

**WOMEN'S
COMMUNITY
SHELTERS**

2019 DONOR'S REPORT

**SUPPORTING
HOMELESS
WOMEN**

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GOVERNMENT HOUSE
SYDNEY

Message from

**His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd)
Governor of New South Wales**

I first learned of the work of Women's Community Shelters in 2015, when the organisation was a finalist in the Macquarie Social Innovation Awards. At that time, they were working to establish their third shelter in Forster-Tuncurry. My wife Linda and I heard about their important work with communities and their unique approach to establishing new shelters and ongoing care for vulnerable women and children escaping domestic violence and homelessness. Their work not only provides critical crisis support for women and children, but educates whole communities around responding to domestic and family violence, which is critical for future generations. WCS drives a collaboration between businesses, philanthropy and local communities, all working together to create a safe and secure home for those who need it most.

In July 2018, I had the opportunity to visit The Haven - Nepean Women's Shelter (WCS' fifth shelter) and hear from shelter staff about the significant work they do, and residents who spoke bravely about their experiences and how the shelters have helped support their road to recovery and a new life.

It was evident from this visit that local communities providing care and practical assistance to women who are homeless or leaving domestic violence, combined with professional support services, help them feel safe, supported and ready to take the next step on their journey.

WCS continues to go from strength to strength as demonstrated in this 2019 Donor Report. They currently have six shelters across NSW and are working to open at least four more by the end of 2020. This will ensure they can continue to offer shelter, help and support to as many women and children who desperately need it.

NSW should be proud WCS is a 'home-grown' charity initiative and I look forward to supporting them in the future. I extend my gratitude and thanks to all the shelter staff and volunteers who work tirelessly in support of women and children in need.

**General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd)
Governor of New South Wales**

Government House, Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW 2000
telephone: 02 9228 4111 | website: www.governor.nsw.gov.au



WCS is delighted to receive ongoing support from His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd) 38th Governor of New South Wales and his wife, Mrs Linda Hurley. The Vice Regal couple hosted staff and residents at a high tea at Government House in March 2019.



MISSION AND VISION

OUR VISION

Women's Community Shelters (WCS) is an Australian charity which works with local communities to set up new crisis accommodation shelters for women leaving homelessness, domestic and family violence, in partnership with local communities.

WCS' ground-breaking funding model brings together business and corporate sponsorship, philanthropic investment, Commonwealth and NSW Government funding and local community fundraising to support our Hub and shelters.

OUR PURPOSE

WCS offers vulnerable women (and their children) at risk of homelessness, domestic and family violence; safe accommodation, active case management, support, social inclusion and a chance to start anew, through our network of shelters and affordable transitional housing.

WE BELIEVE

Community engagement in local initiatives is key to resolving the pressing social issues of women's homelessness, domestic and family violence.

We believe specialised women's shelters offering best practice support are a critical service for women and children.

OUR FUNDING: WCS HUB

\$950,000 per annum,
underwritten by philanthropy.

EACH SHELTER IN OUR NETWORK

A minimum of \$420,000 per annum to run, through a tripartite funding model involving philanthropy, business, local community fundraising, in-kind support and the NSW Government.

BUILDING A NETWORK: WCS TIMELINE

Since 2010, WCS has worked tirelessly to protect and support women and children escaping homelessness, domestic and family violence.

To date, WCS has helped six different communities establish and open crisis shelters to provide more safe havens and additional nights for vulnerable women and children at risk.

Our vision is to expand our network to at least 10 shelters across NSW by the end of 2020, all linked together through technology, shared purpose, operational guidance and support.





KRIS NEILL, CHAIR

Innovation – like the word iconic – is a well-worn term but we believe that Women's Community Shelters has once again this year demonstrated its genuine commitment to innovation and continuous improvement. These principles are the cornerstone of our organisation.

Our unique tripartite funding model, combining funds from corporate and private philanthropy, government and local communities was and remains an Australian first. The way in which we activate and partner with communities to take direct responsibility for the care and protection of women and children is unique to the homelessness sector. Over the past six years, it has proved flexible, sustainable and successful. All the while, we continue to improve the quality of our services and find better ways to measure their performance.

While continuing to build on our track record of opening shelters every year since inception, we are delighted that our commitment to innovation has reached beyond opening and operating women's shelters to other vital services for women and children.

In late 2018, WCS joined with the Property Council of Australia (NSW) and PAYCE property developers to share with the industry the success of our pilot Pathways Home Transitional Housing Project. This program is also an Australian first and uses surplus vacant houses owned by property developers to provide essential, affordable transitional housing for women and children leaving our shelters. This innovation is critical for women to build a new life and future for themselves and their children.

Our shelters have been developing their own outreach services to support women and children at critical stages of their pathway to a new and safer life. Women with a disability have been a particular focus as we find those women often stay in violent and abusive relationships because they have no suitable accommodation to go to. Improved access for women with a disability, following the success of our work at The Sanctuary – Hills Women's Shelter, is now part of the planning and development process for all our new shelters.

Our 2019 Donor's Report lists other new and exciting services and innovations but one of which we are especially proud is our Walk the Talk program whose sole purpose is the prevention of domestic and family violence through high school education. This program has been warmly embraced by a number of schools and their students. It allows us to not simply help manage the aftermath of domestic and family violence but to seek a grassroots solution for its prevention.

In late news, we are pleased to announce that the international Fidelity Foundation UK has, for the first time, funded WCS and specifically, our Efforts to Outcomes digital data project which seeks to measure our successes and guide us in our quest for continuous improvement. That an international philanthropy foundation has recognised this bespoke WCS-designed software program is a tremendous accolade.

To do all that in the past year, we have not just focussed on frontline services and programs but on building our back office operations to ensure a strong platform for growth. We have a new finance manager and company

secretary, Paige Thompson, who has done a sterling job in managing our finances and improving governance processes. Laura Butler has joined as our Administration and Research Officer as she completes her Bachelor of Social Research and Policy (Honours). These two roles have been critical in freeing our long-serving frontline team to do what they do best without distraction: innovate, operate and open first-class women's shelters.

And so, I would like to thank Paige and Laura but also heartfelt thanks to our exceptional and indefatigable CEO, Annabelle Daniel; her 'right hand woman', COO Simone Parsons; Shelter Network Officer, Lieske Dowd; our Partnerships and Communications Manager, Nathalie Peacock and Gen Sini, who operates our Efforts to Outcomes data program. Together these extraordinarily intelligent, dedicated, fine women are the lifeblood of Women's Community Shelters as are their colleagues who operate our shelters to such high standards. They are – each and every one of them – the embodiment of WCS, of our vision, purpose and principles.

Our wonderful organisation would not be able to operate without the generous support of our growing community of donors. The interest, enthusiasm and trust you place in us is vitally important to our successful operation. So, on behalf of the WCS board and team, we offer sincere thanks to our corporate and philanthropic supporters who are so generous in providing financial, pro bono and in-kind contributions. We would also like to thank our growing community of government supporters: our key funder, the NSW Government; the Commonwealth Government; Bayside Council and Parramatta City Council.

Finally, I would like to thank our board members who are so generous and focussed with their time, expertise and good judgement. I would particularly like to thank and farewell our dear friend and founding board member, Julie White. Julie left us late last year after six years of truly excellent guidance and leadership. Julie's unsurpassed knowledge of corporate philanthropy and the not-for-profit sector has provided the organisation with valuable insights. We will miss Julie but know she will always be a friend at our Hotel California.

As fast-paced as 2018 has proven to be, so too are the team's plans for 2019 – plans for more shelters, programs and continued innovation. Our commitment to and pursuit of what is right and decent for vulnerable women and children is as steely and unswerving as it was six years ago when we started out as just an idea, albeit a good one.

My very best wishes and sincerest thanks to you all for your support of the women and children we all serve.

This program (Walk the Talk) has been warmly embraced by a number of schools and their students. It allows us to not simply help manage the aftermath of domestic and family violence but to seek a grassroots solution for its prevention.



ANNABELLE DANIEL, CEO

It's with a huge amount of delight that I report on the 2018 'year that was' for Women's Community Shelters – an organisation I am proud, every day, to lead. At WCS, it always feels like we move fast. 2018 was no exception, with a host of new partnerships, new shelters in development, and a sense of optimism that when we work together with business, philanthropy, government and communities, yes, we can do hard things. 2018 reinforced for me that we can solve domestic and family violence and women's homelessness, working at the local level with a whole of community approach.

We were delighted to work with the Bayside Women's Shelter Board to open the new shelter, accommodating up to six women and their children, in December 2018. Also, on board were new partners Kernel Property and Temple and Webster, who took the shelter's home to a new level of functionality and caring detail. We firmly believe that providing a welcoming, safe and beautiful environment is what every woman and her children deserve, and we are enormously grateful for partners who share that vision.

We continued our shelter development 'pipeline'. Parramatta Women's Shelter, the seventh shelter in our network, is incorporated, with a property currently undergoing a development application. Pro bono renovation work, and furnishing are already complete. We also have further communities actively engaged in shelter development, including a pro bono new build shelter underway in Camden, significant interest in Canterbury Bankstown, Blacktown and Nambucca Valley. We are contacted consistently by individuals, groups, local councils and others who are interested in taking proactive steps towards shelter establishment in their community.

The work that we do continues to be a critical response for women and children. Homelessness grew by 37% in NSW between 2011 and 2016, the results coming from Census data released in 2018. A continued lack of affordable housing options make it critical for us to work with developers, property holders and other 'non-traditional' groups to create innovative solutions. Empty or under-utilised properties are hiding in plain sight and we plan to significantly expand our PAYCE Foundation/Bridge Housing 'Pathways Home' program to take advantage of them. We cannot wait for governments alone to solve this problem. It's urgent, and women and children need assistance now.

In 2018, we were incredibly excited to roll out the beginning of our Walk the Talk program with over 2,000 kids in 15 shelter community high schools. In solving domestic and family violence, symbolism is no longer enough. We need to connect knowledge and awareness of this issue to taking practical action at the local level to embed the learning with the next generation of Australians. Walk the Talk sees high school students learn about respectful relationships, discuss positive gender roles, and work together to support their local shelter. We've already seen some incredibly positive action from Walk the Talk schools, with fundraising barbeques, concerts and volunteering generating strong relationships with our local shelter network. We cannot wait to expand this program further.

The work that we do continues to be a critical response for women and children. Homelessness grew by 37% in NSW between 2011 and 2016, the results coming from Census data released in 2018. A continued lack of affordable housing options make it critical for us to work with developers, property holders and other 'non-traditional' groups to create innovative solutions.

The news around women's homelessness, domestic and family violence is generally bleak. Newspaper headlines resonate with tallies of homicides and assaults, and a sense of hopelessness that these problems can ever be resolved. In our work with local communities, we see a qualitatively different picture. Everywhere, there are reasons for hope. Everywhere, there are signs of a more sophisticated awareness growing across the Australian community. And everywhere, there are good people who volunteer to help – on our boards, with their professional skills, with their time, and with their donations. These are tangible things in a complicated world, and they benefit not just the shelter residents, but all involved with each shelter in our network.

WCS has always been about more than dollars, outcomes and other widgets. It's about genuine relationships, kindness, connection and inclusion. These are the things we draw from being a part of it, and this is how we want women and kids who've stayed with us to experience what we do.

To our generous donors and supporters, we couldn't do it without you. Thank you for your faith in our vision and your commitment to truly changing lives for women and children. Thank you to our corporate supporters and infrastructure partners – you've made a significant difference to our capacity with your in-kind support in 2018. A small for-purpose organisation needs big help. You've delivered time and time again.

To our shelter boards and volunteers, we are so lucky to have you. We learn from you and hope we can give back a fraction of what you give to the women and children your shelters support. You should be proud of the lives you are saving and changing.

To our government partners, we look forward to working productively in partnership well into the future on some of society's challenging issues.

Last and by no means least, my gratitude to the incredible WCS Hub staff and our fantastic Board, led by Chair, Kris Neill. I said it last year, but it is well worth repeating – WCS is, in every way, a team effort. The calibre of expertise we can draw from grows and deepens each year.

More than 100 women and children sleep safer every night, with wonderful support, because of the work our shelter network does. We should all be proud we can walk alongside them.

Everywhere, there are reasons for hope. Everywhere, there are signs of a more sophisticated awareness growing across the Australian community. And everywhere, there are good people who volunteer to help – on our boards, with their professional skills, with their time, and with their donations.

2018 HIGHLIGHTS

TWO NEW SHELTERS

In 2018, WCS welcomed shelters five and six to the WCS network. In April 2018, The Haven – Nepean Women’s Shelter opened in Penrith and in December, The Bayside Women’s Shelter opened in Bayside – adding an additional 250 bed nights per annum to the sector.

NEW WCS BOARD MEMBERS

WCS was delighted to welcome Emily Hodgson (Chief Financial Officer – Australian Securities and Investments Commission); Shenaz Khan (Group General Manager, Enterprise Human Resources Strategy & Services Westpac Banking Corporation) and Sr Mary Louise Petro (Congregation Leader, Sisters of Mercy Parramatta) to the Board of Trustees.

PROPERTIES WITH PURPOSE

In late 2018, WCS held a forum in collaboration with the Property Council of Australia (NSW) and PAYCE Property developers to share best practice from our pilot Pathways Home Transitional Housing Project. The Pathways Home project is a new collaborative model of providing low-cost housing.

The aim of the day was to encourage other developers and property holders to contribute property to a ‘housing pool’ for use as transitional housing for women and children who are homeless or leaving domestic and family violence. Transitional housing supports women and their families leaving our shelters for a further period of three months to three years.

WCS AND EVOLVE LAUNCH SAFE FOUNDATIONS PARTNERSHIP

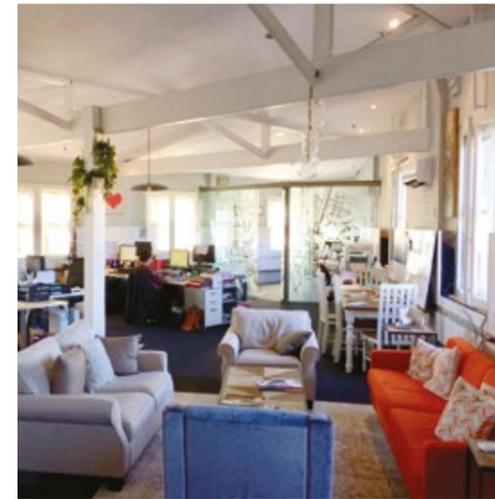
In October, WCS and Evolve Housing launched a pilot program called Safe Foundations which provides medium to long-term housing and positive social outcomes for women and children escaping domestic and/or family violence.

Safe Foundations provides women and their children with an opportunity to stabilise their lives while being safely supported as they exit from crisis accommodation; engage in employment and/or training opportunities while receiving subsidised rental accommodation; and exit into the private rental market with a view to be living independently within three years.

VICE REGAL RECOGNITION

WCS is delighted to receive ongoing support from His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret’d) 38th Governor of New South Wales and his wife, Mrs Linda Hurley. The Vice Regal couple visited The Haven – Nepean Women’s Shelter in July 2018 and hosted staff and residents at a high tea at Government House in March 2019.

Left to right, from top: Property Council of Australia housing forum; Bayside Board; WCS Hub office; Vice Regal support; Safe Foundations partnership; Run4Cover participants; Westpac-hosted fundraiser; Haven Nepean Board meeting; Pathways Home Transitional Housing project partners.



A NEW HOME – THANKS TO THE BIG ISSUE AND NATIONAL PROJECTS AND MAINTENANCE

An early highlight of 2018 was the relocation of the WCS Hub from a small office located in the rear of The Big Issue offices in Redfern to the top floor. The refurbishment was completed pro bono by our amazing partners National Projects and Maintenance and resulted in a beautiful open plan space that can accommodate the growing WCS team. Our team has grown from four to seven in various capacities over the last year, with new staff planned in 2019.

RUN4COVER ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

In November, WCS Hub staff joined Macquarie’s third annual Run4Cover fundraiser at The Domain, Sydney, with all funds donated to WCS. The event was supported by our partner National Projects and Maintenance which entered a team into the race in full fancy dress. A great example of corporates working together to support WCS.

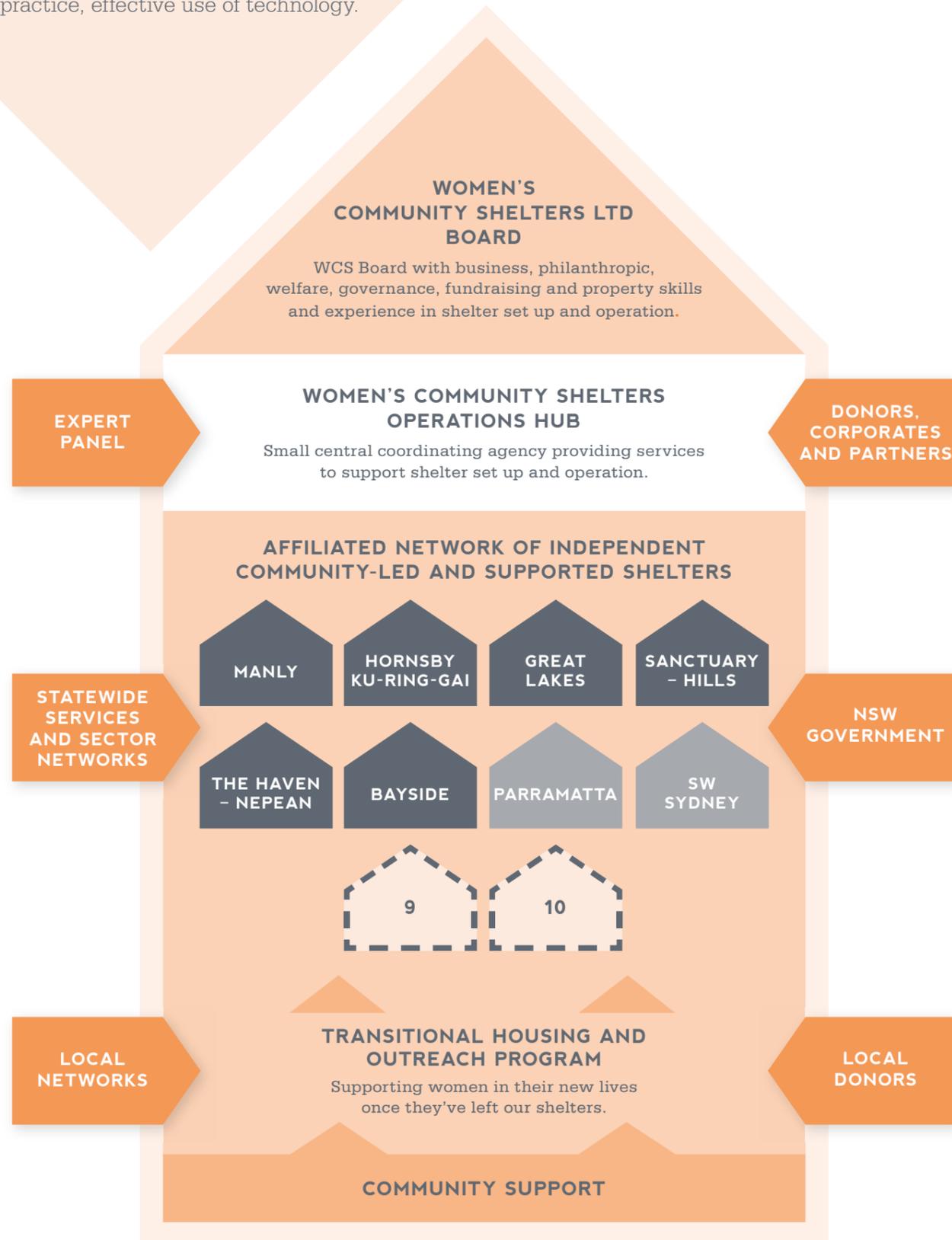
WESTPAC FUNDRAISER

In November 2018, to mark the UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, our wonderful partner the Westpac Group, in liaison with the Finance Sector Union, hosted a breakfast fundraiser in support of WCS. The event was a huge success and helped raise funds and the profile of our charity.

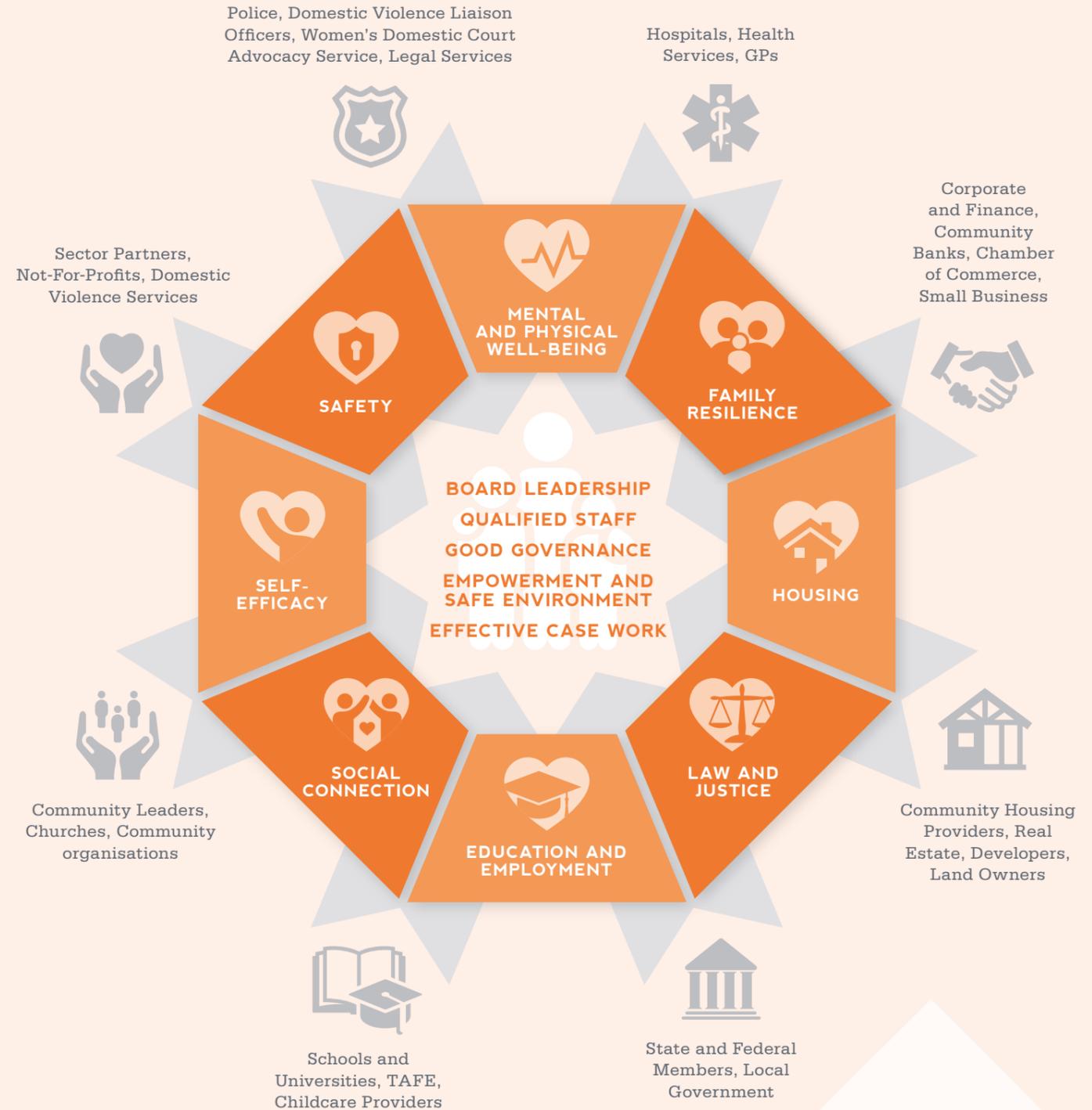


THE SOCIAL FRANCHISE MODEL

Women's Community Shelters is a social franchise model. The diagram below illustrates our relationship with all stakeholders: community participation, industry best practice, effective use of technology.



THE INDIVIDUAL SHELTER MODEL



The Individual Shelter Model: The women and children we support are at the centre of everything we do. Caseworkers are there to walk beside women on their journey, thanks to the commitment and leadership of our Shelter Boards and incredible support of local communities.

WCS was founded to address the urgent and growing need for additional crisis accommodation for women and children. More than one in two women who seek safe crisis accommodation across Australia are turned away every night due to a lack of space.

Our six shelters provide much more than a safe place to stay. The entire process of establishing a new shelter activates and educates a local community and supports early intervention and prevention of domestic and family violence.

Each shelter employs qualified practitioners who walk beside each woman on her journey through effective, personalised case work.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN RECEIVE EXPERT SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE FOR:

- Long term housing
- Professional legal services/ Court Support
- Financial advice and counselling
- Achieving an income stream
- Health/medical services
- Employment assistance

The programs we offer in each shelter community continue to grow and evolve, reflecting local community needs and desires from partners to do more to assist our mission.

SHELTER SPOTLIGHT ON WCS PROJECTS

Our ‘Shelter Spotlight’, gives an insight into the growth of our Shelter Network and the range of programs, activities and advocacy that is alive across our communities.

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAM AT THE SANCTUARY – HILLS WOMEN’S SHELTER AND NORTHERN BEACHES WOMEN’S SHELTER

Transitional housing is a key step for many women on their housing journey, where there are barriers to private rental and wait lists to social housing and a medium-term housing solution is needed.

The Sanctuary – Hills Women’s Shelter has had great success with assisting women to move on to transitional housing after their shelter stay. Shelter Manager, Donna Cavanagh, explained the importance of the WCS Transitional Housing Program: “If there were more transitional properties available, then we could successfully house a lot more women and it wouldn’t be such a gruelling component of their journey to recovery.

“Transitional housing allows women to get back on their feet, it allows them to establish themselves, it allows them to meet other community members and reintegrate back into their local community.

“Women who are currently in our transitional housing are working, they’ve become engaged with their communities, their kids are doing really well, they know they’re supported. That little bit of additional time in a supported environment allows them to have a fresh start without having to interview for 15 properties and possibly being knocked back 15 times.”

Our Northern Beaches Women’s Shelter Manager, Jacqui Leonard, echoed these sentiments: “When in a WCS transitional house, women can drop into the shelter whenever they need, they don’t need to come up with a bond immediately, they’ve got time, their name doesn’t need to go on a lease and they build up a history of paying rent. Transitional housing allows women to stabilise while they look for employment.

The WCS Transitional Housing Program provides a pipeline of affordable properties for women and children leaving WCS shelters. Women continue to receive ongoing ‘outreach’ support from qualified staff which can help as they put in place strategies that work towards future stability.

“Our Community Outreach offers social and emotional support, letting women know that they are not alone, because when they arrive at the shelter they are alone. Knowing that there’s someone keeping an eye on them, who cares about them, who’s checking in on them when they’ve left a shelter makes such a huge difference to their ongoing recovery and stability.”

WCS is currently exploring ways to increase access to transitional properties and working with external partners to make use of ‘Meanwhile’ housing.

‘Meanwhile’ refers to the short-term use of temporarily empty buildings until they can be brought back into commercial use, and WCS is working with property developers to turn vacant houses into transitional housing, turning a potential problem into an opportunity.

In 2018, as a result of these partnerships, WCS now has access to 12 transitional properties. Growing our portfolio means women are able to transition through the shelter to new lives more quickly, freeing up shelter beds to allow us to assist in supporting greater numbers of women seeking emergency help.



From top: Property Council of Australia Forum; WCS Shelter Manager’s Meeting.

Transitional housing is a key step for many women on their housing journey, where there are barriers to private rental and wait lists to social housing and a medium-term housing solution is needed.

THE WALK THE TALK EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AT THE HAVEN – NEPEAN WOMEN’S SHELTER

In late 2018, WCS launched our long-awaited Walk the Talk education program in 15 high schools across Sydney. This program builds on a pilot, first trialled at The Sanctuary – Hills Women’s Shelter and Oakhill College in 2015, where students learned from a Sanctuary Board Member about the work of the shelter and spontaneously took action to raise funds and awareness to support the women and children residents.

The Walk the Talk program, run in partnership with Enlighten Education, educates both male and female students about respectful relationships, gender equality and their capacity to be change makers. It also empowers them to adopt their local WCS shelter to support the resident women and children and embed the learning.

In the Penrith area, Kingswood High School, Emmaus Catholic College and St Paul’s Grammar School are all taking part in the program and have adopted The Haven – Nepean Women’s Shelter.

Shelter Manager, Samantha Campbell, explained the importance of the project: “The impact of the Walk the Talk program has been huge. The teenagers involved are really understanding of the issue of domestic and family violence and fully empathise with what it means for a woman who has to leave her home, to be homeless, to be scared, to be unsafe.

“They are starting to understand what is healthy and what is not, in terms of relationships, and that disrespect can lead to homelessness and abuse.”

As a result of the Walk the Talk program, staff at The Haven – Nepean Women’s Shelter have developed a school engagement program. The premise is that any of the schools taking part in the educational program who wish to do a fundraiser, must have community education and awareness of the cause behind it so it’s not just a standalone fundraiser.

Across the WCS network, over 2,000 students will ‘Walk the Talk’ in 2019.

“Thank you, thank you, thank you for such an outstanding day yesterday. Seeing the students engaged and lost in the words of your presenters was truly inspiring. The fun, kind-natured personalities of your presenters, Nikki and Jack, made for an enjoyable day for staff and students. You can tell the love and passion that you have for such an important issue. I know that Year 9 at Rouse Hill High School, as well as myself, are ready to Walk the Talk!”

Year 9 Teacher, Rouse Hill High School.



FEEDBACK FROM WALK THE TALK PROGRAM:

“I just wanted to convey how outstanding Jack’s presentation was this morning. He was a captivating presenter and the boys were engaged from start to finish. I noticed a number of students go up to Jack for a handshake and a conversation following the presentation. Thanks for the great work your organisation is doing to combat domestic violence.”

Year 9 Grammar Coordinator,
Senior English Teacher,
Pittwater House School.

OUTREACH PROGRAM AT THE GREAT LAKES WOMEN’S SHELTER

Launched in 2016, the WCS Outreach Program allows WCS to support women who are leaving our shelters and need continued support as they move to independent living. The program also provides capacity for early intervention as shelter staff can support local women who haven’t been accommodated, but who need support to stay safe or maintain their accommodation.

Outreach at our Great Lakes Women’s Shelter (GLWS) began on 1st June 2017 and since the commencement of the Outreach Program, GLWS has provided outreach support to 80 women and 99 children.

Staff have worked with ex-residents to help them maintain their tenancies and access support services that they need to remain safe and secure. Domestic and family violence, and self-esteem building have been the major focus with the majority of women to date.

As part of their Outreach program, GLWS founded a support group for current and ex-residents called, The Willow Group (Women Inspiration Love Life Optimism Wellness). They also created a sub group called ‘Little Willows’ for the children.

The aim of Willow is to assist with engaging women to reduce social isolation, provide ongoing support, learn new life skills, build relationships and connect with the community.

Shelter Manager, Natalie Mulhall, explained the genesis of the Willow Group: “As we’re a regional shelter, we don’t have as many support services in our area, so we created the Willow group to allow us to maintain contact with ex-residents and be there to support them.

“It’s only for current and ex-residents, so they build a community network with each other. They’re building these connections with other people who have been through similar situations and it’s important for them to just stay in touch with each other and the shelter.

External professionals also attend the Willow program and share their knowledge and expertise as needed, for example, legal aid, counsellors, victims’ services.

The Willow group runs fortnightly and is primarily directed by the needs of the women who run it, whether that’s networking, debriefing, social support or education.

Natalie continued: “By implementing the program, shelter staff increase domestic and family violence education, decrease social isolation and improve self-esteem and confidence to enable the women to lead productive, strong and fulfilling lives after leaving domestic and family violence or experiencing homelessness.

“For the women to have someone to fall back on is invaluable. Most people have a family member to rely on but many of the women that come through our shelter don’t have that. They don’t have someone to pick up the phone and help. We pride ourselves on being that family for them.”

Page at left, from top: Students participating in the Walk the Talk program; Sausage sizzle fundraiser.

Below, from top: GLWS Outreach program; Trauma-informed yoga therapy held in-shelter; Halloween at GLWS.



THE WCS CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAM AT BAYSIDE WOMEN'S SHELTER

WCS' Child Support Program seeks to intervene at a critical point in children's lives to break the cycle of domestic and family violence. Children who have experienced domestic and family violence, or witnessed it against a primary carer, have particular support needs which are not addressed simply by focusing case management towards their carer parent.

Children need specific services to enable them to repair and forge stronger bonds with their parent, psychological supports, learning, mentoring and tutoring help, and specific cultural and linguistic needs as appropriate.

The WCS Child Support Program ensures every child has a goal-directed case plan to meet individual needs and connects them with appropriate services to provide them.

Bayside Women's Shelter Manager, Sharman Keith-Nott, said: "The program is 100% vital. One of the issues we've encountered is having large families staying in the shelter. When there's a mum with five kids, which we've had twice now, providing programs that support and are specifically targeted to the children's needs is extremely important.

"In the long term, the Child Support Program really supports women with their parenting. Sometimes being an outsider can allow you to see where some of the concerns might be in the family. They've all been through trauma and been through such a lot, so when we meet them, the family can have unhealthy behaviours and patterns that they don't recognise and we're able to see them and support them to find solutions."

The Child Support Program provides support to vulnerable, marginalised and disadvantaged families by enhancing the social and living skills of children and young people staying in our shelters. It also enhances community safety and wellbeing by assisting their re-integration into the community and reconciliation with their families.



Right, clockwise from top: Enjoying pet therapy with therapy dog Chia; Shelter interior by Temple and Webster; Craft sessions at Bayside Women's Shelter.

IMPROVING ACCESS FOR WOMEN WITH DISABILITY AT THE SANCTUARY - HILLS WOMEN'S SHELTER

In 2018, WCS began collaborating with DV NSW and People with Disabilities Australia on an innovative partnership, 'Women with Disability and Domestic and Family Violence: Testing Approaches to Best Practice and Policy'.

The aim of the project is to build access to domestic and family violence services for women with disability by sharing expertise and insights, building networks and working together to find new ways forward in shaping and improving disability access within our communities.

Being part of the Building Access Communities of Practice (BACOP) provides an opportunity to build relationships with members and learn from each other, engage in joint activities and discussions and share information. BACOP has been designed to create a supportive space where like-minded professionals can collaborate and explore ideas and initiatives to guide their practice. The BACOP's practice will be to produce resources on improving accessibility of domestic and family violence services. These resources will be made up of experiences, stories, practices or tools.

Shelter Manager, Donna Cavanagh, explained: "It is extremely important to accommodate the needs of women with disabilities. We know there is a higher rate of women with disabilities not having accessible opportunities to escape domestic and family violence and that's why we've made significant changes within our shelter. We've reviewed everything from marketing literature, forms, smoke alarms that are detectable by sight not just sound, accessible bathrooms and all of our staff have undertaken training in disability awareness and training in the NDIS.

"Our staff now have a more heightened awareness of disability and these programs have enabled staff to engage appropriately with children and the mums with disability."

Women with disability frequently face a number of barriers, which can affect their likelihood of accessing domestic and family violence services, and for these reasons, WCS is looking to involve more of our shelters in the project and The Haven - Nepean Women's Shelter and Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelters will take part in the second and third phases of the project.



"It is extremely important to accommodate the needs of women with disabilities. We know there is a higher rate of women with disabilities not having accessible opportunities to escape domestic and family violence and that's why we've made significant changes within our shelter..."

From top, clockwise to left: Disability Awareness training; Inside The Sanctuary Shelter; WCS Staff and Board training.

SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY, WOMEN WITHOUT INCOME AT THE HAVEN – NEPEAN WOMEN’S SHELTER

2018 saw WCS become a key member of the National Advocacy Group for Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Violence.

As part of this vital group, WCS works with service providers and advocacy organisations operating interstate and nationally to advocate for Commonwealth policy reform.

Together, we are striving to increase access to support for women experiencing violence while in Australia on a temporary visa.

Recent figures show that WCS is supporting an increasing number of women and children with no income. Usually when staying at a WCS shelter, women who are able pay a contribution towards shelter expenses, normally a small percentage of their income or via their government benefits.

However, not all women are able to do this. For example, a woman who may have left a domestic and family violence situation but is on a Temporary Partner Visa is not eligible for government benefits and is not eligible to work so has no access to any income.

A recent survey of nearly 400 women on temporary visas found that 24 percent faced barriers in accessing support including permanent housing and 10 percent of women would stay in a violent situation due to lack of access to emergency accommodation.

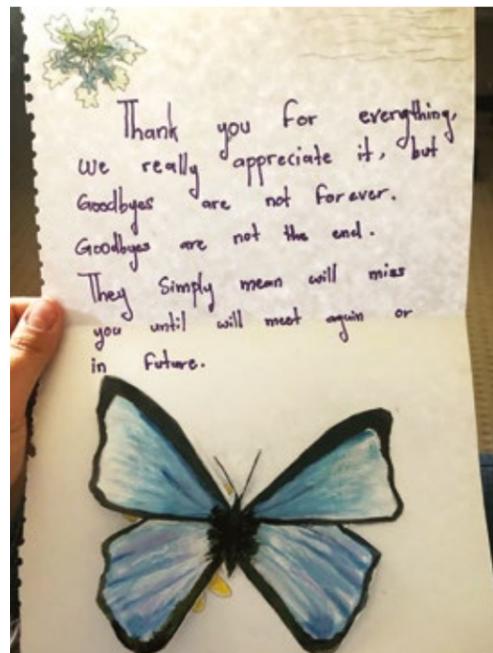
WCS subsidises a woman with no income and support her through her ongoing recovery. Our shelters also help towards the costs of other essential items such as medical expenses, food, clothing and all the other supports they need during their time in a shelter and beyond.

The Haven – Nepean Women’s Shelter Manager, Samantha Campbell, explained: “We’re always looking for local opportunities for women and funding for things like medical expenses. This is important, so they can build that independence themselves. Every woman who comes through on a temporary visa is so eager to work or study, they crave it but sadly the opportunities are limited.

As a result, The Haven staff are liaising with local businesses and exploring partnerships to create more work opportunities for women without income or on temporary visas.

Samantha continued: “Another issue is not having an Australian reference for employment purposes. It severely reduces a woman’s options for employment. So instead what we’ve been looking at is local partnership opportunities for those kinds of traineeships or volunteer opportunities, to get that Australian reference so then they can get into the workforce.

“At the moment we have a successful partnership with a local primary school, who’s offering an administrative traineeship in their office so a woman can get that all important reference and find some work within schools.”



From top: Appreciation letter; Members of The Haven team; Shelter support and guidance.

WORKING TOWARDS OUR RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

In 2018, WCS began developing a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for implementation across our shelter network. Expressions of interest for our RAP Working Group were sought from staff and board members across the network who will help shape WCS’ commitment to the rights of Australia’s First Nations people.

Across our shelters, we see daily the unequal impact of homelessness, domestic and family violence on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children. We hope that by contributing to national reconciliation efforts we will raise awareness and ultimately assist in addressing this gap.

EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION PATHWAYS

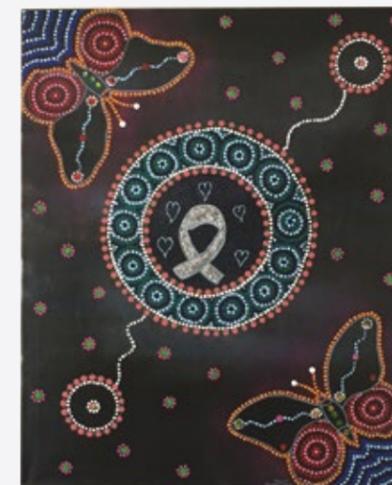
WCS is currently working to further develop our education and employment partnerships and deliver supported pathways into employment and training for women experiencing homelessness or escaping domestic and family violence.

Women who access our crisis and accommodation services come from diverse backgrounds. Disrupted employment and education experiences, loss of self-belief and confidence and overcoming judgement from potential employers are all barriers to long-term stability and independence.

This year we hope to grow a strong Education and Employment Partnerships Program to help women build their skills, develop personal networks, overcome employment and education barriers, and gain confidence and opportunities for employment.

As part of this program we hope to secure employment for women on temporary visas who are not entitled to any government support but have the right to work. We have had some success with this approach to date which has included utilising local networks and partnerships to source both training and employment opportunities. The critical opportunity for these women has been securing both an income and the employment reference from an Australian employer which is key to securing future work.

Right, clockwise from top: In-shelter art therapy; Style with Purpose fundraiser; Artwork at The Sanctuary – Hills Women’s Shelter.



Women who access our crisis and accommodation services come from diverse backgrounds. Disrupted employment and education experiences, loss of self-belief and confidence and overcoming judgement from potential employers are all barriers to long-term stability and independence.



**SERVICE GAPS AND ADVOCACY
– SINGLE OLDER WOMEN AT HORNSBY
KU-RING-GAI WOMEN’S SHELTER**

In Australia today, older women are currently the fastest growing group who are experiencing homelessness across our community.

According to recent analysis of Census data* between 2011 and 2016, the number of homeless women over fifty-five increased by 31 percent and the number of homeless women aged sixty-five increased by 51 percent.

However, the numbers published only capture the women who have sought assistance from official services. The real number of older women in housing stress, and at risk of homelessness, is much higher.

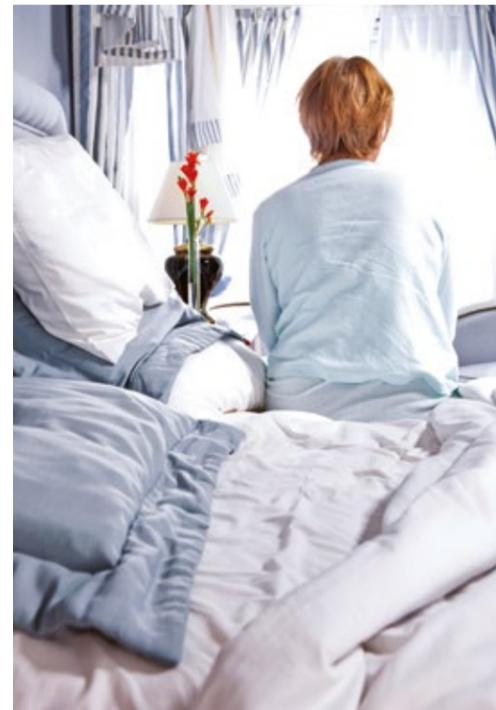
Sadly, this increase is being seen across the WCS Shelter network as more and more older women seek emergency accommodation and support.

Hylette Evans, Shelter Manager at Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women’s Shelter has witnessed this growth first hand. She explained: “We’re getting a lot of older clients with issues of family violence often perpetrated by their children. For example, they’re often setting up their kids to buy properties, by selling their own properties, in the hope of living with them. But when it gets to the time to move in, the children decide they don’t want their mum around and can become quite abusive.

“I feel like the over fifty-fives are always the ones that are forgotten about. People never believe that we have a shelter with anyone of that age group. In the last four weeks alone, we’ve had four clients over fifty-five and sadly most of them have been through family violence.”

According to Hylette, another contributing factor is that the demand for affordable accommodation far outstrips the supply. Hylette continued: “Housing is definitely the biggest problem. We need more transitional housing for over fifty-fives.

“What we’re finding now is that the external agencies we work with for their transitional properties want younger clients and they’re really reluctant to take over fifty-fives. When a property becomes available and the shelter refers one of our older women, they’ll take one of the younger women instead because they say they’re able to work and therefore contribute to their costs of living. It’s making it really hard. This makes our Pathways Home partnership, that also supports women and children, so valuable!”



According to recent analysis of Census data* between 2011 and 2016, the number of homeless women over fifty-five increased by 31 percent and the number of homeless women aged sixty-five increased by 51 percent.

However, the numbers published only capture the women who have sought assistance from official services. The real number of older women in housing stress, and at risk of homelessness, is much higher.



Clockwise from top left: WCS supports older women; Sensory tepee at our Bayside Shelter; Transitional housing; Shelter hatching project.

* Undertaken by the Equality Rights Alliance.

OUR SUPPORTERS

Our shelter operations would not be possible without the dynamism, tenacity and commitment of those communities in which our shelters operate. WCS believes communities engaged around local initiatives are key to addressing women's homelessness, domestic and family violence.

The strength and innovation of the WCS Shelter model is in building collaboration and capacity amongst 'non-traditional' groups at the local level in each shelter location. We do this by working together with community, corporates and philanthropy to provide funding to establish and operate our shelters.

WCS is incredibly grateful for the time, generosity, skills, donations and ongoing efforts of our amazing supporters. Here are just a few examples of the wonderful support we have received across the last year...



OUR DONORS

A WORD FROM SOME OF OUR DONORS

We asked two of our Corporate and two of our Philanthropic donors to reflect on why they give and why they chose to support WCS.

apéro

LAZ SMITH, CO-FOUNDER OF APÉRO LABEL

When we started Apéro, we wanted right from the beginning to use the business to support social justice and contribute tangibly to our community. We did some research, and after an exhaustive search we landed on WCS.

We believe that domestic violence, abuse and homelessness for women specifically is a huge issue in our country and that it needs every bit of support it can get.

As a women's label, it was easy to get behind a charity that works directly with women, who are our customers. I believe every brand has a responsibility to meaningfully contribute to the community it has as customers.



DANIEL AFONSO, GENERAL MANAGER, NATIONAL PROJECTS & MAINTENANCE

With an increasing number of women entering the construction industry and National Projects & Maintenance having 60 percent women within its offices alone, we thought it was time to support a women's charity within the community.

WCS caught our eye because of their short but successful journey so far in establishing shelters within the community.

It was important to us that our contributions with the new charity partner were being put to good use. This is evident with WCS through their continued growth opening more shelters across NSW.

We partnered with WCS because of the synergies between both organisations. Having met the organisation's powerhouse of people, their passion for what they do, from the CEO to shelter managers, is influential and aligns with our values.

We will continue to support such a great cause and charity full of wonderful people doing great things for those that need it.



LYNETTE BARRY, LENITY MANAGER

Lenity Australia, a not-for-profit charity, supports programs which improve the livelihood of people. In part, Lenity achieves its objectives by supporting vulnerable, exploited and abused women and girls.

WCS was selected as one of Lenity's initial projects because of its collaborative model of service, not only through philanthropic support, but through engagement with business, government and local communities. Sustainable and measurable outcomes were also important factors.

Lenity has proudly partnered with WCS over the past three years through the 'Single Women's and Women and Children's Outreach Programs'.

This project, supporting victims of domestic violence as they transition from shelter support to independent living, was initially a trial program and has subsequently become an integral part of the service. Significantly, it has helped women and children break the cycle of domestic violence.

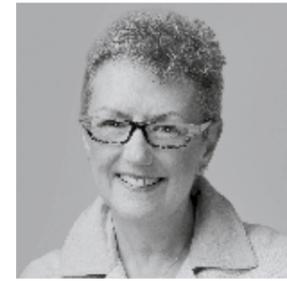


CAITRIONA FAY, GENERAL MANAGER – COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL INVESTMENT AT PERPETUAL

Perpetual is proud to support WCS. Their progressive approach to crisis accommodation stems from human-centred design principles – and it incorporates everything from the built environments right through to the delivery of culturally appropriate care.

Their expertise means they are best placed to achieve positive outcomes for the women who find themselves homeless due to domestic violence or other non-tenable situations.

OUR GOVERNANCE AND STAFF



KRIS NEILL (CHAIR)

Kris Neill is the Managing Director of Kris Neill Consulting. She is a leading corporate brand and reputation strategist with global experience. Kris is a former Macquarie Group Executive Director and a board member and mentor of the Melba Opera Trust.



PETER HUNT AM

Peter is a philanthropist involved in funding, developing and scaling social sector organisations and the founder of WCS. As an investment banker Peter advised local and multi-national companies and governments in Australia. Peter became a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2010 for services to the philanthropic sector.



PAUL SAY

Paul has over 35 years' experience in commercial property with Lend Lease, Dexus, and JLL. Currently he is a non-executive director of listed trusts ALE and FLT and several HNW Family Offices providing governance, transactional and strategic advice. Paul is a Fellow of the AIV and RICS and a qualified property valuer.



PAUL KELLY

Paul is the CEO of The Channel Group with more than 30 years' experience as a communications adviser, facilitator and personal coach to senior executives and Directors. Paul is also a Director of Channel Ventures, which provides advice to and invests in disruptive technology businesses.



EMILY HODGSON

Emily Hodgson is Chief Financial Officer at Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC). Emily is also a member of Ashfield Council and Inner West Council Audit and Risk Committee, where she oversees the Councils' governance, internal controls, financial reporting and internal and external audit.



SHENAZ KHAN

Shenaz Khan is a Human Resources Executive at the Westpac Group. She has over 25 years' experience in Banking and Financial Services in a variety of leadership roles, leading large business and HR teams. Shenaz has also served on the Boards of various wealth management entities and not-for-profit organisations.



SISTER MARY-LOUISE PETRO

Sister Mary-Louise Petro is a Sister of Mercy, of the Parramatta Congregation. In 1985, Mary-Louise founded The Mamre Project at St Marys, which assisted the unemployed, people with a disability, youth at risk and refugees. Mary-Louise is currently the Congregation Leader for her order.



JULIE WHITE (RETIRED OCT 2018)

Julie White is a strategic adviser to business and not-for-profit and is a Chair and/or Director on a number of not-for-profit boards. From 2000–2011 Julie was global head of the Macquarie Group Foundation overseeing its growth to become one of Australia's leading corporate foundations. Julie was a WCS founding board member and retired in October 2018.

WCS HUB STAFF

Chief Executive Officer:
Annabelle Daniel (f/t)

Chief Operations Officer: Simone Parsons (f/t)

Office and Finance Manager:
Paige Thompson (f/t)

Partnerships and Communications Manager:
Nathalie Peacock (p/t)

Shelter Network Officer: Lieske Dowd (p/t)

Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) Officers:
Gen Sini (p/t)
Carly Ravenscroft (p/t)

Administration and Research Officer:
Laura Butler (p/t)

WCS Education Officer:
Dannielle Miller (p/t)

THANK YOU

A huge thank you to existing donors and a warm welcome to new donors who have joined our growing community over the last year.

Your generosity and on-going support are invaluable to helping WCS improve the lives of women and children across our shelter network.

PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORTERS

- > Gray Family Foundation
- > Charles Warman Foundation
- > Neilson Foundation
- > Restore Hope Foundation
- > Hunt Family Foundation
- > Fidelity Foundation (UK)
- > Hogan Family Foundation
- > Roberts Family Foundation
- > The Snow Foundation
- > Tribuo Foundation
- > PAYCE Foundation
- > Perpetual
 - Adolph Basser Trust
 - Baxter Charitable Trust
 - Ronald Geoffrey Arnott Trust
 - Mary Alice Foundation
 - Myee Codrington Foundation for Homeless Women
- > PWC Australia
- > St George Foundation
- > Gandel Philanthropy
- > Sisters of Mercy – St Michael's Fund
- > Lenity Australia
- > LUCRF Super
- > The Horizon Foundation
- > Hummingsong Community Choirs
- > Streetsmart Australia
- > Gene Pty Ltd (Alistair Hanley)
- > Wiggs Foundation
- > Jante Korringa
- > Roey Higgs
- > Elizabeth Gilbert

CORPORATE SUPPORTERS

- > Macquarie – Macquarie Bank, Macquarie Group Foundation and the Macquarie MSIS Higher Purpose Team
- > Westpac Group
- > Commonwealth Bank Australia
- > Apéro Label
- > Bittini Pty Ltd
- > ClubGRANTS
- > Colette
- > Eco Direct
- > Humanitix
- > National Projects and Maintenance
- > Pandora
- > PAYCE
- > St George
- > Temple and Webster
- > Kernel Property
- > Hunter Mason
- > The Just Group
- > i=Change

GOVERNMENT SUPPORTERS

- > NSW State Government
- > Commonwealth Government
- > Bayside Council
- > Parramatta City Council
- > Camden Council

PRO BONO/IN-KIND

- > The Big Issue
- > QIC
- > John Kell – Hicksons Lawyers
- > The Generous and The Grateful
- > Fishead Designs
- > Two Good
- > Maurice Blackburn
- > Bridge Housing
- > Evolve Housing
- > Women's Legal Services
- > Cox Inall Communications
- > National Projects and Maintenance

WORKPLACE GIVING

- > Greenhill
- > Guardian Australia
- > Suncorp Group
- > Hometrack Australia
- > National Australia Bank Ltd
- > PwC Australia
- > Baker McKenzie
- > Sumitomo Mitsubishi Banking Corporate
- > Westpac
- > Blackmores

And many other individual donors, some of whom have made an on-going commitment to support WCS each month.

EXISTING SHELTER NETWORK AND NEW SHELTERS IN DEVELOPMENT

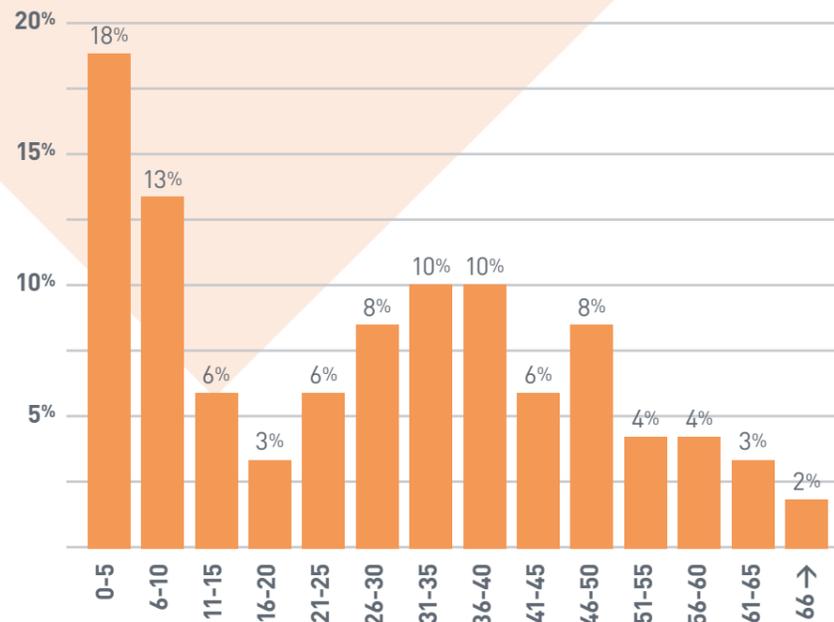
Thank you to the shelter Boards, staff, volunteers, donors and all the amazing individual and corporate supporters who have made the establishment of our current network and opening of our new shelters possible.



THANK YOU

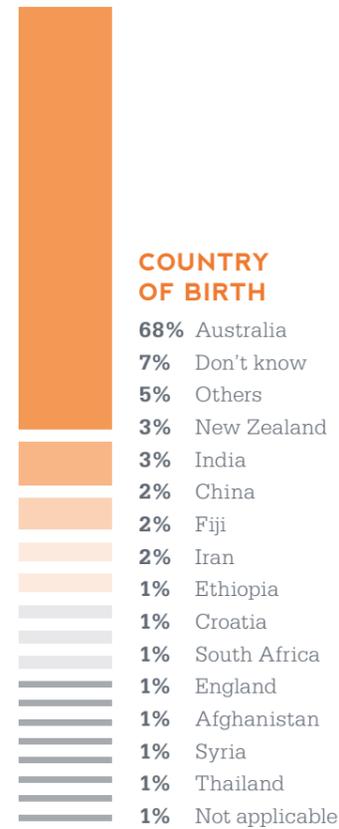
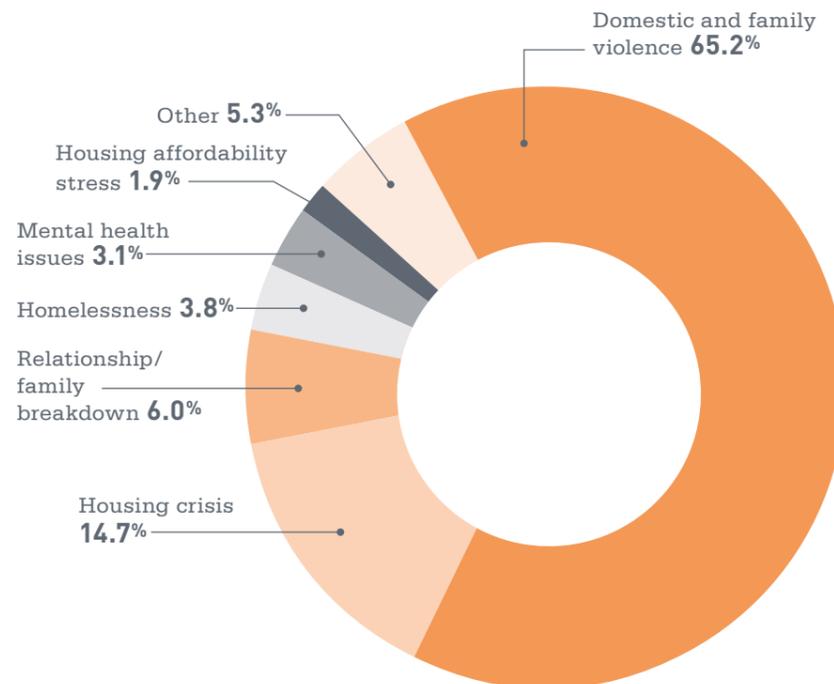
WHO WE WORK WITH

WCS CLIENT AGE GROUPS



PRIMARY REASON FOR REFERRAL

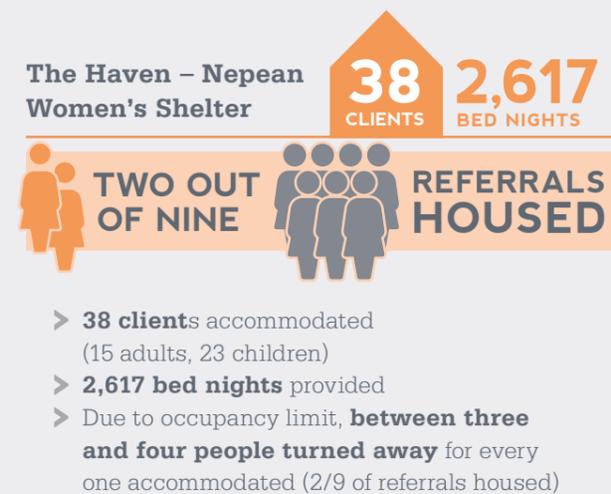
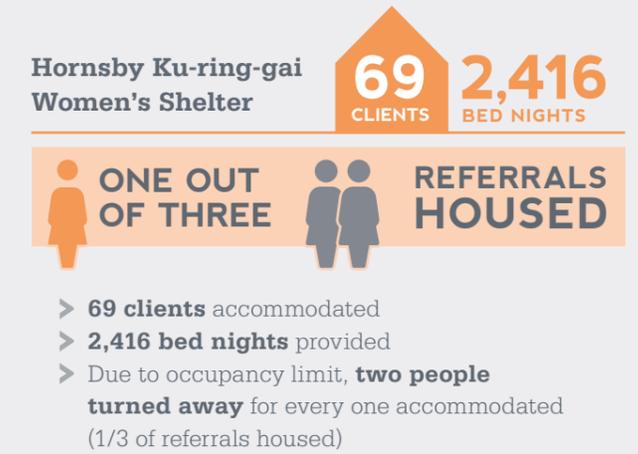
Clients are referred to WCS from many sources, including Link2Home, the DV Line, specialist homelessness and outreach workers, and government agencies. Reasons for being referred to a WCS shelter are often numerous and co-occurring, yet domestic and family violence remains the primary reason for referral.



WCS SHELTER SNAPSHOT:

JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2018

Across the WCS Network, trends in shelter occupancies and bed nights are shaped by many factors. Some shelters may support large families for longer time periods, while other shelters may support more women without children, or for shorter lengths of time. The following demonstrates client trends in the 2018 calendar year across the WCS Network shelters.





OUR IMPACTS

In the 2018 calendar year, the WCS Shelter Network:

- Accommodated 319 individuals, including 203 adults and 116 children
- Provided 17,230 bed nights
- Provided key services including:
 - Assistance for domestic/family violence
 - Psychological services
 - Short-term or emergency accommodation
 - Specialist counselling services
 - Court support
 - Financial advice and counselling
 - Legal information
 - Family/relationship assistance
 - Assistance with immigration services
 - Drug and alcohol counselling
 - Employment assistance
 - Laundry/shower facilities
 - Health/medical services
 - Child care
 - Structured play and skills development
 - Parental skills information
 - Material aid and brokerage

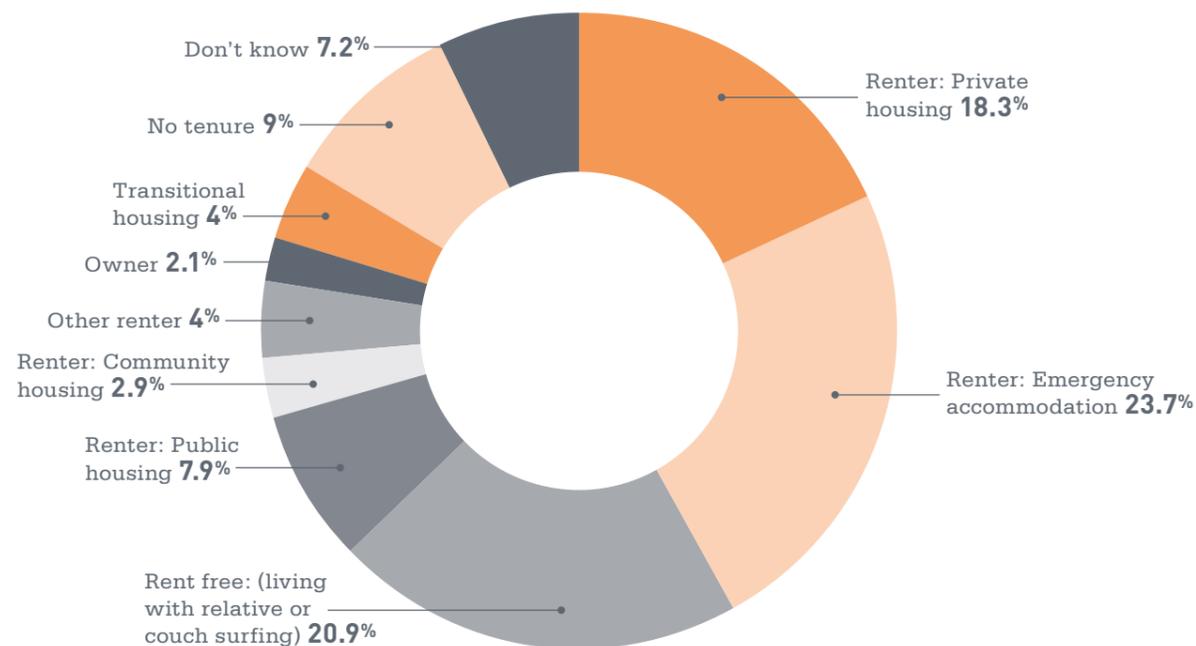
Upon exiting the shelter,

- 84% of clients across the shelter network were successfully housed
- The accommodation tenure of remaining clients is either not known (7%) or the clients moved to no tenure (9%)

Yet, for every person housed, between 3 and 4 people were turned away due to capacity. This is over 1,168 individuals unable to be accommodated – an average of over four per week at each shelter.



TENURE UPON EXITING SERVICE



REVIEW OF 2017/18 FINANCIAL YEAR

WCS received good support from donors and partners during the 2018 financial year, providing a financial platform to commit to opening new shelters and expanding the wrap-around support to existing shelters.

- Shelters were funded from a mix of NSW Government grants and donations from individuals, corporate partners and philanthropic trusts. The shelter network expanded during the year, with The Haven (Penrith) becoming the fifth operational shelter, and the sixth shelter in Bayside (South East Sydney) funded for establishment
- The WCS Hub was funded exclusively from donations.

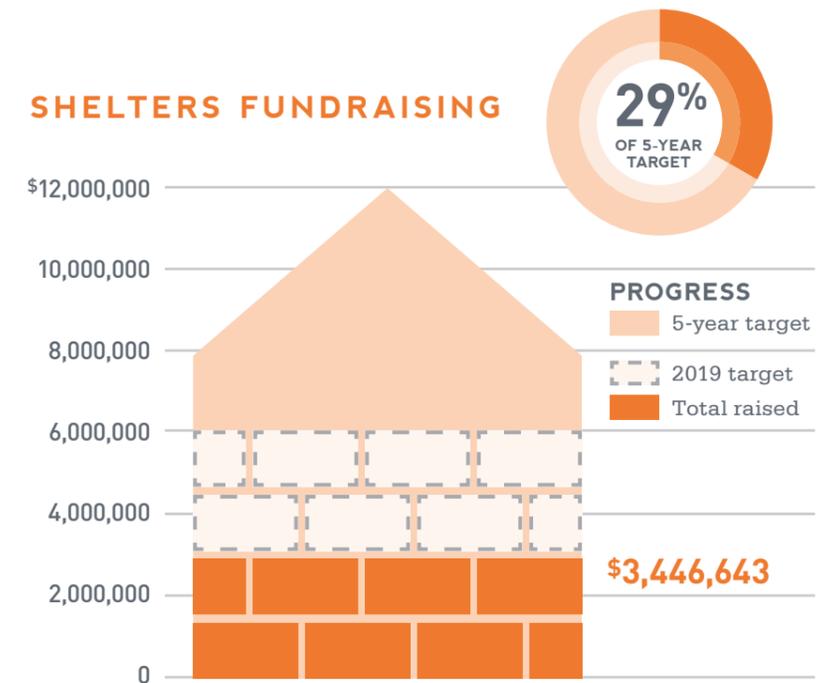
For both shelters and WCS Hub a modest reserve was created to meet a limited period of on-going and new shelter commitments.

The audited balance sheet at 30th June 2018 shows a net asset position of \$4.2m. Whilst the health of the balance sheet has improved over the past year, all funds are fully committed towards future shelter and WCS Hub costs. In fact, as described in the fundraising targets of this report, there are significant funds still to be raised to meet five-year commitments including the planned expansion of the shelter network.

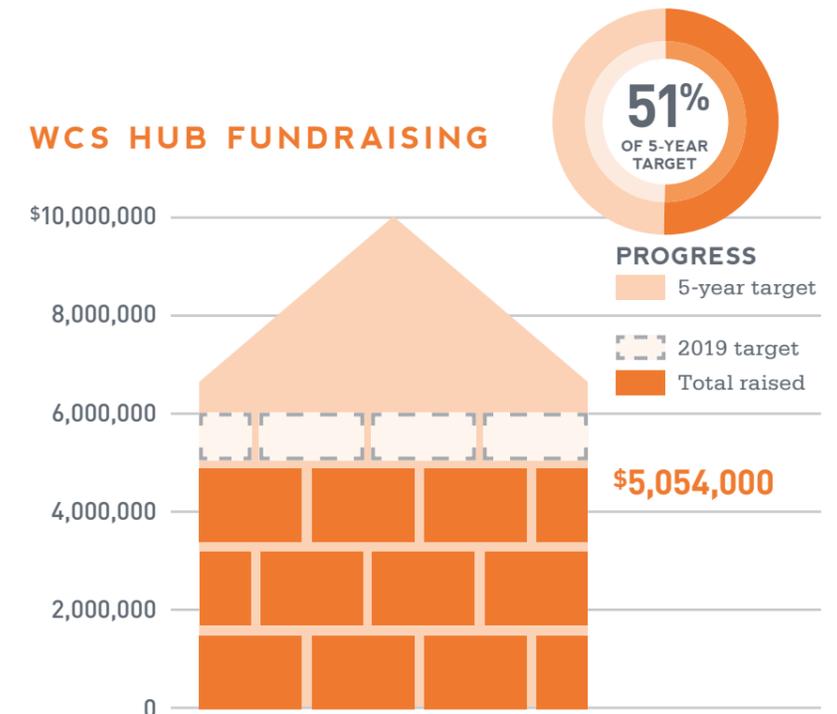
There remains a necessary focus for fundraising on the long term, to support the on-going work (and associated financial commitments) of WCS and its shelters as the network grows to meet community need from six shelters to up to 10 by 2020.

WCS Directors have declared the organisation can meet all commitments as they fall due in the audited financial report, which is available in full at the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission website acnc.gov.au via the Find a Charity function.

SHELTERS FUNDRAISING



WCS HUB FUNDRAISING



ACCOUNTABILITY

WOMEN'S COMMUNITY SHELTERS LIMITED

Public Benevolent Institution with DGR1 (Deductible Gift Recipient) Status

ACCOUNTANTS

Purpose Accounting
583 Elizabeth Street
Redfern NSW 2016

AUDITORS

SDJA Audit Specialists
PO Box 324
West Pennant Hills
NSW 2125

SOLICITORS

Hicksons Lawyers
Level 32, 2 Park Street
Sydney NSW 2000

OFFICE

125-127 Little Eveleigh Street
Redfern NSW 2016
m: 0432 630 359
t: 9539 6859

ABN: 54 153 006 556

ACN: 153 006 556

CONTACTS

For more information about the important work of WCS:

w: womenscommunityshelters.org.au

e: hello@womenscommunityshelters.org.au

m: 0432 630 359

t: 02 9539 6859

FB: WomensCommunityShelters

Twitter: @WCS_CEO

TO DONATE PLEASE VISIT:

WOMEN'S COMMUNITY SHELTERS

www.womenscommunityshelters.org.au/donate/



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COMMUNITY
SHELTERS**

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 hello@womenscommunityshelters.org.au

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 WomensCommunityShelters

 @WCS_CEO