

ANNUAL REPORT | 2020 – 2021





Flat Out Inc
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"fighting to protect the human rights of women (cisgender and transgender) and other trans and gender diverse people in prison"

Flat Out and its staff are committed to supporting the rights, safety, participation and empowerment of all children

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

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Photography by Flat Out

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How to get to Flat Out

Queen Victoria Women's Centre - Level 2/210 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne 3000

Plan your trip via <https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/>

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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, present and emerging 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 Nations who are 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 Nations 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 recognise 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 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.

We accept responsibility for challenging racism, exclusion and oppression in all its forms.



Special thank you

To the Women Flat Out has worked with over the past year, thank you for giving us the opportunity to work with you. Thank you for sharing your stories, insights, courage, advice and strength.

Thank you to our funders

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH)
North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network (NWMPHN)
Family Safety Victoria
The Brian and Virginia McNamee Foundation
Victorian Legal Services Board
Grassroots fundraising and donations
Magistrates' Court of Victoria
StreetSmart Australia

Donations

Aesop, Eastern Emergency Relief Network, Citycare Hillsong and volunteers, Share the Dignity, Western Emergency Relief Network, National Homeless Collective, Groomed 2 Go, Pets of Homeless, Project Underdog Rescue, Independent Mental Health Advocacy, Fitzroy Legal Service, Victorian Aboriginal Health Services, and all of our wonderful individual donors - there are too many of you to name - we are so grateful for your support
Share the Dignity, Citycare Hillsong and volunteers, Phone Cycle, and all of our wonderful individual donors

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

- Speaking at public forums and conferences
- Co-writing submissions and responses to inquiries
- In-kind donations of time and resources
- Co-advocacy with clients and on systemic issues
- Adam Robinson, CEO StreetSmart Australia
- Amanda George, Flat Out Board
- Antoinette Braybrook and the team, Djirra
- Billi Clarke, Community Advocate
- Caraniche
- Charandev Singh, Human Rights and Indigenous Education Advocate, Activist and Community Educator
- The Programs team at DPFC
- Council to Homeless Persons (CHP)
- David Humberstone and volunteers, Citycare Hillsong
- Debbie Kilroy and the team at Sisters Inside, QLD
- Eastern Emergency Relief Network
- Elizabeth Morgan House
- Flemington Kensington Legal Centre
- Heather Holst, Launch Housing and staff
- Hilary Knack, Flat Out Board
- Hui Zhou, Megan Pearce and the team at Fitzroy Legal Service
- Infoxchange
- Inner Melbourne Legal
- Jobs Australia
- Justice Connect
- Karen Fletcher, Flat Out Board
- Law Advocacy Centre for Women
- Launch Housing, Southbank and East St Kilda Women's House
- Local Area Service Network (LASN), North & West Metropolitan Region
- Malcolm Feiner, Corrections Resource Centre
- Mehran Erfanian, Centrax Computer Services
- Rebecca Bunn, Flat Out Board
- Salvation Army Housing Services, EastCare
- Sam Biondo, Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA)
- Smart Justice for Women
- St Kilda Crisis Centre
- St Kilda Legal Service
- Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS)
- Wendy Brokenshire
- WhiteDog GreenFrog IT consultants
- Women's Housing Ltd
- Unison Community Housing

Friends and Volunteers of Flat Out

Thank you to all the amazing Flat Out supporters and contributors who have given time, energy and resources.

It's your assistance and support that makes Flat Out a unique, strong organisation.

FLAT OUT BOARD MEMBERS

JULY 2020 – JUNE 2021

Amanda George, Hilary Knack, Karen Fletcher, Catherine Allision & Rebecca Bunn

FLAT OUT EMPLOYEES | JULY 2020– JUNE 2021

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| Elisa Buggy
<i>Executive Officer</i> | Sienna Cleland
<i>Women Inside and Out (WIAO)
Program Worker</i> | Caitlin Coleman
<i>Women Transforming Justice
Project Outreach</i> |
| Ayla Hope
<i>Manager, Practice and Service Design</i> | Lauren Caufield
<i>Advocacy Coordinator – Policing &
Family Violence: Changing the Story
Project</i> | Jiembra Shiels
<i>Chief Financial Officer</i> |
| Adriana Mackay
<i>Team Leader, Practice and Service
Delivery</i> | Witt Gorrie
<i>Outreach Social Worker – Policing &
Family Violence: Changing the Story
Project</i> | Patrizia Archivio
<i>Finance Manager</i> |
| Gabriela Franich
<i>Campaigner, Homes not Prisons</i> | Beck Chapman
<i>Outreach Support & Advocacy</i> | Rei Alphonso
<i>Family Violence Justice Project
Coordinator</i> |
| Hayley Gibbs
<i>Trainee Disability Program Worker</i> | Siobhan Neyland
<i>Outreach Support & Advocacy</i> | Ria Jago
<i>Manager Strategic Systemic
Advocacy</i> |
| Yasmine Jensen-Solyom
<i>Intake/Program Support Worker</i> | | |

A special thank you to the students who undertook their student placements with Flat Out and the contributions they made.



Organisation Overview

Flat Out is an independent, not for profit, community-based organisation that is managed by and for women (cisgender and transgender) and other trans and gender diverse people.

Flat Out is committed to co-creating safer spaces, fostering support and self-determination for people who identify as sistergirls, intersex, transgender and/or gender diverse women.

We respect that identity is for the individual to define and work collectively to ensure that people with these identities are accorded respect and access to our support and advocacy and provided ongoing opportunities to inform policies concerning the intersection of their identities with experiences of criminalisation.

Flat Out Management Collective Board embraces fairness and equality through the essential roles of governance, management and leadership that are underpinned by a comprehensive set of values, policies and procedures and delegated authority.

Flat Out is a state-wide homelessness support and advocacy service for women 18+, (with/without children) who have had contact with the criminal justice and/or prison system in Victoria. Flat Out receives government funding through the Department of Health and Human Services (Victoria), the North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network (NWMPHN), the Department of Health (Federal), Family Safety Victoria, through the Victorian Legal Services Board and project funds from various sources to increase our capacity to deliver innovative and effective services, advocacy and social change. Government funding is for the purpose of providing individualised support and advocacy for women (with/without children) to address homelessness, drug and alcohol treatment and a range of other support and advocacy to address the underlying causes of criminalisation.

Independent funding is raised through donations, grants and grassroots fundraising for the purposes of Flat Out's social change and systemic advocacy work.

We are also grateful to the generosity of the Brian and Virginia McNamee Foundation, without whom we could not have set up our new innovative support program, the Women Inside and Out project.

Flat Out leads and participates in research and community education, seeking to inform the wider community about the harms that occur for women in the criminal justice system. Flat Out works directly with women who have experienced criminalisation and/or incarceration and to improve the rights and conditions of women in prison. Flat Out works to prevent women from going to prison and keeping women out of prison once they are released.

The theories and values that underpin Flat Out's work have remained constant since Flat Out's inception (1988). Through community involvement, education and research, Flat Out works toward having a strong voice in the prison abolition movement in Australia and internationally. Our vision is that eventually prisons will be viewed as antiquated, cruel and ineffective institutions. Not unlike the movements to abolish slavery; movements to end racism; the women's liberation movement, and the movement to end homelessness. Flat Out seeks to work alongside diverse communities to end all forms of inequality and unfairness. We see all these movements as interconnected.



Flat Out Strategic Plan 2020-2023

Our Vision

Women (cisgender and transgender) and other trans and gender diverse people are not criminalised or imprisoned.

Flat Out Values

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's as the first peoples of Australia
- Our organisation being run by and for women
- Working with women (and their children) who are criminalised
- Providing high quality support services and advocacy
- Freedom, equality and self-determination
- Social justice and economic opportunities for all
- Everyone has the right to lead safe, violence-free lives
- Being part of a movement to end criminalisation and imprisonment
- Working with the wider community toward our vision

How we will get there.

- We will maintain Flat Out as an independent, not for profit organisation
- We will remain focussed on working with women who are criminalised
- We will provide high quality woman centred support and advocacy
- We will support women to obtain appropriate and affordable housing
- We will support women in their journeys to good health and wellbeing
- We will support women to reconnect with family and community
- We will actively promote effective alternatives to criminalisation and imprisonment
- We will lead and contribute to effective social and systemic change
- We will work with the wider community towards our vision

Key challenges for this plan

- Achieving Flat Out's vision and plan in a period of heightened focus on law and order, changes to sentencing practices and unprecedented prison expansion
- Securing Flat Out's substantive funding (government and philanthropic) beyond June 2021
- Returning our organisational deficit to surplus whilst maintaining quality improvements
- Retaining our skilled and committed Board, employees and volunteers

Key Result Areas

Key Result Area 1:

Led by Women's Lived Experience
All platforms of Flat Out's activity are driven by women's lived experience.

Key Result Area 2:

Exemplary Outreach Support and Advocacy

Flat Out's direct support service activities are for women 18+ who have had contact with the criminal justice and/or prison system in Victoria; with a focus on women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and for women seeking support to access drug and alcohol treatment and other therapeutic services.

Key Result Area 3:

Effective Systemic Advocacy and Social Change

Over its 34 years of operation Flat Out has achieved a unique and respected position in the wider community as an advocate for systemic and social change. This role is an integral part of Flat Out's commitment to the rights of all women involved in the criminal justice system and the long term vision of abolishing prisons.

Key Result Area 4:

Strategic Organisational Development

Flat Out has dedicated Board members, employees and volunteer activists that implement our vision and plans. Stakeholders and partners are also crucial to Flat Out's strength and viability. Flat Out is continually improving and strengthening its work through regular review, reflection and change. We are a learning and adaptive organisation.

Key Result Area 5:

Innovative Financial Sustainability and Capacity Building

Flat Out receives recurrent government funding as well as funding and grants from non-government and independent sources for specific initiatives including Flat Out's systemic advocacy and social change work. Flat Out has continued to grow, dedicating significant resources to organisational development and improved services. This plan acknowledges Flat Out's sustained focus on continuous quality improvement. To achieve this Flat Out will maintain its commitment to generating income from diverse sources to achieve the future directions of the organisation.

Executive Officers Report

What an extraordinary year to be part of such an extraordinary organisation! Through the thick of a pandemic, and in some of the most difficult collective times we may ever see in our lifetimes, I have been so inspired and humbled by the dedication and commitment of the Flat Out family, from our wonderful supporters, partners, Board members, and staff, to – most importantly – the people we support.

The pandemic has been challenging for all of us in our own way. The sense of loss and isolation that we have all experienced at different levels will leave lasting impacts on us all and especially on those who have faced the uncertainties of COVID-19 while imprisoned, or out on the streets, or living in violence.

Given the challenges faced in delivering advocacy and assertive outreach services in the midst of an ever changing landscape of health-related restrictions, I have been so proud of our team at Flat Out who embraced a rapid shift to remote working and continued to provide support in a safe and considered way throughout the year – providing advocacy and assertive outreach to more than 150 people both inside prison and in the community.

In addition to our continued outreach and advocacy services, we were also able to:

- continue our involvement in the extremely successful Women Transforming Justice program – so much so that more than 70% of people on the program in 2020 would not have been granted bail but for the support they received from Flat Out and our incredible partners at the Law and Advocacy Centre for Women and Fitzroy Legal Service;
- increase our innovative Women Inside and Out program that provides women with continuous support for six months pre release and up to twelve months post release, including winning a national SIMNA award for innovation in our social impacts measurement framework;
- reignite our partnerships and relationships with a range of housing support, alcohol and other drug, mental

health, family violence, and legal services ensure easier access pathways for people we support;

- strengthen our ties with the incredible Policing Family Violence program by welcoming Lauren Caulfield and Witt Gorrie into the team;
- support the Trans and Gender Diverse community in prisons in Victoria through hosting the voluntary support work of Witt Gorrie;
- welcome three social work students completing their placements in extraordinary times;
- expand our team through the Working for Victoria program to meet the increased needs of people throughout the pandemic; and
- find a new home for Flat Out at the QV Women's Centre after four years at Ballarat Road in Footscray.

We could not have done any of this and so much more without the support of our generous donors, our funders, our volunteers, students, partners, incredible staff and Board members. Thank you in particular to our wonderful funders at DFFH, Family Safety Victoria, and the North West Melbourne Primary Health Network. To the Brian and Virginia McNamee Foundation, the Women's Trust Victoria, the Legal Services Board of Victoria, and StreetSmart. To all of our incredible donors and supporters. To

“We could not have done any of this and so much more without the support of our generous donors, our funders, our volunteers, students, partners, incredible staff and Board members”.

our amazing donors, of which there are too many to name. To our volunteers (Eleanor, Natalia, Imogen, Camille and Georgia). And to our Board members, Hilary Knack, Karen Fletcher, Amanda George, Rebecca Bunn, Nina Springle and Catherine Allison.

Thank you to our amazing team – Ayla Hope, Adriana Mackay, Sienna Cleland, Caitlin Coleman, Beck Chapman, Siobhan Neyland, Yasmine Jensen-Solyom, Rei Alphonso, Lauren Caulfield, Witt Gorrie, Denise Taylor, Patrizia Archivio, Jiembra Shiels, Donna Annetta, Justine Toki and Ria Jago – and our wonderful locums

And finally, a very special thank you to Michele Old who, after 13 years as the backbone of our organisation, left us at the end of 2020. The place is so very different without you, Michele and you will always be considered part of the Flat Out family. Thank you so much for all of your commitment over the years.

Elisa Buggy, Executive Officer Flat Out

Chair report

Surviving imprisonment, preparing for release and building a safe and sustainable life on the outside are a massive challenge at any time. The COVID 19 pandemic has continued to make things even more challenging.

At time of writing, in early 2022, people in prison are entering a third year of solitary quarantines, lockdowns and restrictions on personal and professional visits, programs and supports. On the outside there are complex public health rules and requirements that are virtually impossible for people without homes, internet or other resources to navigate. The result is increases in anxiety, isolation and health risk to formerly incarcerated people and their families. Support needs have never been higher and our capacity to provide support has never been more stretched.

Flat Out continues to walk beside women leaving prison – albeit often “virtually” by phone and video link during the pandemic - and in 2021 we have welcomed the crowdfunded Beyond Bricks and Bars program that supports trans and gender diverse people inside and on release.

In 2020/21 there were around 400 women imprisoned on any one day at the Dame Phyllis Frost and Tarrengower Correctional Centres, down from around 600 pre-pandemic. Despite this, the Victorian Government appears to be pressing ahead with plans to expand DPFC by 106 cells to a capacity of over 700. Flat Out continues to support the Homes not Prisons campaign calling for the extension to be scrapped and the budget allocated to priority public housing for criminalised women and their kids.

Around 50 people are released from the two women’s prisons each month in 2020/21. Close to one third had spent less than a month in prison and over 90% less than 12 months. The “churn” of people remanded in prison for short periods means more women – and particularly Aboriginal women suffer imprisonment over the course of the year. Although there are currently around 400 women in prison on any one day, more than 2000 women did short stints in Victorian prisons in 2020/21.

In 2020/21, for the first time, there were more unsentenced women awaiting trial on remand at DPFC than there were women serving sentences.

The continuing key driver of this very serious problem are changes to the Victorian bail laws in recent years that have largely removed the presumption that an accused person should be released on bail while awaiting trial unless the state can show they pose a risk to community. Flat Out continues to follow the lead of the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and work with many

other organisations and coalitions to campaign for imprisonment as a last, not a first, resort – as recommended by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody more than thirty years ago.

Aboriginal women are the group most affected by the steep increases in imprisonment on remand and were, again, the fastest growing cohort of people in Victorian prisons this past year.

Two young Aboriginal women, Veronica Nelson and Ms Calgaret have died in custody at DPFC in the last three years. Flat Out extends our condolences and support to the families, friends and communities who are seeking answers to their questions about their deaths through the Coronial inquests that will continue through 2022.

The Board is very grateful to the staff, students and volunteers who, despite intense challenges, continued to walk beside women, trans and gender diverse people to re-establish lives in the community. The past year has seen hundreds of calls made to obtain housing, hours in court support, generously donated material aid gathered and distributed, bonds paid, Centrelink secured, families reunited and jobs secured. Each small victory makes a profound difference - even though we all wish it could be more and we continue to strive together for more resources – especially more housing! - and systemic change.

Particular thanks to our outgoing Executive Officer Elisa Buggy for her energetic, skilful and compassionate leadership over the last two years. In her time as EO Elisa has developed a diverse and expert team and a culture of mutual support and shared values at Flat Out.

In 2020/21, despite the challenges, the team has achieved an incredible amount including:

- Introduction and continual revision of COVIDSafe working arrangements, including the technology and systems required for staff and students to

work remotely and still be well supported

- A move from our house on Ballarat Rd in Footscray to new digs in the Queen Victoria Women’s Centre in Lonsdale Street in the city
- An organisational restructure to strengthen our operational, financial and administrative foundations
- An increase in annual income from grants and donations to (for the first time) just over \$1 million.
- Recruitment of our treasurer, Catherine Allison and development of specialised committees of the Board
- Establishment of the Beyond Bricks and Bars program
- Submissions and oral evidence to a range of inquiries including into policing and family violence, homelessness and the criminal legal system

Elisa leaves Flat Out a much stronger team because of the collaborative processes, clear strategic goals and improved infrastructure she put in place. We thank her for this legacy and wish her all the very best.

Our next urgent challenge is to secure ongoing funding to employ longer term staff, reduce insecure work and short contracts and stabilise our team and funding base. In the next few years we also hope to raise funds to purchase a house that can host a diverse range of services people need after release from prison – material aid, parenting support and advocacy, access to computers and IT support, AOD, financial counselling and other counselling services etc. To guide and implement these developments we are committed to recruiting more people with lived experience and expertise to both the Board and staff. Exciting times ahead!

Hilary Knack and Karen Fletcher
For the Flat Out Board 2020/21



Elisa Buggy

Outreach Support and Advocacy Team

The Outreach team at Flat Out has undergone many new and exciting changes over the last year.

The program now comprises of a Team Leader, Practice and Service Delivery, Outreach Support & Advocacy workers, Women Inside & Out Program worker, Program Support worker, Trainee Disability Support Worker and a small number of students on placement. The team have successfully supported 75 women and gender diverse people, while continuously adapting their practice to promote public health measures during the global pandemic. The 75 people we have supported is not inclusive of their children and family, who we are often working with also.

We are absolutely thrilled to welcome 'Beyond Bricks & Bars' to the team. Beyond Bricks & Bars delivers vital work to trans and gender diverse people who are impacted by the criminal legal system.

Our team have demonstrated extraordinary resilience whilst working under the restraints of a global pandemic and continue to demonstrate new and creative ways of providing the high level of support that is required for the people we support. The team has done this successfully amid a very challenging environment.

In the previous 12 months our Team Leader has worked closely with all staff to review and implement best practice frameworks into our day-to-day practice. We are making sure our standard is always best practice and these practices are driven by people with lived experience.

RAISE THE RATE FOR GOOD

"Women can now pay their rent AND buy some food, instead of only having enough money for one of these.

One woman I work with bought herself a new dress for the first time in 10 years. She said the dress was really nice but the best thing about it was that buying something made her feel like a normal person."
- Caitlin Coleman, Flat Out



Women Inside and Out Program

The Women Inside and Out program has successfully provided assertive inreach and outreach support to fifteen women with one consistent key worker across both Dame Phyllis Frost Centre and HM Tarrengower since it's commencement in August of 2020.

While managing the challenges of remote delivery during this time, the program has pivoted to be able to provide remote inreach in the form of regular video calls and distance creative therapeutic interventions with women during their time incarcerated, as well as remote advocacy, case management and support to women once they enter the community. We work collaboratively with women towards reaching their self-identified goals, centring their voices and expertise and empowering women to feel independent in their community. The program has supplied all women exiting custody with phones and sim cards, material aid, support with accommodation and connection to other important services within the community.

The generous funding support provided by Womens Trust Victoria has enabled the program to successfully support a great deal of women to explore their passions, skills and hobbies as well as education, training and employment opportunities, and the lovely folks at Groomed to Go have supplied all women in need with tailored Emergency Clothing Packs to enable a smoother transition from custody. So far, the majority of women being supported report higher rates of life stability than prior to entering custody. We look forward to maintaining this important work to support and resource women to continue on their own chosen paths towards self-defined safety, freedom and success.



PFV report

The policing family violence project responds to police accountability issues, duty failures and harms related to family violence policing, and seeks to intervene into and prevent the criminalisation of people experiencing family violence.

We undertake this project in primary partnership with the Police Accountability Project (Flemington & Kensington Community Legal Centre) and guided by an accountability network of people with lived experience who contribute to our advocacy and other work, and a working group including the Law & Advocacy Centre for Women, St Kilda Legal Service and Inner Melbourne Community Legal - to whom we are immensely grateful.

In the last twelve months we have focused on work exposing and responding to police-perpetrated family violence, as well as the wrongful identification of victim-survivors of family violence and the criminalising consequences of this – which shows lived experiences of racist and discriminatory policing. We have worked with the leadership and guidance of survivors to generate media coverage and public advocacy around this, to build public pressure and scrutiny around these issues, and to critique and problematise the notion that police are uncomplicated sites of safety for all victim-survivors. Through fluctuating lockdowns in the Covid context, we triaged legal and support work to prioritise family violence crisis response, managing risk and providing assistance to challenge criminalisation and incarceration through family violence policing.

We continue to provide legal assistance in the areas of interventions orders and family violence legal support, criminal law assistance or referrals and advice on civil remedies. We also provide social work support and run a narrative therapy 'storytelling project' with people experiencing the intersecting impacts of family violence and harms related to policing. The project can be contacted via advocacy@flatout.org.au



Homes not prisons

On 19 March 2021 the Victorian Government announced construction of 106 new cells at the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, a maximum-security prison for women in Ravenhall in Melbourne's west at a cost of \$188.9 million. The expansion includes two new 20-bed "Management Units" for solitary confinement.

Dame Phyllis Frost currently has capacity to imprison 604 women. In June 2020, at the height of the COVID pandemic, there were around 330 women in the prison. Numbers are now increasing again and are currently over 400.

Expansion of Victoria's women prison is part of a \$1.8 billion expansion of prisons for women, men, transgender and gender diverse people across Victoria announced in the 2019/20 Victorian Budget. Despite reductions in prisoner numbers in Victoria during the COVID pandemic the Andrews Government remains committed to building thousands of new prison cells.

Homes not Prisons is a campaign calling on the Victorian Government to stop the expansion of Dame Phyllis Frost and re-allocate the budget for prison building to public housing to provide "housing first" and support for criminalised women and their children.

Victoria spends the least on public housing per capita of any Australian state or Territory. The Big Housing Build announced in the 2020/21 budget is focused on privately operated "community" and "affordable" housing and will not increase public housing accessible to criminalised and highly disadvantaged women and families.

To find out more about this campaign please visit <https://homesnotprisons.com.au/>

BUILD HOMES NOT PRISONS

FLAT OUT **DON'T EXPAND**
DAME PHYLLIS FROST WOMEN'S PRISON



Family Violence Justice Project

**Rei Alphonso –
Family Violence Justice Project Coordinator**

The Family Violence Justice Project (FV Justice Project) was piloted in 2019 in response to the findings of the Royal Commission into Family Violence (RCFV) which identified that criminalised women experience high rates of family violence, yet have very poor engagement with the service system.

Family Safety Victoria (FSV) funded Flat Out to undertake this project with the aim of improving the accessibility and responsiveness of the service system for women who are criminalised and experiencing family violence. We developed a dedicated role in partnership with FSV to lead the project across the following key domains:

- Professional Education and Community Development
- Relationships and Partnerships
- Policy and Advocacy; and
- Data and Evaluation.

Now in its third phase, the project has become an integral piece in the work of the Systemic Advocacy Team. Despite the challenges and restrictions posed by COVID, the project has continued to engage in internal and external capacity building including training, resource development, research, data and evaluation, and collaborative development of a Best Practice Framework that ensures the integrity of Flat Out's values are embedded in all the work we do, providing a bridge

between individual advocacy and service delivery, operational development and sector capacity building. This work is centred at all times on the living expertise of the people Flat Out seeks to support. For example, this infographic is taken from a co-designed practice resource the project developed, which aimed to inform practitioners about the impact of systemic harm on women who have been criminalised and the barriers to service access these harms create.

During Phase 3 the project achieved a number of outcomes further illustrating this integrated and holistic approach to supporting practice and advocacy including –

- A grant from the Social Equity Centre at Melbourne University to fund a research project titled: Co-organisation development and support: a framework for peer-based harm reduction and decarceration in partnership with Harm Reduction Victoria
- The development and delivery of 24 tailored online training packages for external services across homelessness, mental health, AOD and Family Violence
- A place on the research committee for the Lean on Me study, looking at peer based responses to suicide prevention in LGBTIQ communities.
- Specialised consult to a number of networks and advisory bodies including Smart Justice for Women, Keeping Women Out of the Justice System, the Family Violence Implementation Reform Monitor and consulting on the development of the MARAM framework and the Predominant Aggressor Assessment framework.
- Providing on the ground outreach and advocacy during the hard lockdown of the Flemington-Kensington public housing towers, including the co-ordination of a specialist advocacy network and the successful submission of a report to the PAEC investigation into the state governments response to COVID19.

They won't get it,
why bother.

They'll just tell me to call
the cops if things get bad

There's nowhere
I can go

They just think
I'm crazy

Where can I
be safe?

Why don't they
want to help me

What about
the kids?

It's all my
fault

I'll just end
up back
inside
anyway

I'm failing



StreetSmart Grant

Essential Support Program

Flat Out is very grateful to StreetSmart for funds 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.

Emergency and essential items included

- Emergency accommodation expenses (where other funds are not available)
- Emergency food where other sources are not available
- Household items such as kitchen utensils, sheets/doona/pillows
- Mobile phones and phone cards
- MYKI and Day Passes
- Pharmacotherapy and other prescription medication
- Proof of identification documents
- Refurbished computers/IT hardware for women seeking education and employment
- Specialist psychological and other medical reports

- Sport and recreation memberships and/or equipment
- Undergarments, warm clothing, footwear and other essential clothing

Homelessness continues to be a common feature in the underlying circumstances for why women go to prison. The result of a tough on crime environment is that more homeless people will be targeted and imprisoned unless we can provide a timely, targeted and practical crisis response.

Thank you to Adam Robinson
& StreetSmart



Flat Out Protocols & Partnerships

FLAT OUT HAS PROTOCOLS WITH THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES:

- Dame Phyllis Frost Centre (DPFC)
- Haven HomeSafe
- Launch Housing – East St Kilda Women’s House and Southbank
- Local Area Service Network (LASN), North West Metropolitan Region
- Salvation Army, EastCare Housing Services
- St Kilda Crisis Centre
- Women’s Housing Limited
- Unison Community Housing

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

- Launch Housing
- Salvation Army, EastCare Housing Services
- Women’s Housing Limited
- Unison Community Housing

Training and professional development undertaken by Flat Out

- Footscray, Leaders Information Sharing and Introduction to the Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (MARAM) Information Sharing sessions
- Imagining Abolition, A World Without Prisons, Sisters Inside Conference
- Launch Housing Southbank orientation
- Vic First Aid, First Aid Level 2 accredited training
- Caraniche Forensic AOD Workforce training
- DPFC Orientation training

Flat Out INC - Balance Sheet As at 30th June 2021

CURRENT ASSETS	2021	2020
Cash at bank	479,944	287,136
Term deposit	460,000	450,314
Accounts receivable		131,403
Other receivables		934
Prepayments	20,939	100
Security bonds	10,604	3,300
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	971,487	873,187
Non-Current Assets		
Property, Plant and Equipment		
Furniture & equipment - at cost	81,630	74,328
Less accumulated depreciation	(66,998)	(56,262)
Leasehold improvements - at cost -		44,285
Less accumulated depreciation -		(10,494)
Motor vehicles - at cost	53,967	53,967
Less accumulated depreciation	(52,600)	(48,337)
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	15,999	57,487
TOTAL ASSETS	987,486	930,674
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable	16,126	1,255
Accrued expenses	6,686	9,678
Credit card	1,971	1,949
Funds in trust	45,998	72,998
GST payable	21,507.2	6,416
PAYG withholding tax payable	13,568	9,792
Superannuation payable	8,180	6,220
Income received in advance	399,051	371,570
Provision for annual leave	69,084	38,560
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	582,171	538,438
Non-Current Liabilities		
Provision for long service leave	1,049	1,943
Total Non-Current Liabilities	1,049	1,943
TOTAL LIABILITIES	583,220	540,381
NET ASSETS	404,266	390,293
EQUITY		
Accumulated funds	404,266	390,293

Flat Out INC Profit and Loss for the year ending 30 June 2021

INCOME	2021	2020
Grant Income	\$1,120,002	\$84,724
Interest Received	\$7,925	\$5,371
Donation and Fundraising Income	\$39,668	\$13,349
Trust income	\$27,000	\$45,000
Training Income	\$-	\$500,00
Registration & Membership Fees	\$-	\$72,000
COV ID-19 government assistance payment: Cash Flow Boost	\$51,642	\$38,108
Other Income	\$614	\$-
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,246,851	\$949,647
EXPENDITURE		
Administration Expenses	\$55,267	\$46,999
Client Expenses	\$41,871	\$34,762
Communications Expenses	\$12,299	\$14,076
Depreciation and Amortisation	\$10,736	\$7,693
Insurance	\$-	\$3,080
Loss on Scrapping of Fixed Assets	\$33,791	\$-
Premises Expenses	\$49,460	\$50,681
Staff Salaries, Wages and Related Expenses	\$1,029,454	\$761,869
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	\$1,232,878	\$919,160
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE ASSOCIATION	\$13,973	\$30,487

Independent Auditor's report 2020-2021

FLAT OUT INC
ABN 68 037 026 364
INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS

Opinion

I have audited the accompanying financial report of Flat Out Inc (the Association), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2021, and the income and expenditure statement, statement of changes in equity and cash flow statement for the year ended on that date, a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes and the statement by the members of the Board.

In my opinion, the financial report of the Association is in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012* and the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* (Victoria), including:

- i. giving a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30 June 2021 and of its performance for the year ended; and
- ii. complying with Australian Accounting Standards as per Note 1, the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012 and the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.

Basis for Opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. I am independent of the Association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution

I draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist Flat Out Inc to meet the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012 and the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. My opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Report

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the applicable legislation and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Association's financial reporting process.



FLAT OUT WELCOMES YOUR SUPPORT & INVOLVEMENT

YOU CAN ATTEND OUR PUBLIC FORUMS AND EVENTS

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 OR CONTACT FLAT OUT

YOU CAN BECOME A MEMBER OR ASSOCIATE MEMBER OF FLAT OUT

WWW.FLATOUT.ORG.AU

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THANK
YOU!



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