUT INC** which comprises the balance sheet as at 30th June 2012 and the income statement, statement of changes in equity and cash flow statement for the year then ended, a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The management of are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report and have determined that the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, which form part of the financial report, are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The management's responsibility also includes designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used, as described in Note 1, are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the directors, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

The financial report has been prepared for distribution to members for the purpose of fulfilling the Management's financial reporting requirement. We disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial report to which it relates to any person other than the members or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

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



independence

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the relevant independence requirements.

Auditor's Opinion

In our opinion the financial report of **FLAT OUT INC.**

- (a) gives a true and fair view of **FLAT OUT INC's** financial position as at 30th June 2012 and of its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1, and
- (b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1


Janet Collyer
J L COLLYER & PARTNERS

30th July 2012



FLAT OUT WELCOMES YOUR SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT

- **YOU CAN ATTEND OUR PUBLIC FORUMS AND EVENTS**
- **PARTICIPATE AND OR PRESENT IN OUR EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY TRAININGS**
- **SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY EDUCATION WORK BY DISTRIBUTING OUR PUBLISHED MATERIALS**
- **IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION YOU CAN MAKE A TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION AT WWW.GIVENOW.COM.AU/FLATOUT**
- **YOU CAN BECOME A MEMBER OR ASSOCIATE MEMBER OF FLAT OUT**
- **STAY INFORMED THROUGH OUR WEBSITE AND FACE BOOK WWW.FLATOUT.ORG.AU**





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