

**Zig Zag Young Women's Resource  
Centre Inc.**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2011**





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**Acknowledgement of traditional owners.** Staff and management of Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre respectfully acknowledge Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as its traditional owners. We acknowledge and honour local Aboriginal elders, past and present, for their role as the original custodians of the Brisbane region.



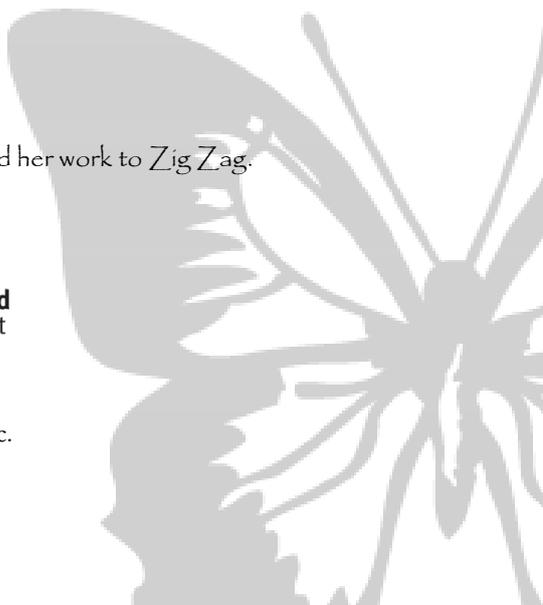
Cover artwork by Amy Shambrook - a young woman who kindly donated her work to Zig Zag.

Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre Inc. is Funded by



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Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre Inc.  
Annual Report 2011





## Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre

“A place of healing, support and social action for young women”

### Zig Zag PHILOSOPHY

Zig Zag provides a place of healing, support, and social action and change for young women aged 12-25 years. As a feminist service, we are committed to working alongside young women and acknowledging their expertise in their own lives. We acknowledge that social, political, cultural and economic contexts limit young women's power, creating vulnerability and disadvantage. In particular, Zig Zag provides services to young women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and young women who are survivors of sexual violence.

Zig Zag recognises the diversity amongst young women, staff and management committee and values the unique experience, knowledge and skills each woman contributes. We work in a way that is collaborative, inclusive, supportive and respectful. Zig Zag is committed to ethical practice and a process of continuous reflection and development that is informed by young women, practice wisdom and shared knowledge.





## Chairperson's Report for 2011

Firstly I'd like to acknowledge Zig Zag's funding bodies, the Department of Communities and Queensland Health, without whose ongoing funding we would not have been able to do the work we do. I'd also like to recognise the staff of Zig Zag for their varied skills and knowledge as well as for the commitment and respect with which they work together and with the young women for whom Zig Zag exists. In particular, I would like to say that, in her capacity as Zig Zag's coordinator, Christy McGuire has never ceased to impress me with her ability to balance professionalism with approachability and humanity; commitment to the work of Zig Zag with commitment to having a rich non-work life; a wealth of skill and knowledge with humility and appreciation of the skills and knowledge of those around her. As a member of the management committee I always feel very supported and appreciated by Christy – I'm sure the rest of the committee does too.

At this time I would also like to acknowledge the following staff who have moved on from their work with Zig Zag in this past year:

- Relief staff Glenys Gibson, Jennifer Green and Kelly Maddock, who worked with us for approximately 3, 6 and 16 months respectively;
- Neti Reid, who was a member of our Housing Support staff over a period of nearly 5 years;
- Talei Rice, who was our Tenancy Management worker in the Housing team for about 4 and a half years; and especially...
- Erica Fernandez, who was Zig Zag's first Senior Practitioner in the Sexual Assault team from 2008 until 2011, by which time Erica had been a dedicated Zig Zag staff member for nearly 13 years!

Zig Zag has seen two staff positions vacated and refilled this year, and although it was in fact just after the end of the financial year that we managed to fill the second of those positions, I want to say that we are very fortunate to have found and snaffled-up Stephanie Anne for our Senior Practitioner position in our Sexual Assault team, and Karen Doolan for our Housing Team's Tenancy Manager position. I'd like to point out that the Tenancy Management position was hard to find someone suitable for, probably because of the two quite distinct areas of expertise required which I suspect aren't usually found in one *sector*, let alone one *position*. After two rounds of advertising and interviewing for the Tenancy Management position we finally found Karen, and in the interim (April to August) we were very fortunate to have Sonya Moore-Carter agree to take up some of the slack, not only in terms of the Tenancy Management responsibilities but also in terms of the Finance Worker's responsibilities while Lynette was on leave, in addition to providing support to Christy and the Centre Support team!

Our management committee has farewelled two committee members this year – Katie McDonald who excused herself to go and work overseas for a while (we are hoping she'll rejoin us upon her return!), and Julie Phillip who was a consistent pillar of focus and financial knowledge as our Treasurer, and who had the dedication to fill the space she vacated with the delightful and equally financially astute Annie Albers!

The 2010-2011 year has had some challenges for Zig Zag and these challenges have been handled well. One of these relates to wage increases in the community sector, legislated by the Industrial Relations Commission. The management committee were committed to implementing all the wage increases as soon as possible, as an important factor in keeping skilled and experienced staff and in attracting highly skilled new workers. We strongly acknowledge the state government for their commitment to the community sector in supporting Zig Zag to provide wage conditions that reflect the complexity and professionalism required of the work that our staff undertake. Karen Struthers, Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women, deserves particular recognition for her support of fair wages for community services.

In March 2011, Queensland Health informed us that Zig Zag would need to tender for their Sexual Assault program funding, in September 2011. Zig Zag's greatest challenge for the year was the implications of this ongoing funding uncertainty, for staff and for young women. In response to Queensland Health's state-wide review of Sexual Assault program funding and service delivery, sexual assault services throughout the state collaborated to produce a report, entitled "*Right to Choose*" – a community sector report on effective



responses to sexual assault in Queensland, launched in September 2010 at Parliament House. In mid-September *this year*, we were informed of the good news that the Sexual Assault program funding is being moved from Queensland Health to the Department of Communities, which means that all of Zig Zag's funding will from 2012 come from the one department. We're relieved, to say the least, that our funding is now stable, and we look forward to working with the Department of Communities with our Sexual Assault program.

So we've survived a year of many and varied challenges, and have strengthened and grown as an organisation, continuing to provide important services to young women in the community, maintaining a commitment to our mission: *to provide a place of healing, support, social action and change for young women*. The staff of Zig Zag, and the young women who not only gain from its services the support they deserve but also contribute to its wisdom and growth, are an inspiration to me.

Christine Grodd - Chairperson

## Treasurer's Report for 2011

As the incoming Treasurer for 2011 I would like to thank Julie Phillipp for the work she has put into the position which she has held for the last 2 years. Andrew Marshall was appointed again for the 2011 audit and Zig Zag has been happy with his communication with the financial staff and with his commitment to the community organisation arena.

The 2010-2011 fiscal year was a successful year for Zig Zag albeit with a number of challenges faced and overcome. FY 2011 showed a total revenue figure of \$751,848 of which government funding received was \$662,879. The Department of Communities funded \$337,989 and Queensland Health funded \$324,890. No unexpended surplus was carried forward.

The Housing Program forms a vital part of Zig Zag's operation and has an important role to play in its financial well being. Rents received from The Crisis Accommodation and Same House/Different Landlord Programs combined contributed \$61,405 to Zig Zag's revenue of which \$3,202 was added to the previous year's unexpended carried forward balance. This has now a combined total of \$51,337.

The remainder of the revenue (\$27,584) was generated by donations, memberships, resource income, and interest received from invested funds.

Profit before income tax was \$683.99 which resulted in total retained earnings of \$109,296.

I am therefore happy to report that there are reasonable grounds to believe that Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

Although there has been continued uncertainty regarding our Sexual Assault Program funding, Zig Zag continued to receive its full recurrent funding from the Department of Communities and Queensland Health as in previous years. Mid year there were serious concerns as to the continuation of Queensland Health's funding of the Sexual Assault Program past December 2011. Happily it has been confirmed that funding will continue through until at least July 2013 with the funding program moving to Department of Communities as of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012. Therefore, in following years, Housing and Sexual Assault recurrent funding will come only from the Department of Communities.

To conclude this report, I would like to thank Lynette Smee for her tireless work in putting together all the reports and so capably maintaining the bookkeeping and other required financial tasks. I would also like to extend my thanks to Christy McGuire for the exemplary way in which she runs the organisation, to all of the



staff and to the rest of my fellow management committee members for their commitment to the work carried out by Zig Zag.

Annie Albers - Treasurer

## Report from the Zig Zag Housing Team 2011

### Staffing:

The year has seen some changes in the Housing Team. We welcomed Anne back from a year of leave in late October and shortly after fare-welled Neti following her 3 years as Housing Support Worker. Fortunately Bess was able to hand Anne's role back and do handover with Neti all within a few weeks, making for a smooth transition both within the team and for Young Women. In 2011 we said good-bye to Talei who had worked as both Tenancy Manager and Housing Support worker over a course of 3 years. We are very thankful to both Sonja and Amelia who were able to step in and carry the Tenancy Manager position for the weeks where the position was unfilled.

### Housing Support:

The Housing Service has continued to offer quality accommodation and support to young women and their children. We continue to manage 5 units of accommodation at Carina and 4 units at Greenslopes. In addition, we continued to work with The Department of Communities Housing and Homelessness Services (DOCHHS) to utilise the Youth Head-lease (Same House, Different landlord) Program.

Our team continues to provide the following services to our tenants and some ex tenants;

- Supporting women to secure stable long-term accommodation
- Linking women with other services in their communities
- Supporting women to achieve their goals including undertaking education; finding employment; building support networks; pregnancy and parenting support

We support our tenants to meet and socialise with other young women by holding regular events. This year we held a Garage Grab; the Dalai Lama Youth Forum; a trip to Currumbin Sanctuary and an end of year craft and pamper celebration.

During the period July 1 2009 and June 30 2010 we supported **32** young women and **18** children. This figure is comprised of:

- **20** young women and **18** children have been housed in our accommodation;
- **3** young women and **3** accompanying children who transitioned from our CAP properties into our Same House Different Landlord Scheme. These women then become tenants of DOCHHS after a 6 month period;
- **2** young women and **1** accompanying child who transitioned into BRIC Housing through our MOU;
- **12** young women were supported with housing help and/or as an ex-tenant with ongoing support. Only those supported with Housing Help for significantly more than



1 hour were recorded. This figure does not capture the many YW on the waitlist that are supported casually through letters of support and smaller amounts of advocacy.

Unfortunately, BRIC Housing has recently had to cancel their MOU arrangements with Zig Zag which had been a very successful arrangement whereby young women exiting Zig Zag housing were prioritized in exchange for a continuation of the support relationship for an initial period of 6 months. Continuing stresses in the area of housing and homelessness in South East Queensland have resulted in a decrease in the number of young women exiting from Zig Zag into long-term community based housing.

### **General Counselling & Housing Help:**

In July 2010 the housing team decided that we will no longer provide a general counseling service to young women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This comes about due to the impact of the pay equity decision and its corresponding increases in wages which, with only partial funding, has meant a decrease in worker hours and a reprioritization of workloads. Our team does however offer a Housing Help service as capacity allows and continues to provide support to ex-tenants.

It has been acknowledged within the team that there is a great need for appropriate housing help for women on our waitlist. At times when capacity allows within the team, or when we have a student on placement, we have been able to offer substantial housing help and have seen many positive benefits for Young Women who have had this advocacy and support to seek appropriate housing.

### **Issues for young women:**

Young women continue to request housing mainly due to family breakdown (especially relating to pregnancy), experiencing violence in relationships, affordability issues, and overcrowding. In this financial year we have had **408** requests for accommodation from young women, their families, and workers.

This year the trend of young African women needing housing and assistance has continued. Around **30%** of young women on our **waiting list** for housing are originally from Africa, this includes women from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan (including the Republic of South Sudan), Liberia, Sierra Leone, Togo, Zimbabwe and Somalia. It has been challenging for the team to respond to the demand for housing assistance and medium term accommodation to the diverse range of young women with housing needs. The young African women on our waiting list often require additional support to access and understand the complex housing system in Queensland and as a team it has been a constant challenge to stretch our resources enough to respond adequately to these young women.

In our housing waitlist **45%** of young women are from **Culturally and Linguistically Diverse** backgrounds (including women from Vietnam, Maori women, and women from the African nations already mentioned). This year young African women made up **60%** of the **support work** we continued with women once they had moved out of our accommodation. This shows the ongoing demand for appropriate support services that can respond to the diverse needs of women and



children who are resettling in Australia. It is also clear that the support during the 6-9 months in our accommodation is not long enough to meet the ongoing needs of this group of women.

**Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women** make up **20%** of the women accommodated in our housing. However it is an ongoing priority for the team to consider how we can become more accessible to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and to make sure our service is appropriate in responding to women's needs. The number of Indigenous women who continued to receive support once they exited our housing was **8%**.

### **Networks & Community Activities:**

At different times during the past year the housing team have participated in and contributed to various networks, including:

- **Brisbane Girls Grammar School:** Anne and Talei met with the Second Chance Committee to talk about Zig Zag's work, youth homelessness and share fundraising ideas. A big thank you to Abby Hills at Brisbane Girls Grammar School for organising Christmas presents for young women.
- **Department of Communities, Housing and Homelessness:** Anne and Bess attended the Specialist Homelessness Services Workshop to discuss the planned Common Assessment Tool. Anne and Bess also met with workers from the local office to discuss Zig Zag young women and processes.
- **International Women's Day:** Anne participated in planning and hosted a screen printing IWD event with the Sexual Assault Team held at Zig Zag.
- **IWSS:** Both Bess and Neti worked closely with workers at IWSS in support of shared clients.
- **Local Psychologists:** Anne and Bess met with a local psychologist to explore possible referrals.
- **NAIDOC:** The housing team womaned a stall with the sexual assault team for the NAIDOC Festival at Musgrave Park.
- **National Homelessness Conference:** Bess and Neti attended this event held at the Convention Centre.
- **Othila's:** Both Bess and Neti worked closely with workers at Othila's in support of shared clients. Anne and Bess womaned a stall at Othila's Domestic Violence Awareness Festival called 'Out of the Shadows'.
- **QYHC:** Talei regularly attended the SAAP housing network. Talei attended the Youth Homelessness Forum. Bess regularly attended the Young Women's Housing Group. Anne attended this same group at times. Bess attended the QYHC AGM. Anne and Talei attended the Youth Homelessness Matters Day event hosted by QYHC.
- **SA Support:** Bess attended the Lantern March in West End that was held in response to recent local events. Bess and Talei attended the SA paper launch at Parliament House.
- **The Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT):** Bess attended the AGM in 2010.
- **Women's Legal Service:** Talei attended an information session conducted by WLS including an inspirational speech from Zoe Rathus.
- **YPP:** Bess and Neti attended the YPP AGM. Bess attended a Young Mum's Group session to talk about the ZZ Housing Program. Anne met with YPP workers to teach them how to use our screen printing equipment. YPP have borrowed this equipment several times.



*The group at Currumbin Sanctuary for a tenant's event, Aug 2010.*

### **Staff Professional Development**

#### **Anne Castles**

In-house training for the Housing Client Database  
The Horn of Africa (Ethiopia and Eritrea) Cultural Awareness Training  
Sex and Gender Diversity Workshop – QLD Association for Healthy Communities.  
Unplanned Pregnancy – Children by Choice.  
ACT for Adolescence Workshop  
UQ Social Work Theory Refresher  
Spiritual Perspectives for Welfare Professionals – Jenny Gilmore

#### **Bess Hopgood**

In-house training for the Housing Client Database  
ACT for Adolescence Workshop  
Spiritual Perspectives for Welfare Professionals – Jenny Gilmore  
Specialist Housing Services - SHIP client management system training – Department of Health and Welfare.

#### **Neti Read**

In-house training for the Housing Client Database  
ACT – The Happiness Trap 2 day Training

#### **Talei Rice**

In-house training for the Housing Client Database  
The Horn of Africa (Ethiopia and Eritrea) Cultural Awareness Training



**Feedback from Young Women:**

**Supported Housing: What did you like best?**

*“Support for everything, not just housing.”*

*“The support I got from the Zig Zag ladies and the meeting with the group.”*

*“Lots of things about the program were good. The housing team helped with my study. I am very happy with all the help.”*

*“Everything was beautiful!”*

*“Everything. It was nice to have someone around in the first few weeks and the case worker was very helpful.”*

*“Having a support worker to talk to.”*

*“Seeing a social worker. Having someone to talk to when I get lonely.”*

## Report from the Zig Zag Sexual Assault Team 2011

### **Staffing**

This year saw some significant changes in the Sexual Assault team as we farewell a long standing worker in the organisation - Erica Fernandez. Erica was employed at Zig Zag for more than 12 years and brought great knowledge, warmth, and skills to her work with young women and colleagues. Her departure is a significant change for the team and all those connected with Zig Zag who knew Erica. We wish her all the very best in her new endeavors.

Adela Brent and Jane Hegerty continued in their permanent positions as Sexual Assault Workers and have ensured Zig Zag's ongoing response to community need for specialist support services for young women who have experienced sexual assault. To help fill out the team this year it was wonderful to have the support and input of two locum workers – Glenys Gibson and Jenny Green. Although Glenys' stay was only for 1 month this year, Jenny was with the team for 6 months, providing individual support/counselling with young women and co-facilitating a support group. The contribution of these two workers is very gratefully acknowledged.

Toward the end of this reporting year the Sexual Assault team welcomed a new Senior Practitioner, Stephanie Anne, who has significant experience in working within sexual assault, domestic violence, and multicultural services in Queensland.



## **Counselling, Support and Advocacy**

The Zig Zag Sexual Assault Program has continued to provide quality sexual assault counselling, support, and advocacy with young women between the ages of 12-25 years. A number of counselling sessions were also offered to supportive mothers or family members of young women. The Program strives to be flexible and responsive to the diverse needs and experiences of young women and offers outreach and/or telephone counselling to young women who cannot access Zig Zag premises at Camp Hill, Brisbane.

As with so many in Brisbane in January 2010, the floods impacted significantly on the lives of some of the young women we work with. There were limits on our/young women's abilities to connect throughout this time and we had to adapt during this period. Fortunately though, both staff and young women got through this time safely.

Individual advocacy is a key component of our work with young women to ensure their voices and concerns are heard; improve access to appropriate support services; and reduce barriers to support that may be experienced. Systemic advocacy is also undertaken to ensure that young women's experiences appropriately inform policy, practice, and law reform.

### ***Statistics:***

The Sexual Assault Support Program provided:

- Direct counselling, support and advocacy services with **430** young women during 10/11. **83** young women were new referrals to the service.
- Support group work activities with **148** young women.
- Community education on issues relating to sexual violence to **1441** participants. Community education activities often include working with both young women and young men.

### ***Themes emerging in counselling this year:***

- Young women who have experienced complex trauma during prolonged and extended child sexual abuse or following a series of abusive situations.
- Young women's access to and experiences of the criminal justice system.
- The complexity for young women in navigating personal and familial relationships following their disclosure/s of sexual abuse, as in most instances the perpetrator is known to the young woman.
- Young women's experiences of self-harm.
- Young women's experience of mental health issues and access to the mental health service system.
- Young women's experience of homelessness following sexual assault at home.

### ***Feedback and evaluation of service to young women:***

Evaluations are used to improve the way we deliver services to young women and the general community. The Sexual Assault team continued to provide a range of avenues for young women to provide feedback on the support accessed at Zig Zag. This included:

- A focussed 6-week period of evaluation;
- Informal evaluation of counselling sessions with young women;
- Support group participants were provided with evaluation forms at the end of the group;
- Most community education activities undertaken also included an evaluation process at the end.
- Zig Zag keeps a suggestion box in the reception so that young women and their supporters can give written (and anonymous) feedback on their experience when accessing the organisation.



## Access and Equity

The Sexual Assault Program endeavors to be mindful and responsive to young women who are significantly marginalized and who find it difficult to access support at Zig Zag. We look for ways to reduce barriers that may be experienced and support women to access the organisation by providing child care, transport, financial and other assistance. Whilst the team is limited in its ability to do outreach work there is also a commitment to doing this when possible. This year the team undertook outreach with young women in mainstream school settings as well as alternative schools such as the Albert Park Flexi School.

Community education is an essential component of the Program as it provides a way to engage with young women who would otherwise not know of Zig Zag services. The Sexual Assault team continues to engage with young women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to raise awareness of support available following sexual assault and to provide useful information.

## Support Group Work

**Young Women's Support Group:** This last financial year we offered 1 support group for young women survivors of sexual violence. The group ran for 8 weeks and was co-facilitated by the group worker and an external social worker. 6 young women attended. The content of the group was based on what the women identified as their preferred topics: dealing with anger; self-concept after the abuse and safety in relationships. Other topics included were misconceptions around sexual violence and women and self-care.

**Mothers' Support Group:** This group met 6 times in 2010 (July to December). The mothers met once a month at Zig Zag premises and continued to discuss issues such as how to support their daughters; dealing with the police and the criminal justice system; how to take care of themselves; dealing with relatives after disclosure; dealing with difficult emotions and misconceptions about mothers and sexual abuse by a family member. This group did not happen during the first semester of the year 2011 however, planning of a new group was on the agenda for the Sexual Assault team.

**Workshops for young women:** As we did not offer a second support group for young women due to a short waiting list, we offer instead 2 workshops for them. The first workshop was on anger and dealing with this emotion, and the second workshop was on relationships following sexual abuse: the impact of abuse and their hopes. Six women attended both workshops and they were co-facilitated by the group and community education workers.

**Young Women's Christmas Party:** Zig Zag staff joined with young women from both the Sexual Assault and Housing Programs, as well as some of the young women's family and friends, to celebrate the achievements of 2010.

## Resource Development and Distribution

This year saw Zig Zag continue to provide resources to the wider community – young women, workers, and supporters of survivors. Zig Zag has found that young women specific resources can support the above groups in improving support available to young women. This is particularly pertinent for people in regional areas. Interest in Zig Zag publications continued this year, with



enquiries coming not just from Brisbane but from other parts of Queensland as well as locations in other states, such as Sydney and rural NSW. Resource distribution included:

- *Lighting the Path – Reflection on Counselling and Sexual Assault*. A compilation of practice reflections from a range of workers from around Australia. (20 Copies distributed.)
- *Working with Young Women Who Self Harm – A Resource for Workers*. (13 Copies distributed.)
- *Healing is Possible*. A primary resource that Zig Zag distributes to young women and which is available English, Serbian and Spanish. (112 Copies distributed. This includes copies sent to Spanish speaking community workers.)
- *Pandora's Box*. A booklet containing the words and thoughts of survivors and their supporters. (73 Copies distributed.)
- *Connecting the Threads*. A resource aimed at generalist workers. This publication explores the meaning of sexual violence and provides skills and tools for workers to use with survivors of this violence. (26 Copies distributed.)
- New and updated versions of "Healing is Possible" were printed in July 2010.

### **Community Education and Training**

Zig Zag strongly believes that an important element of the work we do is engaging with the community and talking about the issues connected to sexual violence. As a result we regularly initiate and respond to opportunities to talk with school and community groups. Sessions adapt to the audience and result in both very informal conversations as well as formal presentations to large groups. Zig Zag continued to utilize these opportunities throughout the reporting year as an avenue to raise awareness and engage community in an important issue affecting so many. A total of **95** community education events were held providing information to approximately **1441** participants.

### ***Community Engagement & Awareness Raising:***

Workers in the sexual assault team are always alert to opportunities to build awareness around the realities of sexual violence. Opportunities come in a range of forms including:

- **Agency Visits** – East Brisbane Community Centre; Attended opening of Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence new premises; Brisbane Sexual Assault Service; Gateway Counselling and Wholeness Centre; Visits to local police stations; Bayside Mental Health Service; Agency visit to Zig Zag from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal Service to discuss how the two organisation's can work better together for the support of young women.
- **Network Involvement:** Ongoing involvement in the External Agencies Meetings at Yeronga High School; Attendance at Feminist Managers' Support Network;
- **Other Activities** : Workers frequently meet with a range of people in the community to talk about Zig Zag and sexual violence. An example of these people this year are:
  - a post-graduate student working in the area of Sexual & Reproductive Health,
  - a local psychologist keen to make connections and explore referral processes;
  - Interview with TAFE student in Northern NSW regarding sexual violence

### ***Sexual Violence Awareness Month (SVAM) Oct 2010:***

- Zig Zag organized to have displays in the Wynnum and Capalaba libraries. The displays gave information on sexual violence, how to support a survivor and supports in the community. There was also information on what SVAM was and what activities, such as Reclaim the Night, were occurring during that month. Young women joined with workers to create these displays.

- Candle Lighting Ceremony for Sexual Violence Awareness Month - Attended this event at the Centre Against Sexual Violence Logan.
- **Wavell State High School** : Information table with interactive activity for senior students preparing for 'Schoolies' week.
- **Reclaim the Night** (Annual rally and march to raise awareness of sexual violence against women and children).
  - Zig Zag was involved in the organizing collective that planned and prepared this event.
  - Zig Zag offered young women support to get to this event and support whilst there.
  - Zig Zag had an information table at the festival after the Reclaim the Night march.

***Other community education and awareness raising activities:***

- **NAIDOC** (National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee) Day (July 9) – The sexual assault team held a stall at this annual event and were joined on the day by workers from the Multicultural Development Association. There were options for community members to make badges or do other craft around the topic of sexual violence.
- **Cavendish Road State High School** (October): Presentation to Year 11 students about Zig Zag's work and ways that young people in the community can support this work.
- **White Ribbon Day** (25<sup>th</sup> Nov) – had information and white ribbons in Zig Zag's reception area.
- **Out of the Shadows** Young Women's Event – distributed information and resources.
- **Griffith University Orientation Week Stall** (22 February): - Joined with a worker from the Brisbane Rape & Incest Survivors' Support Centre (BRISSC) to provide information to 1<sup>st</sup> year students. This included an interactive component challenging students to consider different scenarios they may encounter.
- **Craigslea State High School Education Session** (3 March): - Zig Zag organized the coming together of the Brisbane Rape & Incest Survivors' Support Centre and Living Well (Men's organisation that works with men around the issue of sexual violence) to facilitate an education session and small workshops with the complete year 11 student body.
- **International Women's Day Breakfast** (8 March): - Zig Zag shared a table with another community organization and supported two young women to host at this table.
- **International Women's Day Screen Printing Morning** (9 March): - Workers from both the housing and sexual assault teams at Zig Zag supported women to come together and celebrate International Women's Day and to create screen printing designs.
- His Holiness **Dalai Lama Dharma talk** – Zig Zag staff supported some young women and their children to attend. (15<sup>th</sup> June).
- **Young Women's Consultation Session** – an afternoon was held in late June to talk about what young women find useful/not useful in workers (information to be used as a resource for Zig Zag work to inform community education sessions with workers).

***Yeronga Young African Women's Group***

This group has been running since 2007 and is the result of Zig Zag joining with Yeronga State High School and other community organizations to facilitate an education group with young women from African backgrounds. The group focuses on supporting young women from African backgrounds with the challenges of transitioning into life in Australia. The group explored areas such as:

- Challenges connected to being a young woman from an African background growing up in Australia;
- Healthy relationships;
- Rights in relationships; and

- 
- Looking after your physical and mental health.

Processes for planning and running the group included liaising with a number of community organizations and involvement of adult women in Brisbane from African communities. There were two separate groups which started in July 2010 and who met for 2 x whole days and 2 x 1 hour sessions.

An example of some of the feedback from young women in these groups this year included:

- “The session I liked best was about relationships because it can help me as a teenager when I face difficult things.”
- “I had more fun and I also learnt important stuff.”
- Three words that described the experience – “Interesting”, “Happy”, “Good”.

Our thanks go to all the workers from other organisations who contributed their time and ideas to the running of these groups including staff from: Yeronga State High School, (particularly Frances Orford); Othilas Young Women’s Housing and Support Service; Sexual Health Services Biala/Sexual Health Program Griffith University; Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland (ECCQ), Harmony Place, Immigrant Women’s Support Service, Queensland Program for Survivors of Torture and Trauma and the Multicultural Development Association.

We would also like to gratefully acknowledge the valued input of a number of women in the community who have come from African backgrounds and eagerly gave up their time to contribute their reflections and ideas to the process. Without the contribution of all of these people these groups would not be able to proceed so successfully.

The beginning of 2011 saw planning begin for these groups to again happen in the latter half of that year.

#### ***Formal training and education provided to professionals and students:***

The Sexual Assault Support Program provided the following formal training:

- **Scripture Union of Queensland** - Lecture/Information Session for Youth Ministry Internship Scheme (September).
- **University of Queensland** final year **Social Work students** – presentation on working in the community sector (focusing on work with young women survivors of sexual violence) (October).
- **Youth Support Co-coordinators’ Training** at Regional Meeting - Working with Self-Injury/Self-Harm. Brisbane (October).
- **Social Work Masters’ Course University of Qld** – Presented as part of a Panel on Assessment Frameworks.
- **Brook Red Centre** (provides mental health support) – session with workers looking at what is sexual violence and how to support people appropriately around this issue.
- **Yeronga TAFE** – Session with Community Work students exploring sexual violence.

#### **Student Placements**

Zig Zag is committed to providing opportunities to students whenever possible. This year we welcomed Claire Selderbrook to work with us over a three month period from September 2010. Claire was a student with the Australian College of Applied Psychology. She brought with her great energy and commitment and was a very much appreciated asset to the work of the team.



## **Zig Zag Website**

During the 12 months between July 2010 and June 2011 there were a total of **5864** visits to our site. On average it was measured that there were 12 visitors to our page each day. The site is used as a way to share information about sexual violence with young women and the community. It is also used as an avenue to advertise when Zig Zag is running workshops and activities. Although at this stage we have not been able to directly measure just who is visiting the site and what they are finding useful, we have been contacted by women from as far away as Britain as a result of them reading about us on the website. Additionally orders for our resources are often a result from visits to the website. The website continues to be an avenue for young women to access information in a safe and private way as they consider how they will respond to sexual violence in their lives or the lives of those they know.

## **Involvement in the Sexual Assault Sector**

During the past year Zig Zag has continued its commitment to involvement in the Queensland Sexual Assault Network (QSAN) regularly attending meetings. One of the face-to-face meetings this year saw two workers heading to the Whitsundays for three days. This network continues its vital role as a forum for workers to connect and discuss issues, as well as providing an avenue for the sector to voice collective concerns and issues.

Work of the network this year saw the production of 'The Right to Choose'. This document was a produced from the input of community sexual assault services around Queensland and is a report on effective responses to sexual violence in this state. Particularly, Zig Zag was involved with the Reference Group organising the launch of this report at Parliament House.

## **Staff Professional Development**

Staff in the Sexual Assault Support Program participated in the following professional development activities:

- Qld Health Sexual Assault Training (4 days) – Queensland Health.
- 'Self-Injury in Schools' Forum – The Centre for Suicide Prevention Studies at the University of Queensland.
- 'Beyond Survival' Seminar – Daniel Siegel.
- 'Extending Narrative Skill Development' – Maggie Carey.
- 'Empowerment Framework when Working with Women' – Dr Betty McLellan.
- 'Social Work Theory Refresher Workshop' – University of Queensland School of Social Work & Social Policy.
- New directions in Trauma Mindfulness (2 days) – John Brier.
- 'The Body Remembers: Practical Therapeutic Applications of the Neurobiology of Trauma' (2 days) – Babette Rothschild
- Cultural Awareness workshop on the Ethnic Groups of Burma.
- Qld Health Interpreter Service Information Session.
- First Aid Qualification Training.
- 'Critical Reflection in Supervision' – Professor Jan Fook.
- 'Teenage Eating Issues and Body Image' Forum.
- 'ACT with Adolescents' Workshop.



# Report from the Zig Zag Centre Support Team

## Staffing

The Centre Support Team remained the same this year as the previous...four years! Lynette continued on in the position of Finance Worker, and yet again Wayan and Sonja competently filled the Administration role within the organization. An added note of thanks to Sonja who has repeatedly stepped in support positions have and teams when others have been away on leave. Christy continued in her position as Coordinator.

### THOUGHTS FROM THE ADMINISTRATION WORKER

*"I feel very fortunate to work at Zig Zag. Through my role of admin support to the Coordinator, Finance Worker and direct service workers, I am consistently blown away by the professionalism and enormous skill each worker possesses.*

*I receive many calls each week from young women, family members, carers and other services seeking accommodation and sexual assault counselling and or information. I confidently refer these enquiries to the appropriate worker knowing that each call will be treated respectfully and with kindness and understanding. Knowing also, that the knowledge each worker has will satisfactorily inform and reassure the caller. It's a special experience when a first-time, often anxious visitor walks through the front door and feels instantly at ease by the cheery, informal environment, when a mum waiting for her daughter comfortably wanders into the kitchen and makes herself a cuppa or when a toddler marches into an office and is greeted with enthusiasm by whichever worker happens to be in there.*

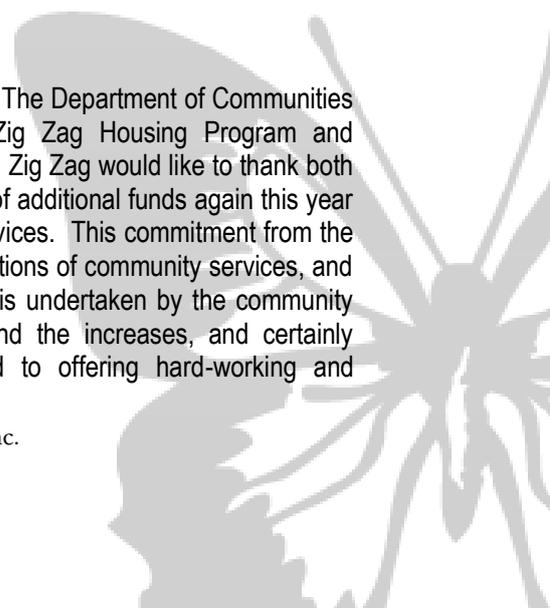
*The inclusive Zig Zag culture allows me the opportunity to participate and to learn. How could I not, with such a whirlwind of information, conversation and debate across the lunch table, in meetings and on other occasions when social justice just has to be hailed. A good belly laugh is valued and it's ok to have a cry or feel "out of sorts" occasionally.*

*I marvel at the MYOB and reporting skills of the finance worker and appreciate the wages which appear with apparent ease in my bank account each fortnight. I am grateful for Zig Zag's highly skilled Coordinator who expertly navigates her way through a maze of funding bodies, service agreements, networks, and meetings, human resource management, budgets, reports, statistics and the requirements by the many stakeholders associated with Zig Zag.*

*All of my colleagues know "their stuff" and by working as a team and valuing each other, I feel we make a difference to the lives of the young women who access our service. This is why I feel fortunate to be part of the Zig Zag team"*

## Funding

A most appreciative thank-you goes out to Zig Zag's two primary funders. The Department of Communities provides operational funding and the housing infrastructure for the Zig Zag Housing Program and Queensland Health funds the Zig Zag Sexual Assault Program. In addition Zig Zag would like to thank both Department of Communities and Queensland Health for their contribution of additional funds again this year to cover additional wage costs to support pay equity in the community services. This commitment from the State government continues to provide improvements to the working conditions of community services, and reflects a genuine commitment to recognizing and valuing the work that is undertaken by the community sector across Queensland. While Zig Zag continues to struggle to fund the increases, and certainly recognizes the impact on service delivery, we are totally committed to offering hard-working and





professional staff employment conditions that better reflect the demands and complexities of their roles. Most importantly, the implications for disadvantaged young women are also significant as this initiative ensures that Zig Zag is better able to attract and retain highly skilled, experienced and committed workers.

The funding environment for the Sexual Assault sector across Queensland was very challenging in the 10/11 year. As with the previous two years, funding was uncertain as Queensland Health deliberated over service delivery and funding reform following its state-wide review process. With service agreement uncertainty and the news in March 2011 that we would go to tender later in the year it has certainly been a challenging and unsettling year for management committee, staff and those accessing services at Zig Zag. Fortunately, the uncertainty has recently been resolved with the news that the Sexual Assault Support and Prevention Funding Program will move from Queensland Health to the Department of Communities in January 2012.

#### **Other important contributions to the work of Zig Zag:**

- **Donations.** Zig Zag would like to thank those members of the community that have generously provided donations to the service during the 10/11 financial year. This kind of support is an invaluable resource to Zig Zag – providing the organization with additional funds from which we can draw on to support young women in ways additional to the parameters set out in our government funding agreements. It is also wonderful to know that our work is supported and valued by the broader community.

In addition to financial contributions, practical material support was also provided through donations of food, clothing and furniture. Thank you to the East Brisbane Community Centre again this year for their donation of linen and blankets which young women snapped up at our regular 'garage grabs'. Also another big thanks this year to Abbie Hills and the students and families of Brisbane Girls Grammar School who once again provided Christmas hamper gifts for young women accessing Zig Zag. Various other local community members also popped in with various donations during the course of the year – thanks to those thoughtful and generous peeps also.

- **Camp Hill Medical Centre.** For many years now the Camp Hill Medical Centre, our local general practice, has offered young women accessing our service a bulk-billing service. This is an invaluable resource for many of the young women accessing our service and we are extremely appreciative of the contribution made by doctors at the Centre to the community of young women in South East Brisbane.
- **'Transition to Independent Living Allowance' (TILA).** This is a federal funding scheme that supports young people on to set themselves up in accommodation through offering small grants for such items as computers, fridges and washing machines. A big thanks goes out to Southern Youth and Family Services in Wollongong for administering this program.
- **'No Interest Loan Scheme' (NILS).** This year Zig Zag spent some considerable resources in setting up the No Interest Loan Scheme Project in conjunction with Good Shepherd and the National Australia Bank. We received a small grant from the federal Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs for this purpose and Sonja stepped into the casual position of NILS Project Worker to refine and update the relevant policy, attend extensive training on coordinating the Project and attend and participate relevant networks. It was recently decided however to discontinue the NILS Project at Zig Zag – this decision was well considered and was based on Zig Zag's ongoing capacity to adequately resource the Project given reduction in hours resulting from pay increases and the fact that the NILS program has increased dramatically and is easily accessible from other better-resourced organisations. Zig Zag extends a warm thanks to Karen Denham and Felicity Dennis for their support throughout our efforts to get the NILS project up and running.



## **Policy and Systems Development**

The Zig Zag centre support team recognises that robust policy and systems are a vitally important part of maintaining an organisational structure that can adequately support the service delivery and accountability functions of the organisation. While Zig Zag has a comprehensive Policy Manual to reflect this, it is an on-going challenge to the team to ensure that policy, procedures and systems are reviewed and updated on a regular basis to meet the changing needs of the service.

## **Networking and Collaboration**

Along with workers from both of the service teams, Centre Support staff have participated in numerous networks and collaborative processes. Zig Zag greatly values the relationships that it has with services around Brisbane and the State. These relationships are vitally important to continued delivery of high quality services to young women, and the contribution of workers and professionals from both the government and non-government sectors play an important role in an integrated response to the needs of young homeless women and young women who have experienced sexual assault.

Zig Zag has greatly valued its work within the Queensland Sexual Assault Sector during the course of this year. With funding pressures bearing down across the sector, services were able to work closely to advocate and lobby for the needs and rights of survivors to access high quality support services. In September, BRISSC, Logan CASV, Gladstone Regional Sexual Assault Service, Gold Coast CASV, Immigrant Women's Support Service, Phoenix House, Sisters Inside, South Burnett Women's Service, Whitsunday Crisis and Counselling Service, Wide Bay Sexual Assault Service and Zig Zag were able to formally launch the "Right to Choose" report at Parliament House.

In addition to this the Coordinator regularly attended the Feminist Management Network, Youth Accommodation Coordinators Network and relevant Queensland Youth Housing Coalition forums, Youth Sector Leadership Network and the SAAP Working Party. The Centre Support team participated in a number of other formal networking opportunities including:

- 'No Interest Loan Scheme' (NILS) network meetings and the Conference in Melbourne
- Attendance at the Othila's, BRIC and Working Women's Service Annual General Meetings.
- Internal agency visits with a number of services including Immigrant Women's Support Service, Alderley Department of Child Safety, Stones Corner Centrelink, Mater Hospital and Sisters Inside.

## **Human Resource Management**

Along with accountability, and supporting and resourcing the management committee, looking after and supporting staff in their diverse roles remains one of the primary functions of the Centre Support team. The women who work at Zig Zag (both paid and voluntary) are our most important and valued resource. Zig Zag provides monthly internal supervision and de-briefing to direct service delivery staff, monthly external clinical supervision, bi-monthly team supervision, as well as offering training and professional development opportunities to all staff.

## **Staff Professional Development**

- NILS Conference (NAB and Good Sheppard)
- Excel Spreadsheet Training (Odyssey)
- Supporting Staff & Transforming Trauma (Childhood Foundation)
- Trauma-Focused Interventions (Gold Coast CASV)
- Polyvagal Theory (Childhood Foundation)



## A Word from the Coordinator

Thanks first to the Department of Communities and to Jane Tudor who was our Community Support Officer for much of the 10/11 year. After all the funding uncertainty in relation to the Sexual Assault Program over the last 3 years it is wonderful to end the year on a high note and we very much look forward to working with the Department of Communities in the provision of sexual assault support services in the future.

Once again thank you to everyone who has supported, resourced and inspired us here at Zig Zag during the year. I would once again like to say thanks to my wonderful, skilled and committed co-workers here at Zig Zag. All workers have brought their own set of skills, knowledge and passions to their work at Zig Zag and this diversity creates a work environment that I find personally and professionally. Thanks to Anne castles, Bess Hopgood, Talei Rice and Karen Doolan for creating a supportive housing program that is committed to valuing, respecting and celebrating the resources and contributions of young homeless women and their children. Thanks to the thoughtful and skilled contributions of Adela Brent and Jane Hegerty as permanent workers, and Jenny and Glenys Gibson as locums, in the Sexual Assault Program. It was with great sadness that Zig Zag said goodbye to Erica Fernandez after 12 years in the team, before welcoming Stephanie Anne to the Senior Practitioner role. The team has been able to continue to provide high quality services to the community in spite of the significant challenges and uncertainties created by funding instability. Thanks also to Claire Selderbrook who came to Zig Zag as a student with the Australian College of Applied Psychology.

A huge thank you to Christine Grodd as Chairperson, Deb Aldridge as Vice-Chair, Teresa Stewart-Hunter as Secretary, Annie Albers as Treasurer, and to Carla de Simone and Lani Pereira as general members for their contributions over the last year and in deciding to continue on into the coming year. Thanks also to Julie Rheinburger and Katie MacDonald both of whom stepped down from the Committee during the year. I feel blessed to have such a committed and present management committee – providing me with considered advice and sustained support in my position, and excellent governance to the organization. The management committee of Zig Zag balance good process perfectly with the tasks of good governance, coupling an understanding of their leadership role with a sound commitment to providing a supportive and stable work and industrial environment for all staff. Having a strong, committed and stable governance structure is so important to community organizations and these women behind the scenes who have given their time and resources voluntarily play a central, and often unrecognized, role in the provision of services to young women in the wider Brisbane region.

A final thank you goes out to all of those women across the women's sector in Queensland and to those other workers in the community-based youth and specialist youth homelessness sectors. Thanks to all those in other organisations that have supported me in my role at Zig Zag, and supported Zig Zag in its role of supporting young women.

Christy McGuire

