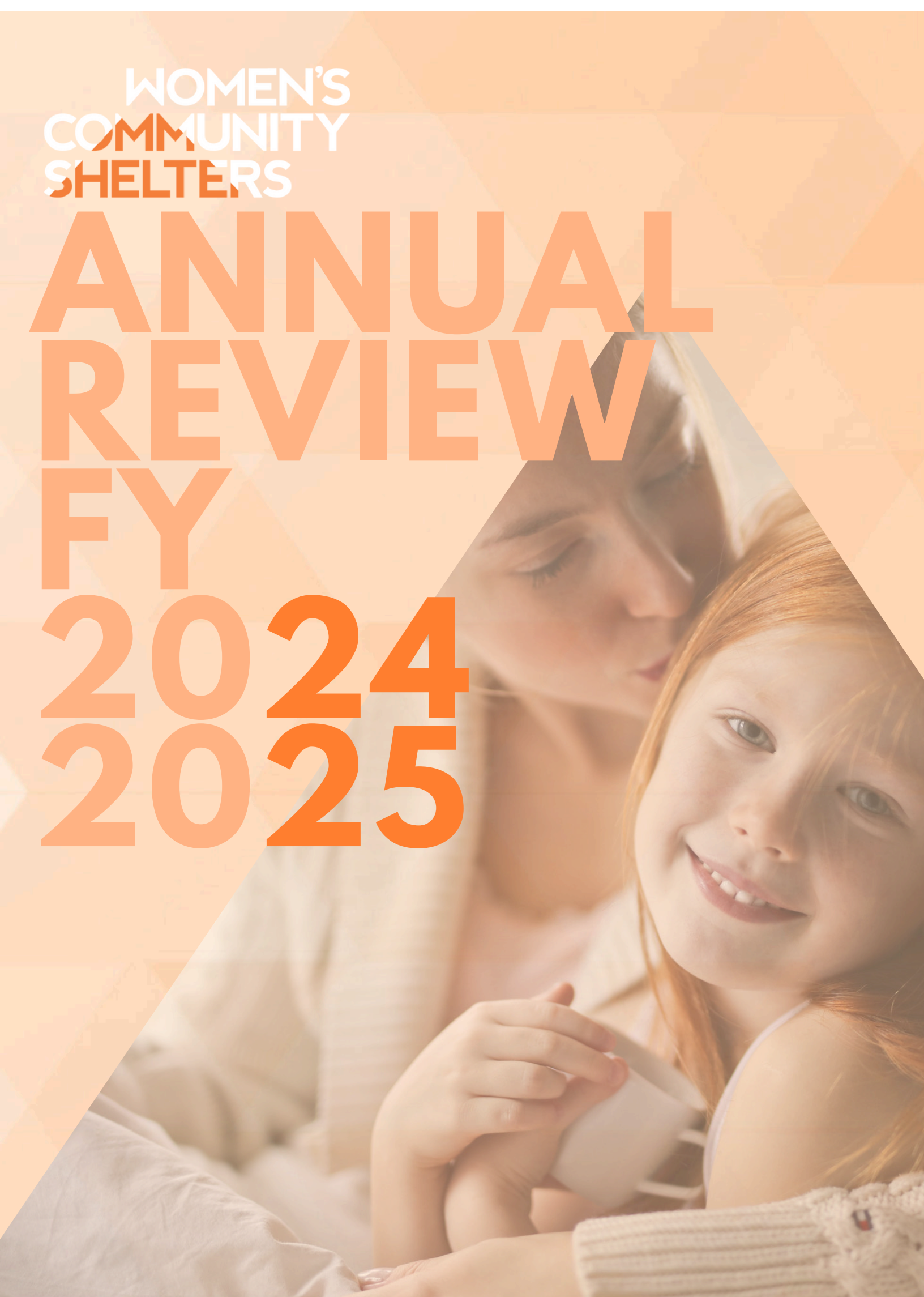


WOMEN'S
COMMUNITY
SHELTERS

ANNUAL REVIEW FY 2024 2025



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Women's Community Shelters acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters.

We pay our deepest respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all First Nations peoples.

We honour their strength, resilience, and enduring wisdom, recognising the deep and sacred connections to land, waters, and community connections that have existed for tens of thousands of years and continue to be unbroken.

In this spirit, Women's Community Shelters stands in solidarity with First Nations communities, honouring the courage and dignity of those who not only stand up and say no to violence but who take action to challenge it, holding perpetrators accountable.

We also pay our deepest respects to the mothers, children, sisters, cousins, and loved ones who have lost their lives at the hands of perpetrators. We honour their memory, holding them in our hearts as we continue our collective fight for justice and change.

We commit to working alongside First Nations peoples and all communities in creating a future where safety, dignity, and respect are a reality for all. We will continue to advocate for change so that those emerging may never need to question their safety, can live a life free from fear, and flourish.

Women's Community Shelters Collective Artwork *Our Hands Their Journey*

This painting holds the story of our women's work — the deep, quiet care that happens every day across our shelters and safe havens.

Each large circle on the canvas represents a shelter or a safe haven. These circles are like hearths, places of warmth and safety where women and children can step out of the storm and into a bit of calm. Around every circle, the dots and lines show how these spaces are connected — not just by services, but by people, by purpose, and by culture.

The U-shapes throughout the painting represent the women we serve. Some sit alone, some in pairs, some gathered close. They carry different colours, patterns, and stories — because no two journeys are the same. These U-shapes honour their presence, their resilience, and the way they meet us in trust, even in the hardest moments.

Surrounding all of this are the staff, represented by the painted hands. Our hands show how we hold these spaces — how we guard the doors, keep the lights on, and wrap our support around the women who walk with us. The hands aren't just decoration; they're a promise. A reminder that our work is hands-on, heart-first, and grounded in care.

Flowing gently through the centre are the five waterways of Sydney, painted in blue. These lines remind us that all of us — staff, women, families — are connected through Country. The rivers, creeks, and ocean have always carried women's stories, and they carry ours still. They guide us, cleanse us, and remind us to keep moving forward.

This artwork is Women's Community Shelters' story — a celebration of connection, community, and collective strength. A reminder that every woman who comes through our doors is held, honoured, and never alone.

Danielle Jolliffe, First Nations Partnerships and Outcomes Manager





CONTENTS

1	A Message From Our Patron	4
2	A Message From Our Chair	5
3	A Message From Our CEO	6
4	Who We Are	8
5	Our Focus Areas	9
6	Our Programs	10
7	Geographic Impact	12
8	Our Crisis Shelters	13
9	Crisis Shelters On The Horizon	23
10	Transitional Housing	24
11	Transitional Housing On The Horizon	28
12	Social And Affordable Housing	29
13	Advocacy	30
14	Walk The Talk	31
15	Client Outcomes And Wellbeing	34
16	Patrons And Board Of Directors	39
17	Reflections From The Senior Leadership Team ..	41
18	With Thanks	43
19	Financials	45

1. A MESSAGE FROM OUR PATRON



GOVERNMENT HOUSE
SYDNEY

Message from

Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC
Governor of New South Wales

I was delighted to grant Women’s Community Shelters Vice-Regal Patronage in March 2024 after engaging with the organisation on several occasions following a visit to their Parramatta shelter in 2019. Those engagements reinforced my understanding that the work of WCS was vital, with the demand for services increasing and the needs of many women and children escaping violence and experiencing homelessness, remaining unmet.

Since its establishment, 14 years ago, WCS has supported more than 8,600 women and children. In the period covered by this report alone the number of safe bed nights provided by the Shelter Network and housing projects is up 20% on the previous year’s figures with an additional 10% of shelter clients being transitioned into safe and secure housing. These are remarkable achievements, and yet, the confronting reality is that WCS cannot assist more than one in two women who reach out for help. Such is the immense and growing challenge of domestic and family violence in our communities.

The WCS response over this past year has been multifaceted, including a major expansion in the provision of shelters and services, advocacy work leading to significant reforms such as the criminalisation of coercive control and the ‘meanwhile use’ of properties for social and community housing, and education programs including Walk the Talk which saw more than 6,000 students from 36 schools participating this financial year, bringing the total reach of the program to over 22,000 young people since its launch.

Their response has not only been about scaling up support but doing so strategically to address emerging trends. Recognising that older women are the largest growing cohort of homeless people in Australia, WCS opened the doors to Tingira House in May this year, a ‘meanwhile use’ safe haven for 20 women aged 55+ in the Lake Macquarie region of NSW.

I commend this report to you, acknowledge and honour the courage of residents, and thank WCS board members, staff, volunteers, donors and supporters for your efforts to ensure women and their children are safe, secure, supported and equal.

Margaret Beazley
Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC
Governor of New South Wales



2. A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

INNOVATIVE IN OUR MISSION

Annual reviews are a wonderful opportunity to take a moment to reflect. As Chair of Women's Community Shelters (WCS), it is my privilege to present this report and recognise the tremendous commitment, dedication and impact that the whole WCS community has had over the last financial year.

2024/25 was another year of increased demand and an ever-changing landscape of needs. We have continued to move forward, adapting to these needs and remaining innovative in our mission to support women and children affected by homelessness, domestic and family violence.

We've experienced significant growth, not only expanding our existing service model and extending our work into Victoria, but also embracing the opportunity to move into social and affordable housing and purchasing a new building, Wentworthville House.

Co-funded by the NSW Government and WCS, along with our committed supporters and donors, the property enables us to build on our existing mission, offering long-term housing pathways for women and their children, and expanding our continuum of support and care. It's a move that signifies our maturing into a registered Community Housing Provider, and we are immensely grateful to the funders who made this possible.

And, while we celebrate our diversification of service and growth, we remain solidly committed to our core mission of providing crisis shelter and transitional housing for women and children escaping homelessness and domestic and family violence. It's a mission that we've been focused on for 14 years, alongside our many shelter boards, and it was wonderful to recognise the milestones of several of our shelters last year, with Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter reaching its 10th anniversary.

In Board news, I am delighted to welcome new members, Laura McMillan and Rachel Vincent. Laura steps into the role of Chair for the newly renamed Engagement Committee, following her previous work on our Fundraising Committee, while Rachel serves as Chair of the Property Committee, taking over from Paul Say, who has retired from his role on the WCS Board and Chair of the Property Committee.

Paul has been on the WCS journey since our early days and his years of contributions have significantly influenced our robust financial reporting, governance, and developments in property, all thanks to his guidance and clear thinking. On behalf of all Board members, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Paul and we wish him all the best.

2024/25 was also the year that founding member, Peter Hunt AM, a trailblazer in designing the pioneering social franchise model for WCS, retired from the Board after 14 years.

His foresight, innovative thinking, unwavering dedication and commitment to all the values that WCS holds so close, has been critical to our establishment, consistent growth and success. I have immense gratitude for his support for the entire WCS team and all our shelters, and of me in my role as Chair.

Peter remains connected to WCS in his role of Emeritus Patron, and he and his late wife, Ellie leave a legacy that will continue for years to come, transforming the lives of countless women and children.



Finally, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the wonderful support and commitment that all my colleagues on the WCS Board bring to their roles. Together with our talented staff, all have made contributions that have significant impact in our local communities. They walk alongside our wonderful community of donors, our Shelter Network Boards and staff and together inspire collective action and demonstrate dedication to ensuring that all women and children have a safe place to live. We are truly grateful.

I am excited by the opportunities ahead of us and know that together, we will continue to do all that we can for those who need us most.

Thank you for being with us on this journey.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie White".

Julie White
Chair, Women's Community Shelters



3. A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

A RECORD NUMBER OF SAFE BED NIGHTS

I am delighted to present the Women's Community Shelters' 2024/5 FY Annual Review.

I'd like to begin by recognising the extraordinary efforts of the people who make up the WCS Shelter Network and our WCS Hub Board and team this year. Our alignment to mission has never been more evident across the span of our work. Critically, this year we developed our WCS Strategic Directions 2025-2030, a significant investment in planning for our next five years and what we will work to achieve. Our Strategic Directions document represents months of collaborative effort and a reframing of how we think about what WCS does, yet still with our Shelter Network, and engagement with communities, at the heart of our work.

In 2024/25 we marked a record number of safe bed nights provided by the WCS Shelter Network and our housing projects - up 20% on the previous year. I am so grateful for a team and network that put their hearts, their hands and their significant efforts into delivering life-saving support for women and children.

This year, we've seen the needs of the women and children we support becoming more complex, and the length of time and the intensity of case-work required is changing. What's clear is that we remain dedicated to helping our residents achieve their goals, not just in addressing their immediate crises, but in our long-term commitment to creating safe and sustainable outcomes, including housing and meaningful recovery for all those we serve.

As the national conversation continues to shine a light on housing availability and affordability, we have placed increased focus on seizing opportunities to expand our housing solutions. Despite the backdrop of a housing crisis, the WCS Shelter Network increased safe housing outcomes for women and children following their shelter stay by 10%. The WCS Hub has further stepped up to the challenge, opening Tingira House in the Lake Macquarie region to provide safe transitional housing for up to 28 older women, and using our recent registration as a Community Housing Provider to open our own 10-unit block of social and affordable housing in Wentworthville, NSW.

This year, we took strides in deepening our existing commitment to providing culturally responsive, trauma-informed support and care for First Nations women and children across our network and projects through the appointment of a First Nations Partnerships and Outcomes Manager. Ensuring we have a First Nations lens over all our work is not optional – it is essential, not just for the women and children we assist, but as part of the daily and ongoing work towards practical reconciliation in Australia.

Across our network this year, we sadly saw an increase in the number of women at 'serious threat' of homicide based on NSW Police Risk Assessment tools. This highlights that the need for our services remains critical, and our ability to grow our education and prevention programs is key to interrupting the cycles of violence within communities.

Our work with schools to deliver the Walk the Talk respectful relationships and service learning program has joyfully increased thanks to additional philanthropic investment, and our goal is to deliver the program in even more locations in the coming years. Walk the Talk educates and activates teenagers in a meaningful way that moves beyond theory and token gestures and into purposeful, informed action. We were delighted to welcome students and dignitaries to our 2024 Walk the Talk Awards at NSW Parliament House, and celebrate the achievement of students and schools in support of their local shelters.

My words here represent only a few of the key highlights of 2024/25. Amongst these larger achievements, there have been so many others – advocacy wins, law reform in NSW and beyond, partnerships supporting housing pathways, and shelters celebrating milestones and opening subsidiary services. These are the sustaining victories which keep us optimistic against the scale of the work that is required of us to build the Australia we envision – where women and children flourish, free from abuse.


In closing, I wish to say a huge and heartfelt thank you to our donors, Government funders and partners who enable our work, our growth and our impact. As I am fond of saying, there is nothing better than working with great people to achieve good things. My sincere thanks go to everyone who has played a part in the success of WCS and our network 2024/25. Long may we work together!

With kind regards,



Annabelle Daniel OAM
CEO, Women's Community Shelters



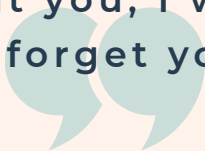


The day I arrived I was a broken, humiliated and demoralised person. I had been through so much. The experiences I endured prior to becoming homeless were not ideal for living. I tried to opt out of life. Homelessness can happen to anyone at any time. By the time I came to Shelter I had no faith in humanity whatsoever.

I don't know how the team did it but they helped me to become a strong and independent woman. They treated me with kindness, compassion and most importantly respect. Every caseworker (I call them care workers) has a special place in my heart. I felt safe and secure. I had an exit form to fill out and one of the questions asked if there was any way to improve the service. Honestly, I couldn't think of a single thing. I wrote this on the second night in my new apartment.

I went from homeless to hopeful in ten weeks all because of their help, support and caring natures. I couldn't have done this without them.

You gave me another life. Without you, I would not be where I am today. I will never forget your kindness.



Former resident,
Hornsby Kur-ring-gai Women's Shelter

4. WHO WE ARE

WHY

A world where every woman and child flourishes and lives free from abuse.

WHAT

We break the cycle of domestic abuse by transforming communities from within.

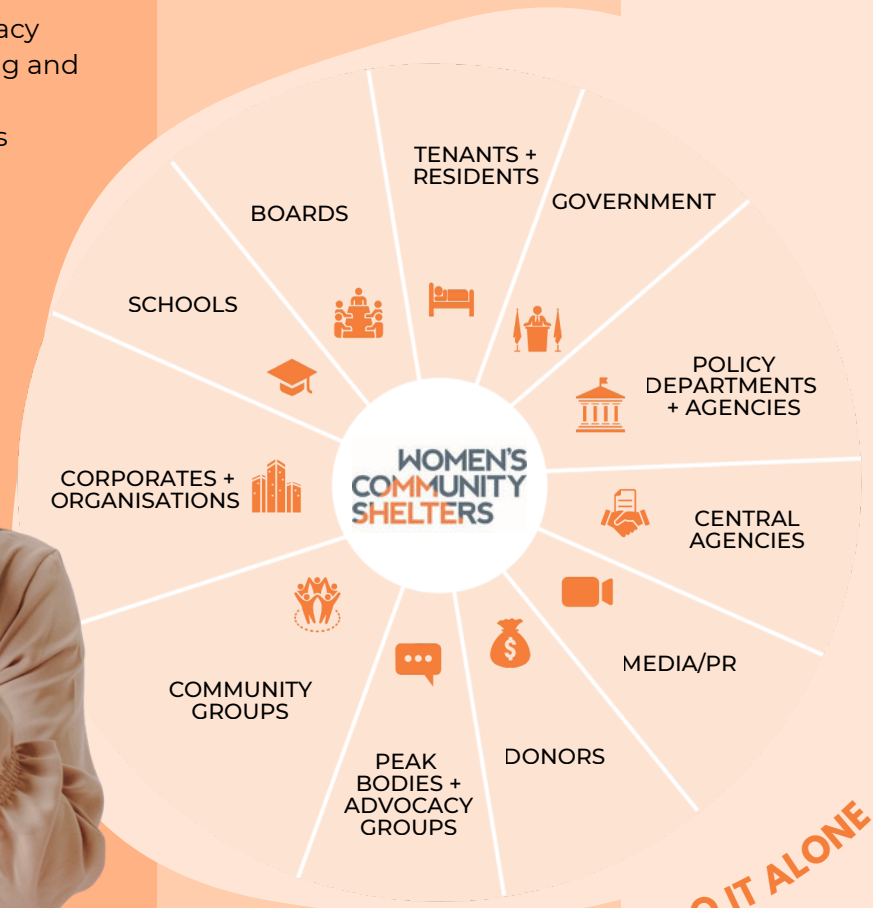
HOW

We empower communities to:

- Stop violence before it takes root
- Recognise and address early warning signs
- Provide immediate crisis support
- Guide healing and recovery

Through concrete action:

- Create safe havens and sustainable housing solutions
- Deliver transformative education programs
- Lead strategic systems advocacy
- Develop local capacity building and leadership
- Incubate and lead innovations



WE DON'T DO IT ALONE



5. OUR FOCUS AREAS



PERSONAL RECOVERY (Housing)

We create places where safety begins and recovery takes root – housing that offers not just shelter, but dignity, stability and a foundation for long-term healing.



SOCIAL INFLUENCE (Education)

We educate to shift societal norms – equipping students, professionals, leaders and institutions with the insight and tools to recognise harm and act to prevent it.



A MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE (Engagement)

We mobilise people and communities to take collective action – transforming passive support into active ownership of the mission.



SCALABLE INNOVATION (Operations)

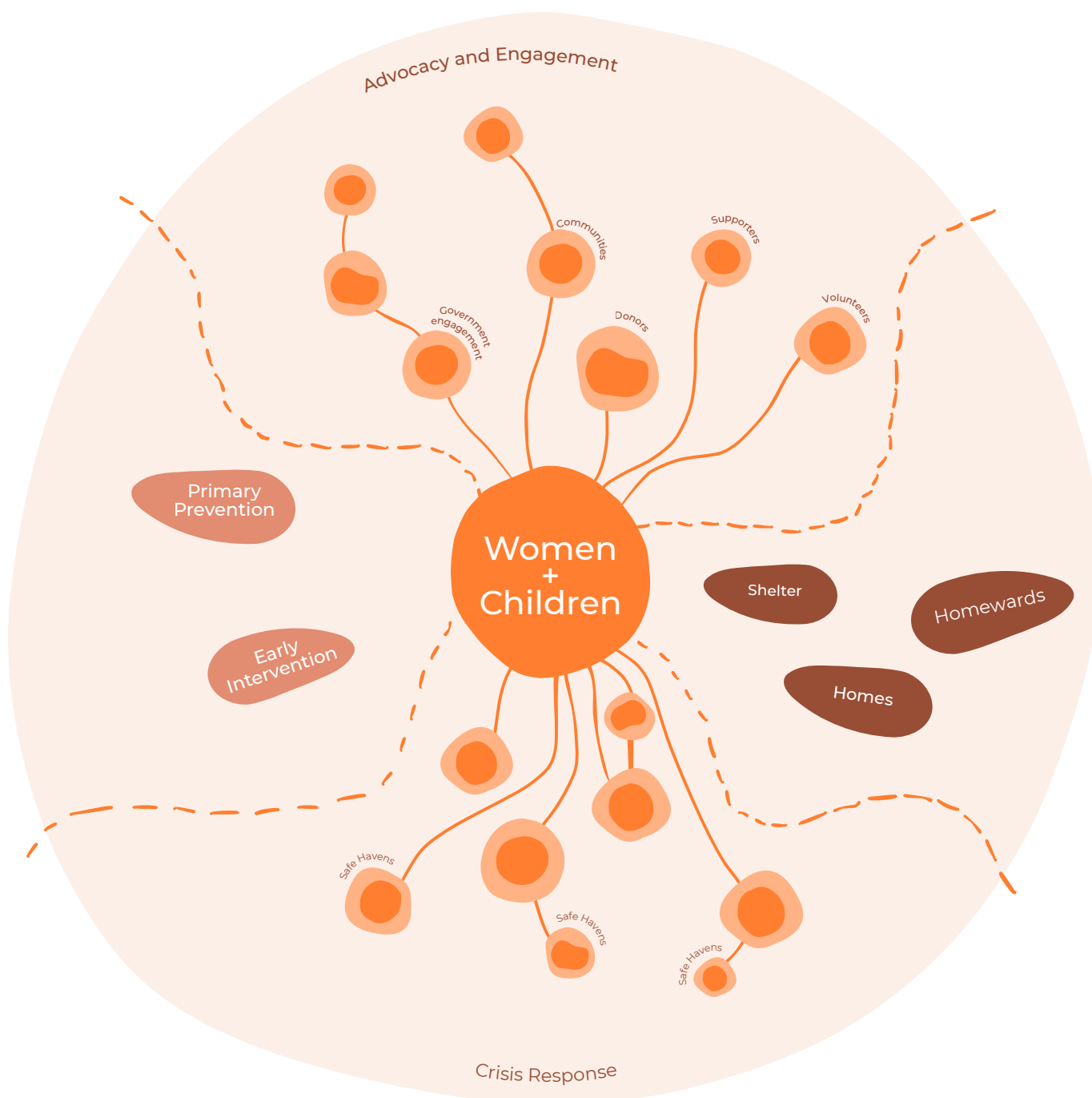
We build a future proofed organisation that ensures every effort we make can go further, faster and with lasting impact.

6. OUR PROGRAMS

Domestic and family violence (DFV) is the leading cause of homelessness for women and children in Australia, impacting 54,000 women every night (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021). It transcends geographic, cultural and socio-economic boundaries, and is on the rise.

Women's Community Shelters' (WCS) purpose is to help build a world where every woman and child flourishes and lives free from abuse. We are dedicated to breaking the cycle of domestic abuse by transforming communities from within - empowering communities to prevent and respond to DFV through practical, concrete action for lasting change. Achieving this takes more than shelter, so we provide specialised and ongoing wrap-around support such as counselling, healthcare, legal aid, education, employment and help with navigating systems.

Over the last 14 years, our network has directly supported over 8,400 women and children through early intervention, prevention, education, crisis and transitional accommodation, outreach and recovery, and advocacy. We support women of all ages, at all stages of their journey, and their accompanying children.



OUR PROGRAMS



Crisis Shelters

WCS has worked with local communities to open 11 shelters. We provide safe accommodation along with critical wrap-around support services, including access to health care, counselling, legal help, child support, and pathways to education, training and employment.

Empowering local communities is the key to lasting change. We operate under an innovative social franchise model, partnering with local communities to support them in establishing and operating crisis accommodation and services. This includes everything from set-up and support with funding, to access to shared resources and operational guidance.

Each shelter operates independently, led by a local board and community volunteers, ensuring critical community engagement. This proven model allows shelters to be responsive to local needs with the support and guidance of WCS, ensuring quality and consistency across all service delivery.



Transitional Housing

Our innovative program of 'meanwhile use' housing partners with developers and landlords to repurpose vacant properties to provide immediate transitional housing solutions for women who are no longer in crisis but are yet to secure a permanent, affordable home. We operate five large-scale homes for women aged 55+, who are tragically, the fastest growing cohort of homeless people in Australia.



Social and Affordable Housing

We are creating new social and affordable homes specifically for women and their children who have experienced DFV, and we are proud to have opened our first property in Wentworthville, NSW, this year. This program provides long-term housing solutions with tailored case management support, helping residents heal from trauma and build a pathway toward independence.



Primary Prevention

Our Walk the Talk High Schools program has reached over 22,000 students since its launch, educating them about DFV and promoting respectful, healthy relationships through connection with our Shelter Network. We also run a corporate education program, Walk the Talk Corporate, and a corporate team building program 'Allies in Action', to increase community awareness and understanding of DFV.

IMAGE: Tingira House. Lake Macquarie
Photo by Temple & Webster



7. GEOGRAPHIC IMPACT

OUR SAFE HAVENS IN NSW + VIC

- CRISIS SHELTERS
- TRANSITIONAL HOUSING
- PROPERTIES IN PROGRESS
- SOCIAL + AFFORDABLE HOUSING



8. OUR CRISIS SHELTERS

CELEBRATING SUCCESSES

Every one of our shelters provides a safe haven for women and children through crisis and recovery, to the moment they open the door of their forever home.

Each community-led team understands the complex needs of their residents, and responds with integrity, care and compassion. Here we spotlight some recent successes and milestones, and thank our Shelter teams for their ongoing dedication.

You turned a house into a home for us all! Thank you for all you have done and continue to do"

**Former resident,
Parramatta Women's Shelter**

OUR CRISIS SHELTERS

CELEBRATING SUCCESSES

Northern Beaches Women's Shelter (est. 2010)



A New Beginning

In 2024/25, the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter (NBWS) became a graduate of the WCS network, operating independently in its mission to support women and children experiencing homelessness and domestic and family violence in the region.

"Over the last ten years, the team has built enormous strength and capacity in the community, demonstrating excellence in their governance and fundraising."

We are proud to have been a part of their journey, and we look forward to continuing to work together, as part of the broader sector, to support women and children experiencing homelessness and domestic and family violence in the Northern Beaches community and beyond.

We wish them all the very best in this next chapter and thank them for playing a crucial role in the history and growth of WCS. Their role as a founding partner leaves a huge legacy, and one we will honour and remember as we move forward."


Julie White, WCS Chair



OUR CRISIS SHELTERS

CELEBRATING SUCCESSES

Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter (est. 2015)

 **Women's Shelter** Celebrating 10 years of making a difference

In 2025, the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter (HKWS) and its community celebrated an exciting milestone - its 10th anniversary.

Celebrating a milestone such as this warrants celebrations, and there have been several!

On International Women's Day, a 10th anniversary lunch was held at Pymble Golf Club. It was a true community celebration and an opportunity to recognise the original group of men and women who worked hard to establish the shelter, many of whom are still active supporters. It was also an opportunity to acknowledge the strength of the many women who have sought sanctuary and rebuilt their lives thanks to the shelter. In September, HKWS celebrated its 10th Anniversary Gala event at the beautiful Sergeants Mess in Mosman. The team also welcomed HKWS founders to a special 10th anniversary morning tea, hosted by our longstanding volunteer and supporter, Jo Moffat and the current Board. It was a moment to reconnect, share memories and acknowledge the people who dedicated their time to getting the shelter up and running a decade ago.

HKWS is a shining example of what's possible when a community unites to confront one of Australia's most urgent and complex issues. WCS is absolutely delighted that in its 10th year, HKWS received external recognition for its incredible efforts including the Ku-ring-gai Council Mayor's Award for an Outstanding Contribution by a Community Group and our Board Chair, Catherine Knox, received the Wahroonga Women of the Year award.

During the year, HKWS also announced a new Wellbeing Hub, developed in partnership with Westfield Hornsby and made possible through generous philanthropic support. It will provide a range of services for women and children in the local area, including healthcare, employment, financial wellbeing, legal support, casework and safety planning.



IMAGE: Members of our dedicated HKWS Board and Team.

I'm so grateful to Hornsby Shelter because it has provided me with a safe place and protected me from DV when I was in so much fear and terrified.

**Former resident,
Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter**

OUR CRISIS SHELTERS

CELEBRATING SUCCESSES

Great Lakes Womens Shelter (est. 2016)



GREAT LAKES
Womens
Shelter

A New Outreach Program

WCS's outreach programs support women and children before they reach a point of crisis and need shelter support, and after they have spent time in a WCS crisis shelter and are transitioning to independent living.

The team at Great Lakes Women's Shelter (Forster-Tuncurry NSW) have taken this program to new heights.

In October 2024, specific NSW Government funding support has enabled a new Outreach Case Worker position. So far, over 70 women across three LGAs in the region have received access to this vital support. Work has ranged from short-term engagements to more extensive, ongoing assistance, such as connecting families with mental and physical health services and employment opportunities - all tailored to meet individual needs.

The aim with this new role is to build and strengthen community connections, creating safe spaces where women and children can speak freely and access the services they need.

By continuing to empower these individuals, we not only help them find immediate solutions but also contribute to building a more resilient and supportive community.



IMAGES: Shelter Life at Great Lakes Womens Shelter

OUR CRISIS SHELTERS

CELEBRATING SUCCESSES

The Sanctuary - The Hills Women's Shelter (est. 2016)



The Power Of Advocacy And Support

Behind every success story there is a long, and often difficult journey to safety and security. In this Q&A with Shelter Manager Brigitte, we get a snapshot of the complex needs of shelter clients, and how advocacy and access to the right services can help women and children rebuild their lives.

Brigitte's team at The Sanctuary were contacted by a local school after a family shared that it was not safe for them to return to their home. It quickly became clear that the family had a number of challenges that would require a range of support services.

Can you describe the main challenges the family presented when they first arrived?

Mum had experienced physical and psychological abuse at the hands of her partner and his parents.

Both children had high level challenging behaviours that made it difficult for them to reside within a communal living environment.

Mum hadn't engaged with specialist services as her partner denied the children's needs, so she had received no help in developing behavioural support strategies for her children and she could no longer cope with the demands of caring for them.

What specific support was most important in addressing the family's needs?

Mum's priority was secure safe long-term accommodation. The children also needed a medical and clinical assessment in order to access specialist support services, such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The team supported Mum to establish a repayment plan with NSW Housing to repay her debt and be eligible for Housing Assistance. An application for Priority Housing was submitted and although initially declined, after an appeal of the decision, Mum was approved for Priority Housing.

Mum also received support to strengthen her skills in caring for the children's health and wellbeing, and daily care needs.

Can you describe a turning point?

The team's advocacy for the family to join the NSW Housing waitlist gave Mum a light at the end of the tunnel and allowed her to start putting plans in place for a more hopeful future. Happily, Mum then received an offer of social housing and was able to move into her own long-term accommodation.

Engagement with specialist children's services provided Mum with the opportunity to deepen her awareness of the children's conditions and the support services she was eligible for.

During her stay, Mum identified that she wanted to enrol in studies and was later accepted into an online TAFE course and commenced part time studies, with the hope of returning to work when her youngest child starts school.

How would you summarise the outcome for the family?

Although the team had reservations regarding the family's suitability for a communal shelter environment, the continuous presence of caseworkers proved beneficial. Their support enabled effective strategies to be implemented, helping to reduce the risk of harm to the children and enhancing Mum's awareness and ability to manage challenging behaviours.

Through strong advocacy, the team successfully secured stable long-term accommodation, which proved pivotal in engaging essential support services.

IMAGE: Family bedroom at The Sanctuary



OUR CRISIS SHELTERS

CELEBRATING SUCCESSES

The Haven - Nepean Women's Shelter (est. 2018)



Haven Horizons - Building Hope And Resilience

In March 2025, the Haven - Nepean Women's Shelter launched Haven Horizons - a program designed to bridge critical gaps in access to affordable and trauma-informed therapeutic services for children impacted by DFV and homelessness.

The focus is on children aged 0-13, with psychological services extending up to age 16. Through the program, the team provides free onsite access to a range of vital services, including psychology, speech pathology, occupational therapy, art therapy and music therapy.

Through art and music therapy, children are encouraged to use their creativity while talking through their feelings. Age-appropriate psychology services give children the space to discuss areas of their lives they may feel unsure about, and build skills to develop their resilience, emotional regulation and relationships.

All services offered to families are completely free of charge, ensuring equity and accessibility for those in need without any eligibility barriers.

In just a few months, Haven Horizons has proven that early and coordinated therapeutic interventions can significantly alter recovery pathways for children coping with trauma. Families are already reporting significant improvements in their children's emotional regulation, communication skills, and school readiness. Mothers have also shared that they feel more confident in addressing their children's emotional needs. By building trust, resilience, and stability, the program is not only reshaping individual futures but also laying the groundwork for stronger family bonds and breaking the intergenerational cycles of violence and disadvantage.

Together, the team is building hope, healing, and resilience, one child at a time.



IMAGES: Shelter life at The Haven

OUR CRISIS SHELTERS

CELEBRATING SUCCESSES

Bayside Women's Shelter (est. 2018)



Opening The Doors Of Jacaranda Women's Hub

In June 2025, the Jacaranda Women's Hub officially opened its doors in South East Sydney. Developed by Bayside Women's Shelter, this community-driven initiative will serve as a one-stop-shop for essential services, including counselling, legal assistance, financial support, and creative classes, as well as cultural programs tailored for First Nations women.

The Hub is a soft entry point for women discreetly seeking support, ensuring that those affected by DFV can access crucial services in a compassionate and respectful environment. The focused approach will allow the team to privately address the specific needs of these women, while offering a continuum of care that promotes healing and recovery.

The idea for the Hub began in 2022 during a strategic planning session at Bayside Women's Shelter. Recognising the need for early intervention and community education, the Board imagined a space where women could come together for support and empowerment. After extensive collaboration with local communities, input from Indigenous leaders, and securing philanthropic funding, the Jacaranda Women's Hub came to life.

The Hub will offer a variety of weekly programs, including a playgroup, local talks aimed at building community connection, and the newly launched Jacaranda Women's Circle, where participants can take part in health discussions and mindfulness activities.

By creating a supportive environment, Jacaranda Women's Hub is not only changing individual lives but also providing hope and healing for all women in the region.



IMAGE: Jacaranda Women's Hub



IMAGE: Members of our dedicated Bayside Board and Team

OUR CRISIS SHELTERS

CELEBRATING SUCCESSES

Parramatta Women's Shelter (est. 2019)



Celebrating A Year Of Core + Cluster

In March 2024, Parramatta Women's Shelter proudly opened 'Waratah House' in Guilford. After just one year of operation, the new site has become a trusted and respected part of the Cumberland LGA, exemplifying best practice in crisis accommodation and holistic recovery support for women and children.

It's a three-way partnership between WCS, the NSW Government and Evolve Housing Limited, which as a Tier 1 Community Housing Provider, manages all aspects of property renovations, and ongoing maintenance.

The Core and Cluster model is designed to support vulnerable families by providing self-contained accommodation units, referred to as "clusters," situated near communal facilities, known as the "core." This setup fosters a safe environment where families can access essential services, including counselling, legal assistance, education, employment support, and dedicated child-friendly spaces, allowing them to maintain personal space and daily routines while receiving help. The shelter team has also established an after-school and school holiday program making an incredible difference for children experiencing the aftershocks of trauma.

Since opening, the shelter has supported 148 clients, 82 of which were accommodated in the shelter, 36 women and children have accessed outreach services, and almost 80% of those exiting the shelter transitioned into safe and secure housing.

The success of Waratah House demonstrates the effectiveness of the Core and Cluster model and highlights the need for continued investment in similar services across the region to meet growing demand.

In just one year, the shelter team has achieved exceptional results. Their success in helping clients move into safe and secure housing is among the best we've seen, and we commend their incredible impact on women and children in the area.

**Annabelle Daniel OAM,
WCS CEO**



IMAGE: Waratah House, Guilford.
Photo: Temple & Webster

OUR CRISIS SHELTERS

CELEBRATING SUCCESSES

Biyani House - Revesby Women's Shelter (est. 2021)



Innovative Modular Housing Renovation

We are delighted to be working with Biyani House - Revesby Women's Shelter on a significant enhancement to its crisis shelter offering.

Two separate projects are underway - the renovation of the existing shelter, and the addition of four new independent modular units in the backyard, which will provide safety and support to six women and their children at any one time.

These urgently needed new safe havens will significantly enhance on-site service provision and demonstrate the first use-case of modular buildings for crisis shelter care in Greater Sydney.

They are environmentally sustainable, fast to build and high quality, making them a smart, efficient solution to help address the dual housing and homelessness crisis in NSW, which heavily impacts women escaping violence.

"There's overwhelming demand for crisis accommodation in Southwest Sydney. We are really excited that soon we will be able to welcome more women and children to our shelter and give them a safe and private space when they need it the most" says Lisa Annabel, CEO of Biyani House - Revesby Women's Shelter.

This innovative modular approach is being made possible by \$2.4 million in NSW Government Core and Cluster funding secured by WCS.

The build process has been aided by an incredible group of project partners and community champions led by the Biyani House Board. Special thanks to Biyani Chair, Deb Sarkar, whose expertise as an architect was instrumental in the design of the units.



IMAGES: Visualisation of modular interiors: Das Studio

OUR CRISIS SHELTERS

CELEBRATING SUCCESSES

Blue Wren House - Camden Women's Shelter (est. 2021)



Welcome To 'Dianella Cottage'

Sadly, demand for support in the Camden area reached new heights last year. At times throughout the year, nine out of ten women who reached out for help had to be turned away. Then, in late 2024, a very generous donor stepped in to help.

'Blue Wren House', which has been supporting women and children in Camden since 2023, will now be joined by 'Dianella Cottage', thanks to the donor's support.

This new property, available for 36 months, will provide additional beds for single women in need of a safe place to stay.

The Board is now exploring a range of options to secure a permanent second site so they can continue to meet demand and support the local community now and in the future.



My time spent at Blue Wren House was positive. I felt safe and comfortable. Having staff around gave me a sense of relief and reassurance that I was now safe.

Former resident, Blue Wren House - Camden Women's Shelter



IMAGE: Dianella Cottage

9. CRISIS SHELTERS ON THE HORIZON

2025/2026

A New Crisis Shelter In Liverpool LGA To Support Up To Five Families In Need

In partnership with the Liverpool community, WCS is transforming a property generously donated by Homes NSW for crisis accommodation. At a community forum in May, over 70 residents came together to share their support and join WCS in making this vision a reality.

"We were humbled by the outpouring of support from the community. Teams of dedicated volunteers offered to help revitalise the shelter through deep cleaning, garden improvements, room setups, and new whitegoods" says Neesha Eckersley, WCS COO.

The Liverpool shelter will operate under the WCS social franchise model, and with a Liverpool Steering Committee established, WCS is working closely with the committee to get the governance structures for Liverpool Women's Shelter set up. In a beautiful act of solidarity, Camden Women's Shelter has offered to manage this shelter in its early stages, while the Liverpool community mobilises and prepares to take the reins next year. This generosity is deeply appreciated and reflects the spirit of collaboration and kindness at the heart of our network.

Responding To An Urgent Need In The Southern Highlands

We are seeing an increasing need to support women and children in the Southern Highlands, NSW, and we are pleased to share that plans are in motion for a new, purpose-built shelter in the region, due to open in late 2026.

The development will create four self-contained two-bedroom units, with space for on-site case management support services, to help women and their children rebuild their lives.

"We are grateful to Hume Housing who secured this NSW Government funding to purpose-build a crisis shelter which will be a crucial resource for so many in the surrounding area, who may otherwise have had to leave their local community to find safety." WCS CEO Annabelle Daniel OAM.

Community Led Expansion - Introducing Moonah House

Every night, over 350 women on the Mornington Peninsula, Victoria, the region now recording the highest levels of rough sleeping in the state — are forced to couch surf, sleep in cars, or endure rough sleeping as demand for social and affordable housing continues to escalate. WCS and a dedicated community-led team are aiming to change that. In late 2024, a new not-for-profit entity 'Moonah House' was formally established in Victoria, as the first community-led crisis shelter for women and children in the region.

We extend our gratitude to the Australian Government's Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF) for its capital investment in Moonah House. We are actively scoping potential locations to bring this new shelter to life, and we look forward to sharing the happy news that the shelter's doors are open.

We hope Moonah House will serve as a blueprint to expand WCS's services across Victoria, to support more women and children in need.

10. TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

TURNING VACANT PROPERTIES INTO SAFE HAVENS

The 2021 Census recorded 1 million unoccupied residential dwellings. At WCS, we harness the potential of vacant or underutilised properties to help address urgent housing needs through immediate and pragmatic action, giving hope and stability to women and children during periods of vulnerability.

The WCS 'meanwhile use' program provides transitional housing, particularly for women over the age of 55, who are the fastest growing cohort of homeless people in the country. This transitional accommodation is typically for 6 – 24 months while they are supported to find secure, permanent, affordable housing.

The aim is to prevent re-entry into homelessness or the return to an unsafe home, and 80% of residents from WCS' 'meanwhile use' properties move directly into their own affordable, long-term forever home.

Introducing Tingira House For Older Women

In May 2025, WCS opened the doors to Tingira House, a new 'meanwhile use' safe haven for 20 women aged 55+ in the Lake Macquarie region of NSW.

Taking a vacant aged care facility, WCS coordinated with multiple partners to transform the property into accommodation that will see over 100 women supported over the next five years.

It was opened by The Hon. Jodie Harrison, MP, Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

Tingira House is WCS's fifth 'meanwhile use' property for older women, bringing the number of women over 55 who are provided with safety and support every night to more than 70.

"We couldn't do this without our partners who share our vision. We are incredibly grateful to Anglicare Newcastle, which owns the property, the NSW Government for providing the refurbishment funding, our wonderful property managers, Pacific Link Community Housing, Temple and Webster, who ensure we can provide quality furnishings for the bedrooms and shared living space that make it feel like home, and to our community of donors for championing this critical work" says WCS CEO Annabelle Daniel OAM.

Life is peaceful here with ample time to regroup and discover oneself again amid the warmth and friendliness of the ladies residing here. Each one with a dynamic all of their own. One only has one life. "Get After It"

Tingira House Resident



IMAGE: Tingira House, Lake Macquarie
Photo Temple & Webster

Jan is a former resident of Allawah House, East Gosford. Jan worked for 49 years as a primary school teacher, she had a secure home and single-handedly raised four children. But at 81 years of age, she became homeless as a result of family breakdown.

“It was a real unknown, I didn’t know where I was going to be, it was a very, very difficult time. We all want to be respected and have dignity and I think you lose a lot of that when you’re about to lose your house. Once I was [at Allawah House] I met the other residents. They're all very different, from all walks of life, all different ages. We all had our stories ... and it's the same thing, all totally unexpected.”

There were no affordable rental options for Jan and her stay at Allawah House was the lifeline she needed. Women’s Community Shelters case managers were able to help Jan secure long-term safe housing, and she is now happily living in her ‘forever home’.

Jan joined us at the launch of Tingira House where she shared her story to advocate for more services for women just like her.

Jan, Former Allawah House resident



IMAGE: Jan at the launch of Tingira House
Photo by Temple & Webster

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

TURNING VACANT PROPERTIES INTO SAFE HAVENS

Digital Literacy And Wellbeing For Beecroft House Residents

Beecroft House on Sydney's Upper North Shore, provides safe transitional housing for 20 older women. The property has been made possible following the repurposing of an empty aged care facility owned by Twilight Aged Care. It is a nurturing environment where women can stabilise their lives and connect with permanent housing solutions.

Recognising the rapid changes in technology and the increasing need to have a competent level of digital literacy, the team has delivered fortnightly internet and IT classes, supported by our Housing Partner Link Wentworth. The sessions have empowered residents with essential digital skills, focusing on digital safety and scam awareness as well as the effective use of government apps.

Nourishment and wellbeing have also been key focuses, with support from local food suppliers and regular art sessions. Thanks to the local community for your generous food donations and support.

Funding Boost Extends Allawah House Support

In 2022, WCS opened Allawah House in East Gosford - a formerly disused aged care facility that was transformed into a 14-unit home for women, aged 55 and over. The tenancy, which was due to end in 2025, has been extended to May 2026, thanks to funding from the NSW Government, ensuring that we can continue to support women in the community for an extra 12 months.

"Allawah House has become a much-loved part of the East Gosford community. Residents receive support through an on-site case worker to work towards their personal goals and access public and community housing – support that many didn't even realise they were eligible for," says Jen Dixon, WCS's Director of Housing.

"The additional funding enables us to cover the costs of rent and the case management services required, allowing us to maintain our support and address a significant need on the NSW Central Coast."

"I feel free. I feel released from the turmoil that I was in before. And I've had a chance to really recover myself, and find myself"

Former Beecroft House Resident



IMAGE: Zanny, Meanwhile Use Caseworker at Beecroft House celebrations

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

TURNING VACANT PROPERTIES INTO SAFE HAVENS

Celebrating Friendships, Resilience And Strength At Mosman House

As Mosman House celebrates five years of operations supporting older women, Robyn - Meanwhile Use Caseworker at Mosman House says, *"It has been my absolute privilege to walk beside the residents of Mosman House. One of the joys and learnings of the program is that we have the opportunity in transitional accommodation to create both a connection with community and a community within."*

Mosman House has been filled with experiences that enhance positive friendships and an increased sense of belonging and engagement this year, many of which are made possible thanks to volunteers.

On International Women's Day, the community at Mosman House came together to mark the day, honouring the strength and resilience of the residents. The day was filled with joy from a range of activities, including performances from local artists.

A magnificent group art project was undertaken, called *No Place like Home*. The work in acrylics displayed the journeys of the women, each represented by their favourite flower, bursting with colour and flourishing.

Health and wellbeing has also been a big focus this year, with financial counselling, grief counselling, free eye checks, haircuts and stylings, and local outings, all thanks to the generous support of the local community.

"I am touched that these homes are there for people who need them. This makes me feel supported and very grateful that people care."

Former Mosman House resident



11. TRANSITIONAL HOUSING ON THE HORIZON

Increasing Housing And Support For Older Women In Glenfield

WCS is transforming an empty aged care property into safe and welcoming housing for older women experiencing homelessness in Glenfield, southwestern Sydney. This is a big project that will support 28 women over the age of 55 every night, and we are pleased to be working collaboratively with a number of corporate and community partners to bring it to life.

A Collaborative Effort Extending Support In Sydney's Inner West

The Inner West Project stands as a landmark example of WCS's 'meanwhile use' housing initiatives. As part of the largest project of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere, WCS will provide safe and supported housing for up to 50 women and children each night. Importantly, this project marks the first time we will offer dedicated accommodation for transgender women, reinforcing our commitment to inclusive and equitable housing solutions.

WCS also plans to launch a Community Support Hub to deliver vital local services - including case management, mental health care, skills training, legal support, and housing pathways. This will be the first time WCS has offered this service for women and children in the community, needing our specialist DFV support.

12. SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Introducing Wentworthville House

Responding to the ongoing housing crisis in Australia, WCS has purchased 'Wentworthville House,' a new property that will provide social and affordable housing specifically for women and children.

The purchase marks a significant expansion of WCS's services and addresses the dual crises of limited housing availability and the pressing need for more support systems for those affected by DFV.

Co-funded by the NSW Government's Community Housing Innovation Fund – Domestic and Family Violence (CHIF – DFV), along with generous donations from George & Mary Beswick Fund and Lendlease FutureSteps, Wentworthville House provides ten new high-quality homes for women and their children who have experienced DFV,

It's a natural evolution in the growth of WCS, now a registered Community Housing Provider (CHP), which opens up a whole new avenue for future expansion in line with growing demand and need. WCS will take referrals for residents from its network of crisis shelters and transitional properties in the first instance, and then from the broader sector and community.

"Addressing homelessness for women and children requires more than temporary solutions; we need to create pathways to long-term, secure housing without which women can be forced to return to unsafe environments or live in precarious situations. We aim to eliminate this impossible choice by providing safe, affordable long-term homes," says WCS CEO, Annabelle Daniel OAM.

Wentworthville House comprises five social housing units and five affordable housing units, but this is more than just a safe place to live. In addition to housing, residents will benefit from WCS's strengths-based, trauma-informed case management support. This comprehensive approach acknowledges that the trauma experienced by survivors of domestic violence lingers long after they have left their abuser. By addressing these needs, WCS aims to empower women and their families to regain their independence and confidence, breaking the cycle of violence.

One of the program's key goals is to foster economic independence. For women who are already employed, WCS offers support to help them transition into more stable, long-term job opportunities and even pathways to home ownership. Meanwhile, social housing clients will receive assistance in navigating the steps necessary to secure and maintain appropriate employment.

With easy access to public transport, schools, employment centres, and essential services, it is also within reach of major employers in the Parramatta CBD and the Westmead health and education precinct, ensuring that residents are not only sheltered but also connected to the community and opportunities for growth.

IMAGE: Wentworthville House
Photo: Cassandra Hannagan



13. ADVOCACY

Driving Lasting Change Through Advocacy

Beyond providing the tools and services for the prevention of DFV — and its inextricable link with homelessness in Australia — a large part of WCS's work is to drive change, conversation and education via our connections, partnerships and advocacy work.

Working at a federal, state and local government level, WCS educates, amplifies and campaigns for the rights of women and children escaping domestic and family violence. We stand with a variety of organisations to channel our expertise and voices to change laws that change lives.

Our CEO, Annabelle Daniel OAM holds a number of volunteer roles including Chair of Domestic Violence NSW (the peak body for domestic and family violence services in NSW), and the Independent Member on the New South Wales Coercive Control Implementation Taskforce, leading the Domestic and Family Violence Sector and Lived Expertise Reference Groups. WCS COO, Neesha Eckersley, is Deputy Chair of Homelessness NSW (the peak body for homelessness in NSW) and a member of their Policy Council. WCS's strong and active voice in the sector also extends to our Patron, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, the 39th Governor of New South Wales. Her Excellency brings a wealth of experience in law and public service, with a strong commitment to social justice and advocacy for vulnerable communities.

We are proud to play an ongoing role in advocacy that results in changes that better protect women and children.

Coercive Control Legislation: Why Is This Important?

In 2024, one of the major campaigns championed by WCS made history in Australia when, on 1 July, coercive control became a criminal offence in NSW. It was the first state to introduce a stand-alone offence of coercive control, which was followed by QLD in 2025.

Coercive control has been strongly linked to intimate partner homicide; in fact, the NSW Domestic Violence Death Review Team found that in 97% of intimate partner domestic violence homicide cases, the victim had experienced coercive and controlling behaviours before being killed.

Prior to the law coming into place, and an education campaign to raise awareness, only one in three people understood or could explain what coercive control was. Now more than one in two people in NSW are aware.

"We are now seeing more women identifying coercive control as one of the reasons for escaping the home, and in response, we have undertaken training with front-line staff about what it is and how to respond to it, and that will be ongoing work," says Annabelle.

Changes to NSW Planning Laws

Throughout 2024, WCS strongly advocated at multiple levels in the NSW Government for a change to allow for the temporary repurposing of vacant buildings for social and community housing.

Now granted, the planning law change enables 'meanwhile use' of properties already under a Development Application (DA) to be additionally repurposed temporarily for social and community housing, without the need for separate, full DA approval processes. This dramatically helps to speed up the conversion of vacant or underutilised properties into transitional crisis accommodation.



IMAGE: Annabelle Daniel OAM, CEO Women's Community Shelters

14. WALK THE TALK

EDUCATE, THEN ACTIVATE

Walk the Talk continues to grow as a powerful education and social-change initiative linking young Australians with Women's Community Shelters and our vision of a nation where women and children are safe, secure, supported and equal.

Now in its sixth year, the program invites students to move beyond awareness to action — to truly walk their talk. More than 6,000 students from 36 schools participated this financial year, bringing total reach to over 22,000 young people since launch.

Phase One delivers evidence-based workshops exploring respectful relationships, consent, and domestic and family violence.

Phase Two turns learning into impact. Schools 'adopt' their local women's shelter, running service-learning projects that offer practical support to women and children rebuilding their lives. In 2024/25, students contributed almost \$240,000 in goods, fundraising and volunteer hours to their communities.

The outcomes reach far beyond numbers. Some students have disclosed abuse and sought help. One young woman convinced her mother to leave a violent relationship after our session. Many others have written to say they ended unhealthy relationships or supported friends in doing so. *"You taught me to follow my instincts — I deserve better,"* one student shared.

Walk the Talk shows how education can spark empathy, leadership and real-world change — empowering a generation to not only understand domestic violence, but to help end it.

'The Walk the Talk program has been a powerful and transformative experience for our students.'

**Head Teacher Wellbeing,
Government High School**

WORKSHOPS RUN
AT

36

SCHOOLS



6,582

STUDENTS PARTICIPATED
IN WORKSHOPS



SUPPORTED

11

OF WCS SAFE HAVENS

\$240,000

TOTAL VALUE DELIVERED TO
AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY

(volunteering plus goods/donations)



AN AVERAGE OF

97%



OF ALL STUDENTS RATE THE PROGRAM AS
VERY GOOD / EXCELLENT

100%

OF STUDENTS WOULD
RECOMMEND THE
PROGRAM



97%

SCHOOL RETENTION



I know that Women's Community Shelters and everybody who supports them through this program are making a real difference and making positive impacts on the lives of people now and in the future. The program really demonstrates what can be done when we take a whole of community approach to eradicating domestic and family violence.

Jodie Harrison MP, Minister for Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence speaking at the 2024 Walk the Talk awards.



(what) really stands out to me about this program is the way it connects prevention and early intervention efforts with frontline service delivery and crisis response. It's connecting things across that whole spectrum in a really powerful and coherent way.

Hannah Tonkin, NSW Women's Safety Commissioner speaking at the 2024 Walk the Talk awards.



WALK THE TALK

EDUCATE, THEN ACTIVATE

Harmony's Story

As told to Dannielle Miller OAM
Director of Education and Special Projects

Harmony Clark is a 16-year-old woman who participated in Women's Community Shelters Walk the Talk education initiative in 2024.

When you're a teenager, it's easy to feel like you don't have much power. For me, gender inequality was always something I wanted to challenge, even when people my age insisted that feminism wasn't needed anymore. But everyday sexism is still everywhere.

That's why the Walk the Talk program at my school mattered. For the first time, we had a place to speak honestly about sexism and gender-based violence and, more importantly, to do something practical to address it. Supporting our local shelter felt meaningful to all of us, but for me it was personal.

When I was little, my mum and I lived in a domestic violence shelter. I don't remember many details, but I remember how bare it felt. There weren't toys or comforting things for children. Even though it was safe, it didn't always feel welcoming. So when our year group was invited to adopt our local shelter, The Haven at Penrith, I was excited. We decided to raise money so that when children arrived, they would find beautiful toys and a warm space that eased their fear about an uncertain future.

Even organising a simple bake sale felt powerful. For the first time, the ideas I held about equality and justice weren't just thoughts in my head. They turned into action.

One of my favourite films is Little Women, especially Greta Gerwig's version. There's a line where Jo says she's "so sick of people saying that love is all a woman is fit for." That quote has always stayed with me. I'd felt that frustration too but didn't know what to do with it. Walk the Talk helped me put those feelings into practice and understand that activism comes in many forms.

A highlight was being invited to New South Wales Parliament House at the end of the year to celebrate our work alongside other schools. It was inspiring to see so many students, including young men, united in supporting shelters. I also met women who had grown up with violence and gone on to break that cycle. It made me think about the kind of future I want.

Because no matter what we're doing there are always ways to reach out and create change.



IMAGE: Students from Blaxland High School, Harmony pictured centre.

**For the first time,
the ideas I held about
equality and justice
weren't just thoughts.
They turned into action.**

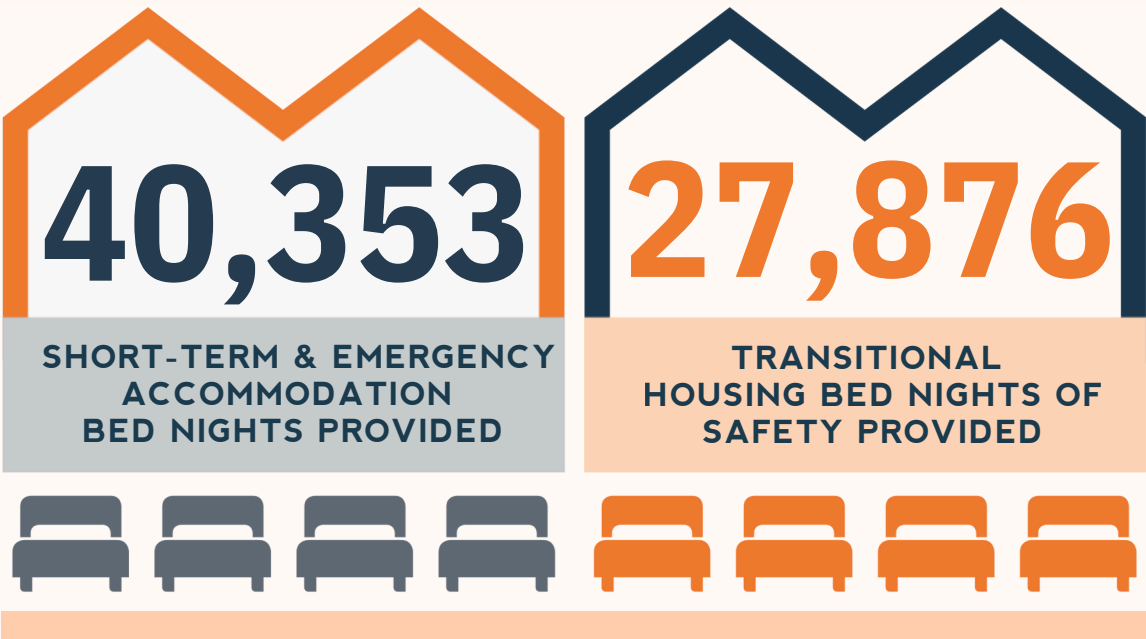
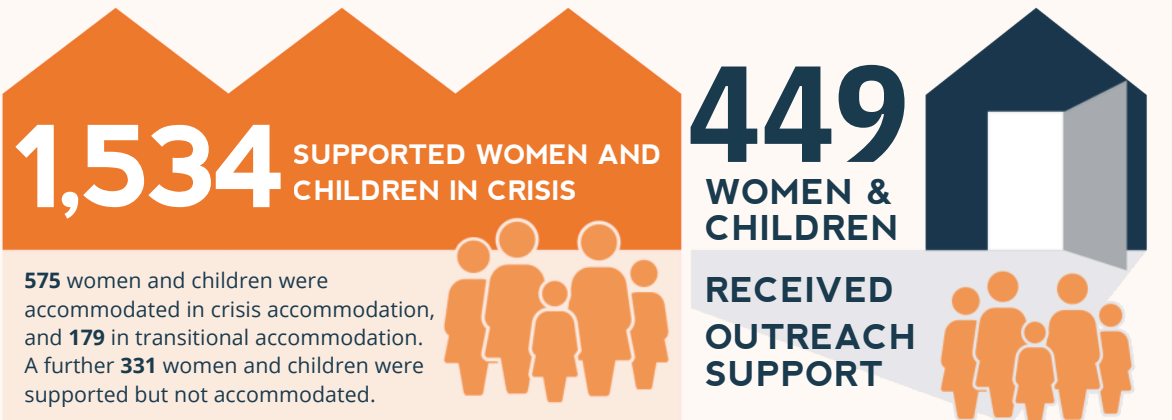
15. CLIENT OUTCOMES AND WELLBEING

FY2024/25 OUTCOMES

Reporting period 1st July 2024 to 30th June 2025

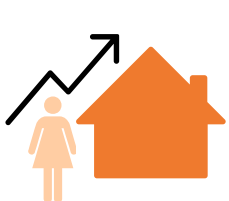
The statistics presented here highlight the vital impact of Women’s Community Shelters’ work across crisis response, housing pathways and prevention initiatives, delivering comprehensive support services that respond to the complex and diverse needs of women and children experiencing homelessness and domestic and family violence.

In FY2024/25, WCS supported over **1,534** women and children in crisis and provided more than **68,229** safe beds nights for women and children at risk.



CLIENT OUTCOMES AND WELLBEING

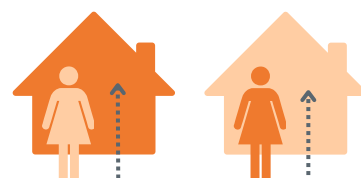
The following statistics are more than just numbers, each one represents hours, weeks and months of comprehensive support services, care, healing and hope that has led to one of our most impactful years to date.



WCS supported 1,534 women and children (a 5.6% increase on 2023/24)



WCS provided a total of 68,229 nights of safety across its network (an increase of 9%)



Despite a backdrop of increasing challenges and a growing affordable housing crisis, this year, WCS has been able to exit an additional 10% of shelter clients into safe, secure housing. This is a testament to the dedication of the shelter network, their skills, experience and expertise.

Trends We Are Seeing

More clients are presenting to WCS every year, and the increasing complexity of need is leading to a greater need for intensive support, with clients requiring sustained engagement with services over longer periods. Reflecting these higher support needs, the average duration of outreach support has risen from 14 to 16 weeks.

As the affordable housing crisis worsens, we are seeing more and more people requiring longer shelter stays; in the last year, the average stay increased by over two weeks to 11 weeks. This is perpetuated by increasing rents, which limit post-shelter options for many on low to no income.

Tragically, we are also seeing more women than ever presenting at 'serious threat' from homicide, based on the DVSAT assessments undertaken on site. The demand from women over the age of 55 also continues to rise, increasing to 10% of our total client base.

Without doubt, the need to raise awareness about domestic abuse remains critical, and we must do all we can to ensure we are there for the women who raise their hands for help.

Unfortunately, our resources are finite and the number of people we cannot assist continues to grow, highlighting that it is more important than ever to build our network and services. Our response is a continued investment in expansion, education, prevention, and building a bigger, brighter network of communities equipped to support those who need it, but the task is growing, not slowing.

In spite of multiple societal and economic challenges, we have been able to make tremendous strides in our work and improvements in the number of people supported, nights of safety taken and a positive increase in those exited safely into secure housing. As ever, we will seek to build on all of this.

More women presenting at WCS are assessed at 'serious threat' from homicide.

More women and families are requiring longer shelter stays with the average stay increasing from 9 to weeks to 11 weeks.

Despite the number of clients we support is increasing, sadly the number of people we are unable to assist continues to grow.

With increasing rental costs impacting affordability, it is becoming increasingly difficult for our most vulnerable clients to secure sustainable housing.

CLIENT OUTCOMES AND WELLBEING



67% of clients presenting due to DFV as their primary reason - up 4%



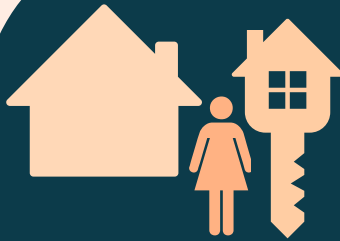
Stays in crisis shelters increased by an average of 2 weeks (to a total of 11 weeks).



21% of clients supported identified as First Nations



63% of clients in shelter were supported into safe and secure housing – an increase of 10%



87% of clients in transitional accommodation exited into safe and secure housing



Private rentals continue to be the main exit pathway at 46% for shelter clients



20% more clients were supported through transitional accommodation



Demand that we could not meet increased by 40% which was 1847 unassisted women, primarily due to lack of beds available



Outreach support increased in length from 14 to 16 weeks

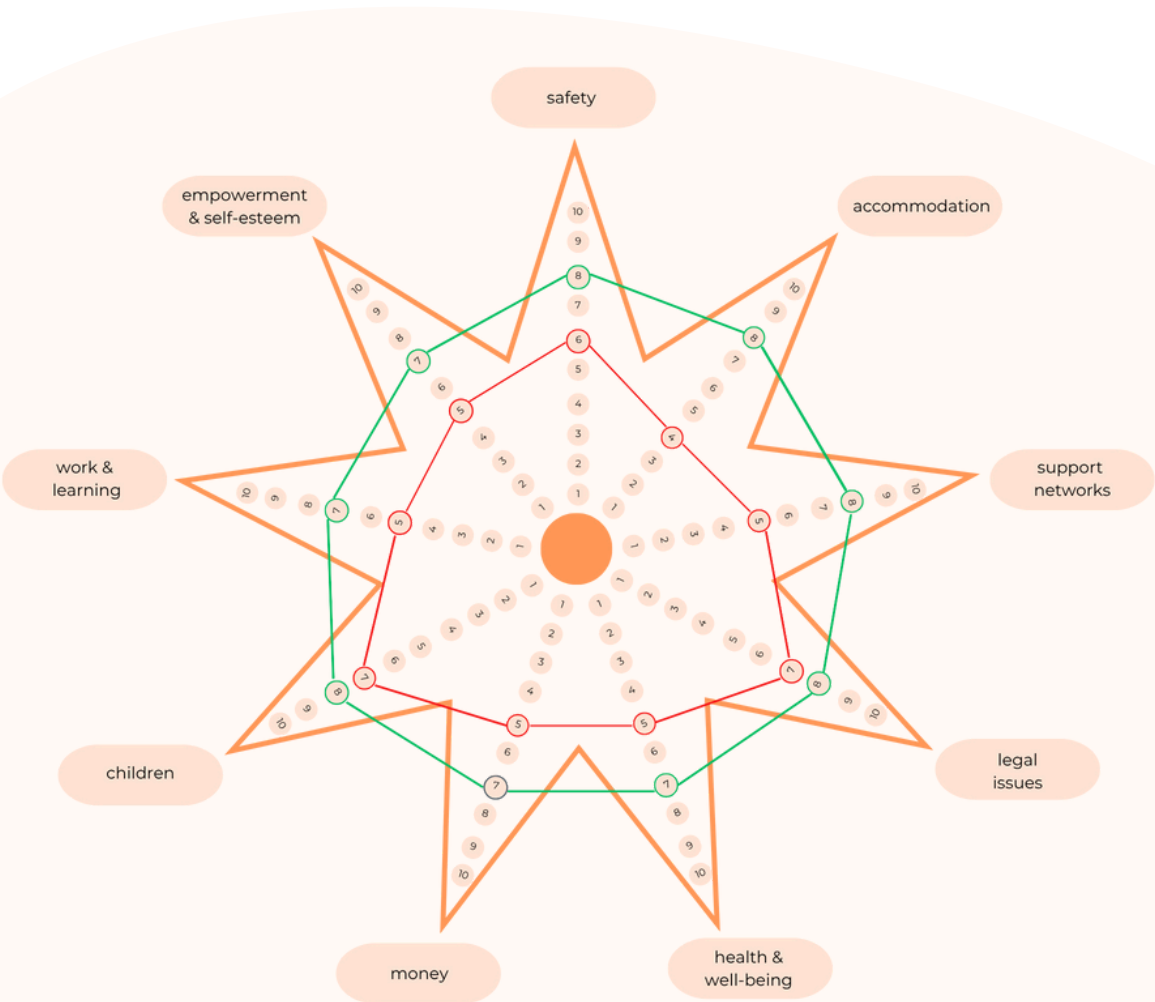
CLIENT OUTCOMES AND WELLBEING


WCS case managers are trained to use proven tools for collecting data and measuring the progress of women and children who are experiencing homelessness, domestic and family violence.

These tools are also used for the sharing of data with relevant services and collaborating with others to improve delivery and outcomes.

Outcomes STAR™ is an evidence-based tool that is designed to help measure meaningful change and empower clients. Each client has their own STAR, which allows them to monitor and track their personal goals and outcome areas with their case worker. The use of the STAR can help facilitate important conversations about change and to help case workers and clients remain focused on what's important for them. Each STAR contains a set of values or goals, and different STARS can be used for different needs, ages and stages. This 'family of STARS' were designed by practitioners over 20 years ago and are used throughout the sector today.

The graphic below highlights WCS average clients' Empowerment Star for FY 2024/25 with their specific goals and outcomes. The red line shows the clients' rating based on how they felt when they arrived. Following support, we see in the green line a marked improvement in every area, with particular movement in accommodation. Women often arrive feeling stuck and unsure of how they will find safe and secure housing, but with support, they not only find long term accommodation, but feel much more confident in what it takes to remain there.



A photograph of a woman with dark, curly hair smiling and hugging a young child with blonde hair. The woman is wearing a white t-shirt, and the child is wearing a striped t-shirt and blue jeans. The background is a soft, out-of-focus teal color. A large, semi-transparent white circle is overlaid on the lower left side of the image, containing text and two orange speech bubble icons.

For those of us who had no one else to turn to in times of hardship, this shelter was a ray of hope. The case workers were a gentle and guiding presence, helping us take steps forward [to] independence. They always showed great sensitivity to our mental and physical health, supporting our recovery with genuine care and empathy.

Former resident,
Hornsby Kur-ring-gai Women's Shelter

16. PATRONS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Patrons



**Emeritus Patron Peter Hunt AM
(WCS Founder)**

Peter, a philanthropist and WCS founder, has a background in funding and scaling social sector organisations and advising companies and governments on mergers, acquisitions and capital raisings. He was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2010. Peter stepped down from the WCS Board in November 2024 and remains our Emeritus Patron.
(Sep 2011 - Nov 2025)



**Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC,
Governor of New South Wales**

WCS Patron, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, the 39th Governor of New South Wales appointed in February 2024. Her Excellency brings a wealth of experience in law and public service, with a strong commitment to social justice and advocacy for vulnerable communities. Her patronage highlights the importance of our work in providing safe, sustainable housing for women and children escaping domestic violence.
(Feb 2024)

Board



**Julie White
(Chair & Founding Board Member)**

Julie has over 40 years' experience in both not-for-profit and corporate sectors. Executive Chair of Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation; Independent Chair of COORDINARE (SE NSW PHN), Board member of Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation UK and Chair and Board member of Southern Highlands Community Foundation.
(Feb 2012 - Sept 2017
Aug 2020 - present)



Terence Kwan

Terence is a partner at Fidelis Advisors, a risk advisory firm. He has had a long relationship with Women's Community Shelters commencing in 2016 when he led fundraising efforts with the Macquarie Group Foundation. Terence is a Board Director for Sydney Philharmonia Choirs and is a former Director for Radio Community Chest Incorporated as well as One Disease, which works with remote Indigenous communities in Australia.
(Apr 2020 - present)



Emily Hodgson

Emily is a strategic and results-oriented public sector leader with deep expertise in financial administration and operations. Known for her collaboration, she is a key driver in shaping ANSTO's financial planning and budgeting strategies to achieve its corporate objectives. Her prior experience at the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) involved significant contributions to the financial sector.
(Aug 2018 - present)



Sister Mary-Louise Petro

Sister Mary-Louise Petro is a Sister of Mercy, of the Parramatta Congregation. Mary-Louise has worked in Education and Youth work and in 1985, founded The Mamre Project at St Marys, which assisted the unemployed, people with a disability, youth at risk and refugees. Mary-Louise was previously the Congregation Leader for her order and now supports the social service sector and emerging leadership styles through Boards and committees.
(Aug 2018 - present)

PATRONS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS



David Winterbottom

David is an experienced Chartered Accountant with over 30 years of expertise in complex financial scenarios. He currently participates in, and advises, boards of large not-for-profits and for-purpose companies, including being the Senior Financial Advisor to the Paul Ramsay Foundation since 2020. Previously, he led KordaMentha's Restructuring practice for 13 years. David also serves as a Non-Executive Director at the Catherine Hamlin Fistula Foundation. (Apr 2023 - present)



Harriet Whyte

Harriet is an Executive Director with the NSW Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development. Across numerous roles with the NSW Government, Harriet has worked on policy challenges and with communities and all levels of government to improve the lives of all NSW residents. She currently also serves on the board of Out for Australia. (Apr 2023 - present)



Laura McMillan

Laura is Director of Communications for the Macquarie Group Foundation, where she leads social impact communications for Macquarie Group and serves as a member of the Foundation's leadership team. She has extensive experience in communications and marketing across the non-profit, financial and corporate sectors.

Laura is also an active member of Macquarie's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) working group and contributes to the RAP Communications and Events Sub-Committee. (Feb 2025 - Present)



Rachel Vincent

Rachel has over 25 years' experience in commercial property with CBRE, ING Real Estate and Valad Property Group. Rachel is the Managing Director of North Sydney and Head of NSW Office Leasing at CBRE, where she fosters teams and delivers marketing strategies for clients that number among the world's largest real estate developers and investors. She is a passionate advocate for equality for women through her role as an Implementation Lead on the Property Champions of Change and has been raising money and awareness for DV since 2016. (Feb 2025 - Present)

The Board maintains several committees to fulfil its governance obligations effectively.

FINANCE, RISK, AUDIT, INVESTMENT & COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

The committee is a formal body of WCS tasked with advising on corporate governance, overseeing risk management, legal compliance, audit requirements, external reporting, and regulatory duties. *Chair: David Winterbottom*

NOMINATION & REMUNERATION COMMITTEE

The Nomination and Remuneration Committee oversees the charity's selection and appointment procedures, addresses Board succession planning, and ensures the Board has the necessary skills, knowledge, experience, and diversity to fulfill its responsibilities effectively. However, ultimate responsibility for these practices rests with the Board. *Chair: Terence Kwan*

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

The Fundraising Committee supports WCS's Engagement Team to secure funds to ensure the financial sustainability and stability of the organisation. *Chair: Laura McMillan*

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

The Property Committee oversees WCS Community Housing (CHP) assets, manages compliance requirements, and collaborates with the Finance Risk and Audit Committee (FRAC). Together, they advise the Board on the acquisition, sale, or development of properties within the WCS Property portfolio. *Chair: Rachel Vincent*

17. REFLECTIONS FROM THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM



ANNABELLE DANIEL OAM
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

OUR INCREDIBLE NETWORK

What I am most proud of this year is the WCS team and our Shelter Network. The Network's dedication, compassion and care make everything we do possible. Across the network, we have supported women and children through some of life's hardest moments, championing safety, dignity and lasting change. Our commitment, collaboration and expertise have built trust, opened meaningful pathways to independence, and created positive, transformative outcomes. They continue to inspire with their resilience, innovation and steadfast dedication to providing safety and support for those who need it most.



NEESHA ECKERSLEY
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

As WCS grows and broadens its offerings to create safe havens for women and children, I led the establishment of the Senior Leadership Team to collectively drive WCS's objectives and mission and ensure systems and infrastructure to support our expanded footprint while delivering high-quality services. We collectively pushed WCS forward in all areas, maintaining our innovative spirit, nurturing our donors, supporting our hardworking Shelter Network, building a strong workforce and infrastructure, and keeping the women and children we serve at the centre of every decision.



DANNIELLE MILLER OAM
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

WALK THE TALK AWARDS 2024

A significant highlight for WCS this year was the 2024 Walk the Talk Awards, held at NSW Parliament House and attended by Ministers, sector leaders and more than 300 students, teachers and supporters. The event showcased the extraordinary impact of the 4,000 young people who participated in Walk the Talk in 2024, recognising how their service-learning projects added almost \$180,000 of value to local shelters while deepening community awareness of domestic and family violence. For many students, Walk the Talk was genuinely transformational, with disclosures of abuse, strengthened help-seeking, and strong connections being forged between schools and our shelter network.

The Awards not only honoured these young Change-Makers, they also strengthened WCS's reputation as a leader in primary prevention and youth empowerment. It was a powerful demonstration of how educating, then activating, young people drives real change for the women and children we support.



JEN DIXON
DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

GROWING SAFE HOUSING SOLUTIONS ACROSS NSW

A major highlight for me this year has been the NSW Government's support and investment in modular housing, providing a practical and more immediate solution to homelessness showcased through our Revesby Shelter, Biyani House, Tingira House, Lake Macquarie, opened in May as WCS' fourth 'meanwhile use' property for older women, bringing the number of women over 55 who receive safe, supported accommodation every night to more than 70.

Alongside these developments, I have been providing strategic leadership for multiple housing projects across the Network, ensuring they meet operational and quality standards while responding to urgent community needs. Together, these initiatives expand WCS' housing capacity and strengthen our ability to provide safe, sustainable accommodation across the state, demonstrating our ongoing commitment to innovative, impactful solutions for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM



LIBBY GAULD
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

MOBILISING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

This year, the power of our generous community was instrumental in opening new doors to safety and ensuring their long-term sustainability. Our International Women's Day appeal helped bring our new Liverpool Shelter to life, while our thought-provoking fundraising event, *How the Law Silences Women: With Jennifer Robinson*, deepened public understanding of systemic injustice and how WCS is making a difference. Our End-of-Financial-Year appeal exceeded expectations, securing the funds needed to support two new shelters through their critical first year of operation.

Beyond fundraising, our strong advocacy across mainstream media and social platforms amplified the voices of women and children experiencing domestic violence and coercive control. Our influence extended far beyond the women we directly support in shelter - contributing to a broader national conversation and driving momentum for lasting change.



LIESKE DOWD
DIRECTOR OF EXECUTIVE SUPPORT

BRINGING A COMMUNITY-LED MODEL TO VICTORIA

During the past financial year, Women's Community Shelters established the Moonah House Board for the Mornington Peninsula Women's Shelter, marking a significant expansion into Victoria. Supporting the Steering Committee to form Moonah House as a company limited by guarantee and build a strong Board has secured WCS's presence in the area.

The Mornington Peninsula has Victoria's highest number of rough sleepers. In partnership with the Moonah House Board, WCS will provide a safe haven for women and children with nowhere to go. This interstate expansion reflects WCS's model of increasing access to safe bed nights while engaging communities to understand domestic and family violence and be part of the solution, a community-led response to a growing need in Victoria.



MICHAELA TURANCOVA
DIRECTOR BUSINESS OPERATIONS AND PERFORMANCE

WCS CHILD SAFEGUARDING FRAMEWORK

One highlight I am proud of from FY24/25 is the development of the WCS Child Safeguarding Framework. The children who come to WCS services are survivors and clients in their own right. In FY24/25, children made up more than half of the clients we accommodated in shelters (53% to be exact), so it is really important that we have consistent casework practices to support them.

The safeguarding framework, developed in conjunction with the Australian Childhood Foundation, is a comprehensive guide for all our services on how to provide safe, consistent, and effective support to children and young people. It will be supported by engaging and playful resources that caseworkers can use with children, and I am looking forward to seeing the difference this makes for our clients.

18. WITH THANKS

The generosity of our local community, philanthropists, businesses, government bodies, partners, and individual supporters continues to fuel our mission — and for that, we are deeply grateful. Our work simply wouldn't be possible without your ongoing support.

MAJOR SUPPORTERS

We thank the following Major Supporters for their extraordinary commitment and partnership.

Adolph Basser Trust
Alexandra & Lloyd Martin Family Foundation
Bell Family Foundation
Camceda Pty Ltd ITF Roberts Family Foundation
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Temple & Webster
Todd Barlin & Vincent Ro
Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation

PHILANTHROPIC, COMMUNITY & CORPORATE SUPPORTERS

We thank the following supporters for their generous donations of \$5,000+, from 1 July 2024 - 30 June 2025.

Adam McWhinney
Adolph Basser Trust
Adrian Choi
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Frazer Foundation
GIC
Global Federation of Chinese Business Women, Sydney Chapter
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Hunt Family Community Foundation
Hunt Family Foundation
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Il Tutto
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Mamakai Foundation
Mark and Angela Bazant
Marshmallow Fund

WITH THANKS

PHILANTHROPIC, COMMUNITY & CORPORATE SUPPORTERS CONT.

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Nautitech Mining Systems Pty Ltd
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Jennifer Robinson
John Zapper
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Thread Together
Two Good Co.

For more details on how to support WCS, please contact Libby Gauld, Director of Development at (02) 9539 6859 or via email at libby@womenscommunityshelters.org.au.

HOUSING STAKEHOLDERS

AHOW
Arise Foundation
BEA Projects
Evolve Housing
Echo Real estate
Housing All Australians
Housing Older Persons Project
Hume Housing
Link Wentworth
Momento Hospitality Group
OWN (Older Women's Network)
Pacific Link Housing
Twilight Aged Care
Whiddon
Housing All Australians
Urban Property
TSA Riley
DT Infrastructure
Willowdene Construction
Arada Foundation
Vigilanti Architecture
Urbis

GOVERNMENT SUPPORTERS

Homes NSW
Department of Social Services
NSW Government Department of Communities & Justice

WCS AMBASSADOR

Sarrah Le Marquand

WCS ADVOCATES

Amani Haydar
Ariana Levy
Cheryl Rae
Donna Burke
Eileen Hoggett
James Stewart
Jo Gaines
Lee Townsend
Mark Coulter
Natalie Ferres
Sallianne McClelland
Sandra Mills
Deb Yates



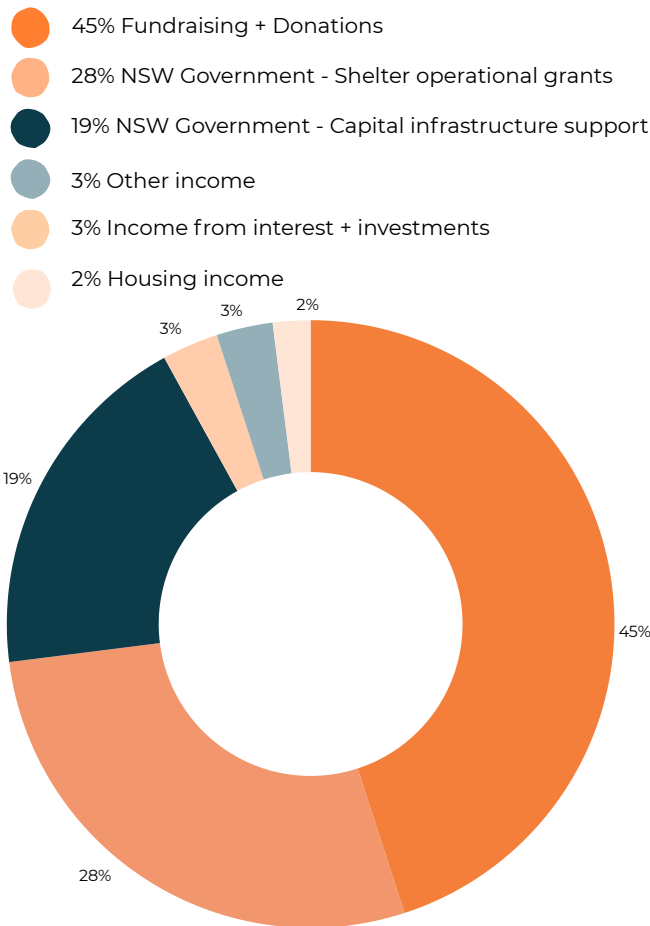
WCS Special Event: Key WCS Champions Hannah Tonkin with Jennifer Robinson and Annabelle Daniel OAM

19. FINANCIALS

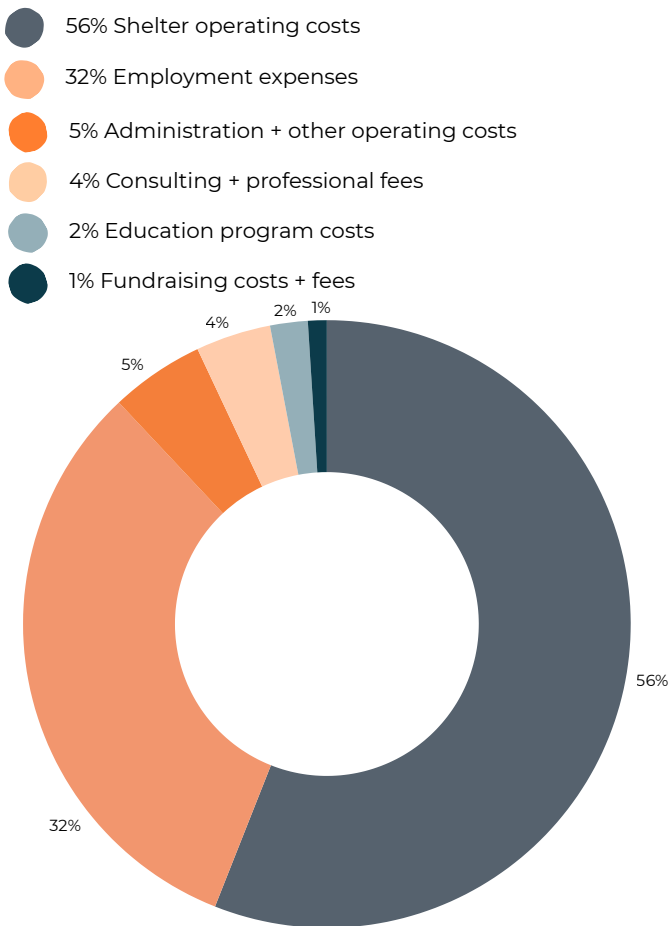
WCS has significantly expanded its impact to meet the increasing needs of women and children across NSW. This growth is supported by diverse funding sources and strategic financial management, both essential to sustaining and expanding our services.

The funding sources and expenditure graphs below illustrate how we secure and allocate resources to maximise our impact, for transparency and accountability in financial stewardship

Income FY2025



Expenditure FY2025



Accountability

WOMEN'S COMMUNITY SHELTERS LIMITED

Public Benevolent Institution with DGR1 (Deductible Gift Recipient) Status ACNC registered

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ACN 153 006 556

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NSW 2125

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Barangaroo NSW 2000


For a full view of WCS's financial statements, please visit the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission website (acnc.gov.au) using the 'Find a Charity' function.

Scan the QR code below to be taken to the ACNC website.




ORGANISATIONAL
MEMBER
CODE COMPLIANT







Despite Women's Community Shelters' continued expansion of safe havens, the scale of the crisis means we are still forced to turn away 1 in 2 women every night. Every woman we turn away isn't just a statistic - she has her own life and her own story. She may be someone's mother, sister, daughter, or friend. A new future begins with a safe bed.




Annabelle Daniel OAM,
CEO, Women's Community Shelters

SAFE BEDS SAVE LIVES

 www.womenscommunityshelters.org.au

 hello@womenscommunityshelters.org.au

 (02)9539 6859

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 [women-s-community-shelter](https://www.linkedin.com/company/women-s-community-shelter)

 [womenscommunityshelters1450](https://www.youtube.com/womenscommunityshelters1450)



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