



**ANNUAL
REPORT
2022**

CONTENTS

<i>PRESIDENT'S REPORT</i>	4
<i>CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT</i>	7
<i>MALLEE DHELK DJA ACTION GROUP</i>	10
<i>NSW DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FUNDING</i>	10
<i>IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELLBEING OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY SEXUAL ASSAULT</i>	11
<i>MILDURA MULTIDISCIPLINARY CENTRE – MDC</i>	12
<i>ORANGE DOOR</i>	14
<i>MALLEE FAMILY VIOLENCE EXECUTIVE (MFVE) REPORT</i>	15
<i>Family Violence Regional Integration Committees</i>	15
<i>Strategic Planning</i>	15
<i>Workforce Development and Training</i>	16
<i>SEXUALLY ABUSIVE BEHAVIOURS TREATMENT SERVICES (SABTS)</i>	17
<i>SERVICES – MALLEE SEXUAL ASSAULT UNIT (MSAU)</i>	17
<i>SERVICES – MALLEE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES (MDVS)</i>	19
<i>THE WATTLE</i>	21
<i>MALLEE SEXUAL ASSAULT UNIT INC. HIGHLIGHTS</i>	25
<i>FINANCIAL SUMMARY</i>	26

OUR VISION

To be recognised as the national leader in the prevention of sexual assault and family violence and the provider of services of excellence to Victims/Survivors of crime.

OUR MISSION

To reduce the prevalence and impact of sexual assault and domestic violence in the Mallee through partnerships which raise community awareness and undertake preventative and early intervention strategies and provide specialist and coordinated care valued by survivors of sexual assault and family violence, meeting safety needs and facilitating their empowerment, dignity and reintegration into communities of choice.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

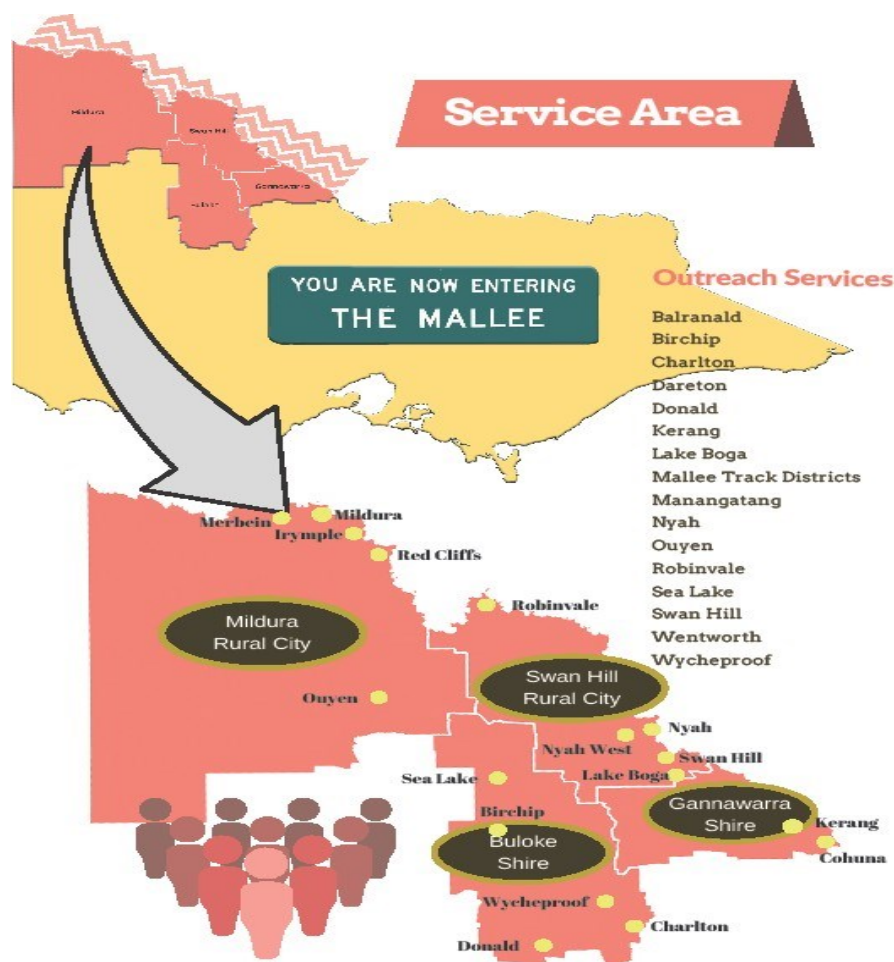
Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc./Mallee Domestic Violence Services aim to provide direct services to victims/survivors of sexual assault and victims of family violence in the context of their family and other support systems.

Services include crisis care responses, counselling, casework, advocacy, referral and group work. Other work undertaken includes the development and participation in a range of educational and training strategies for relevant practitioners and communities of interest.

To provide timely and appropriate responses to recent and past victims/survivors of sexual assault.

To provide education, training and consultation to relevant individuals and services to facilitate meeting the broader needs and concerns of victims/survivors of sexual assault and family violence.

To develop and participate in broad community education strategies that work towards the prevention and early identification of sexual assault and family violence.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Last year I started this report with our people, and I do so again. This organisation is nothing without you our hard-working staff. The Committee of Management (COM) wish to acknowledge and recognise, in our eyes the first responder nature of the work you do.

On many occasions you are the FIRST port of call for victims of family violence or sexual assault – or both. Their lives are in crisis. On those occasions those persons are reaching out for a response. They seek assistance, help, support and a pathway forward. Often even just an ally in a time when many feel isolated and powerless, but you are so much more than this. In addition to the FIRST initial intake and the immediate ensuring of the safety of your clients, you are tasked with the ongoing care and assistance to help them remain safe and heal over time.

These tasks are complex, immediate, and ongoing and the skill and care expected to meet these needs and RESPOND is demanding. A fact recognised nationally now in the qualifications required to do the job you do in crisis response, individually and as an organisation

Typically, this work includes, but is not limited to:

- FIRST intake, where you are providing the initial emergency refuge accommodation (which may continue for as long as necessary) to notifications to departments like Child Protection (DFFH) and Victoria Police.
- Balancing at the same time medical treatment for the physical trauma suffered to a victim or their children.
- Maintaining ongoing support and assisting in access for our clients to financial counselling and legal support (Mallee Family Care).
- Going to court with clients as required in IVO applications or criminal prosecutions.
- Helping to find long term accommodation that is safe and financial assistance to make that accommodation a home and begin again.
- Through to family violence counselling for clients and their children and our therapeutic team assisting to heal the trauma suffered.

These are the RESPONSES needed and required of you and demanded of the organisation and you.

Responding to this demand requires a high degree of empathy, compassion, and a duty of care throughout. You, our staff, daily, are expected to come up to the mark each and every time. The COM thank you for meeting that demand and doing so time and time again. You respond first and respond well and add value

in every task you do. Value to the organisation, value to yourselves and ultimately give value back to our clients. Thank you.

Organisation Snapshot

We have continued to grow as an organisation in size. We have needed to do so to deliver the service and programs to our clients.

We have a continued strategic direction to provide a Multi-Disciplinary Centre (MDC) - one location where MSAU can be based in one space that is also in the same place as our major partners DFFH, and VICPOL. This is to add the value of one place for victims to come to be supported and responded to.

We are in review of our culture and the way we do things as we grow. Our goal is always to deliver a high standard and discharge our duty of care to our clients. We must always be looking to improve and find ways to work together and support each other to achieve this.

We are in a strong financial position given 30 years' worth of planning, financial management and growth towards our goal of the MDC and continued service provision.

Significant Events

The progression of the MDC is continuing to the final stages before we seek tenders to begin work. There are ongoing challenges given the world we live in with the increased costs of building, but our goal remains the same.

The finalisation of the upgrading of our IT hardware and data transfer into this new more efficient system.

The Rainbow Tick accreditation, endorsing our organisational capability, workforce development, client participation as a culturally safe and acceptable organisation which is welcoming and accessible to all. SO very important given the work we do.

Place in Community

As last year as with previous years, it is important to acknowledge that we are only able to exist and deliver service with the assistance and collaboration with other community organisations. Those being the DFFH, Family Safety Victoria, Far West Area Health Services NSW and the DFCS NSW. Their funding and support are crucial and key to the organisations place in our community.

Further, organisations such as Victoria and NSW Police services, DFFH Child Protection, Sunraysia Community Health Services, MASP, The Orange Door and MDAS, are often our partners and working together with us in many roles to assist us to deliver support to our vulnerable clients. The ability to work collaboratively and with understanding, is greatly appreciated and acknowledged.

I thank the COM for their ongoing commitment on a volunteer basis to contribute. To take on board the role and always add value to our meetings. It does not go unnoticed.

Finally, I encourage our community to continue to work with us to help bring change. Our community continues to change, to call out that violence and in particular family violence, is not accepted. This change is slower than we would like, and we have a long way to go but change is happening. It must continue.

The challenge going forward for our organisation and our partners is to not only continue to respond as we do to ensure the safety of our clients - but also to advocate for continued change and more resources to support that change not just help to pick up the pieces of the lives destroyed by it.

Paul J Avery
President
Committee of Management Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc.
Mallee Domestic Violence Services

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT MEMBERS

Paul Avery	President
Kate Stockman	Vice President (Resigned)
Moira McGee	Treasurer (Resigned)
Pru Burgun	Member
Emily Craig	Member
Mark Eckel	Member
Chris Hobart	Member
Dennis McLaughlan	Member
Peter Mailes	Member
Lorraine Thiele	Member



It was frightening at first, but they were so kind and understanding.



I feel stronger about the future, thanks to the support of my worker.



I and the kids felt really helped and I am grateful to all staff.



Thank you so much for being an advocate for the kids and myself. We definitely need more people such as yourself helping vulnerable kids, young adults and their parents find direction.



Thank you for everything, you don't understand how much strength you have put back in me. You are hands down an angel.



I have had many setbacks, but with the trained and incredible staff from Mallee Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence unit I have gotten through. Reminding myself how fortunate I am to have a councillor with my best interest at heart.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc. and Mallee Domestic Violence Services (MSAU-MDVS) provide essential and vital services to the communities of the Northern and Southern Mallee regions in Victoria and the border communities of New South Wales and South Australia.

During the past year, MSAU-MDVS has had a challenging year in terms of the problems impacting the world. 2021 became the year where there was a greater focus on the issue of sexual violence. Sexual violence was in the media daily. Each year there is a greater demand on the services provided by our organisation, and the difficulty is compounded when the world is struggling with the trauma of a pandemic.

Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc. has continued to provide specialist 24-hour crisis care services, counselling, advocacy, support and therapeutic treatment services for children under 18 years with problem sexualised behaviours, and sexually abusive behaviours.

Outreach counselling clinics were conducted throughout the region, including Robinvale, Swan Hill, Ouyen, Dareton, Wentworth, Balranald, Kerang, Sea Lake, Wycheproof, Manangatang, Donald, Birchip, Charlton, Nyah, Lake Boga and the Mallee Track districts.

Mallee Domestic Violence Services responded to the needs of people who had experienced or witnessed domestic/family violence throughout the Mallee regions in Victoria and the border communities of New South Wales and South Australia.

Services provided include counselling, crisis care, emergency and transitional accommodation, support, advocacy, group programs and preventative education programs, family violence therapeutic services.

Throughout 2021-2022 the organisation delivered prevention and education programs about sexual assault and family violence throughout the region.

Group programs were conducted during 2021-2022. The Family Violence Therapeutic Program was conducted in partnership with Berry Street, who provide the "Restoring Childhood" program. Our partners Mallee Accommodation Support Program, Mallee Family Care and Mallee District Aboriginal Services, work collaboratively in the delivery of the MESH group programs.

Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc. in conjunction with Victoria Police and Child Protection Victoria operates a specialist Multi-Disciplinary Centre (MDC). This centre is a 24-hour sexual assault centre where persons who have experienced sexual assault and child abuse receive a comprehensive response to their needs by Police, Sexual Assault Counsellors, Forensic Medical Officers and Child Protection Practitioners. This facilitates a collaborative, timely intervention in situations where sexual assault or child abuse have been identified.

The Multi-Disciplinary Centre has specialist police investigative facilities with a forensic medical suite and specialist sexual assault support services which provide best practice quality care for victims of crime.

Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc. is proud of the collaborative working partnership with the MDC Unit, Victoria Police and Child Protection Services in Mildura.

Sunraysia Community Health Services and the Murray Mallee Community Legal Centre work collaboratively in the Multi-Disciplinary Centre (MDC). These additional services have provided a Community Health Nurse Specialist and Specialist Family Violence Legal Services for clients of the MDC. The MDC has received a national award in recognition of the high level of service to victims of sexual assault and child abuse.

In the Southern Mallee Centre in Swan Hill, our partners are the Murray Mallee Community Legal Centre, Mallee Accommodation Support Program and Child First who are co-located with our services to provide an integrated service response for clients in the Southern Mallee of Victoria and the border communities of New South Wales.

During 2021-2022 the organisation has worked collaboratively with many community service organisations, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing of Victoria, the Department of Health New South Wales and Family Safety Victoria.

The organisation has participated in state-wide and national reference groups and many research projects. Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc. fully supports the important work of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and is working collaboratively to implement their recommendations.

We have provided counselling and advocacy for victims/survivors of childhood sexual abuse, provided support and assistance to victims writing submissions, and assistance to victims who appeared before the Royal Commission.

Mallee Domestic Violence Services continues to work with the Victorian Integrated Family Violence Strategy. This approach ensures improved integrated services throughout the state and has increased the capacity to meet service demands.

The Strategy seeks to reduce the levels of re-victimisation and re-offending by providing people who have experienced family violence with the support they need, combining justice responses with human services approaches and programs to change the behaviour of those who use violence.

In May 2018 one of the most significant recommendations from the Family Violence Royal Commission was the establishment of the Support and Safety Hub (The Orange Door) for the Mallee. The Mallee being one of the first 5 pilot sites in Victoria. Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc. and Mallee Domestic Violence Services is a key partner in this initiative. The Orange Door is a new way for women, children and people experiencing family violence and families who need help with the care and wellbeing of their children to access the support they need.

The Orange Door also supports men to change their behaviour and is a new way for men to access services to be better partners, fathers and family members. This is a free service. The Orange Door welcomes people of any age, gender, sexuality, culture and ability.

The Orange Door works with local Aboriginal services and communities, multi-cultural services, LGBTIQ+ and disability services to meet the diverse needs of individuals and families.

The Orange Door will connect and refer to services that are needed in order to keep families safe. The Orange Door provides services to people living in the Mallee, which includes Buloke, Gannawarra, Mildura and Swan Hill Shires. The Southern Mallee Orange Door access point has been established located within Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc. Mallee Domestic Violence Services in Swan Hill.

During 2021-2022 the organisation received additional increases in funding to address the ever-increasing demand for services and to implement the important reforms from the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

During 2020-2021 Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc. Mallee Domestic Violence Services was included in the Victorian State-wide \$21 million Refuge Redevelopment Program. This program was to redevelop existing refuges to the new core and cluster model, which also provides 24-hour staffing within the facilities.

In March 2020 Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc. Mallee Domestic Violence Services opened "The Wattle" our wonderful new facility in Mildura, which has a cluster of six units and an administration / service block within the one site. "The Wattle" provides emergency secure accommodation for six families.

Since March 2020 we have all endured the impacts of COVID-19, Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc. Mallee Domestic Violence Services have during this time continued to provide all services for our clients across the Mallee and the border communities of New South Wales and South Australia during 2021-2022.

Innovative alternative forms of service provision have been employed to engage with our clients. Each year, our services are under tremendous pressure to continue to achieve positive outcomes for our clients. The

investment that staff make in achieving the best possible service for all our clients is always amazing. I commend you all.

MSAU-MDVS auspices the Mallee Family Violence Executive (MFVE). The MFVE engages in early intervention and prevention strategies to prevent future demand for violence related services.

In April 2016, the 227 Recommendations were released by the First Royal Commission into Family Violence in Victoria. The organisation in collaboration with the Mallee Family Violence Executive and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Family Safety Victoria, have diligently worked on the implementation of the recommendations.

During 2021-2022, MSAU-MDVS has worked with the National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence (NASASV). The NASASV works to further the shared aims of services for those who have experienced sexual violence across the nation, with the goal of eliminating sexual violence in the community.

NASASV was successfully funded during 2020-2021 to work in collaboration with the Commonwealth Department of Social Services on a significant project.

NASASV has reviewed the National Standards of Practice Manual for Services Against Sexual Violence (Second Edition) to reflect advances in best practice in planning prevention and service provider responses and has developed the National Standards of Practice Manual for Services against Sexual Violence (Third Edition). The Standards (Third Edition) was officially launched by Minister Ann Ruston, Minister for Families and Social Services for Australia, on the 1st of December 2021.

The Commonwealth Attorney General's Department, National Office for Child Safety (NOCS) has engaged the NASASV to develop a Best Practice Guidance Resource for service providers that engage with victims and survivors of child sexual abuse.

This Guidance Resource will align with the Standards of Practice Manual for Services Against Sexual Violence (3rd Edition) (NASASV Standards), but will focus specifically on service provision to victims and survivors of child sexual abuse.

MSAU-MDVS is officially accredited by the Quality Innovation Performance (QIP) and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Standards. MSAU-MDVS successfully achieved Rainbow Tick accreditation in 2019. MSAU-MDVS was again officially accredited by the Quality Innovation Performance December 2021.

I would like to sincerely thank the Committee of Management for their loyal service, strategic direction, and support during the past year.

I wish to thank all staff for their dedication, commitment and compassion and for all of their accomplishments achieved during the past year, including SOCIT, MDC Child Protection Team, Forensic Physicians, MDC Nurse and Murray Mallee Community Legal Centre team and Financial Counsellors.

It is a privilege to work alongside committed professionals so that we can, in partnership, assist people who have experienced sexual assault, child abuse and family violence.

Our mission is to provide quality care and services to the Mallee Community.

Joanne Sheehan-Paterson OAM
Chief Executive Officer
Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc. Mallee Domestic Violence Services

MALLEE DHELK DJA ACTION GROUP

Mallee Dhelk Dja Action Group has a pivotal role in implementing community led responses that educate, prevent, respond to and reduce family violence in the Aboriginal community. The Mallee Dhelk Dja Action Group is an inclusive mechanism for the Aboriginal community to develop local responses to family violence matters, ensuring they are responsive and culturally relevant to Aboriginal individuals, families and communities in the Mallee area.

As part of our administration, Mallee Dhelk Dja Action Group manages the use of Mallee Dhelk Dja Action Group Discretionary Funds. The Mallee Dhelk Dja Action Group also manages and supports the Community Initiatives Fund (CIF) which funds Aboriginal community projects which aim at reducing and preventing family violence. Throughout the years we have built a good rapport with Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc. Mallee Domestic Violence Services and a shared understanding of preventing family violence in our Community.

Through the Mallee Dhelk Dja Action Group (MDDAG) Chair and Regional Coordinator, we actively participate in and strengthen partnership links with the Regional Integrated Family Violence Strategy, Mallee Family Violence Executive, Northern Mallee Family Violence Network, Aboriginal services and mainstream service providers.

Mallee Dhelk Dja Action Group would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone at Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc. Mallee Domestic Violence Services for being our auspice body as we all aim towards preventing family violence in the Mallee community.

NSW DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FUNDING

In 2016-17 MSAU-MDVS entered a partnership arrangement with MASP to deliver a domestic violence response service to residents of Wentworth and Balranald LGAs in NSW.

Funded by NSW Family & Community Services, the Domestic Violence Enhanced Response (DVRE) now allows for an after-hours crisis response to victims of domestic violence who are unable to remain in their homes due to safety concerns.

The after-hours response element is being provided by MSAU-MDVS while MASP provides the ongoing support to DV clients returning home under the Staying Home Leaving Violence (SHLV) model.



IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELLBEING OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY SEXUAL ASSAULT

The impact of sexual assault on the health and wellbeing of victims and affected family members is well documented and includes both short term and long-term effects. The role of the community health nurse (CHN) within the MDC is to assist and support these victims/survivors to access appropriate and timely health care by linking the clients with the health system and other mainstream services and other MDC partner agencies.

The 2021/22 year continued as a time of managing during the Covid 19 pandemic and as such, the MDC CHN role remained adaptable and flexible to respond to the State & Commonwealth government direction whilst providing high standard health care to our clients. As the year progressed and restrictions lifted, outreach clinics recommenced at The Wattle (refuge) and co-location of the nurse to the MDC unit was reestablished on a part time basis.

Despite the challenges the pandemic presented for both clients and staff, the MDC nurse program received 104 new referrals for the 2021/2022 period, 35 of which were children aged up to 16 years. The majority of these referrals were received from the MDC partner agencies, predominantly the Centre Against Sexual Assault and particularly the women's refuge, whilst a number were also received from the sexual health nurse at Sunraysia Community Health Service (SCHS).

Not surprisingly during this time of pandemic, the main service clients were referred to by the CHN was mental health support with 37% of out-going referrals directed to mental health services, followed by 34% to sexual health nurse service at SCHS and 29% of referrals out to local GP services (predominantly the GP clinic at SCHS).

During the 2021/22 year, 10 clients were supported with brokerage funding through the MDC CHN program. Small amounts of funding were made available to clients who, due to financial barriers, could not access the required health services, were unable to access personal needs to improve health outcomes or couldn't access necessary targeted assessments or therapeutic interventions.

Whilst the previous year saw CHN's being redeployed from the MDC CHN role to Covid response roles, we have also struggled to maintain the EFT of the program with staff resignations and unsuccessful recruitment. We are looking forward to having full program staffing in 2022/2023 and full-time co-location of the CHN's at the MDC.



MILDURA MULTIDISCIPLINARY CENTRE MDC

In Mildura a 24-hour Sexual Assault centre allows victims of a sexual assault to receive a consistent and comprehensive response to their needs by police, sexual assault workers / counsellors and if appropriate child protection practitioners. The Sexual Assault Centre includes a specially trained police unit, the Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Team (SOCIT), the Mallee Sexual Assault Unit (MSAU) a Child Protection Team (DFFH).

SOCIT is staffed by detectives whose specific role is to investigate sex offences and child abuse and provide support to victims.

The Child Protection Team is staffed by specialist practitioners whose specific role is to investigate allegations of physical and / or sexual abuse against children. These investigations may be conducted jointly with SOCIT.

The MDC Community Health Nurse provides a comprehensive client centred health service to adults, young people, children and their family members (non – offending) who have experienced a recent or past sexual assault.

The Multi- Disciplinary Centre aims:

- To improve support for victims / survivors and families.
- To increase the reporting of sexual offences and reduce attrition of cases from the criminal justice system.
- To improve and integrate the investigation of sexual offences and child abuse.
- To improve the quality of evidence in sexual offences and child abuse cases.
- To improve the capability of agencies to respond collaboratively.

OUR OFFICES



144-148 Lime Avenue, Mildura



14-18 McCallum Street, Swan Hill

RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT PANEL (RAMP) REPORT

A Risk Assessment and Management Panel or 'RAMP' is a formally convened meeting of key local agencies and organisations who conduct a multi-agency risk assessment of people who are at high risk of serious harm from family violence. The panel focuses on the perpetrator while simultaneously centralising the safety of victim survivors, mostly women and their children. They are engaged when the usual service system has not or cannot mitigate serious risk posed by the perpetrator due to systemic and structural barriers and/or intensifying, overt, calculating, and immutable perpetrator behaviour. RAMPs are an initiative of the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), in partnership with FSV and Safe & Equal.

THE MALLEE RISK ASSESSMENT MANAGEMENT PANEL

Mallee RAMP is one of the 18 RAMPs across Victoria. Mallee RAMP is operational since 2016 and covers four local catchments extending from Mildura City Council to Swan Hill City Council, Buloke Shire council and Gannawarra Shire. Mallee RAMP is aligned with state-wide RAMP structure. The monthly panel meetings (Mildura and Swan Hill) are co-chaired by a representative from a specialist family violence service and Victoria Police facilitated by the RAMP coordinator. A RAMP coordinator in each catchment provides oversight, services, and support to the local panel to function consistently in a coordinated way. RAMP core members include representatives of community corrections, Victoria police, local specialist family violence services including district aboriginal services, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, clinical mental health services, alcohol and drug services, men's family violence services, family services and child protection.

Currently, State-wide RAMPs are going through some practical changes to align each panel's response in mitigating the highest risk of domestic and family violence across the state. Furthermore, to support the standardised practice, the new RAMP requirements (previously 'RAMP guidelines') are in implementation stage pending release by the end of 2022.

RAMP REFERRALS

RAMP is not the first response to family violence. Cases are only considered when the standard service response is not able to sufficiently reduce the level of threat posed by the perpetrator. Given that RAMPs target only the highest risk family violence cases, they consider up to five new cases a month – only a small number of serious risk family violence cases reported in Victoria. Most serious risk family violence cases are effectively managed by the standard family violence response. Cases can be referred to RAMPs by contacting MSAU-MDVS or the Orange Door.

A comprehensive MARAM risk assessment will be conducted for each case to determine whether the perpetrator presents a serious and imminent threat to the victim.

2021-2022 FINANCIAL YEAR:

- 29 referrals were logged to be heard at Mallee RAMP in 2021-2022 in comparison to 26 referrals in 2020- 2021.
- 14 of the 29 referrals (48%) involved a party who identified as Aboriginal/Torres strait islander (ATSI).
- 5 of the 29 referrals (17%) involved a party who identified as Culturally & Linguistically Diverse (CALD).

Lisha Rakhyani
Coordinator – Mallee Risk Assessment Management Panel

2021 – 2022 financial year saw an increase in clients accessing The Orange Door in the Mallee. MDVS staff provided an integrated response to 3,450 clients. MDVS staff provided tailored individual responses for each client in relation to Family Violence, Child Wellbeing and Perpetrator accountability working closely with other core services.

The Mallee Orange Door alongside Orange Doors in other DFFH areas has been implementing state-wide guidance. This is to ensure consistency across the state for all clients accessing The Orange Door from any location.

This financial year has seen a great deal of planning go toward establishing outpost locations in Kerang and Robinvale. This will assist clients in these communities to access services closer to where they live. In doing so the Orange Door is increasing awareness within these communities and building stronger professional relationships.

To increase engagement of families all partner agencies have adopted consistent home visiting practices. This has seen more thorough assessments being able to be completed providing opportunities for more appropriate service referrals.

We have seen the introduction of the Victorian Legal Aid and Mallee Family Care Community Legal Service providing in-reach supports one day a week. This provides the opportunity for clients to have timely access to legal advice as needed.

Further work was undertaken to expand the current facility in Mildura. Plans are under way with completion to be expected by the end of 2023. This will allow for staff from all core services to work from one location. The Orange Door continued to operate in a COVID-19 safe environment. This saw staff needing to be flexible while maintaining the high levels of service to the community. After a period of working from a variety of locations the end of COVID-19 restrictions has seen the staff return to the offices. This has supported greater capacity to work in an integrated way.

Due to the increase of online accessibilities from COVID-19 training opportunities have become more readily available to rural communities. We have seen this benefit our staff through having more regular access to mandatory training eg: MARAM framework.



MALLEE FAMILY VIOLENCE EXECUTIVE (MFVE) REPORT

During 2021 - 22, the Mallee Family Violence Executive (MFVE) has continued to build on its System Leadership and drive System Development through the redevelopment of their strategic plan, fostering innovation and working collaboratively to improve and strengthen the family violence pathways to support and ensure the system holds people who use violence to account.

The MFVE clear strategic direction is supported by the expertise and knowledge of its members as well as its collaborations with key stakeholders across the Mallee region. These partnerships strengthen horizontal system integration at the local level, working toward the MFVE's vision of ***'a community that is free from gendered violence. Where all people live free from gendered violence, and the fear of gendered violence: where people are treated with equality and respected'***.

Family Violence Regional Integration Committees

Family Violence Regional Integration Committees (FVRIC's) were established in 2006 and have been the governance structures that underpin the delivery of family violence reform. They were established to improve integration and have played a vital role in the transformation of Victoria's service delivery and community response to family violence.

May 2022 Family Safety Victoria endorsed the redeveloped guidelines for these committees, outlining clear expectations for the FVRIC's and providing guidance for key stakeholders and outlining:

- The role of FVRIC's play in contributing to the design, implementation and monitoring of state-wide family violence policy and reforms
- The strategic priorities of FVRIC's which support strategic leadership and cross sector collaboration within the local system
- The approach to strategic planning
- Governance arrangements
- The frequency and types of required reporting.

The MFVE welcomes these guidelines and has commenced planning and activities to align.

Strategic Planning

The Mallee Family Violence Executive Strategic Plan 2022 - 25 has four strategic priorities to guide family violence service system integration in the Mallee over the next phase. The strategic priorities are leadership, workforce, governance, and integration. With the endorsement of the new FVRIC's guidelines the MFVE has now mapped their four strategic priority areas against the new guidelines five strategic priority areas of:

- Leading initiatives that support service integration and system improvements
- Supporting the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of family violence reform initiatives
- Developing an evidence base to inform planning, prioritisation of system improvements initiatives and advocacy for system change
- Building workforce capacity and capability
- Effective cross-sector governance for system leadership

The MFVE has endorsed its plan for alignment. Some key areas being redeveloped:

- Annual Action plan to direct the work of the MFVE over the next twelve months
- Communications Strategy
- Partnership Agreement
- MFVE mapping its reach across the Mallee through members involvement in networks and working groups
- Activities to support MARAM alignment
- Family Violence and Community Services Sector Orientation

Workforce Development and Training

Workforce development across the Mallee has remained at the forefront of the MFVE's strategic thinking.

- **Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Collaborative Practice training.** The MARAM Collaborative Practice training is relevant to all professionals who respond to family violence in Victoria. Its focuses on both collaborative practice and the foundational aspects of MARAM that enable collaboration. The training enables professionals to contribute to risk assessment and collaborate for ongoing risk management. Since its inception 237 professionals have been trained across the Mallee.
- **Rural and Regional Family Violence Social Work Graduate Program.** Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Mallee Domestic Violence Service, participated in this pilot program offering two Social Work Graduate positions across their family violence and sexual assault programs.
- **Mallee Workforce Working Group.** Over the last twelve months the working group has continued to establish itself, with new members, development of a Terms of Reference and action plan. Working group members have presented to Mallee schools and participated in opens days to promote the community services sector and the working group.

Donna Strong
Principal Strategic Advisor
Mallee Family Violence Executive



SEXUALLY ABUSIVE BEHAVIOURS TREATMENT SERVICES

SABTS provides counselling and support for children and young people up to the age of 17 who display problem or sexually abusive behaviours. Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc. conducts thorough assessments with children and young people. Our model accommodates the developmental needs of the child or young person, including those with learning and language difficulties, developmental delays and varying levels of intellectual ability.

Involvement of the family in treatment is essential in producing the best outcome for the child or young person. To support a child or young person's efforts to change their behaviours, the parents or carers need to understand the sexual abusive behaviour cycle, and the emotional states and circumstances that enable the behaviour to occur, including family dynamics that might trigger the cycle.

Parents and carers need to be aware of and support the new positive coping strategies developed for the child or young person to interrupt the cycle, and they need to support the child or young person to maintain and implement those strategies. Family work is particularly important when a child or young person is unable to remain in the family home due to the sexually abusive behaviours. Where this occurs, family reunification is a high-priority treatment goal.

When all the children involved are under 10, the behaviour is referred to as 'sexualised behaviour' or 'problem sexual behaviours' rather than 'sexually abusive behaviour'. Children under 10 are deemed by Victorian law to be unable to consent to any form of sexual activity. In addition, children under 10 cannot be held criminally responsible for their behaviour.

The SABTS program significantly reduces the likelihood of the behaviours continuing. Sexually abusive behaviours in a child or young person are not an indicator of paedophilia, and do not mean that the child or young person will go on to sexually offend as an adult.

The impact of sexually abusive behaviours on children, young people and the child or young person displaying the behaviours may be long term.

SERVICES – MALLEE SEXUAL ASSAULT UNIT (MSAU)

Mallee Sexual Assault Unit (MSAU) aids victims-survivors of sexual assault.

What is Sexual Assault?

There are many behaviours that constitute sexual assault ranging from unwanted touching to rape.

Sexual Assault

- Is an act of violence.
- Is a violation of basic human rights and therefore is a crime against the individual and society.
- Has social, emotional, medical, political and legal consequences, each of which must be responded to appropriately.
- Is never the fault of the person assaulted.

Services We Provide

- 24 Hour Crisis Care: For recent assault.
- Counselling and Support: For people who have experienced recent or past sexual assault. Help is also provided for friends and family of the victim.
- Medical Care: Facility on the premises for forensic examination and follow-up medical care.
- Support and Information: Regarding medical / legal rights and processes.
- Education: For professional and community groups on the incidence/nature of sexual assault.
- Consultation: To the community, other professionals and local agencies.

Also Available

- Research: On the incidence of sexual assault.
- Library Resources: Books, articles, videos, pamphlets / brochures for all age group
- Multicultural resources.
- Support Groups.
- Advocacy/Referrals: To other services/organisations.
- Community/School Education Programs: Focusing on prevention and breaking down the myths surrounding sexual assault.
- Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal (VOCAT): Information and assistance with victims of crime compensation applications.
- Facts
- Sexual Assault can happen to anyone regardless of age, race, culture, class or disability.
- Most victims/survivors know their attacker.
- Many sexual assaults are premeditated and well planned.
- Most offenders look and act like ordinary people and come from all social classes, income levels, races and age groups.
- Sexual assault in marriage is also a crime.

NO ONE HAS THE RIGHT TO SEXUALLY ASSAULT ANOTHER PERSON.

SERVICES – MALLEE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES (MDVS)

Mallee Domestic Violence Service (MDVS) provides assistance to victims-survivors with or without children who are in crisis as a result of domestic violence.

Our services include:

- 24-hour crisis support and intervention.
- Crisis refuge accommodation: safe, short, medium and long-term emergency transitional accommodation for women and children escaping family violence.
- Emergency accommodation for men is provided
- Forensic medical services.
- Support for victims wishing to access the criminal justice system.
- Outreach services.
- Community education and awareness raising about family violence and sexual assault.
- Development and implementation of educational programs and school-based prevention programs.
- Quality care from the appropriately trained and experienced staff, respectful of privacy and dignity regardless of social status, disability, age, sex, race, religion or political belief.
- Short, medium, long-term counselling, advocacy and support for women, men, children, and families to assist with making informed decisions about their circumstances and safety.
- Referrals on behalf of the victim-survivor to other services as necessary.
- Establishment of protocols with relevant organisations in the Mallee region.
- Well demonstrated integrated response to family violence with the Police, Courts, Child Protection Unit, Mental Health Services, and other Health Services.
- Liaison and consultation with community groups in relation to sexual assault and family violence issues.
- Quality resources, skills, and information.

We offer:

- crisis refuge accommodation
- medium security accommodation
- options – about your situation, and support you in whatever choices you make
- counselling – we offer short term and long-term counselling
- advocacy – that we are willing to talk to other services for and on behalf of you
- information – about domestic violence and other services
- referrals – we are willing to refer you onto other services to meet your needs
- support – we can help you in whatever your needs are, e.g. attend appointments with you etc.
- assistance – we offer to help you network and get yourself re-established in the community
- outreach services – we offer support even if you're not wanting to leave your situation. We also offer follow up support for women and women with children that have left the refuge.

THE IMPACTS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE ARE PROFOUND: DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE IN AUSTRALIA

In Australia, one woman per week is killed by a current or former partner and one male per month is killed by a current or former partner on average.

For both women and children, family violence has extensive and often long term physical and emotional consequences. It creates homelessness, disrupts children's schooling, and leads to social and economic isolation for women.


Family Violence is the abuse of power over another person. It mostly affects women and children, however the victims can also be men.

Mallee Domestic Violence Services provides a confidential and client directed service to victims /survivors of family violence, assisting them to make informed choices regarding their situation.

We provide a 24-hour crisis response across the Mallee and border communities of New South Wales and South Australia.


FACTS

- **Domestic Violence is a crime.**
- **There are no excuses for domestic violence.**
- **Domestic violence occurs across all cultures and social groups.**
- **The victim/survivor of domestic violence are never to blame.**
- **While alcohol and drug abuse are often a contributing factor, it is not an excuse for the violent behaviour.**
- **Witnessing domestic violence can have long term and damaging emotional effects on children.**



I wish there was a way to show how thankful I am and my gratitude towards the services kindness. Funding, I never dreamt to receive although for medical, it brings hope into my life.

One day I too hope to be able to return the kindness of the service as well as my takeaway from the support. To always support others in need, always kind, and sometimes the smallest (and largest) gesture, can change a life, because the act made from MSAU/MDVS for me, has changed my life.



Just wanted to say thank you for helping yesterday with the court process. Without your support and assistance, the matter would likely have been adjourned. If you could pass on my thanks to the rest of the office, for inviting us into your space.

We appreciate you making the facility available to the witnesses, it was perfect environment for them to provide their evidence to

THE WATTLE

The Wattle Refuge has been operating since March 2020 providing emergency support and accommodation for victims of family violence.

Maintenance

This year upgrades have been completed to 5 of the 6 units in the provision of ramps to the front entrances. The main Administration building is still awaiting necessary repairs to the ceiling. The fire system upgrade is in process of being completed.

House 2 and 3 have had renovations completed to the kitchens and car port, painting is currently underway. Both properties are occupied by families.

Accommodation

Since December 2021, the Wattle has accommodated 61 adults and 78 children. December and April proved to be the busiest months.

We continue to utilise motels when necessary for short term needs and when Refuge is at capacity. Since January 2022, however, motel usage has significantly decreased. Since the beginning of this year, we had the added option of motel rooms at Wentworth also available, with one of the rooms being reserved specifically for positive Covid cases. This has been invaluable, as there would be otherwise no options for people in this situation requiring emergency assistance.

After Hours Crisis Care

After hours crisis care in relation to Family Violence continue to be managed efficiently by the Wattle staff. So far, it has not been necessary to activate the Recall team for family violence response. They have however attended for Sexual Assault forensic cases.

MDC Nurse

Kate Maloney attends the Wattle on Tuesday mornings to service clients in Refuge and/or their children in relation to medical needs and concerns. This is proving to be a much needed and convenient resource for the clients there. In the near future we also hope to be providing legal and financial services on site at the Wattle.

Staffing

The Wattle is staffed over 24 hours. The staffing situation has been challenging this year, with many changes due to different issues. We have managed this to the best of our ability. Wattle staff have been very patient and flexible in this regard, staff from the main office have also been of assistance. Many thanks to all involved.



Unit kitchen at "The Wattle".

PROGRAMS

FAMILY VIOLENCE THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION (FVTI)

The Family Violence Therapeutic Intervention program provides a stepped care model of therapeutic interventions for adult and child victim/survivors of family violence. The model has been designed to provide tailored, integrated therapeutic support to people who have experienced family violence and their non-offending caregivers and other family and or other support people.

The model of services includes a therapeutic screening for victim/survivors for services. It must be noted that MSAU-MDVS intake screens for family violence risk and safety factors and integrates a family violence risk assessment into all our work. Clients will then become engaged in services provided by MSAU-MDVS, prior to an internal referral being made to FVTI.

Overview of Service Model:

- MSAU-MDVS therapeutic counselling
- MESH Group
- Restoring Childhood

Referrals into MTFVS are accepted from several sources which can include:

- Family Violence Programs
- The Orange Door
- Police
- Self-referral
- Family Support & Child First Services
- Child Protection.

PERSONAL SAFETY PROGRAM (PSP)

The Personal Safety Program (PSP) is aimed at Primary School age children.

Objectives of this program:

- Teaches children “we all have to right to feel safe”.
- Raises awareness, teaches strategies and coping skills that can be applied to various difficult situations.

Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc. and Mallee Domestic Violence Service staff delivers this program in several sessions delivered at schools. The program can also be delivered in a one-on-one basis, according to needs.

MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, SOCIAL HEALTH TOWARD HEALING AND RECONNECTION... INSIGHTS THAT VALUE EQUALITY (MESH THRIVE)

Mental, Emotional, Social Health General (MESH GENERAL)

MESH is around sharing experiences in a trusted, safe and supported group setting where children and adults can grow and develop. The MESH Program was created to support the needs of children and families who may need support around healthy living skills. Each week has a different topic to assist in reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness, build connectedness, developing skills to assist in reducing shame and blame while learning how to identify and express feelings to build healthy relationships. MESH aims to Increase self-awareness and self-esteem in participants while learning to care for self and others. MESH is an 8-week program which Mallee Domestic Violence Service staff facilitate and take part in.

MESH THRIVE

MESH Thrive was created to support the needs of children and families affected by family violence and trauma. MESH THRIVE provides children and families the chance to share stories of family violence and trauma and realise they are not alone by working in a group with people who have shared similar experiences. MESH THRIVE aims to support people to work through feelings that come with family violence, heal from trauma while giving children and families the chance to wish for a better future. MESH THRIVE works through understanding the gendered nature of violence and how to respect ourselves and other people in our lives.

MESH Thrive is an 8-week program which Mallee Domestic Violence Service staff facilitate and take part in.

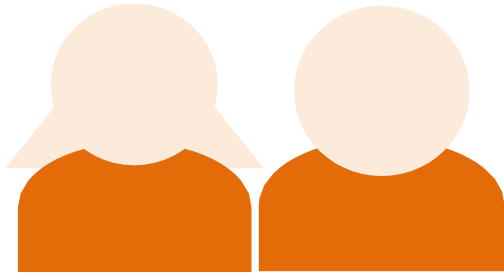


*I cannot thank you
enough.
I'm so grateful for all your
help. Could not have done
it without you.*

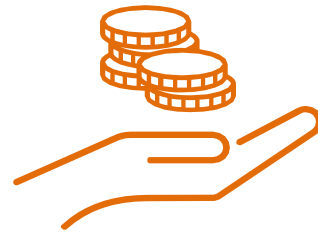


*The kids and myself just
wanna let you know that we
have arrived to our
destination, we appreciate
everything you have done for
us, and there is no amount of
gratitude and appreciation
we could possibly show you all
from the bottom of our
hearts.*

MALLEE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS

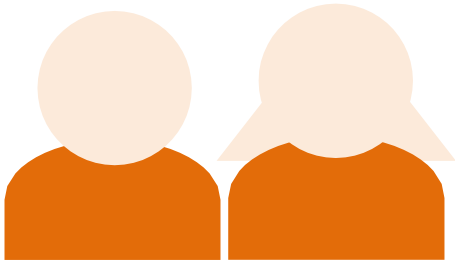


5682 clients



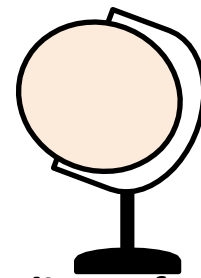
242

Family Violence Flexible Support Packages approved



458

Children under 10



Clients from 34 countries



56 clients

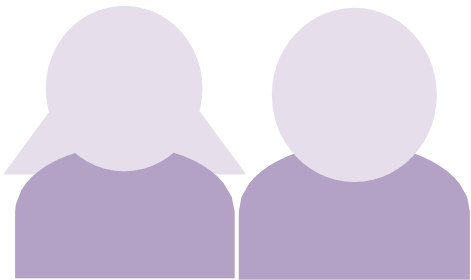
Received legal support from Family Violence Legal Unit



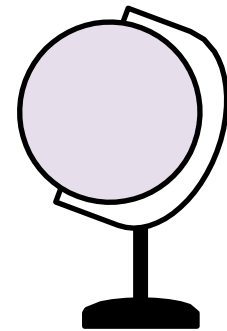
10309

Bed nights

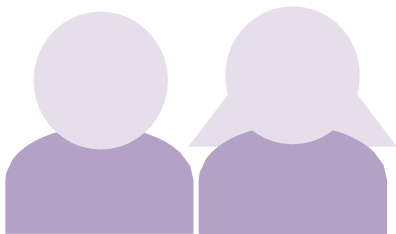
MALLEE SEXUAL ASSAULT UNIT INC. HIGHLIGHTS



2267 clients



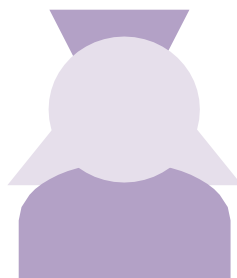
**Clients from
13 countries**



**580
Children under 10**



**494 MDC-SOCIT
referrals**



**146 clients
from SCHS Nurse**

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

MALLEE SEXUAL ASSAULT UNIT INCORPORATED

CASH FLOW STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	Note	2022 \$	2021 \$
Cash Flows From Operating Activities			
Operating grants receipts		10,426,566	11,861,994
Payments to suppliers and employees		(7,838,646)	(8,422,750)
Interest received		855	2,108
Other income		155,211	184,818
Net cash provided by operating activities	15a	<u>2,743,986</u>	<u>3,626,170</u>
Cash Flows From Investing Activities			
Purchase of property, plant & equipment		(474,722)	(255,053)
Proceeds from sale of property, plant & equipment		52,479	79,818
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities		<u>(422,243)</u>	<u>(175,235)</u>
Cash Flows From Financing Activities			
Proceeds of borrowings		-	-
Repayment of borrowings		-	-
Net cash used in financing activities		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Net increase in cash held		<u>2,321,743</u>	<u>3,450,935</u>
Cash at beginning of year		11,368,120	7,917,185
Cash at end of year	15b	<u>13,689,863</u>	<u>11,368,120</u>

MALLEE SEXUAL ASSAULT UNIT INCORPORATED

BALANCE SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	Note	2022 \$	2021 \$
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	13,689,863	11,368,120
Trade and other receivables	5	259,283	128,769
Total Current Assets		<u>13,949,146</u>	<u>11,496,889</u>
Non-Current Assets			
Establishment Fees		767	1,528
Property, plant & equipment	6	3,950,184	3,707,994
Total Non-Current Assets		<u>3,950,951</u>	<u>3,709,522</u>
Total Assets		<u>17,900,097</u>	<u>15,206,411</u>
Current Liabilities			
Trade and other payables	7	1,492,819	1,424,317
Short term provisions	8	794,316	666,946
Total Current Liabilities		<u>2,287,135</u>	<u>2,091,263</u>
Non-Current Liabilities			
Long term provisions	8	390,685	381,773
Borrowings	9	10	10
Total Non-Current Liabilities		<u>390,695</u>	<u>381,783</u>
Total Liabilities		<u>2,677,830</u>	<u>2,473,046</u>
Net Assets		<u>15,222,267</u>	<u>12,733,365</u>
Equity			
Retained earnings	10	15,222,267	12,733,365
Total Equity		<u>15,222,267</u>	<u>12,733,365</u>

MALLEE SEXUAL ASSAULT UNIT INCORPORATED

INCOME STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	Note	2022 \$	2021 \$
Revenue	2	10,728,122	12,105,375
Employee benefits expense		(6,301,105)	(5,237,333)
Administration & operating expenses		(1,742,325)	(3,564,802)
Depreciation & amortisation expenses		(189,991)	(121,087)
Interest expense		-	-
<i>Profit before income tax expense</i>		<u>2,494,701</u>	<u>3,182,153</u>
<i>Income tax expense</i>		-	-
<i>Profit from operations</i>		<u>2,494,701</u>	<u>3,182,153</u>



Health



MILDURA

144-148 Lime Avenue, Mildura, VIC 3500

PO Box 1373, Mildura VIC 3502

Ph: (03) 50255400

Email: info@msau-mdvs.org.au

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14- 18 McCallum Street, Swan Hill, VIC 3585

PO Box 1641, Swan Hill VIC 3585

Ph: (03) 50331786

Email: info@msau-mdvs.org.au

<https://msau-mdvs.org.au>