

Rural Outreach & Support Service



ANNUAL REPORT 2023 to 2024

PROUDLY FUNDED BY



**Communities
& Justice**





'In the spirit of reconciliation, the Rural Outreach & Support Service acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres

We are on

KAMILAROI COUNTRY

Welcome to the Annual Report for Rural Outreach & Support Service. The report reflects the dedication of the Management Committee and Staff in achieving our strategic and operations goals for the 2023-2024 financial year, and in maintaining **our vision, which is to provide a safe, secure, confidential and caring environment that encourages opportunities for men, women, children and youth to develop their own skills in life and enhance their own dignity and self-respect.**

How we will work with you	What this means for you	What you can expect from us
Transparent	We will make it easy to access and understand our information.	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • update our information so it is accessible and easy to understand • keep you informed and communicate in your preferred format • make sure we have answers to your questions • our staff will disclose conflict of interest • give you access to your personal information if you request it
Responsive	We will respond to your individual needs and circumstances.	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide you with a staff member to contact so you only need to tell us information once • give you options, so if your circumstances change, we can work together to find an appropriate solution.
Respectful	We will recognise your individual experience and acknowledge you are an expert in your own life.	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • treat you with respect and dignity • listen to you so we can understand your experience • make sure our staff are trained to understand the impact of different disabilities and diversity in people's lives. • listen to your feedback and use this to find better ways of doing things. • handle all your information in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988.
Empowering	We will make it easy to access and use information and be supported by the Rural Outreach & Support Service to lead your life.	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make our processes simple and easy to understand and use • give you information so you are prepared and supported to make decisions • inform you of your rights • support and promote your voice when requested • include people with disability and the community to help us develop and test our processes.
Connected	We will support you to access the services and supports you need.	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give you options so you can choose how you connect with us • help you to find supports and services • help you understand and find other government and community services and supports you can access • connect with participants from all communities, especially in First Nations, culturally and linguistically diverse and LGBTQIA+ communities.

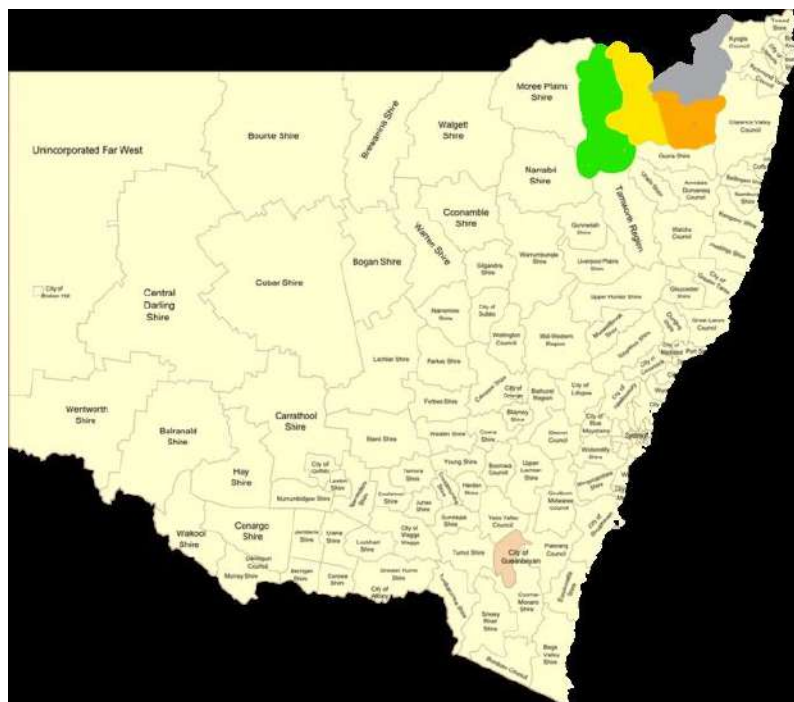
About Rural Outreach and Support Service:

Rural Outreach & Support Service is funded by the Department of Communities and Justice to service the Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Inverell, Glen Innes Severn, Gwydir, Tenterfield and the satellite town of Bundarra, that was born out of a need to provide support and resources to vulnerable individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Our team also provides emotional support and practical advice to men, women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence. This can include assistance with safety planning, accessing emergency accommodation, and navigating the legal system.

Rural Outreach & Support Service has also developed strong partnerships with a range of service providers and mainstream providers, ensuring a streamlined service delivery and a client-centred focus. These collaborations have allowed us to provide comprehensive support to clients, addressing not only immediate needs but also working towards long-term solutions.

The organisation has always been committed to providing services free from discrimination, irrespective of individual characteristics such as race, gender, colour, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, class, sexual orientation, physical and or mental ability, financial situation, lifestyle choices, and substance use.

Rural Outreach & Support Service continues to adapt and grow, continually assessing its programs to ensure quality and improvement. The organisation remains dedicated to its mission of providing a safe, secure, confidential, and caring environment that encourages opportunities for men, women, children, homeless or at risk of homelessness to develop their own skills in life and enhance their own dignity and self-respect.



LGA Population as per 2021 Census	
	Glen Innes Severn Pop: 8,931
	Gwydir Pop: 4,910
	Inverell Pop: 17,853
	Tenterfield Pop: 6,628

Category: Specialist Homelessness Service

Our clients:

Male

45%

Female

53%

First
Nation

35%



Assistance Provided:

Cost of
Living

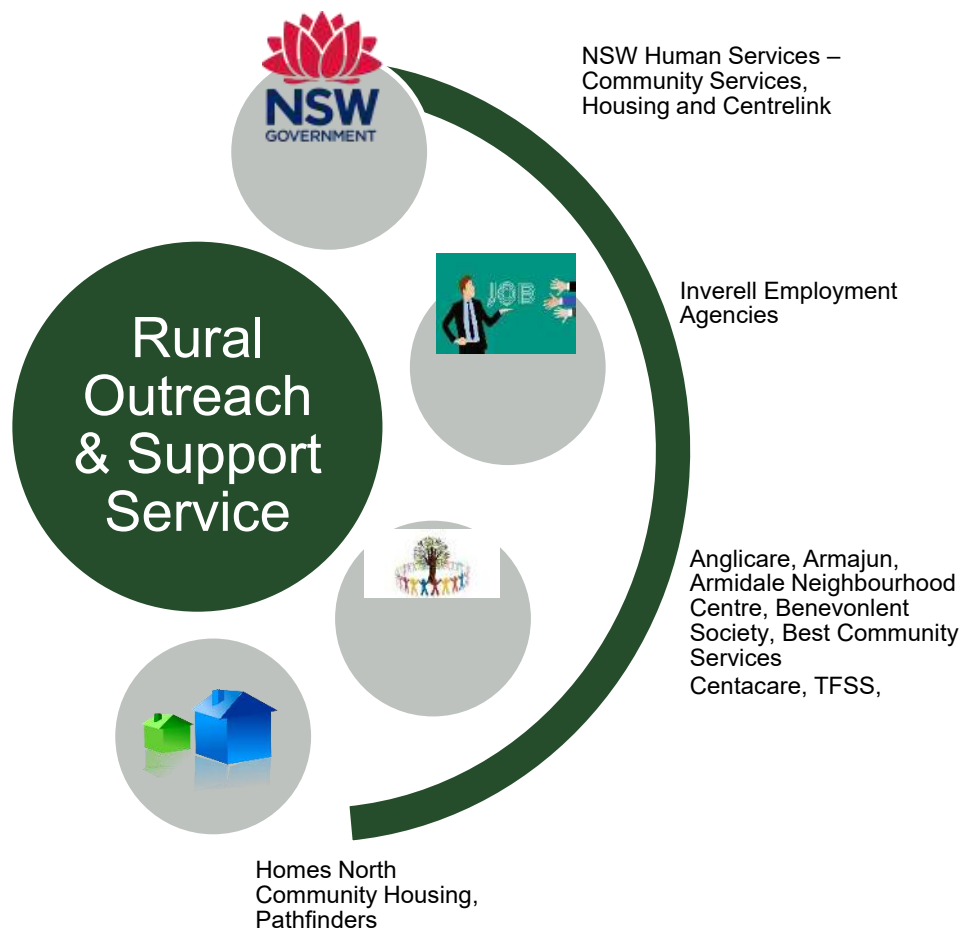
42%

Domestic
& Family
Violence

25%

Partnerships and Collaborations:

RURAL OUTREACH & SUPPORT SERVICE WOULD LIKE TO
THANK OUR PARTNERS AND THOSE ORGANISATIONS WE
COLLABORATE WITH THAT HELP ENSURE WE PROVIDE THE BEST
POSSIBLE OUTCOMES FOR OUR MUTUAL CLIENTS



Community Connections:

We have a very generous community who have donated items of linen, crockery, beds, and other essential goods and some wonderful donations have come from Share the Dignity bags for women, Allanah & Madelaine Foundation with kids pack backs full of essential goodies, the Women's Shed with bags and much needed beanies and knee rugs from the lovely ladies at Inverell Sewing for Charity to name but a few. Good 360 has supplied us with \$13,000 worth of goods to be given out. Big W has also donated many items. We are also recipients of the Regional Australia Community Partnership Fund



A huge shout out for the generosity of Big W, Good 360 and the local community who made it possible to enrich the lives of so many children this Christmas. The staff at Rural Outreach & Support Service were thrilled to assist in process and distribution of your gifts and are sure they will help in putting a smile on the face of the children who received them this Christmas.

Community Participation:

Throughout the year we have participated in the Inverell Street March to end violence, 16 Days of Activism and Candlelight Vigil to increase community awareness in relation to domestic violence and its effects.



Our service provides support to both perpetrators and victims of violence. A total of 63 clients, both male and female were referred to our service during the 2023-2024 year to complete our Anger Management Workshops which aim at educating the offender to recognise their emotions and develop strategies to control them.

We also participated in NAIDOC Week Celebrations, RUOK Day, and various community events such as the Community Information Day in Bingara and Ashford, Inverell's 1st Candle Light Vigil and the Holiday Fun Mini Obstacle Course. We participated in the Homelessness Count in February.

Our service is represented in many local committees such as The Men's Haven of Hope, Community Violence Prevention Team, The Place Team, Inverell Interagency and the regional District Homelessness Innovation Group. We also participate in Homelessness NSW webinars on a regular basis.






Feedback:

Our service views complaints and feedback from our clients and collaborative partners as a way to monitor how we are managing our service delivery. Rural Outreach & Support Service is proud to report that no complaints were received during this period and feedback was positive.

from clients:



"This is the place I come to for help."

"The staff put their heart and soul into this service."

"They treat you like family."

"The team at ROSS fully accept all people, they take you as you come."

"Plenty of support and help."

"I can talk freely about anything."

from other services:

- *"Working with ROSS is definitely a positive experience. They are the top service provider in our area"*
- *"The client's needs are always the focus"*
- *"They are very much out in the community – they are a pillar. Our community needs them"*



What have we achieved this year?

Early intervention: LoveBites®, Shark Cage and Drug and Alcohol Education provided to High Schools throughout the areas we service.

Outreach: Regular visits to the Gwydir Toy Libraries and Tenterfield Play Group

Client wellbeing and support: Thousands of donated products have been given out to our clients to benefit their wellbeing and assisting them with the cost of living. Products such as period and incontinence products, mobile phones and credit, frozen meals, bedding and clothing, cleaning supplies, toys for children at Christmas, buddy bags and hygiene products. Sometimes assisting clients to leave town in a timely manner for their own safety.

Advocacy: We have assisted clients to obtain the Centrelink Disability Support Payment (DSP), access appropriate Job Providers, gain access much needed support from My Aged Care, National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), as well as assisting people with Housing Pathways Applications, Private Rental Applications, obtaining No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) and Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA). In addition to this when requested we provide moral support for those clients who request us to accompany them to other service providers or occasionally the Local District Court.

Our staff: We welcomed three new staff members this year, Tess Hamilton, Tahnee Capon and Nat Delaney. All staff continue ongoing education to keep them updated with Cultural Awareness, Domestic Violence and Homelessness.

Staff Wellbeing: We value our staff; they are critical the success of our service. Each month we have a group session with an Anglicare Counsellor who provides great support. This is also available on a one-to-one basis as required by staff.

ASES Accreditation: Rural Outreach Support has proudly achieved the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES) accreditation, valid through 28 February 2027. This accreditation marks a significant recognition of our commitment to quality and continuous improvement in service delivery. ASES guides community organisations through a rigorous process of self-assessments and external evaluations. This prestigious accreditation is valid for three years and underscores our dedication to maintaining high standards across various organisational principles. These include a focus on customer outcomes, accountability, continuous learning, valuing diversity, collaborative work practices, evidence-based decision making, and social responsibility. Accreditation by ASES provides independent confirmation that an organisation meets stringent criteria, ensuring quality and performance assurance for stakeholders including staff, managers, funding bodies, and clients. Rural Outreach Support remains dedicated to upholding these standards, fostering an environment of excellence and innovation in our service delivery.

