

The Miranda Project

When did the project commence?

2017

How is this program funded? If there is more than one source of funding, please show the percentage of funds from each source

The program is funded by the Paul Ramsay Foundation (69%), Women NSW (13%), Corrective Services NSW (9%) and the Department of Communities and Justice (9%).

Project summary — Please provide a brief statement about the project

The Miranda Project, a project of the Community Restorative Centre (CRC), supports women in contact with, or at risk of contact with the criminal justice system who have been impacted by domestic and family violence. It is an innovative, gender-specific program with provides specialist, holistic, trauma-informed case work, and case management, based on a long-term relational and outreach model of support. It is co-located with a Women's Health Centre which provides a safe social space and access to groups, psycho-educational, social and recreational activities supported by specialist criminal justice and domestic and family violence workers.

Name of lead organisation

Community Restorative Centre (CRC)

Address of lead organisation or individual responsible for the project

Contact person/s for the project

Phone

Email

Names of all partners involved in the project

Community Restorative Centre

Is this project led by a police organisation?

No

Has this project previously applied for an award in the ACVPA program?

No

What changes or new components to the project have been added since the previous nomination (if any)?**Is this a nomination for a project you are working on?**

Yes

Description of project

The Miranda Project assists vulnerable women attending court, on community orders, or exiting prison who have experienced domestic and family violence (DFV). Women are the fastest growing prisoner cohort in NSW, and most women in contact with the criminal justice system have experienced DFV. Women released from prison are 16 times more likely to die from violence than women of the same age in the general population[1]. Miranda aims to halt the increase in the women's prison population by diverting women early in the court process, and by supporting women following their release from prison. Miranda offers trauma-informed, individualised, outreach support, working with women to identify and achieve their personal goals and support needs to remain safely in the community and free from violence. The program includes holistic, wraparound support services for women and their families (see also Attachment C). A key strength of the model is its co-location with Penrith Women's Health Service which enables a safe pathway to a range of specialist women's health supports for Miranda clients, and a pathway to Miranda for other women who connect with the health service. The Miranda Hub provides a safe space for women to engage and connect with each other, participate in group activities including art programs, and to access victims counselling. In line with desistance theorising, Miranda supports women to build an identity outside of the criminal justice system by cultivating extra-curricular activities and encouraging client participation in art-based programs and to build social connections with other women. The project is delivered in the Penrith and Blacktown Local Areas of Sydney and to women housed in NSW Correctional Centres. Miranda caseworkers provide intensive support to around 60 clients per year, and lower-touch support to around 85 clients. The Miranda team comprises seven female staff, including the Program Manager, one Senior Caseworker and five Caseworker positions, one of which is a First Nations identified position. An important aspect of Miranda is its culturally safe approach to providing support to First Nations women who have experienced violence and are at risk of criminal justice contact. The heart of Miranda is helping women live lives free from the criminal justice system, and free from DFV. Violence impacts all areas of women's lives, including health, wellbeing, safety, and opportunity, increasing their risk of contact with the criminal justice system, and perpetuating and exacerbating the cycle of victimisation, trauma, stigma, and lack of opportunity. The Miranda Project recognises women's resistance to violence and the pathways from victimisation to criminalisation, and that women (and particularly First Nations women) identified as a perpetrator of violence are often misidentified when looking at the full sequence of events[2]. The long-term goal of Miranda is for women to feel safe, free from DFV, connected to community, empowered and in control of their future. To do this, they need to be able to access services and support, free from discrimination and stigma. To achieve this long-term goal, Miranda aims to deliver a range of

outcomes for women at risk of violence and their families, including: - Women feel safe, experience lower rates of violence, and access appropriate supports in response to instances of violence. - Women remain in community instead of being taken into custody. - Women having access to safe and stable housing. - Women receive the services to meet their mental health needs, to deal with issues related to alcohol and other drugs, and to meet their social and emotional wellbeing support needs. - Women attain higher levels of education, training, and employment. - Family relationships between parents and children are healthy. - Women demonstrate competence and confidence in economic responsibility. - Women access relevant mainstream services to support their lives and families. Miranda is based on CRC's best-practice model of reintegration support which is based on holistic, relational, and long-term outreach support and addressing the social determinants of criminalisation. A broader evaluation of CRC programs (which included Miranda) found that following engagement with CRC transition program supports the number of days in custody reduced by 65.8%, the number of new custody episodes reduced by 62.6% and the number of proven offences reduced by 62.1%. A comparison analysis found that there are significant social and economic benefits to CRC programs, including savings to the criminal justice system of up to \$16 million over three years for an intake of 275 new clients (see Attachment B). [1] Willoughby, M., Spittal, M., Borschmann, R. (2020) 'Violence-Related Deaths Among People Released from Prison: A Data Linkage Study', Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 36(23-24). [2] ANROWS (2020) Accurately identifying the "person most in need of protection" in domestic and family violence law: key findings and future directions. ANROWS: Sydney.

What is the annual cost of the project?

\$1,093,300

Do you make use of in-kind support?

Yes

Has the project been evaluated independently?

Yes

Please provide a summary of the key evaluation findings. You may also want to provide an electronic copy of the evaluation report or a link if the report is available online.

An independent evaluation of Miranda found it has filled a critical gap in the service system and is underpinned by best-practice reintegration for survivors of domestic and family violence in the criminal justice system. Specifically, the evaluation found: - Increased safety: 62% of clients reported increased safety since connecting with the program. - Increased rates of women remaining in the community: 86% of women who engaged with Miranda remained in the community, with 14% of clients returning to the community. - Increased housing stability, financial wellbeing, and compliance with community orders: 62% of Miranda clients reported improvements to housing stability; 49% reported improved economic responsibility. - Increased positive opportunities and options for women in contact with or at risk of contact with the criminal justice system. - Increased engagement with mainstream services for women who previously faced barriers to support. - Increased social connection and kinship connection (see Attachment A).

Please outline how you know the program has successfully achieved its intended outcomes, including any supporting evidence you have available.

What makes the project special or innovative?

Miranda is the only project of its kind in Australia which provides specialist support to women who have experienced DFV and are at risk of criminal justice system contact. The original project design was derived from

the knowledge, expertise and passion of women involved in the NSW Women's Advisory Council and was informed from learnings gained from visiting UK Women's Centres (emerging from the 2007 Corston report), which found the value of embedding specialist criminal justice and violence prevention workers in 'one stop shop' women's centres to holistically support women at risk of violence. Miranda is underpinned by CRC's best practice model of support which has been developed and refined over the lengthy period that CRC has provided specialist support. Importantly, Miranda is informed and driven by women with lived experience of DFV and the criminal justice system. Women who have experienced violence and contact with the criminal justice system are often labelled 'complex', 'non-compliant', or 'too-difficult', and on this basis are excluded from many mainstream services, either via a direct refusal to work with them or lack of understanding of their needs and appropriate ways of engaging with them. For people who have high levels of needs, such as Miranda clients, the post-release experience tends to be defined by repetitive exclusion from potential services, referral fatigue, high levels of exhaustion and frustration, followed by relapse into familiar patterns of substance use to manage physical, emotional, and psychological pain, associated reoffending often related to resistance and responses to violence, and ultimately imprisonment. Miranda plays a key role in replacing punitive and exclusionary policies and practices and shifts narratives across the sector towards more empathetic and non-judgemental attitudes to women who have contact with the criminal justice system and have experienced violence. In this way, Miranda builds the capacity of other mainstream services that provide support to survivors of DVF and the criminal justice system. Miranda works with women in a flexible, holistic and person-centred way where they are 'met where they are at'. In this way it provides a unique and innovative service response where women have historically 'fallen through the gaps'. Miranda is unique to the Penrith area, though an evaluation highlighted the benefits that could flow from expanding the service by embedding it within other women's health services across NSW. The benefits of Miranda were recognised by the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into The High Level of First Nations People in Custody (2021) which recommended the NSW Government ensure long-term funding for Miranda including expansion to rural, regional, and remote areas. The Miranda project raises awareness, builds knowledge, and drives policy change to better serve women who have experienced violence and are impacted by the criminal justice system. It does this by supporting women to access housing that is free from violence; by providing them with opportunities for pro-social engagement and connection; and supporting access to appropriate supports in response to instances of violence and to receive education in reducing the impact of violence on themselves and their children.

Referees

Referee 1

Name

Address

Contact number

Email

Referee 2

Name

Address

Contact number

Email

What would winning an ACVPA mean for your project / organisation?

The Miranda Project is a relatively new project of CRC. It is a unique model and supports a population with high levels of need who are at risk of further victimisation from violence. Winning an ACVP award would demonstrate our leadership and recognise our expertise in supporting victims of domestic and family violence who are at risk of criminal justice system contact. It would lead to more visibility for the Miranda project and a larger reach with the potential of expanding the program and embedding specialist workers in other women's health services across NSW.

How did you find out about the Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards?

Online

Would you like to be on an emailing list so you can be notified about future Awards?

Yes

Please provide your email address.

Contact details

Name

Position

Program Manager

Organisation

Community Restorative Centre

Phone

Email

File Uploads

- https://www.aic.gov.au/system/files/webform/acvpa_nomination_form_2022/630/Attachment%20A.%20Miranda%20Project%20Evaluation.pdf
- https://www.aic.gov.au/system/files/webform/acvpa_nomination_form_2022/630/Attachment%20B.%20CRC%20Reintegration%20Programs%20Evaluation.pdf
- https://www.aic.gov.au/system/files/webform/acvpa_nomination_form_2022/630/Attachment%20C.%20Media.pdf