



Annual Report

2020 – 2021

Corazon Centre Inc.
A not for profit organization serving the people of Wyndham.

Introduction

The report covers the period from July 2020 to June 2021. The highlights and significant events of these twelve months have included the following:

- Continued provision of Psychological Counselling service, against the continued challenges of COVID-19 restrictions.
- Renewal of service agreement with North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network for provision of psychological services through 'CAREinMIND' and 'On the Line' Suicide Prevention Service.
- Suspension of the Circle of Security (CoS) intensive group program for caregivers and their young children aged between 1-5 years.
- Small increase in Medicare rebate for clinical psychological services from \$128.40 to \$129.55.
- Increase in DVA rebate for clinical psychological services from \$155.90 to \$213.90.
- Suspension of relaxation therapy.
- Renewal of service agreement with Carers Victoria to provide massage services.
- Suspension of planning for the development of a supported play group for vulnerable families.
- Animal-Assisted Therapy.
- Ongoing commitment to reducing our "carbon footprint" by planting additional trees and shrubs and extending our irrigation system.

Service Provision

Professional Services

Psychological Counselling Service

Referral Source

Our referral sources remained the same, as in previous years, and are derived from five sources:

- Better Access to Mental Health, funded by the Commonwealth Government through the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS).
- CAREinMIND (CiM) Targeted Psychological Support Services for people living in the North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network (NWMPHN) who cannot afford other services.
- Suicide Prevention and Postvention Services managed by 'On the Line'.
- Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA).
- Access Employment Assistance Program (Access EAP).

The total number of referrals accepted for service during the reporting period was 152. As shown in Figure 1, new referrals increased by 41% (44) compared to the previous reporting period. While this increase is indicative of the number of hard copies of referrals we received from our referral sources, our referral numbers would have been greater if we had had the capacity to accept those who contacted us for mental health support. Data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reported that "in the 4 weeks to 27 June 2021, MBS subsidised mental health services were 4.1% and 13.9% higher than the same periods in 2020 and 2019 respectively. Many people have had long wait times to access services.

Some Reflections

Many of the challenges we faced delivering services during the last financial year remained. Once again, gaps in the digital divide exposed and amplified inequality. While younger people were more adept with using "Zoom" on their mobile phones, other less technologically minded people struggled. Also, poor internet speeds meant that calls often dropped out. This resulted in disrupted sessions for some people.

There were also issues with privacy. Some of our clients had sessions in their cars, while others had to wait until family members left the house. Those with younger children had to have sessions scheduled around their child's nap time. While an effort was made to accommodate people's need for privacy, this was not without difficulty.

Figure 1. Total psychology referrals

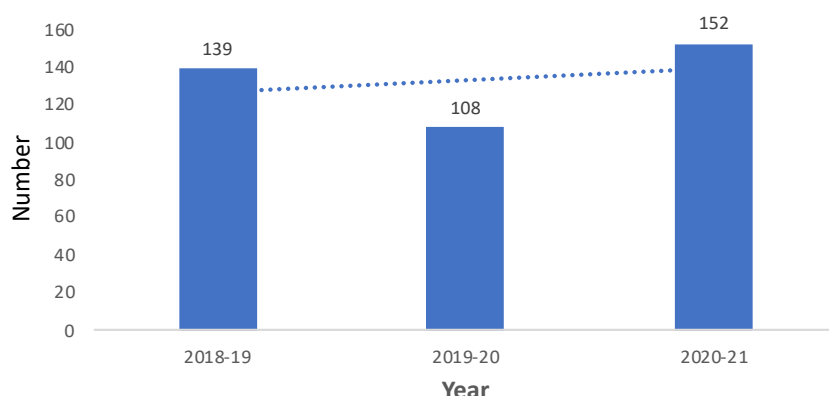
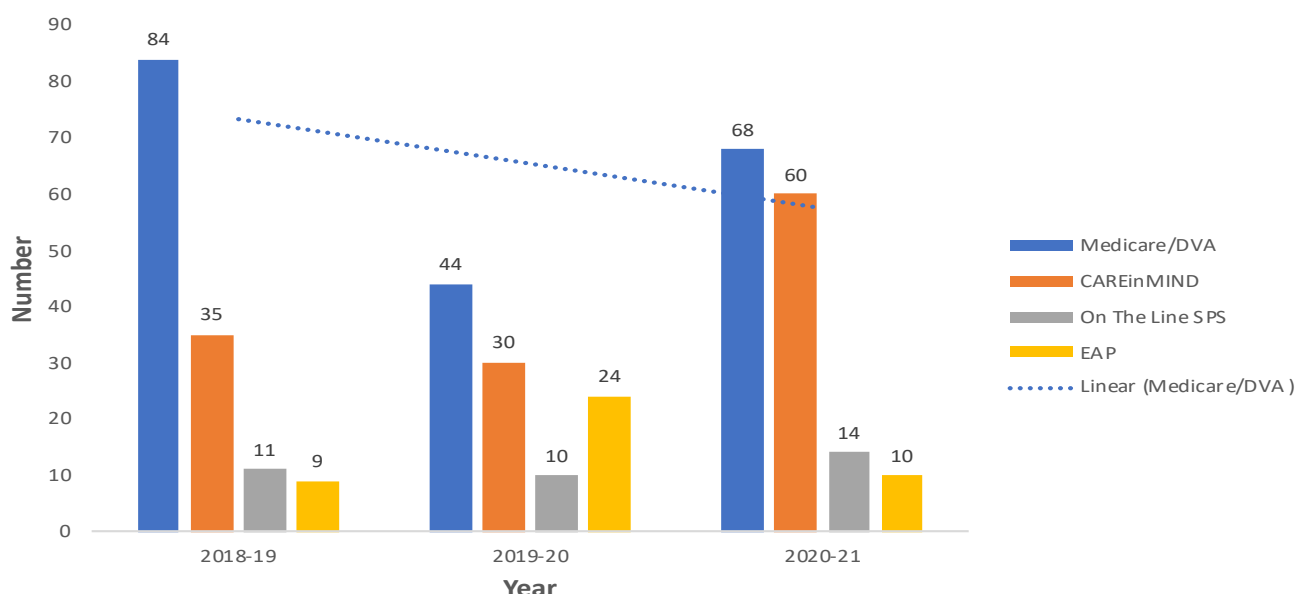


Figure 2. Referral sources and number



Another difficulty we encountered during our referral process, was the “on again off again nature of lockdown”. This became a stumbling block for many who wanted to access face-to-face services. Those who were accessing sessions, before lockdown, chose to wait for lockdown to end as they were unable to move to a telehealth environment, for many reasons. As a result, treatment was suspended until lockdown was lifted. This created a new set of difficulties because of the extended nature of the multiple lockdowns that happened in Victoria which saw our service accruing waitlists as well as managing telehealth clients.

We also encountered pressure, on an almost daily basis, from some referrers and potential clients to offer face-to-face sessions during lockdown. No doubt, referrers were under pressure to find services for their patients/consumers as well as people who were desperate for support for their mental health struggle. Feelings of frustration and irritation were tangible. Despite the challenges of the last year, there were also some positive outcomes for our clients. For instance, we were able to offer a telehealth service to some of the most vulnerable because we were able to reduce or mitigate technology problems which prevented them from obtaining the service from other providers.

Referral Sources and Numbers

As shown in Figure 2, 152 referrals were accepted for service and were drawn from the following referral sources: General Practitioners, Care in Mind (CiM), On the Line and Access EAP.

The main referral source was General Practitioners (GPs) referring clients through the MBS and

accounted for 68 referrals (44.7%). For the sake of simplicity two DVA referrals were included in the total number of GP referrals. This number represented an increase of 23 (52.3%) referrals compared to the previous year.

Seventy-four referrals were accepted for service from the NWMPHN. Of these, 60 referrals were for clients through the CiM program while 14 were from the On the Line Suicide Prevention Service. Compared to the previous reporting period, there was an increase in the number of clients referred through both programs: CiM (50%, 30) and On the Line (40%, 4).

Referrals from the Access EAP have remained low. The total number of referrals accepted for service during the current reporting period was 10 which is a decrease of 14 referrals (58.3%). During this same period, we also accepted a referral to support staff through a redundancy process at a local Child Care Centre that was ceasing operations. Two days were set aside for this work.

In examining trends in our referral numbers, the data suggests that General Practitioner referrals to Corazon continued to decline, while referrals from CiM and On the Line programs continued to increase across a two-year period. While anyone can access the On the Line program, only those who meet the eligibility criteria can receive services through CiM. It is possible that our proximity to Wyndham Vale, a suburb which experiences higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage relative to other areas of Wyndham, may account for this increase. It may also be possible that those living in Wyndham Vale may have experienced greater economic and social stress resulting from COVID-19.

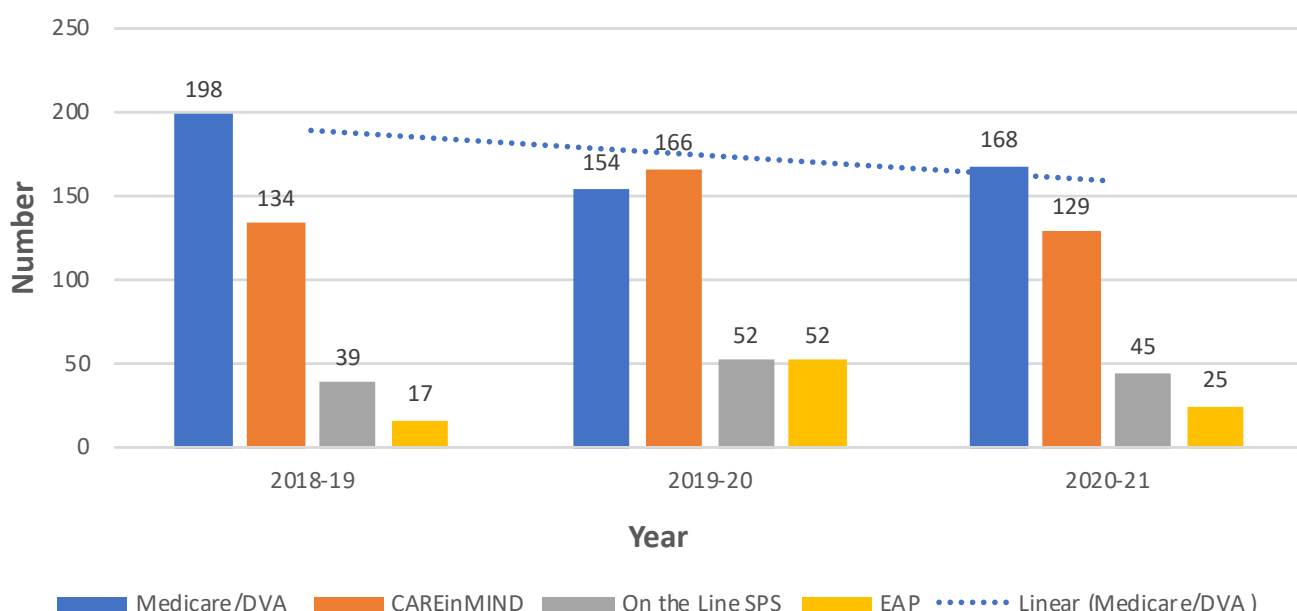
Referral Sources and Psychological Counselling

Individual

As shown in Figure 3, a total of 367 sessions of individual psychotherapy sessions were delivered during this reporting period. Overall, this figure represents a decrease of 79 (18%) sessions when compared to the previous reporting period. While the number of Medicare funded psychotherapy sessions increased by 14 (9%), psychotherapy sessions delivered through other programs decreased. These decreased session numbers are as follows: CiM (37, 29%); On the Line (7, 16%); EAP (27, 108%).

It is interesting to note that while the total number of referrals from all programs, except Access EAP, increased when compared to the previous reporting period, this did not translate into an increased number of psychotherapy sessions. On the contrary, as shown in Figure 3, the number of psychotherapy sessions decreased. Anecdotal evidence suggests that clients were likely to miss their psychotherapy session due to experiencing some of the following psycho-social stressors: depression symptomology, family violence, home schooling, forgetting they had scheduled an appointment, equipment failures, COVID-19 fatigue.

Figure 3. Referral sources and psychotherapy sessions



Group

The Circle of Security (CoS) parenting program was cancelled, for a second time this year due to COVID-19 restrictions. As the program runs for 18-weeks, the dilemma we faced arose from the unpredictability of our lockdowns and ability to complete the training: if we started a group would we be able to finish it? The nature of our clientele and the structure of the program made it impossible to offer it in a telehealth format.

While we were not able to run the group, we continued to develop our partnership with Dr Tiffani Howell (La Trobe University) and Mr Joe Coyne (Queensland University of Technology). Dr Howell is a research fellow in the School of Psychology and Public Health, while Mr Coyne co-ordinates the Master of Clinical Psychology and the Master of Educational and Developmental Programs and is an

accredited therapist and supervisor for the Circle of Security intervention. It is our intention to start our research project in conjunction with Dr Howell and Mr Coyne during 2022. The aim of the project is to explore the possible role of animal assisted therapy in the CoS program. Fortunately, the grant we received from the Mental Health Foundation Australia, and which we have been unable to acquit, will be partly used to fund the professional coding of the "Strange Situation", which will be done in Canada. The Strange Situation Procedure is used to assess and measure patterns of attachment between the caregiver and their child and is considered the 'gold standard' for research and clinical assessment. This will increase the validity and reliability of our results and is necessary for publishing our results in a peer-reviewed journal.

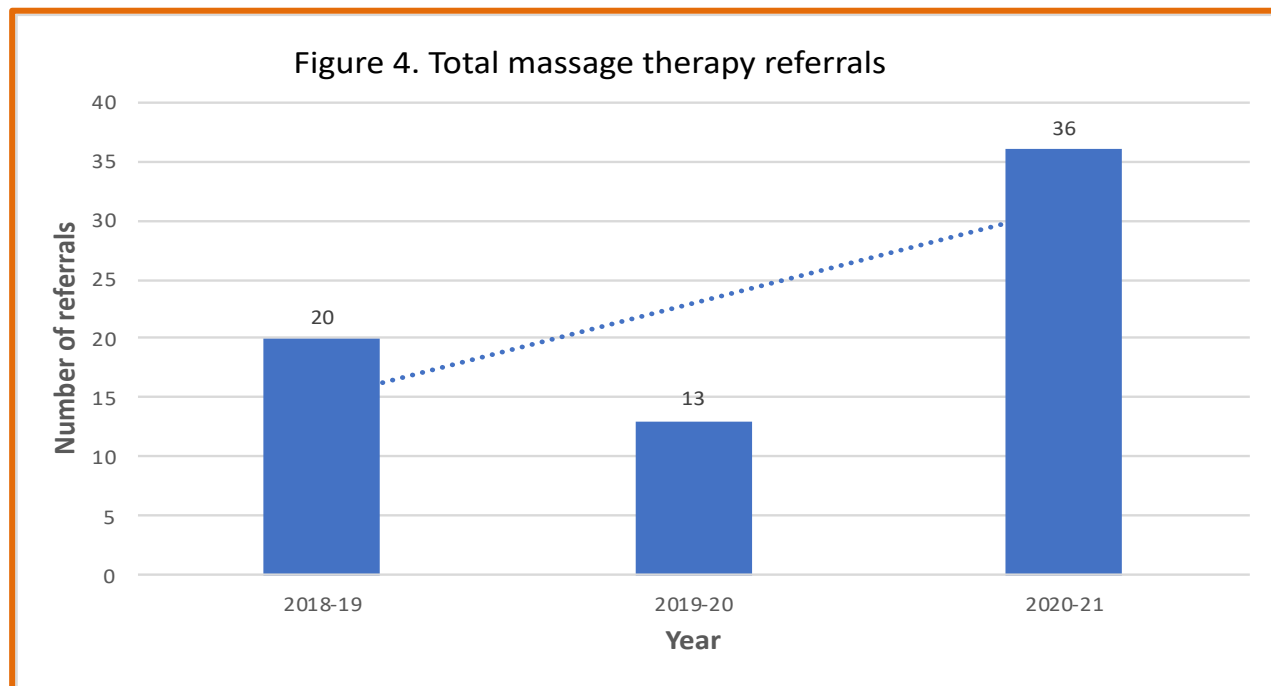
Relaxation Therapy

Referral Source

The Relaxation Therapy service has continued to be provided by Fiona McKee. The main source of referrals is from Carers Victoria.

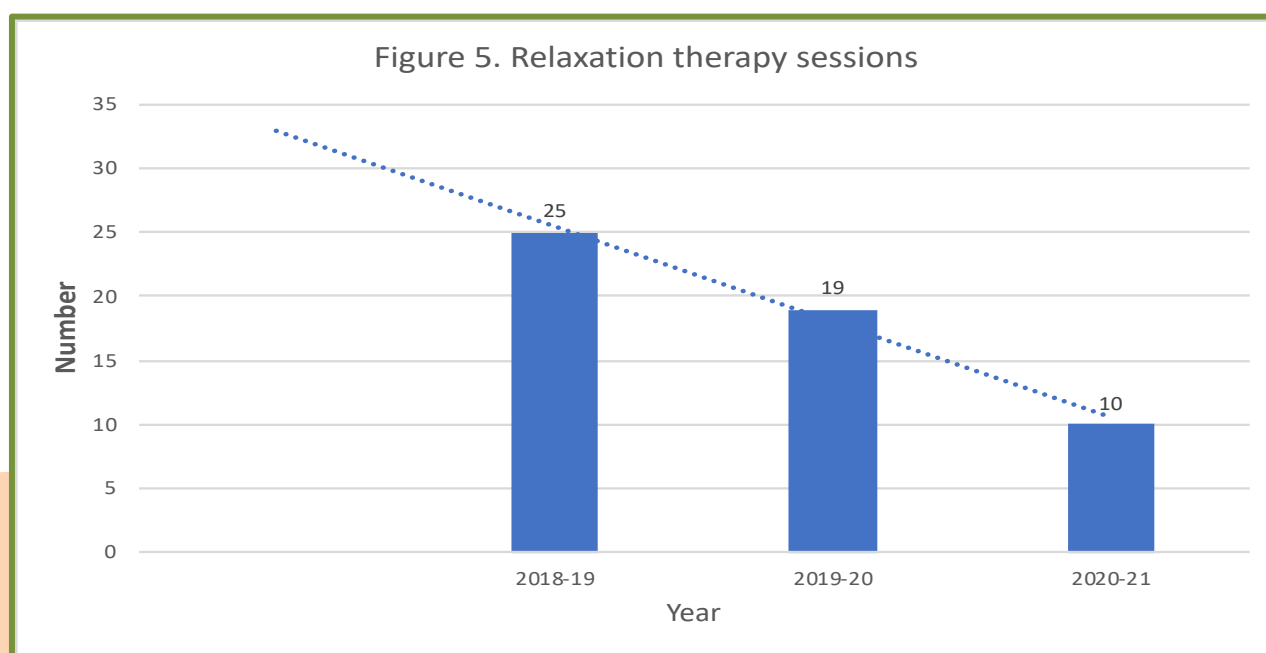
Referral Numbers

During the current reporting period, a total of 36 referrals were accepted for service. As shown in Figure 4, the number of referrals increased by 23 (176%) compared with the previous reporting period.



Relaxation Therapy Sessions

As shown in Figure 5, a total number of only 10 massage sessions were delivered in the current reporting period despite the high number of referrals. Unfortunately, we were unable to provide a COVID-19 safe environment.



Other Developments

Animal Assisted Therapy



During the current reporting period, Jenny enrolled in the Canine-Assisted Intervention Specialist (CAIS) Certificate through the Institute for Human Animal Connection, University of Denver. The CAIS Certificate is a professional development program designed for animal-assisted intervention professionals seeking to improve their knowledge of and skill with canines. The course runs for six months and concludes in January 2022.

New Therapy Dog

In April 2021 we welcomed Fletcher, our new Labrador pup to Corazon. He was named Fletcher, after Fletcher Seagull from the book “Jonathan Livingston Seagull”. He carries this message: *‘that we can all be so much more than we believe or are given to believe’*.



Fletcher – the new therapy dog

He was born on 13 February 2021 and comes from the Tweed area of NSW. He is training to be a therapy dog. We have partnered with Ms Claire Turner from K9 Assistance Australia (K9AA) to assist us. Because of COVID-19, however, our training schedule has had many interruptions. K9AA accredits both assistance and therapy dogs to work with adults and children to improve physical, mental and social outcomes. We are fortunate to be able to collaborate with Ms Turner as her work with people and assistance dogs is informed by Attachment theory and thus is in line with Circle of Security concepts.



Fletcher – his first experience in a public space and focused on the job.

Partnership with MacKillop College

MacKillop Secondary College is a large Catholic College located in Werribee. We were invited to partner with them in the delivery of their Year 12 VCAL program. They will help with further development of the garden including the community vegetable garden. Unfortunately, because of COVID-19 this arrangement did not proceed.

Future Planning and Development

Volunteer Base

- There is a need to rebuild our volunteer base, which, because of Covid, has been diminished greatly over the last two years. The assistance of many people over the years has been so essential to supporting our work in the community.

Employment

- Recruitment of an admin and community development staff. This will help us increase our referral base and enable the handling of referrals in a timely way.
- Recruitment of a psychologist and/or social worker.
- Recruitment of a part-time gardener with expertise in the care of native plants.

Landscaping of property

- It is necessary to undertake maintenance work on the garden at the rear of the property. In the early years of Corazon, the garden had been developed and maintained by ‘work for the dole’ participants and volunteers. As this help has dwindled over the last few years, it is now necessary to undertake remedial work and control our extensive weed problem.
- We will be looking to make a low maintenance garden that will also be child friendly.
- In addition, it is also necessary to restore and extend the irrigation system. Planning is underway for this redevelopment.
- This project will gain assistance from the year 12 VCAL students from MacKillop College.



Fletcher – the new therapy dog, settles in well and finds a new friend in Finn.



Financial Report – for end of financial year to 30 June 2021.

CORAZON CENTRE INC. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

INCOME	AMOUNT
Massage	\$720.00
Psychology	\$54,487.10
Bank Interest Received	\$2,640.92
Cash Flow Boost ATO	\$10,000.00
Donations	\$1,000.00
Solar Energy Refund	\$800.60
Other	\$825.46
TOTAL INCOME	\$70,474.08

EXPENDITURE	
Property Maintenance	\$2,386.55
Water, Utilities	\$972.14
Salaries	\$7,941.71
Supervision	\$2,562.67
Bank Fees and charges	\$747.79
Professional memberships	\$1,048.26
Professional Development	\$4,492.38
Psychology Resources	\$1,778.17
Telephone & Internet	\$3,012.86
Catering Expenses	\$9.45
Centre Expenses	\$11,532.25
Insurance	\$1,453.56
Car Expenses	\$2,317.29
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	\$40,255.06
SURPLUS (Income - Expenditure)	\$30,219.02

ASSETS	
Cash in bank	\$770.04
Investments	\$301,876.93
Motor Vehicle	\$27,956.82
Furniture & Equipment	\$18,014.43
Property Improvements	\$44,556.84
TOTAL ASSETS	\$393,175.06

Liabilities	
GST	\$566.27
Creditors	\$659.18
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$1,225.45

ASSOCIATION'S EQUITY	\$391,949.61
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