



Welcome To Flat Out Information Kit

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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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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.

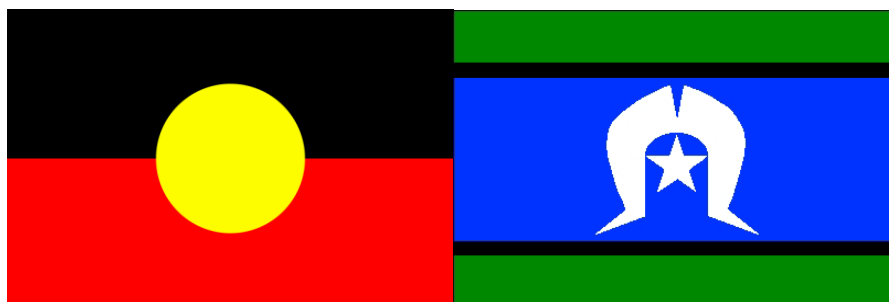
We recognise the loss and grief held by Indigenous people in Australia caused by alienation from traditional lands, the loss of lives and freedoms, and the forced removal of children.

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.





WELCOME to Flat Out Information Kit Index and Check List

Welcome to Flat Out Information Kit contains the following information:	Please tick once you have seen and read below
• About Flat Out	
• About this kit	
• How to access Flat Out (Flow Chart)	
• Flat Out Support Service Standards and Responsibilities	
• Key Contacts	
• Flat Out Client's Rights	
• About your Personal Information	
• Client access to file or record	
• Flat Out Client Feedback Form	
• Complaints Procedure	
Other documents as well as the Welcome to Flat Out Information Kit	
1. DHS Your Rights & Responsibilities Consumer Charter (booklet and card)	
2. Homelessness Advocacy Service (HAS) card	
3. Flat Out Consent Form	
4. Flat Out Support Agreement	
5. Flat Out Client feedback form	

Please ask your support worker for a copy of this page to sign and keep on your file.

I can confirm that I have received and I understand the above documents:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Given to me by:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____



About Flat Out

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 Health and Human Services, the Department of Health and occasional project funds from various sources to enhance its capacity to provide innovative and effective services and advocacy.

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. 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.



About this kit

FLAT OUT'S Welcome Kit is yours to keep and use. If you can think of anything else that might be useful to include, **please tell us**. We value your ideas.

The kit includes information on:

- Flat Out;
- Services, people and places that may be of use to you: **Key Contact Numbers**;
- There is also information on your rights: **FLAT OUT CLIENT'S RIGHTS** and responsibilities while being supported by Flat Out;
- There is a feedback form where we welcome any feedback you might have about the services and information provided to you by Flat Out;
- There is also information about making a complaint if you are not happy with Flat Out services or individual workers;
- If you have any comments or suggestions for other ideas that would improve this kit, please let us know. We welcome and value your feedback, as you know best what makes a good support service to meet your needs;
- **FLAT OUT** will endeavour to meet your negotiated support plan.

Flat Out has a number of annual reports and publications. You are welcome to visit the Flat Out office to collect any of these publications, or your support worker can get a copy for you.

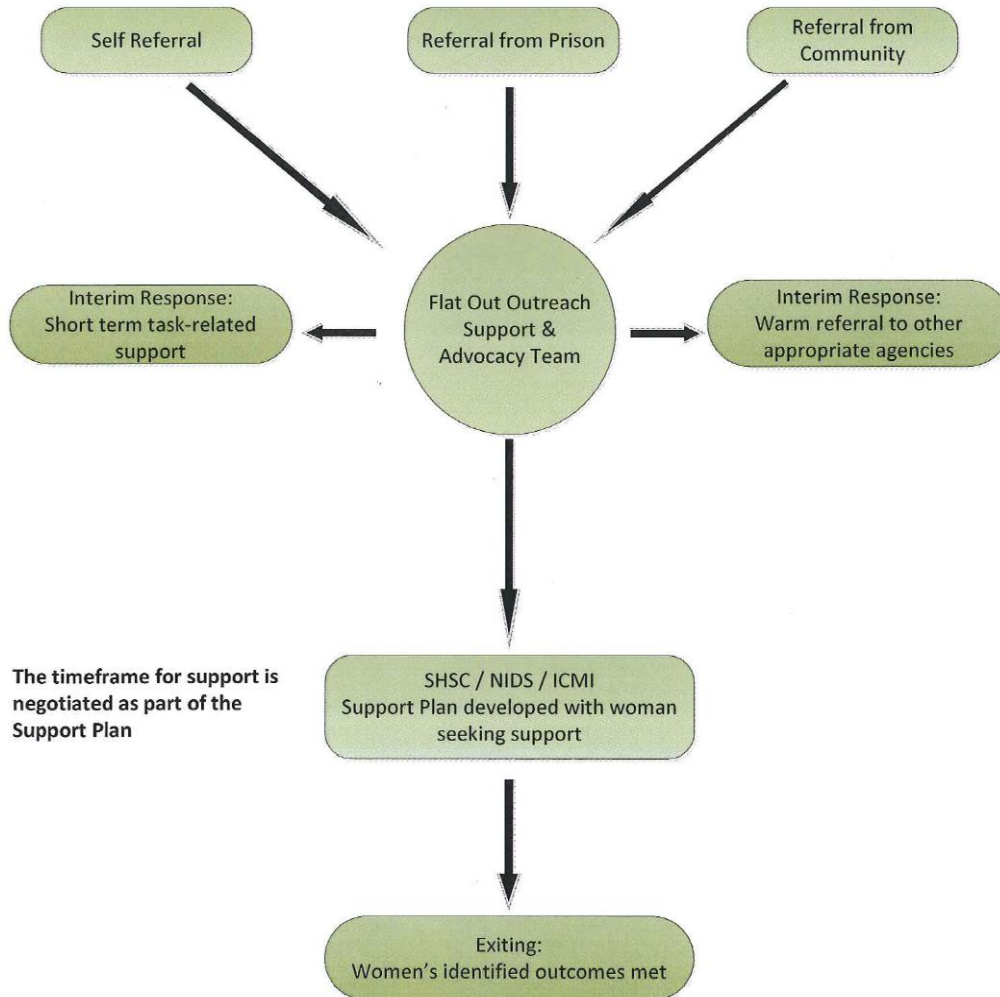
Publications include:

- An 'End to Prisons' poster
- 'Flat Out Inc: A Brief Herstory' which talks about Flat Out and what Flat has done since it started in 1988
- 'Call Me By My First Name' was written by women who have spent time in jail.
- Flat Out also has a website www.flatout.org.au and Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/FlatOutInc/>



How to access Flat Out Support & Advocacy Flowchart

Flat Out does not maintain a waiting list





FLAT OUT SUPPORT SERVICE STANDARDS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Support

It is expected that you will have regular contact with your support worker as agreed; and notify of any changes of circumstances. By having regular contact with Flat Out, you are demonstrating your commitment to work towards identified goals and outcomes.

Flat Out is a **voluntary homelessness and drug and alcohol support service** that works with women who are criminalised; it's your right to decide whether or not you receive support from Flat Out.

If you decide you want support from Flat Out, we will work with you on a negotiated support plan.

If you decide not to accept support from Flat Out, we will assess your support needs, and where possible Flat Out will refer you to a more appropriate service.

Homelessness

Flat Out is a specialist homelessness **support provider** funded to support women who are exiting prison or who are at risk of being imprisoned, by providing access and referrals to appropriate and affordable providers of transitional, supported, private, public or community housing. Flat Out is **not a housing service**.

Safety

Flat Out will work in a manner that looks after the safety of both support workers and clients. This means, for example, an alternative meeting place will need to be arranged if violence is known to be occurring at your place of residence. It also means that support workers are responsible for ensuring that the Flat Out office environment is safe for you to visit and that Flat Out cars are safe and fitted with appropriate child safety equipment.

Duty of Care

Flat Out has a 'Duty of Care' to women being supported by our service. This means that if a Flat Out support worker has assessed that you may be at risk of harming yourself or others, or if you are in danger, then the support worker must act on this information and contact relevant services and support.



Duty of Care to Children

Flat Out believes that children deserve to live in a safe and supported environment and sometimes need extra help and support. If support workers become aware that a child is at risk of abuse, neglect, or harm, then support workers must act. Flat Out support workers will make every effort to work with women to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their child/ren. However if a child remains at risk, then Flat Out support workers may need to notify child protection agencies.

Abusive Behaviour

Abusive Behaviour **will not be tolerated**. It is the **responsibility of Flat Out clients** to respect the rights of staff to work in an environment which is free from abuse. It is the responsibility of Flat Out workers to **respect** the rights of clients. If there is an abuse of worker or client rights, either party has the ability to make a complaint and/or cease the support relationship immediately.

Accessibility

Flat Out is committed to universal access and providing a fully inclusive service that is sensitive to:

- identity
- heritage
- life experience
- age
- gender identity
- sexual orientation
- religion
- race
- language
- ability
- country and culture of origin
- important relationships and networks



Your rights as a woman being supported by Flat Out

- I have the right to negotiate a support plan with Flat Out.
- I have the right to end my support with Flat Out.
- I have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- I have the right to have my privacy and confidentiality respected.
- I have the right to be assisted by my support worker, but not pressured into any course of action.
- I have the right to make decisions about my own life.
- I have the right to express my feelings safely.
- I have the right to continue my cultural and religious practices and retain the language of my choice without discrimination.
- I have the right to receive interpreter and translation services and culturally appropriate support services.
- I have the right to be free from physical, sexual, emotional & verbal abuse.
- I have the right to live without discrimination or victimisation.
- I have the right to have my dealings with this service treated in a confidential manner.
- I have the right to request a change of support worker and Flat Out will consider this request.
- I have the right to give feedback to Flat Out and to use the Flat Out complaints procedure if I have a problem with the support service provided to me.
- I have the right to be referred to another service if Flat Out is not able to meet my support needs.



YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION

When you are supported by **Flat Out** a file is created and regularly updated as a record of your support relationship with Flat Out. The file contains identifying information such as your name, age, nationality, contact details and other information about your support plan.

YOUR QUESTIONS

OUR ANSWERS

<i>Who gets my information?</i>	As well as your support worker, other support workers in the team may see your file.
<i>Why do you need my information?</i>	So we can keep a record of our work together and your involvement with our service. It is also a legal obligation.
<i>Do I have to give you this information?</i>	You don't have to give us information that you would rather not tell us. However, by giving us true information, you will help us provide a better standard of service for you.
<i>Will Flat Out get my permission if my information is shared by others?</i>	Flat Out will seek your consent. When we need to collect information about you, or we have to ask someone else, we will always try to ask you beforehand. If information is to be shared we would get your written permission first, except in duty of care situations e.g. child protection risk or self-harm or suicide risk.
<i>Can I see my records?</i>	You can make a written or verbal request to see your file and a support worker or the Executive Officer of Flat Out will go through it with you, however if we think it could cause harm to someone else referred to in your file, we may not, by privacy and confidentiality law, be able to provide such information. **Flat Out is required by law to respond to your request to see you file within 45 business days



<p><i>What if my records are wrong?</i></p>	<p>You let us know and if we agree, we will amend them.</p>
<p><i>What if someone wants to see my information?</i></p>	<p>We will give your information to others only when you have agreed to it or in situations when we are required by law. We would only provide a copy, not the original. There may be times when we hold back information so that others are protected. This is a requirement under law.</p>
<p><i>Where is my file kept?</i></p>	<p>Your hard copy and electronic file is kept in a safe and secure system. Your files on the computer are password protected.</p>
<p><i>Flat Out data collection</i></p>	<p>Flat Out is required to collect and submit non-identifying data for our funders for the purposes of service accountability and improvement.</p>
<p><i>Organisational Review by funders</i></p>	<p>The Accreditation Reviewers will see SHIP client files, including case notes unless access to this is declined by the client.</p>
<p><i>Any other questions?</i></p>	<p>Don't hesitate to ask your support worker if you have other questions about the recording and storing of your personal information. You can also access the Privacy Policy from your support worker or any other worker at Flat Out, or with the support of an external advocacy service such as Homelessness Advocacy Service (HAS).</p>



COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Flat Out welcomes any complaints you have about our service because it helps us to improve our service. Flat Out has a Complaints Policy and associated procedures which you can ask for a copy of at any time.

Flat Out clients have the right to have their grievances heard and dealt with in a responsive, systematic and confidential manner and without fear of reprisal and without it having a negative impact on your support.

If you would like to make a complaint about our service, or any of our workers, you can do so either directly to Flat Out or independently through the **Homelessness Advocacy Service (HAS)**.

How to complain

Direct to Flat Out

Please contact the service and speak to the Executive Officer, or if the complaint is about the Executive Officer, then please ask to speak to a Management Collective (board) member. You will then be informed of your rights and responsibilities regarding the complaints process, and given a copy of the Complaints Policy and Procedures. The Executive Officer/OR support worker will support you through the process of having your complaint heard and investigated.

Formal Complaint – External

- Contact the Homelessness Advocacy Service (HAS)
Free call 1800 066 256 to make an appointment
Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm
- Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC)
Ph. 1300 292 153
- Disability Services Commissioner
Free call 1800 677 342

Key Contacts and Emergency numbers

In an Emergency phone 000

Homelessness and Support STATEWIDE	1800 825 955 during business hours
Homeless Advocacy Service	1800 066 256 Advice, information and complaints about a specialist homelessness service
ST KILDA CRISIS CENTRE	After-hours support – 1800 627 727
Domestic/Family Violence WOMEN'S DV CRISIS SERVICE VIC.	1800 015 188 24 hours, 7 days a week
Sexual Assault CASA-Centre Against Sexual Assault	1800 806 292 24 hours, 7 days a week
Drug & Alcohol Support	DIRECT LINE - 1800 888 236 24 hours, 7 days a week counselling, information & referral
General Health	NURSE-ON-CALL - 1300 60 60 24 24 hours, 7 days a week (In an emergency phone 000)
Mental Health Crisis	PSYCHIATRIC TRIAGE - 1300 558 862 24 hours, 7 days a week, information, assessment & referral
Suicide Line	1300 651 251 24 hours, 7 days a week, professional telephone counselling service, qualified counsellors available to listen and assist. Free confidential counselling, support and information.
Parents & Carers PARENT LINE	13 22 89 8am-Midnight, 7 days a week, information for age's birth to 18.
Legal Services Victoria Legal Aid	9269 0120 Country Callers 1800 677 402

