

# VACRO:07

2007  
Annual Report



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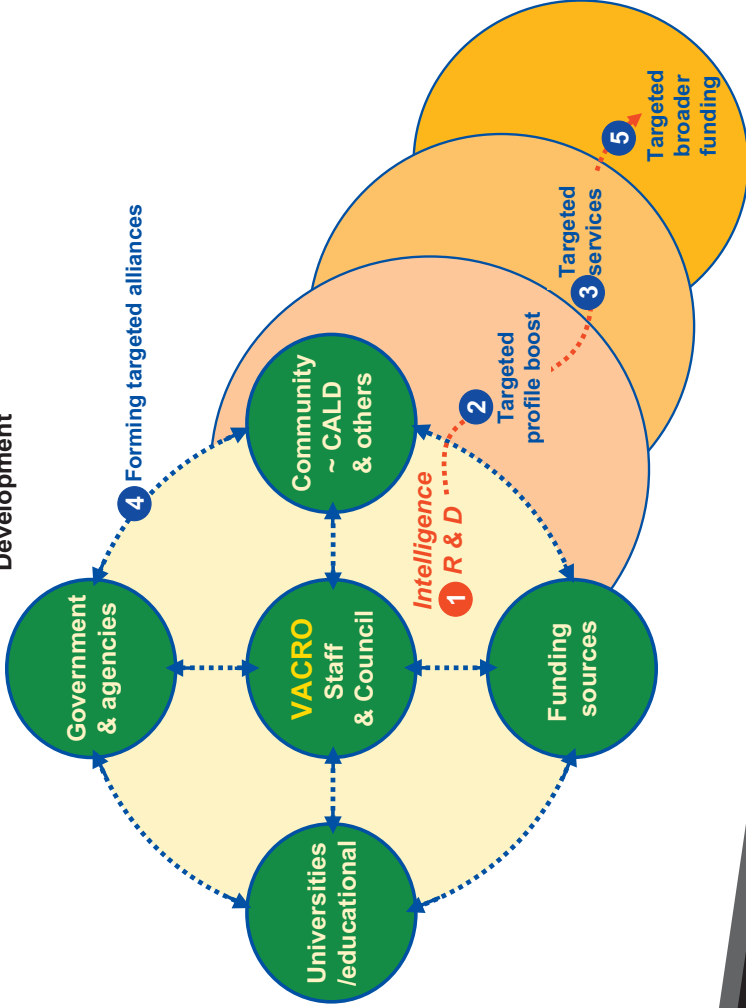
## Our Mission

Together we can reduce crime

*VACRO provides support and information for individuals charged with a criminal offence, offenders, prisoners and their families, as well as leadership, education, training and research on the Justice System for the Community.*

# VACRO Strategic Priorities

VACRO's Strategic Priorities ~ Led By Boosted Intelligence and Research & Development



## COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

**President:** *The Hon. Mr Justice David Harper*  
*BA Hons, LLB (Melb)*

**Chairman:** *Roger Dench*  
*B. Sc, Dip. Ed, MBA*

**Treasurer:** *Matt O'Keefe*  
*B.Com, M.Com, CPA, Grad. Dip.*  
*Advanced Accounting, CISA*

**Secretary:** *Allan Elliott*  
*LLB*

### **Council Members:**

*John Sayers*  
*LLB (Melb) LLB (Melb)*

*Dr Jane Hendtlass*  
*B.Sc. (Hons.), LLB.(Hons.), Ph.D. FAICD, AIMM, ARACI*

*Ann Cunningham*  
*B.Ec.,Dip.Ed.,M.Crim*

*David Youssef*  
*M.I. Fire. E, Adv. Dip. Fire Fighting Mtg, Grad. Cert. Appl. Mgt*

*Anna Whitlam*  
*Post-Graduate - Masters in Management (current);*  
*Bachelor of Business*

*Alan Clayton*  
*B.Ec., Master of Business, Melbourne (MBA), PSM*

*Janelle Morgan*  
*BBSc, Grad. Dip. Counsell, M. Appl. Sci*

*Assoc Professor Chris Trotter*  
*BA TSTC Dip Soc Studs MSW PhD*



# The President's Report

The Hon. Mr. Justice David Harper

This has been an exceptional year for VACRO. Our new strategic plan is already proving to have been an excellent investment of time: all of our core programs have been secured for another contract period; we have developed key partnerships / alliances with a number of service providers and universities; our profile both within the Justice System and the Community generally has increased by our new community capacity building program/s; we have moved 'up stream' to undertake early intervention work and work in the Courts; we have new funding streams from Trusts, Government Departments and Donors; and our existing supporters continue to provide much needed and very gratefully received assistance.

We continue to honour our tradition of working at the front line of service delivery within the Justice System; but this year we have taken an even stronger leadership role – one that marries our existing knowledge and expertise with substantial resources being placed into research, evaluation, education and partnerships. This, for me, is a source of great pride.

I also wish to thank and strongly commend the VACRO team – it gives me great pleasure to work such an amazing group of people. We continue to expand the experience and expertise of the Council, with a number of new members bringing their wisdom to the organisation. Our Chairman, Roger Dench provides excellent leadership to this very professional body. Their work is invaluable in enhancing our operations and strengthening our future.

Our staff (including our volunteers) are as dedicated and inspiring a group as any I have known. It is impossible to commend too highly the humanity and compassion that they bring to their roles. Our CEO, Andrea Lott, leads the team with enthusiasm and energy; she has become a major contributor at key policy making forums, while continuing her strong focus on operational detail and organisational support. To each and every one I offer my thanks. The VACRO team are indeed making a difference!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Harper'.

The Hon. Mr. Justice David Harper  
President



## The Chairman's Report

Roger Dench

This year has been a year of great growth, development and action for VACRO. We continue to deliver high quality programs – programs that work with some of the most marginalised groups in our community – that build on the experience and expertise that VACRO has developed over our 135 years. This same expertise is highly sought after – VACRO staff are well represented on a range of committees, at conferences, forums and networks. Our CEO is currently on three Ministerial Advisory Committees (as well as numerous other committees); our staff run regular information, training and education sessions / modules; and we are able to feed back into the community our knowledge via research and practice wisdom so that we continue to be on the cutting edge of innovation for the future.

The VACRO Council continues to go from strength to strength; focusing our energies on our 5 key strategic areas whilst bringing new and diverse skills to table. Our latest recruitment has brought skills from the areas of marketing, research / academia, finance / IT and justice/ corrections. We welcome these new members, all of whom have joined us since our last AGM: Chris Trotter, Matt O'Keefe, Anna Whitlam, Janelle Morgan & Alan Clayton.

We also extend our thanks to Leslie Heath who was the Treasurer of the VACRO Council for 18 months. Leslie did a wonderful job in this role – bringing structure, organisation and humour to the Council.

The planning and development programs undertaken by the Council and staff last financial year have indeed come to fruition. We have secured significant funding / support to enable us to undertake proactive research into our key areas, coupled with a number of pilot programs. It is indeed a privileged position to be in and we thank the ANZ Trustees for their support of our work and of what we are able to offer to the community. I also wish to thank the Department of Justice – VACRO continues to secure funding through the Department for the majority of our programs – who work with us in true partnership and in the desire to constantly look to better ways to reduce re-offending and stopping cycles of crime.

To our other many supporters (all of whom are mentioned in this report), including the R.E. Ross Trust, William Buckland Foundation and MarketU to name just a few – THANK YOU. Your encouragement and support of VACRO remains a shining light for us all.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank our President, the Hon. Mr Justice David Harper, all members of the VACRO Council (whose names are listed in this report), the CEO Andrea Lott and our wonderful staff. It is a pleasure to work with such an amazing team of people. I am looking forward to the coming year – it has already proven to be a great start!

Roger Dench  
Chairman



# The CEO's Report

Andrea Lott

As we draw a breath after a very busy year, I am pleased to reflect on the amazing achievements of our organisation. It never ceases to make me proud to work for an organisation where our mission and values are so clear and our direction so focused. The VACRO team is going from strength to strength – we now have over 35 staff and a Council that is stronger and more diverse than ever before. Our focus on three key areas (Community, Justice System Services and Family & Children's Services) has given us a balance between our strategic and operational work: keeping us working at the forefront of need while taking a stronger leadership role with our research, evaluation and community education.

Some of our major achievements this year have been:

- Our family work at the new Neighbourhood Justice Centre;
- Our research into the long term transitional needs of offenders (12 months + post release);
- Our work with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra on a project in partnership with the Melbourne Assessment Prison;
- Successfully receiving 2 years funding for our Women's Mentoring program (and an expansion to incorporate matches with women on Community based orders);
- The introduction of the Child Care and Transport Subsidies (CCaTS) Program which offers child care and transport subsidies to women on Community based orders;
- Our Families of Offenders Resource Kit (FORK) Program has completed its community capacity building / education across 4 local government areas and has increased our visibility to a whole new group within the community;
- Our continuing partnership with the Public Interest Law Clearing House and Corrs, Chambers, Westgarth Law firm who provide the pro bono law clinics to offenders and their families (for civil and administrative law matters);
- Our partnership with the Red Cross to deliver a Volunteer based 'Visitors Centre' program at Port Phillip Prison.

The planning from this year has also proved to be most fruitful for the 2007/08 financial year. We have secured a range of new programs and projects that build on our expertise and experience and allow us to provide stronger leadership in the Justice System.

- A capacity building project that looks at the needs of prisoners post release in relation to gambling support;
- A video conferencing project that will link families with loved ones in the prison system;
- A (Federally funded) program that will engage offenders and their families in activities relating to exercise and healthy eating;
- A Research and Development role at VACRO, allowing us to build knowledge and skills, develop sustainable services and provide leadership in promoting awareness of the 'whole-of-community' benefit in meeting the needs of offenders and their families.

We have had a sad passing of one of our team this year. Dr Leonie Naughton worked with our projects team over the last three years and will be sorely missed by us all. In memory of her work with VACRO and her never ending commitment and enthusiasm for research and travel, the Council has established an annual Scholarship that will provide funds for 'work related travel to contribute knowledge of the field' to one VACRO staff member each year. I value the input and initiative of staff in raising this and the support of the Council for making this happen!

My sincere thanks go out to the VACRO staff, Volunteers and our Council for all of their continued support and encouragement and to our donors, members, partners and supporters. What a team!!

Andrea Lott - CEO



# Community

VACRO has worked in the community supporting offenders and their families since 1872. For many years VACRO was the sole provider of such services, operating with limited resources and staff. Wherever the need, VACRO would try to respond, working both in prisons and in the community to ensure that support was available.

While VACRO has a respected history of service provision and an excellent reputation, much of our work has historically been in response to specific requests or immediate needs. We have focussed on meeting the ever-increasing demand for individual services and therefore have not always had the capacity to be pro active in our leadership, sharing our practice-based knowledge. As a result, our extensive experience in working with offenders and their families has not, to date, been consolidated in a form that allows us to present what we know of the Justice System and the ways in which it impacts on individuals, families and communities.

VACRO understands that offenders and their families are part of a broader community and that offending damages the fabric of that community. While incarceration removes offenders from the community for a period of time, most will eventually return and will require support to establish a new and productive role within that community. Taking this broader view, it is in the interests of the 'whole of community' to ensure that offenders and their families receive reasonable support. The intention is to reduce the likelihood of reoffending, to encourage participation in family and community life, making a contribution and, in turn, receiving the support of the community. For some offenders, this is a new experience and takes some time and effort to establish. VACRO's focus on the whole



picture will allow us to stimulate and contribute to debate, seeking better community understanding of the work of supporting and reintegrating offenders into local communities, upon completion of a sentence or order. The alternative experience - of repeat offending, social exclusion and community fear of crime - is costly and damaging for all of us.

In 2005/2006, the VACRO Council produced a strategic plan that provides us with a strong path on which to travel for the future; it will ensure that we develop a stronger evidence-based, productive and sustainable direction for the organisation. This will allow us to be an organisation that is constantly leading and adapting in response to client / community need.

Over the next three years (through a generous grant from the Florence and Trubi Williams Strategic Impact Program, managed through the ANZ Trustees), VACRO will focus on developing three main areas of work:

1. Community
2. Justice System Services
3. Family and Children's Services

# Community

Our work in the latter two areas will produce evidence based action plans and then pilot a program or project in each area based on this information. Each will be evaluated and will, in turn, form the basis of new targeted development of services.

Our work in the area of 'Community' will ensure that our engagement with Victorian Communities is enhanced through:

- raising community and professional awareness about the needs of individuals charged with a criminal offence, offenders, prisoners and their families (with a particular focus on children);
- providing information and promoting discussion on the 'whole of community' benefit of supporting the above target group;
- addressing the stigma associated with being involved in the Justice System (particularly incarceration);
- maximising 'early intervention' contact with our target group

VACRO will do this through:

- the provision of more accessible information about the Justice System and the issues faced by those involved in it (comprehensive information on our website, our Telephone information line, our resources / publications, information sessions);
- the provision of education and training to a broader cross section of the community;
- stronger relationships with Universities and Schools (partnerships in research, publication, education, student placements);
- stronger networks / alliances with community leaders of Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups; the mental health sector; the drug and alcohol sector; Government Departments (State and Federal); media contacts; business leaders / corporate organisations; and philanthropic organisations.



## DID YOU KNOW THAT?

- ❑ Offenders come from all parts of the community, although particular groups are over represented. Statistics collected by Corrections Victoria indicate that:
  - of 3,660 men in prison, only 10% had completed secondary education; 60% were 'unemployed or not a part of the paid labour force when in the community';
  - of the almost 300 women in prison, 20% had completed secondary education; 80% were 'unemployed or not a part of the paid labour force when in the community'.
- ❑ Just as victims of crime can come from all walks of life, so do the families of offenders – they are the 'hidden', secondary victims of crime. They often face a range of adverse psychological, emotional and financial effects following the incarceration of a parent or family member.
- ❑ 5% of Australian children experience parental incarceration.
- ❑ 1 in 5 indigenous children experience parental incarceration

# Justice System Services

VACRO's work in the Justice System dates back to 1872, having been established in the wake of the 1871 Royal Commission into the Penal Establishment and Gaols. The Royal Commission urged the establishment of a body to give assistance to discharged prisoners; Jurists, clergy and philanthropists launched an appeal for public funds which resulted in swags, clothes, blankets, tools and travel passes being made available to released prisoners. The Prisoners Aid Society (1872 – 1974) was born and staff and volunteers provided material aid, assistance with employment and prison visiting. A re-appraisal of our goals and services in the 1970's, led to the reincarnation of the organisation as VACRO. Our role within the Justice System expanded to include an educative role, more services for offenders and a greater focus on families.

We are now a multifaceted organisation that offers information, support, counselling, research, evaluation and community education. There has been no diminishing of need for services; in fact the demand is ever increasing, as does the population in our prisons. We continue to work at the forefront of need via the following programs:

- Bridging the Gap (BtG) program - pre and post release support for male prisoners;
- Women's Integrated Support Program (WISP) – a pre and post release support for female offenders (a partnership with Melbourne Citymission and the Brosnan Centre);
- OPUS program at Tarrengower (a partnership with Caraniche);
- Women's Mentoring Program
- Child Care and Transport Subsidies Program (for women on Community Based orders)
- Prisoner Property and Banking program
- Plan B (multi-modal creative arts based project for men who have been released from prison).



## Justice System Services

Our research and planning over the last 12 months meant that we have successfully tendered for a number of other projects (starting in 2007/2008). These include:

- Healthy, Active Living project – looking at involving ex-prisoners in exercise & healthy eating; and
- A Problem gambling project – a community capacity building program looking at gambling supports pre and post release of prison.

We look forward to working with the community in the coming year to ensure that the experience for those exiting the Justice System is an experience of forgiveness and support. Together we can reduce crime.



*“I am pleading for a time when hatred and cruelty will not control the hearts of men, when we can learn by reason and judgement and understanding and faith that all life is worth saving and that mercy is the highest attribute of men.”*

*Clarence Darrow 1857 – 1938*

*American lawyer*

*(As quoted in A brief History of The Prisoners Aid Society and VACRO 1872 – 1997)*

# Family & Children's Services

VACRO has a long history of working with families and children of individuals who have contact with the Criminal Justice System – this may be at the time of arrest, through the court proceedings, whilst a loved one is incarcerated and/or during the transition from custody to community. We recognise these families and children as the hidden, secondary victims of crime.

Our work in this area is going from strength to strength as we deliver more programs and undertake more research and development in this area than ever before. We continue to offer services in the areas of:

- Family Liaison worker at the Melbourne Assessment Prison (MAP);
- Counselling and Support for Families of Offenders;
- Family Groups (CBD, Geelong and Morwell);
- VACRO Good Beginnings Program at Fulham Correctional Centre (Parenting program for male prisoners);
- Mulwilla House and Blake Cottage (Accommodation in Beechworth and Castlemaine);
- Aboriginal Family Visits program.

This year we have also started two new ventures:

1. Family work at the new Neighbourhood Justice Centre in Collingwood – a partnership with Court Network and the Salvation Army; and
2. A Visitors Centre at Port Phillip Prison - a partnership with the Red Cross and Port Phillip Prison.

We are very excited about these new ventures (and new partnerships) which have taken our work into new areas of need. There are a number of new programs planned for 2007 / 2008 – one of these is a video conferencing program that allows us to keep families in touch with a loved one from our office!

The work that we offer often makes us the first point of contact for many families who are coming into contact with the criminal justice system. We provide information and support



via our suite of services to ensure that families and children are better able to navigate their way through the system. For example: What do you tell your children when their mum / dad has been taken into custody? How do you manage other family member's / community reactions to a loved-one's imprisonment? When / how often can you see your loved one? How do you visit a prison? How do you ensure that you are able to deal with the potential financial implications of an incarceration?

Ensuring that you have someone to talk to about these issues, particularly someone who has practical knowledge and information about the Justice System and its impacts, is very important. VACRO provides a venue for families to discuss the challenges that they face and to receive support in a safe, non judgemental environment.



## The Treasurer's Report

Matt O'Keefe

The 2007 financial year has been very productive for VACRO. We have been successful in securing a range of new funding streams, and have appropriately and prudently managed our financial resources within budget for an overall budget surplus position. We have successfully focused our attention on more early intervention and prevention programs, and targeted projects that will return very real benefits to the whole of the Victorian Community.

The budget surplus of \$51,611.62 allows us to continue our excellent work in 2007/08 developing a stronger financial foundation, to ensure that VACRO continues to be a leader in the justice system; working together with the Victorian Community to reduce crime.

We are looking forward to another strong and successful year, working in partnership with our many Donors and Members who continue to provide VACRO with generous support.

We extend our gratitude to all who make our work possible. Thank you also to the VACRO staff for their invaluable work – their commitment and professionalism is a credit to the organisation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt O'Keefe', written in a cursive style.

Matt O'Keefe  
Treasurer

# Financials

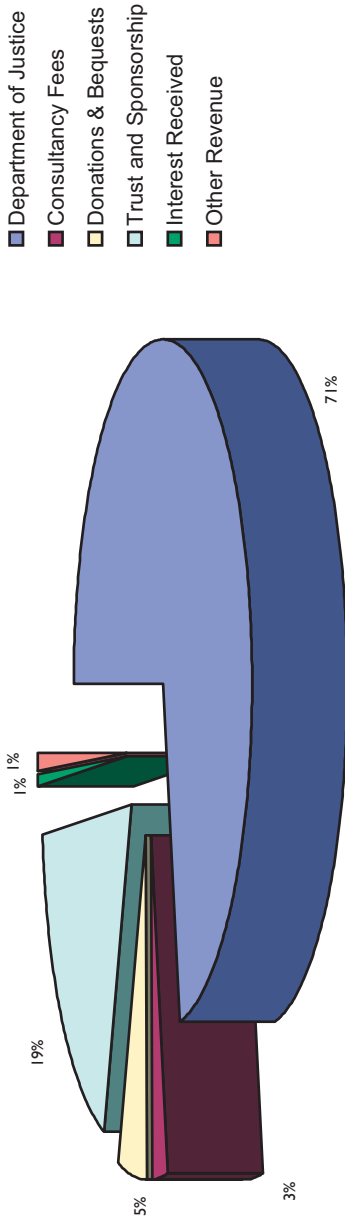
## Financial Statement Year Ended 2007

	2006/2007	2005/2006
<b>Revenue from Ordinary Activities</b>	\$	\$
Department of Justice	1,449,822	1,124,752
Consultancy Fees	55,570	91,762
Donations & Bequests	105,326	43,853
Trust and Sponsorship	374,106	439,749
Interest Received	14,397	10,979
Other Revenue	15,702	18,977
<b>Total Revenue from Ordinary Activities</b>	<b>2,014,923</b>	<b>1,730,072</b>
<b>Expenses from Ordinary Activities</b>		
Employee Benefits Expense	-1,306,117	-1,147,810
Depreciation & Amortisation Expenses	-28,865	-32,176
Consultancy Expenses	-47,290	-149,225
Motor Vehicle Expenses	-141,836	-113,039
Occupancy Expenses	-38,628	-41,846
Administrative Expenses	-176,976	-152,526
Client Expenses	-97,547	-58,078
Other Expenses from Ordinary Activities	-126,053	-48,049
<b>Total Expenses from Ordinary Activities</b>	<b>-1,963,312</b>	<b>-1,742,749</b>
<b>Surplus/Deficit from Ordinary Activities</b>	<b>51,611</b>	<b>-12,677</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	182,637	106,288
Trade & Other Receivables	355,860	216,726
Inventories	0	9,256
Prepayments	15,894	13,394
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>554,391</b>	<b>345,664</b>
<b>Non Current Assets</b>		
Property, Plant & Equipment	531,507	531,541
<b>Total Non Current Assets</b>	<b>531,507</b>	<b>531,541</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>1,085,898</b>	<b>877,205</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Payables	123,569	109,302
Provisions - Employees	74,242	50,657
Other - Deferred Revenue	112,207	0
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>310,018</b>	<b>159,959</b>
<b>Non Current Liabilities</b>		
Provisions - Employees	9,156	2,133
<b>Total Non Current Liabilities</b>	<b>9,156</b>	<b>2,133</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>319,174</b>	<b>162,092</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>766,724</b>	<b>715,113</b>

	2006/2007
<b>Program Expenditure</b>	\$
Community	169,673
Justice System Services	1,387,155
Family & Childrens Services	408,738
<b>Total Program Expenditure</b>	<b>1,965,566</b>

# Financials

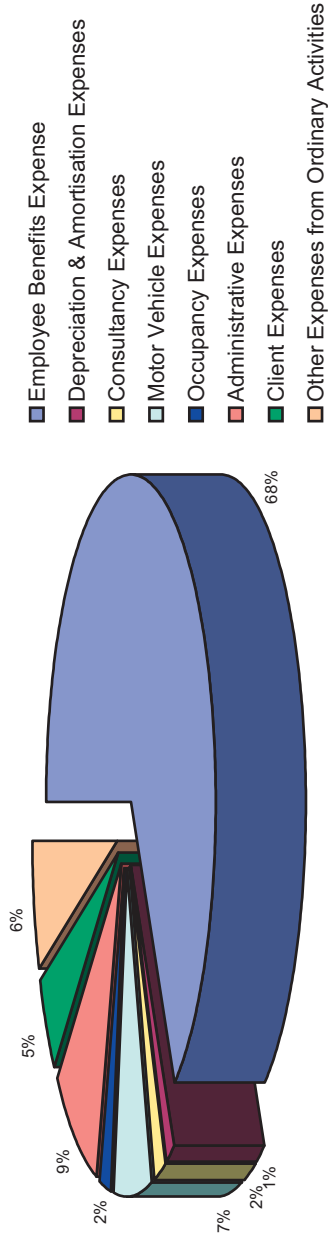
Revenue from Ordinary Activities 2007





## Financials

Expenses from Ordinary Activities 2007



# VACRO Supporters

- ❑ ACSO
- ❑ Anglican Parish of Holy Trinity
- ❑ The Brosnan Centre
- ❑ T&M Brusamarello
- ❑ Jean Cheshire
- ❑ City of Melbourne
- ❑ Collie Foundation
- ❑ Constance Cooke
- ❑ Corrs, Chambers, Westgarth
- ❑ Court Network
- ❑ Ann Cunningham
- ❑ June Danks
- ❑ Dame Elisabeth Murdoch A.C.,
- ❑ D.B.E.
- ❑ Roger Dench
- ❑ Department of Justice
- ❑ DC & EM Doherty
- ❑ Mr Dunn
- ❑ DA Eddison
- ❑ Allan Elliott
- ❑ Embelton Limited
- ❑ Allan Elliot
- ❑ David Elsum
- ❑ FaCSIA
- ❑ Nelima Ganter
- ❑ Gamblers Help
- ❑ R.E. Ross Trust
- ❑ GEO
- ❑ Justice David Harper
- ❑ Dr Jane Hendtlass
- ❑ Graeme Horsborough
- ❑ Nikki Iacovella
- ❑ Cecily Johns
- ❑ Anne Kantor
- ❑ Rob Kerr
- ❑ Julian Knight
- ❑ Helen Leyshon
- ❑ Mallesons Stephen Jaques
- ❑ Market U P/L
- ❑ WC Meagher
- ❑ Melbourne Citymission
- ❑ Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
- ❑ Sylvia Morrissey
- ❑ SK, EW & JM Muntz
- ❑ The Myer Foundation
- ❑ Matt O'Keefe
- ❑ Our Lady of the Pines, Donvale
- ❑ Public Interest Law Clearing  
House (PILCH)
- ❑ Ann Polis
- ❑ Samira Ratel
- ❑ Hilary Read
- ❑ Red Cross Victoria

# Achievements

## Community

- VACRO Information Sessions
- VACRO Information and Support Line
- PILCH Pro Bono Law Clinic

VACRO Information Sessions:	VACRO Information and Support Line:	PILCH Pro Bono Law Clinic:
1. Family Drug Help 2. Ex prisoner panel 3. Family Panel 4. Justice System Services Panel Attendees: 86	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4,509 (phone / face-to-face contacts)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 65 Files were opened on 'cases'</li> </ul>

## Justice System Services

- Prisoner Banking and Property
- WISP Pre and Post release program
- Bridging the Gap Pre and Post release program
- Women's Mentoring Program
- OPUS Exit planning, Counselling, Support (Pre and Post release) program

Prisoner Banking:	Prisoner Property:	Clients being case managed across the programs:	Women's Mentoring Program:	OPUS program:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11,874 Requests and Transactions (average of 230 per week)</li> <li>• Over \$1.5 million Credits and Debits via Trust Account</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 400 items currently stored</li> <li>• 136 Prisoners utilizing the service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 261</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 Existing Mentors</li> <li>• 13 Women currently mentored</li> <li>• 25 Prospective mentors currently training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% of female prisoners at Tarrenrower Prison in Maldon received a range of support/s</li> </ul>

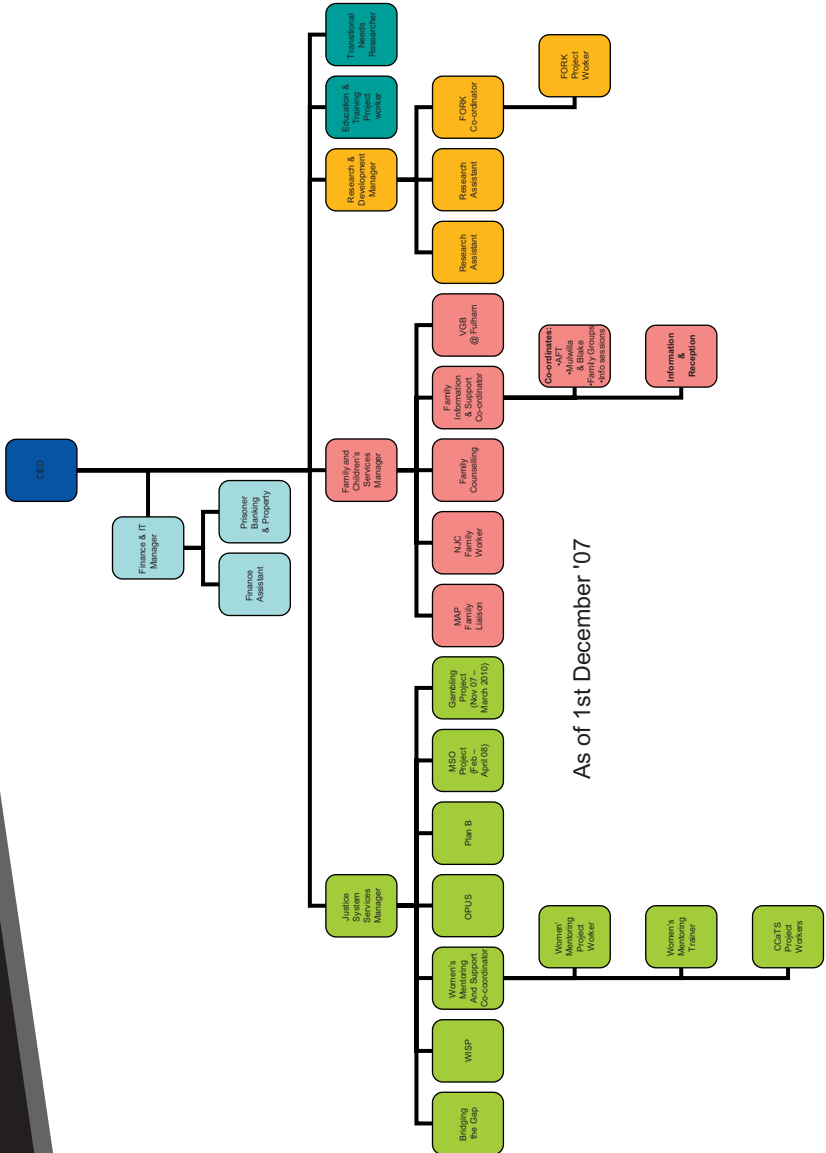
# Achievements

## Family & Children's Services:

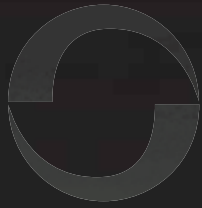
- Family Counselling and Support
- MAP Family Liaison
- Mulwilla House
- Family Support Groups
- VACRO Good Beginnings at Fulham Correctional Centre (Parenting program)
- Aboriginal Family Travel Program

Number of contacts (phone / face-to-face) across the programs:	Number of overnight stays at Blake Cottage / Mulwilla House:	Family Support Group Attendees (3 groups across Victoria):	VACRO Good Beginnings Program:	Aboriginal Family Travel Program:
• 2,868	• 196	• 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 (6-8 week) programs</li> <li>• 68 prisoners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 43 prisoners visited</li> <li>• 100 Adults and 65 children received</li> <li>• 78 Nights of accommodation utilised</li> <li>• 274 Adults and 142 Children received travel assistance accommodation support</li> <li>• 78 Nights of accommodation utilised</li> <li>• 274 Adults and 142 Children received travel assistance</li> </ul>

# 'Organisational chart for 2007/08'



VACCRO:07



**VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE CARE & RESETTLEMENT OF OFFENDERS**

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Telephone: 9602 1366 Facsimile: 9602 2355 [www.vacro.org.au](http://www.vacro.org.au)