



# WOMEN'S COMMUNITY SHELTERS

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ANNUAL REPORT FY2023/24



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Women’s Community Shelters (WCS) acknowledges the traditional custodians of the many lands on which we live and work across New South Wales.

Our Shelter Network is located on several First Nation lands including Bidigal; Gadigal; Dharug; Dharawal; Worimi; ; Gayemegal; Darkinyung; Guringai; Cammeraygal and Wallumedegal.

We pay our respect to Elders both past and present, and to those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients, experts and organisations who walk alongside us as we work to protect women and children.

We acknowledge that homelessness and domestic and family violence are both experienced disproportionately by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

We acknowledge the strength, resilience and wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and celebrate their ongoing custodianship of this beautiful country which always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.



# CHAIR'S REPORT

As Chair of Women's Community Shelters (WCS), I am proud to present this year's annual report, reflecting on an extraordinary year of growth, impact, and innovation.

Our commitment to supporting women and children at risk of homelessness, domestic and family violence has driven us to achieve significant milestones across various facets of our operations. Below are some of the key highlights and accomplishments from this transformative year.

WCS has proudly supported over 1,200 women and children in crisis, providing more than 60,000 safe crisis and transitional bed nights. These numbers reflect the growing need for our services and the vital role we play in offering safety, dignity, and a pathway to independence for vulnerable women and their families.

A major highlight of this period has been the opening of two new shelters under the innovative core and cluster model, funded through NSW Government support. This model enhances our capacity to offer independent living options, giving women greater choice and flexibility while ensuring they remain connected to vital support services. We are already seeing the profound difference this model is making in the lives of the women and children we assist.

We continue to secure NSW Government funding to bolster our operational sustainability. These investments by the NSW Government allow us to continue innovating and expanding our crisis support models, ensuring we can meet the ever-growing demand for our services.

WCS continues to play a critical role as a strong advocate led by our wonderful CEO, Annabelle Daniel. Annabelle's commitment, passion and eloquent advocacy has contributed to driving much-needed investment into the sector and is helping to shape the future of women's crisis support in Australia. Our voice in this space has been crucial in securing the resources required to innovate, expand, and deliver high quality support to women and children.

Philanthropic funding has also continued to grow, and we are deeply grateful for the generous donors and partners who sustain our sites and services. These contributions are essential to our ongoing efforts and have helped us remain a lifeline for countless women and children facing homelessness and domestic violence.

This year, our 'Walk the Talk' respectful relationships education program reached new heights, engaging over 2800 high school students and numerous corporate employees alike in fostering personal, community, and societal change. The program's impact on shaping future generations and workplaces cannot be overstated, and we look forward to its continued success.

In addition to these achievements, we were thrilled to welcome Her Excellency, the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of New South Wales, as our new patron. Her Excellency's commitment to women's safety and empowerment aligns perfectly with our mission, and we are honoured to have her support as we continue to advocate for change.

Looking to the future, our plans for expansion include a focus on the Mornington Peninsula, Victoria where we aim to address the growing need for crisis accommodation in regional areas. This strategic growth will allow us to reach even more women and children, ensuring they receive the support they deserve, no matter where they live.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the dedication and hard work of so many. I want to particularly mention the incredible support of our WCS Board. I am incredibly privileged to work with such a dedicated, compassionate and committed board of directors. Together with our hard working staff, volunteers, and our shelter boards, staff and the local communities who support us we are incredibly fortunate. Your passion and commitment are the driving force behind WCS, and I am deeply grateful for all you do.

As we look to the future, I am filled with optimism. While there are undoubtedly challenges ahead, I have no doubt that Women's Community Shelters will continue to grow, innovate, and provide life-saving support for those in need.

Thank you for your dedication, your support, and for standing with us as we work towards a future where every woman and child has the opportunity to live free from violence and homelessness.

Warm regards,

  
Julie White  
Chair, Women's Community Shelters



# CEO REPORT

Welcome to the Women's Community Shelters Annual Report! We are so proud to reflect on the extraordinary efforts and achievements of our Shelter Network for the period 1st July 2023 to June 30th 2024.

This document is a testament to the strength and resilience of the women and children we accommodate and support across our growing network of eleven crisis shelters and portfolio of transitional properties.

Through hard work and commitment, we have witnessed remarkable transformations and countless success stories that inspire and drive us forward. Our shelters have provided safe havens, support, and hope to women and children escaping homelessness, domestic, and family violence.

We are proud to showcase the achievements and milestones we have reached together - achievements that have profoundly impacted over 1200 women and children, and the local communities that walk alongside us.

Highlights for the year include the opening of two new shelters, successful implementation of new programs, expanded services, wonderful Victorian community development initiatives and community partnerships that have enriched our residents' lives.

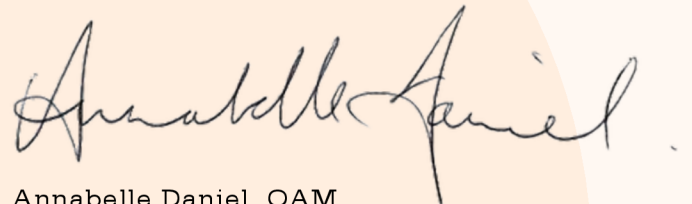
We have achieved this together against a backdrop of unprecedented awareness of domestic and family violence and an increase in domestic homicides across Australia. Also 'front and centre' in the media landscape has been the issue of housing affordability, which has deep impacts on women and children finding, and keeping, a safe roof to begin their trajectory of rebuilding after homelessness and abuse.

As ever, our deepest gratitude goes to our dedicated network of boards, staff, volunteers, donors, partners, and local communities who have made these successes possible.

Your support is the cornerstone of our work, and without it, none of this would be achievable. Your unwavering support and generosity have enabled us to make a real difference and continue our mission of providing safety, dignity, and a brighter future free from violence for all women and children.

I hope you enjoy this reflection on 12 months of accomplishments, and the inspiring stories drawn from across our network. We are continually looking ahead to the future as we work to increase our impact, open more shelters and create an Australia where women and children are safe, secure, supported and equal.

With warm regards,



Annabelle Daniel, OAM  
CEO, Women's Community Shelters







# OVERVIEW, VISION & VALUES

Domestic and family violence (DFV) against women and their children is a national epidemic. Every night, 54,000 women are homeless across Australia\*, with DFV as the single, biggest cause.

We know that women's homelessness and DFV are solvable problems, just not a simple ones.

## Our Purpose

To build an Australia where women and children are safe, secure, supported and equal.



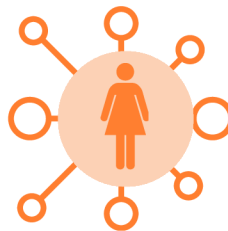
## Our Vision

That the communities we work with across Australia are empowered to respond to and prevent domestic and family violence, and women and children's homelessness.



## Our Mission

Create strong relationships and engagement – taking our local communities with us on our growth journey.



Build and leverage the experience, resources and networks of WCS.

Support the development and operation of a network of best practice, sustainable specialist shelters and transitional accommodation properties to support women and children.

Work at a system level to innovate and advocate for vulnerable women and children.

Be innovative solutions-focused to support improved outcomes for homeless women and children escaping domestic and family violence and homelessness.

Strengthen the long-term capacity and sustainability of independent shelters and the WCS Network.

Develop resources and programs to promote community understanding and empower them to prevent and respond to domestic and family violence and homelessness, and support those impacted by it.

## OUR VALUES

### RESPECT

We value our staff, our volunteers and all our communities and recognise their value and worth.

### KINDNESS

We are generous and considerate, non-judgemental, and understanding of others' needs.

### EXCELLENCE

We strive always to exceed expectations and deliver high standards.

### COURAGE


We seek to drive positive change and challenge the status quo.

### HOPE

We provide hope and optimism to all our clients and communities, through collaboration and partnership.

\* [Estimating Homelessness: Census, 2021](#)





I was desperate to leave with my baby after years of abuse from family members. I didn't know of any support services for homeless people but when someone mentioned Women's Community Shelters, I made the decision to leave.

I felt tense and scared and couldn't trust anyone when I first arrived at the shelter, nothing good had ever happened to me, except for my baby Jane.

After a few days, I was amazed by the support from the staff. But I started feeling hopeless when it became difficult to secure a property. But the shelter helped me secure a lovely unit, and applying to the Escaping Domestic Violence Program so I could buy the basic items I needed, and one of the volunteers helped me assemble the furniture.

I was so grateful for the support.

My time at the shelter was the first time in my life that I felt safe and experienced a family atmosphere. I continue to run daily in the shelter area even though our unit is far from the shelter, as it's my backbone of safety.

**Carole, WCS shelter resident**





# GEOGRAPHICAL IMPACT

Each shelter within the Women's Community Shelters (WCS) network serves a distinct and unique client base, reflecting the diversity and complexity of each individual local community.

Our growing network of eleven shelters caters to women and children from various backgrounds and all ages, ensuring that each woman and child receives tailored support that meets their specific needs.

Our large meanwhile use properties, Beecroft House, Mosman House and Allawah House provide safe, stable and temporary accommodation to older women - the fastest growing cohort in Australia.

The demographics of our clients in FY2023/24 highlight this diversity and underscore the importance of our shelters' specialised support services and qualified staff.

The geographic distribution of our clients remained consistent between 2023 and 2024. The top four local government areas, ranked by client numbers, were Mid-Coast, Canterbury-Bankstown, Northern Beaches, and Parramatta.

## 3. FORSTER-TUNCURRY

### SHELTER TIMELINE

1. 2010: Northern Beaches Women's Shelter
2. 2015: Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter
3. 2016: Great Lakes Womens Shelter, (Forster-Tuncurry)
4. 2016: The Sanctuary - Hills Women's Shelter
5. 2018: The Haven - Nepean Women's Shelter (Penrith)
6. 2018: Bayside Women's Shelter, (Botany)
7. 2019: Parramatta Women's Shelter
8. 2021: Biyani House - Revesby Women's Shelter
9. 2023: Blue Wren House - Camden Women's Shelter
10. 2024: The Haven Residences, (South Penrith)
11. 2024: Parramatta Women's Shelter second shelter, (Guildford)

### **Larger transitional properties for older women**

- 2018: Beecroft House
- 2019: Mosman House
- 2022: Allawah House

EAST GOSFORD

2. HORNSBY KU-RING-GAI

10. SOUTH PENRITH

4. THE HILLS DISTRICT

BEECROFT

1. NORTHERN BEACHES

5. PENRITH

11. GUILDFORD

7. PARRAMATTA

MOSMAN

6. BOTANY

8. REVESBY

9. CAMDEN

# WCS KEY PROGRAMS

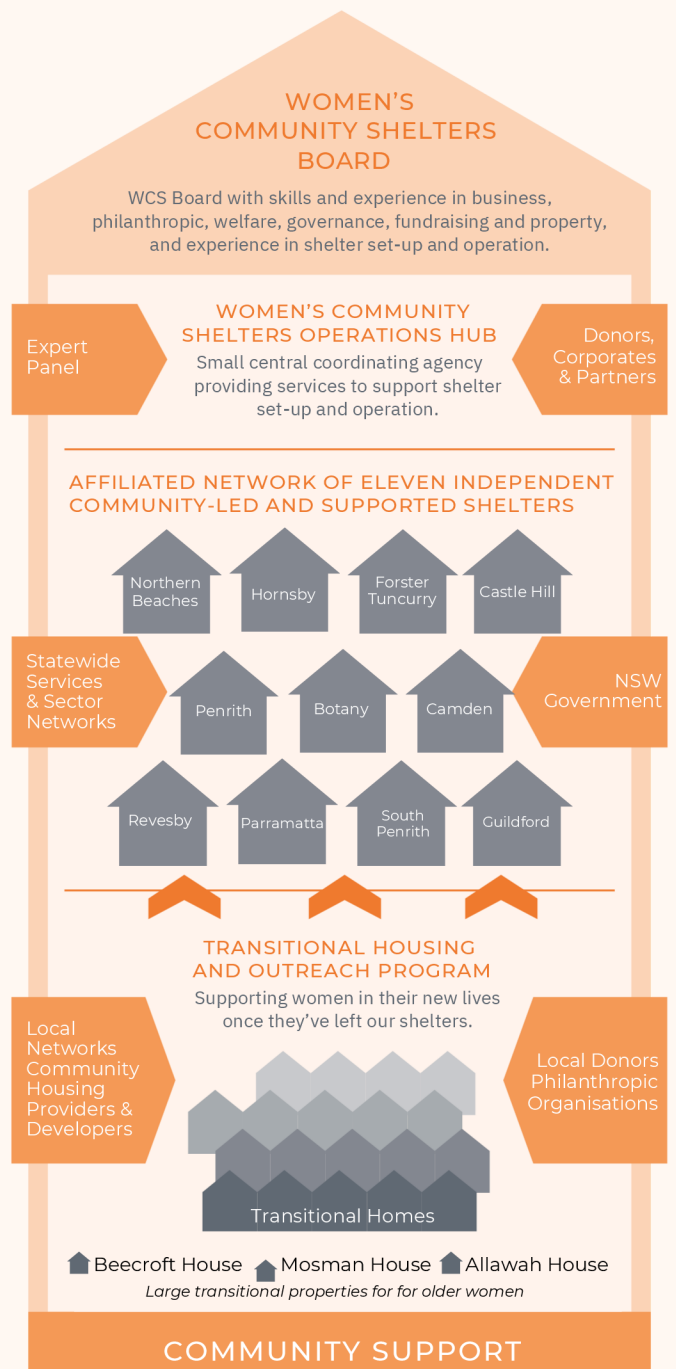
Over the past eleven years, WCS has changed the conversation on women's homelessness, domestic and family violence in NSW and supported nearly 7,600 women and children.

WCS's work includes early intervention and prevention; education; crisis and transitional accommodation; outreach support and recovery; and advocacy. We support women of all ages, at all stages of their journey. Our unique point of difference is identifying the people in a local community who want to do something about this urgent need, harnessing their energy and expertise, and working together in partnership.

We have established:

- An innovative WCS Social Franchise Model:** Our model replicates successful shelter operations across communities, ensuring high service quality and brand integrity. It involves defining key service elements, such as client-centered case management and support services, which are then adapted locally. This structured yet flexible framework allows each shelter to tailor services to community needs while adhering to core principles. The model maintains consistency and effectiveness, empowering local organisations to address homelessness, domestic and family violence with a proven, scalable solution.
- 11 crisis shelters:** We provide safe accommodation along with essential support services, including access to health care, counselling, legal help, child support, and pathways to education, training and employment. WCS was the only organisation in NSW to open new crisis shelters between 2014 and 2021.
- A portfolio of transitional homes:** For women who are no longer in crisis, but are yet to secure a permanent and affordable home, preventing their re-entry back into homelessness and the cycle of abuse.
- 3 large-scale transitional properties for women aged 55+:** By repurposing three vacant aged-care sites, we have created immediate and pragmatic transitional housing specifically for women aged 55+, who are tragically, the fastest growing cohort of homeless people in Australia by percentage.
- Walk The Talk:** Our prevention and early education program for high-school students, about healthy relationships. Each year we reach over 2,800 students and invite them to 'adopt' their local crisis shelter and provide support through fundraising, advocacy and other practical initiatives.

## WCS SOCIAL FRANCHISE MODEL





# WCS KEY PROGRAMS

Other essential programs include:

- **The WCS Outreach Program:** Outreach is essential in delivering ongoing support to women and children after they leave crisis accommodation. Additionally, we provide proactive outreach to women and their children before they reach a crisis, helping to prevent escalation and promote early intervention. As we expand our Shelter Network, the demand for these vital outreach services continues to grow.
- **Child Support:** At WCS, we are committed to viewing children as clients in their own right. We acknowledge their experiences and prioritise their healing. Each of our shelters has dedicated child support case workers who create personalised case plans for every child, ensuring they receive the individual support they need.
- **Women with No Income:** WCS assists vulnerable women with insecure residency or visa statuses, often lacking access to Centrelink, Medicare, housing support or work rights. Abusive partners may exploit visa restrictions to control them. In our shelters, these women receive financial, practical, and emotional support. Thank you to the Goodman Foundation for supporting this program.



Captions from top: Outreach support services; working with children at Great Lakes Womens Shelter; a succesful Walk the Talk school session.

# HIGHLIGHTS

## 2023

- **May:** WCS successfully launched its ninth shelter, Blue Wren House - Camden Women's Shelter.
- **June:** WCS, in partnership with The Haven - Nepean Women's Shelter and Evolve Housing, successfully launched its tenth shelter, The Haven Residences, utilising the innovative core and cluster\* model. This project expanded shelter capacity and support services in the Penrith LGA, with key funding from the NSW Government's Domestic Violence initiative.

WCS CEO and Domestic Violence NSW Chair, Annabelle Daniel OAM, represented WCS and Domestic Violence NSW at a Federal Government roundtable in Canberra to provide feedback about the 'Safe Places' funding to build more crisis accommodation for women and children across Australia.

- **July:** The Hon. Jodie Harrison MP, Minister for Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault announces the launch of the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter and Parramatta Women's Shelter first core and cluster\* projects, of the NSW Government's Domestic Violence investment funding.
- **August:** WCS and the Shelter Network achieved Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES) accreditation. A program designed to enhance the capacity of community organisations, promoting continuous improvement in quality service delivery.

## 2024

- **March:** WCS successfully launches our brand new Allies in Action corporate volunteer program in partnership with Team Build With Purpose.
- **April:** WCS opens shelter number eleven in our growing network. Parramatta Women's Shelter's second property in Guildford.
- Her Excellency, the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC, Governor of NSW, becomes WCS's Patron. Her Excellency toured our new Guildford shelter, showing her strong support for our mission.
- **May:** WCS held its first Mornington Peninsula Community Forum, a key step in expanding to Victoria. The event informed the community about plans for the region's first WCS shelter and sought volunteer board members to promote local involvement and leadership.

\*Core and Cluster is an innovative model that allows for independent living and privacy while also providing access to support services.



Captions from top: WCS CEO, Annabelle Daniel OAM at the NSW State Government's launch of the Coercive Control Education Campaign in April 2024; Blue Wren House - Camden Women's Shelter opening; a WCS corporate paint and sip; WCS Patron, Her Excellency, the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC and partners visit our shelter in Guildford.



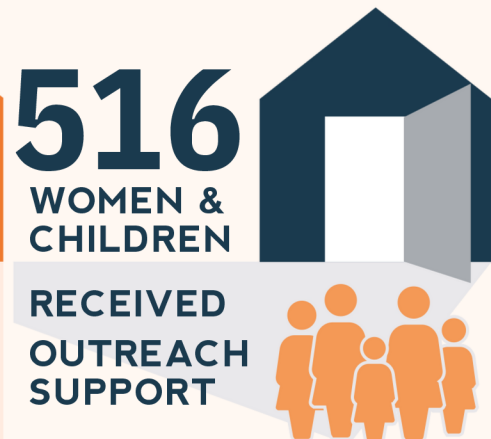


# FY2023/24 OUTCOMES

Reporting period 1st July 2023 to 30th June 2024

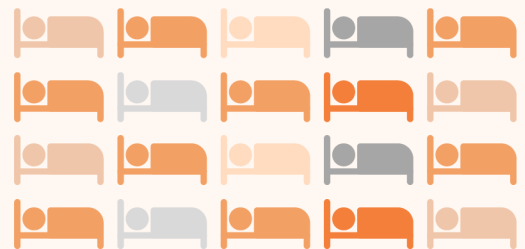
The statistics presented here highlight the crucial impact of Women's Community Shelters' work in providing comprehensive support services tailored to meet the complex and diverse needs of women and children experiencing homelessness, domestic and family violence.

In FY2023/24, WCS supported over **1,200** women and children in crisis and provided over **60,000** additional safe beds to women and children at risk.



# 62,456

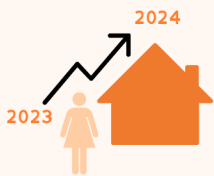
CRISIS AND TRANSITIONAL SAFE BED NIGHTS TO THE SECTOR



# FY2023/24 OUTCOMES

During FY2023/24, we are pleased to have supported 21% more women and children, with the total number of clients increasing from 1,055 in FY23 to 1,277 in FY24. This reflects our ongoing commitment to reaching and assisting more families in need.

WCS has also made considerable progress in enhancing our data collection and analysis capabilities, allowing us to better understand emerging trends, assess the impact of our services, and adapt our programs to meet the evolving needs of the communities we serve.



WCS accommodated 42% more shelter clients than in FY23 (432 to 613)



Demand continues to grow faster than supply; despite our growth, the number of clients unassisted increased by 58%, primarily due to lack of beds available.



There was a 7% increase in clients seeking assistance due to domestic and family violence

WCS has expanded its **Outreach** services, helping more women and children in need. More women are receiving support, including those who don't require accommodation but still benefit from other services offered. This reflects WCS' growing impact in providing assistance beyond shelter.



The number of clients who received support but not accommodation went up by 12%.



The number of clients WCS assisted through outreach grew by 17%



WCS clients needed or received longer periods of outreach support in 2024 (14 weeks) compared to 2023 (12 weeks).

# FY2023/24 OUTCOMES

## TRENDS WE ARE SEEING ACROSS THE SHELTER NETWORK



**Demand is growing faster than supply; despite our growth, the number of people unsupported almost doubled**



**People are homeless for longer before turning to crisis services: the proportion of clients that had a last permanent address more than a year ago increased by 49%**



**The percentage of clients that came to WCS from short term accommodation increased from 28% in FY23 to 38% in FY24.**



**Clients entering shelter from couch surfing/other insecure tenure increased from 8% in FY23 to 10% in FY24**

## HOUSING OUTCOMES FOR CLIENTS EXITING WCS SHELTERS

Amidst increased environmental challenges and the growing unaffordability and supply of safe and secure housing options, sourcing safe accommodation is increasingly more difficult.

Despite these obstacles, the dedicated work and comprehensive wraparound supports provided by WCS' shelter network continues to make a remarkable impact.

WCS achieved an extraordinary outcome: from FY23 to FY24, the percentage of clients successfully transitioning from shelters to safe and secure housing increased by 3%.

Two out of three clients successfully transition from shelter to safe and secure private accommodation.

While 30% do not, it's important to recognise that WCS serves clients facing complex trauma, and some may choose alternative paths beyond the scope of WCS support.



Every client's journey is unique, and WCS remains committed to empowering individuals to make the best choices for their future.



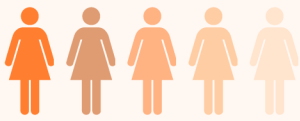
**92% of transitional clients exits into safe and secure housing.**



# FY2023/24 OUTCOMES

## WCS CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS

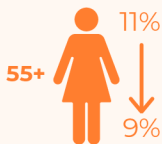
In FY24 there were several changes to demographics of clients compared to FY23. The overarching observation has been a shift to more indigenous clients and less culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) clients.



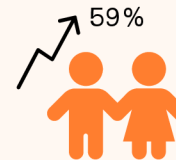
Indigenous clients increased by 5 percent from 20% in FY23 to 25% in FY24.



The number of clients born overseas decreased by 5 percent from 32% in FY23 to 27% in FY24.



Clients over 55 decreased from 11% in FY23 to 9% in FY24.



The number of children in shelter increased by 59% from 193 in FY22/23 to 306 in FY23/24.



The average age of clients remained stable at 40 for adults and 7 for children.



There has been a demographic shift to more indigenous clients and less culturally and linguistically diverse clients between FY23 and FY24.





“

When I was 36, I reached out to Women’s Community Shelters after my partner’s physical abuse left me and my two children homeless.

I was overwhelmed and didn’t know where to turn, but the team at shelter stepped in to support us. They helped me secure financial assistance and mental health support and even arranged daycare for my son, which was a huge relief.

One of the biggest challenges was helping my daughter overcome her fears related to school. With the team’s advocacy and regular counselling sessions, she gradually felt more confident, and I was able to support her successful return to school.

During this time, I was also job hunting, determined to rebuild our lives.

Thanks to their unwavering support, I eventually secured a private rental.

Today, I’m focused on creating a better future for myself and my children, and I’m incredibly grateful for the help I received at such a critical time.

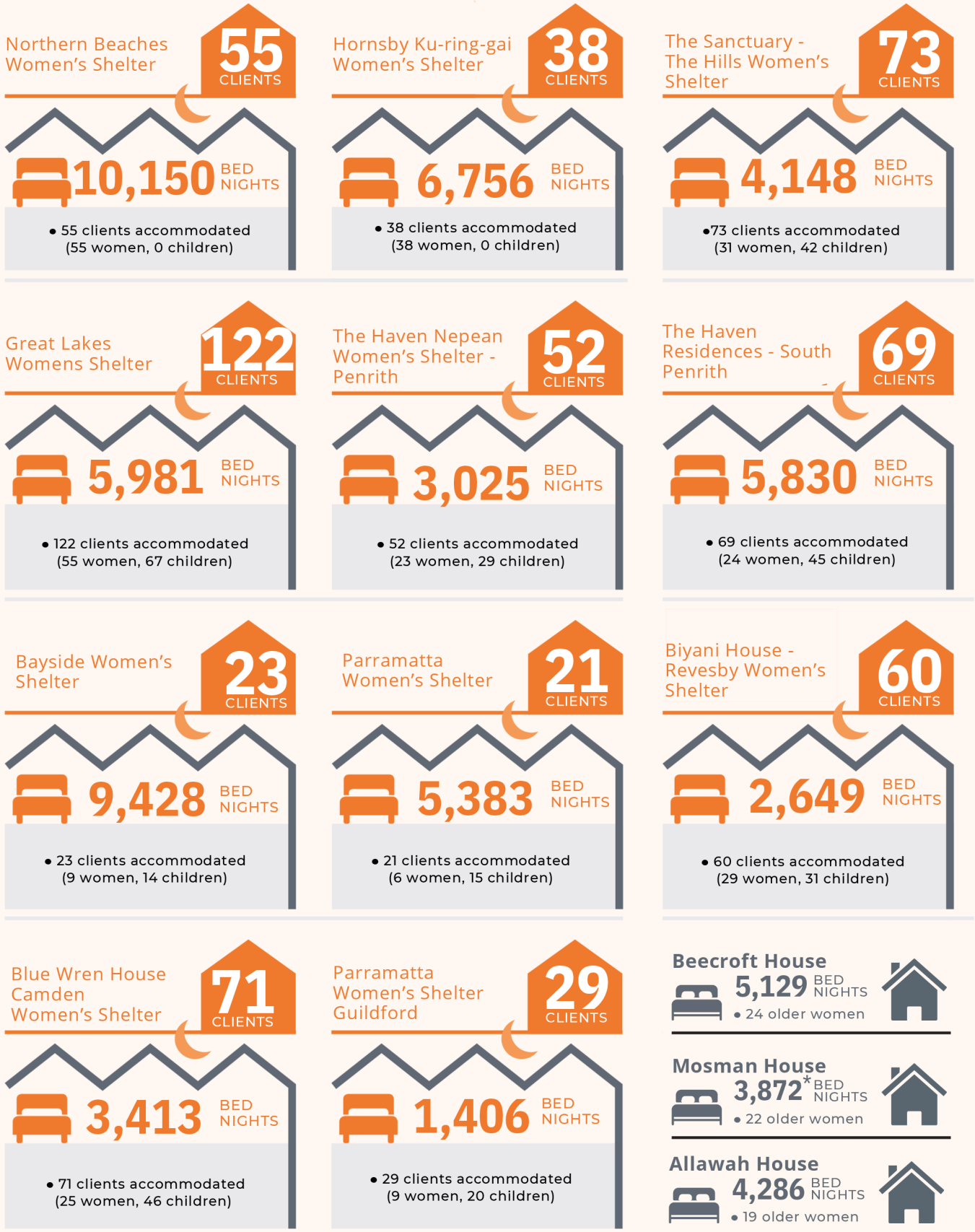
**Linda, former WCS shelter resident**

”



# FY2023/24 OUTCOMES

## WCS Shelter Snapshot



\*During the reporting period, Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter and Parramatta Women's Shelter experienced planned temporary closures. Mosman House bed nights are an estimate, as precise numbers cannot be determined due to changes in the methods used for data collection for this property.



# OUTCOMES ANALYSIS

WCS' highly skilled 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™

Outcomes STAR™ is an evidence based tool that is designed to help measure meaningful change and empower clients.

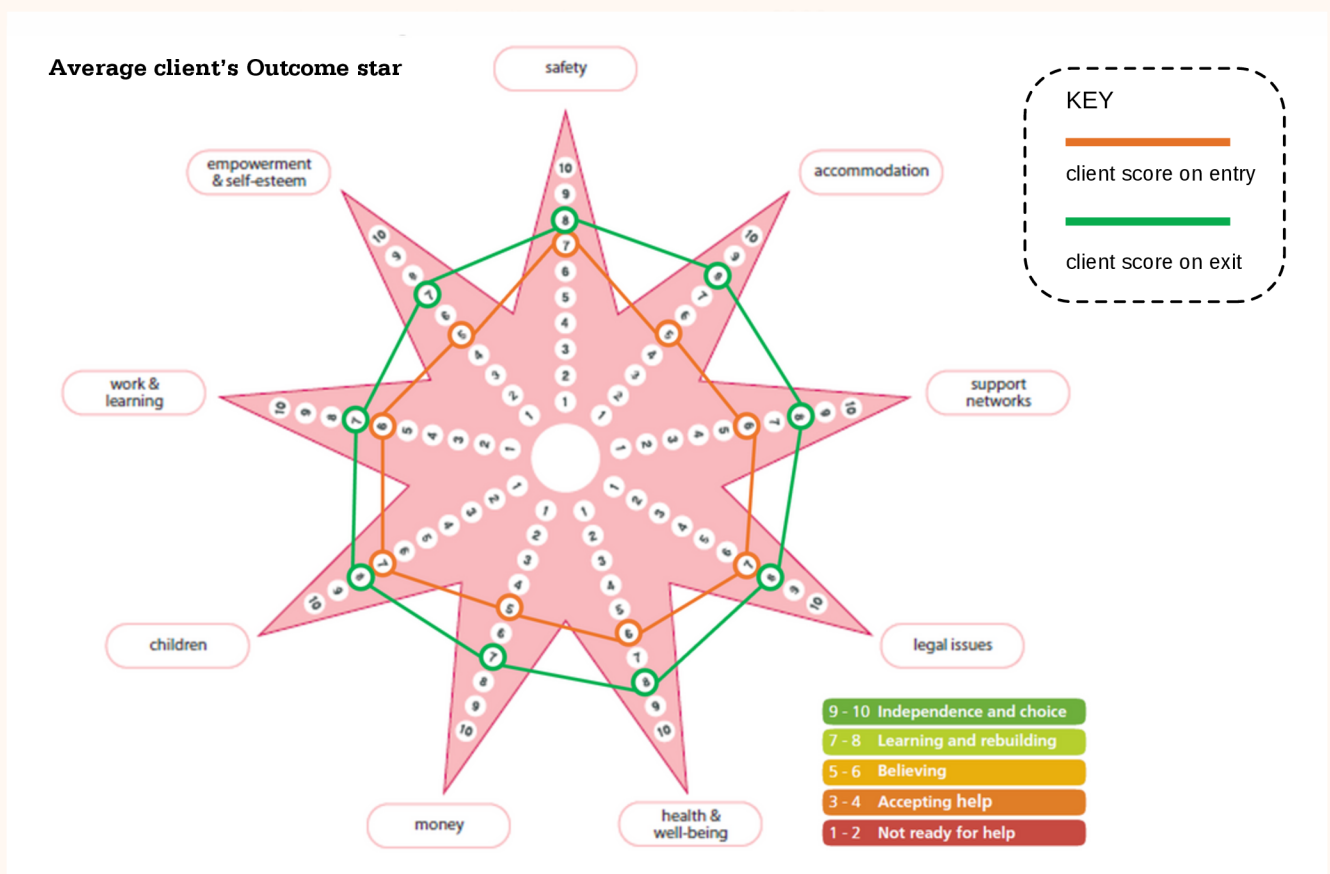
Each client has their own STAR, which allows them to monitor and track their personal goals and outcome areas with their case worker.

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 a client's specific goals and outcomes





**The shelter helped my kids to understand what we have just gone through and that it was ok and that life was going to get better.**

**Lucy, WCS shelter resident**



# WALK THE TALK SUMMARY OF IMPACT

Walk the Talk is our primary prevention program aimed at high school students. The program educates students about healthy relationships, DFV, consent and how to seek help, and connects them to their local shelter for ongoing service learning opportunities.

In 2023, WCS partnered with Social Impact Hub (SIH) to assess the impact of this program. The results exceeded our expectations demonstrating the power of the program to impact students, teachers, shelters and the wider community. Please scan the QR code overleaf for access to the full report.

“

*I've always believed that if engaged in the right way, young people can (and will) change the world. I'm incredibly proud to share this report which demonstrates the impact of engaging minds, hearts and hands.*”

Dannielle Miller OAM,  
WCS Director of Education  
and Special Projects



“

*This program is invaluable. There is nothing that you can say in a lesson situation that will ever give them something as real as contributing to a women's shelter where women in our community really need that support.*”

Year 10 Teacher

WORKSHOPS RUN  
AT **19** SCHOOLS



**2,846** STUDENTS PARTICIPATED  
IN WORKSHOPS



**7** OF WCS' NINE\* SHELTERS  
SUPPORTED



**\$149,887** TOTAL VALUE  
DELIVERED TO  
AUSTRALIAN  
COMMUNITY  
(volunteering plus goods/donations)



**100%**  
OF TEACHERS INTERVIEWED  
RECOMMEND WALK THE TALK



recognising the benefit to their school community  
in building community understanding of respectful  
relationships & the issues surrounding domestic violence

**100%** OF TEACHERS INTERVIEWED  
SHARED THAT STUDENTS  
DISCLOSED INCIDENCES  
of relationship abuse after the program ran



**100%** OF SHELTERS INTERVIEWED  
RECOGNISED THE LONG-TERM BENEFIT  
of enhanced community connection  
and the ability to call on support



\*WCS now has 11 shelters in NSW.

## STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

### PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Enhance knowledge of students and teachers about respectful relationships and DFV.
- ▶ Enhance capacity of students and teachers to act in response to instances and/or disclosure of DFV.
- ▶ Provide leadership opportunities to students.

### OUR YEAR IN ACHIEVEMENTS

#### SCHOOLS

- ▶ **Half-day student workshops** (phase one) ran in **19 schools**.
- ▶ **74%** of all schools engaged with ongoing opportunities to support their local shelter post workshop (phase two).

#### STUDENTS

More than 2,500 students participated in workshops and immediately following:

- ▶ **100%** of all students recognised the value of what they learned and consistently identified enhanced knowledge of consent, healthy and unhealthy relationships, relationship abuse and ways to support self and others.

#### 3-6 MONTHS AFTER COMPLETING THE WORKSHOP, OF SURVEYED STUDENTS:

- ▶ **83%** knew the signs of a healthy relationship.
- ▶ **76%** knew what enthusiastic consent meant.
- ▶ **71%** would reach out to domestic and family violence services if they needed to.
- ▶ **63%** knew more about gender stereotypes.
- ▶ **Meaningful opportunities** (such as enhancement of leadership skills or empowerment of students to become change makers) **were generated for 62% of students** with 35% of these students proactively nominating themselves into Walk The Talk leadership teams.



After 3-6 months, 2 out of 3 surveyed students retained high levels of understanding of our key messages.

#### From our students:

*"The best part was learning **how to spot signs of an unhealthy relationship** so we know what to do when we see it. I learned how to give consent, how to achieve healthy relationships, unhealthy relationships and different statistics about domestic abuse. Stereotypes about teenage boys are not true (we can stand up against violence against women)."*

*"I thought today was excellent. I learned more about consent, how to use your voice, to speak up for what is right, **sexism is not a joke** and always do what we love doing."*

*"I learnt so much about **different types of violence and abuse** and the horrifying statistics about violence towards women which was very eye opening. The part about how important the conversation around consent is was very necessary for people our age to hear. I learnt to be kinder to myself and my friends and peers and to check in with them."*

This report encompasses the period from January to December 2023.

TO READ THE FULL WALK THE TALK IMPACT REPORT PLEASE SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.

SCAN ME







# FUTURE STRATEGIC EXPANSION

WCS has a three-year goal to double the number of women and children we can support. To do this, WCS needs philanthropic support to invest in our capacity development to underpin the growth of WCS and its network, to help bring more crisis shelters, transitional properties and critical wrap-around support programs to life.

The WCS Hub is primarily funded through corporate and philanthropic partnerships, with minimal government funding allocated directly to the Shelter Network. The shelter funding model operates as a tripartite arrangement, combining contributions from the government, local communities, and donors and philanthropists.

WCS has a proven model for scaling our operations and an 11-year track record of social impact. We know with confidence that we will quickly fill as many crisis shelters and transitional properties as we are able to operate.

## NEW SOUTH WALES

We are currently working with two communities in regional NSW with the goal to establish two new crisis shelters.

We are also walking beside and supporting a First Nations organisations who is expanding their health services into crisis shelters, to support more First Nations women and children.

WCS was successful with NSW Capital funding, working in partnership with community housing providers as well as in our own right as a registered community housing provider, with projects in Guildford, Revesby, Penrith, Hornsby and the Northern Beaches.



Captions fom top: celebrating the launch of WCS' second core and cluster shelter located in Guildford; a shelter bedroom furnished by Temple & Webster; Celebrating Annabelle's 10 years of WCS at the Paul Ramsay Foundation.



# FUTURE STRATEGIC EXPANSION

## VICTORIA

We have formed a steering committee on the Mornington Peninsula, Victoria, to establish our first crisis shelter outside NSW. The Victorian shelter system is overwhelmed. 80%\* of women seeking to leave DFV are accommodated in unsatisfactory motels each night. Our goal is to have this shelter operational within 18 months, and to develop a blueprint for further Victorian and interstate expansion to support more women and children across Australia.

## MEANWHILE USE HOUSING

Two further meanwhile use projects are being explored to continue our delivery of a pragmatic housing solution for women over 55 during the current housing crisis.

The WCS Meanwhile Use program provides transitional housing for women, children, and older single women escaping domestic violence by repurposing underutilised properties into temporary housing.

## SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Australia's housing system is in crisis, making it difficult to transition women from crisis shelters to permanent, affordable housing. With no affordable options available, WCS aims to establish a property portfolio to provide social and affordable homes for women and children who have experienced domestic violence.

As part of this initial pilot, we are fundraising for our first purchase of a small unit block in Western Sydney.

WCS secured funding through the Community Housing Innovation Fund – Domestic and Family Violence (DVF) and local community support to deliver five social and one affordable housing units for DFV victim-survivors. Securing a suitable property is well underway.



Captions from top: WCS CEO, Annabelle Daniel OAM presenting at the WCS Mornington Peninsula Community Forum; Housing Minister, the Hon. Rose Jackson visits Beecroft House; Mosman House - WCS' second large Meanwhile Use property for older women; Former Meanwhile Use client Shirley who has now moved on to permanent housing.

\*Safe Steps, 2022



# **WCS GOVERNANCE**

Women's Community Shelters Ltd, trading under the name Women's Community Shelters, is a registered DGR1 charity and holds the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC) Registered Charity Tick.

The organisation is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC) and operates as a company limited by guarantee, with the Australian Company Number (ACN) 153 006 556.

As a Public Benevolent Institution, WCS is dedicated to ensuring transparency, accountability and sound governance, which are integral parts of its Constitution.

In 2023, WCS was successfully awarded the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES) accreditation. ASES accreditation is a set of internationally recognised standards introduced by The NSW Government's Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) that all DCJ-funded homelessness providers must achieve by June 2024.

## **BOARD COMMITTEES**

The Board maintains several committees to fulfill its governance obligations effectively. Participating in these committees provides WCS directors with opportunities to deepen their understanding of the organisation, engage more actively, and fully utilise their expertise for the benefit of WCS.

### **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.

### **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.

### **FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE**

The Fundraising Committee is a permanent body established with the goal of securing funds to ensure the financial sustainability and stability of the charity.

### **PROPERTY COMMITTEE:**

The Property Committee oversees WCS Community Housing (CHP) assets, manage associated compliance requirements, and collaborate with the Finance Risk and Audit Committee (FRAC). Together, these committees advise the Board on matters concerning the acquisition, sale, or development of properties within the WCS Property portfolio.



## WCS BOARD



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

Julie White 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) and a Board Member of Southern Highlands Community Foundation. A member of Chief Executive Women and Australian Institute of Company Directors. (Feb 2012 - present)



**Peter Hunt (Founder, Board Member)**

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. (Sep 2011 - present)



**Paul Say**

Paul has over 40 years' experience in commercial property with Lendlease, Dexu and JLL. Currently he is a Non-Executive Director of listed company Cedar Woods and Chairman of the Mirvac Wholesale Office Fund providing governance, transactional and strategic advice. Paul is a Fellow of the AIV and RICS and a qualified property valuer. (Oct 2015 - present)



**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. (Aug 2018 - present)



**Sr 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 has had over 40 years' experience in the social service sector including various governance roles. (Aug 2018 - 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)



**Daniel Martin**

Daniel Martin is the Director of Foundation at St Aloysius' College and serves on the College's Leadership team. Daniel has over 20 years' experience working within leading health-related charities, universities and schools and previously held senior leadership positions at UNSW Sydney and the University of Sydney, where he contributed towards the successful \$1B INSPIRED philanthropic campaign. (Apr 2020 - Sep 2024)



**David Winterbottom**

David is an experienced Chartered Accountant with over 30 years of expertise in complex financial scenarios. He specialises in not-for-profit boards and executive roles, including being the Senior Financial Advisor of 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 Whyte is an Executive Director with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. Across numerous roles with the NSW Government, Harriet has worked on policy challenges and with communities, politicians and all levels of government to improve the lives of all NSW residents. She currently serves on the board of LGBTQI+ mentoring charity, Out for Australia. (Apr 2023 - present)





(Walk the Talk) has been a powerful and transformative experience for our students.

Women's Community Shelters, in collaboration with our school, has demonstrated the ability to deliver a best practice educational program that not only tackles a difficult topic but does so in a manner that is trauma-informed, sensitive, and empowering for all participants.

The program's focus on positivity and resilience ensures that students are not overwhelmed by the severity of the issues at hand but are instead encouraged to act as informed and capable agents of change in their own communities.

**Walk the Talk teacher testimonial**







# WITH THANKS

We are deeply grateful to our donors and supporters. Together we have supported over 7,600 vulnerable women and children fleeing homelessness and family violence.

The generosity shown by our local community, philanthropists, businesses, government bodies, partners, and individual supporters fuels our mission. Your commitment is crucial, and our work would not be possible without your continued support.

Your involvement truly makes a difference.

## PHILANTHROPIC, COMMUNITY & CORPORATE SUPPORTERS

8 Mile Trust	GIC	PNI Foundation
Ada Le Tet	Goodman Foundation	Poole and Gallimore Foundation
AIG Australia Limited	Goodman Property Services (Aust) Pty Limited	Restore Hope Foundation
Alexandra & Lloyd Martin Family Foundation	Grahame Mapp Family Foundation	Revesby Workers' Club Ltd
Alison Fowler	Gray Family Foundation	Ronald Geoffrey Arnott Foundation
Alphinity Investment Management	Gregory Ainsworth	Rotary Club of The Entrance
AMP Foundation	Helen Bowden	Sallie Johnston
Anthony Cuzzilla	Honnery Cahill Gift	Seasonal Supplies Pty Ltd
ATS Charitable Foundation	Hudson Hotel	Shaw and Partners Foundation
Australian Philanthropic Services Foundation	Hummingong Community Choirs	Skrzynski Foundation
Baxter Charitable Foundation	Hunt Family Community Foundation	St George Foundation
Bell Family Foundation	Hunt Family Foundation	Stranfield Pty Limited
Bomberry Pty Ltd	i = change	The Vernon Foundation
Camceda Pty Ltd ITF Roberts Family Foundation	IMC Pacific Foundation	Susan and Stuart Lloyd Hurwitz
Candice and Peter Berger	ING Australia	Suzanne Grae Corporation Pty Ltd
Canturi Jewels	James N Kirby Foundation	Temple & Webster
Cara Giving Fund	JLL	TGH Operations Management Pty Ltd (Momento Hospitality)
Charles Warman Foundation Pty Ltd	Katharine Leavey	The Adolph Basser Trust
Christine Fensham	KPMG	The Alternative Future Foundation
Christopher Kelly	Lambert Bridge Foundation	The Fairview Endowment:
City of Sydney	Lay Choo Koh	The Horizon Foundation
Community Impact Foundation	Lend Lease Real Estate Investments	The Macdoch Foundation
Cooper Tuxen Foundation	Lendlease FutureSteps	The Macleod Smith Foundation
Credit Suisse Management	Lenity Australia	The Orgill Family Foundation
Darville Foundation	Lions Club - District 201N5	The Rye Beach Opportunity Shop
David Winterbottom	Link Wentworth	The Sir James Mcneill Trust
Dominic Spillane	Loefam Foundation	The Sisters of Mercy Parramatta
Dominique Home	Lorna Jane Pty Ltd	The Tribuo Foundation
Eco Direct	Macoun Charitable Foundation	The Wiggs Foundation
Eden Foundation	Macquarie Group Foundation	Thyne Reid Foundation
Edwards Estate	Margaret Cheng	Todd Barlin and Vincent Ro
Elizabeth Bryan Endowment	Marie Cusack	Turramurra Uniting Church
Estate of the Late Pnina Taylor	Mary Alice Foundation	UBS Australasia
Ethos Urban	Myra Trust	UBS Optimus Foundation Trustee Pty Ltd
F&K De Angeli Foundation	NAB Foundation	VDC Offering
Fidelity International Foundation	Neilson Foundation	VGI Partners Foundation
Furama Darling Harbour / Golden Swan Investments Pty Ltd	Omera Partners Pty Ltd	Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation
Gene Pty Ltd	Pater Pty Ltd ATF The George & Mary	William Clement
GHS Legal	Beswick Fund	Wotnot
	Paul Ramsay Foundation	Yardi Systems Pty Ltd
	PAYCE Foundation	Yarranabbe Foundation
	Peter Hunt	





# WITH THANKS

## PROBONO/IN KIND PARTNERS

Body + Soul  
 C3 Church Carlingford  
 Camilla  
 Clarins  
 Gwinganna Lifestyle Retreat  
 Goldman Sachs  
 Hedgefunds Rocks  
 Kirsten Delaney Photography  
 Garage Roasters  
 David Jones  
 Archie Rose  
 Paramount Hotel  
 Country Road  
 Impact Group  
 In Bed  
 John Kell – Hicksons Lawyers  
 John Zapper  
 Matt and team at DVMovers  
 Pillow Talk  
 Radical Yes  
 Re-Love  
 Stellar Magazine  
 Temple and Webster  
 Thread Together  
 Two Good

## HOUSING STAKEHOLDERS

AHOW  
 Arise Foundation  
 BEA Projects  
 Bridge Housing  
 Department of Communities and Justice  
 DVNSW  
 Evolve Housing  
 Homelessness NSW  
 Housing All Australians  
 Housing Older Persons Project  
 Hume Housing  
 Lendlease  
 Link Wentworth  
 Momento Hospitality Group  
 OWN (Older Women's Network)  
 Pacific Link Housing  
 PAYCE Foundation  
 Shelter NSW  
 Sisters of Mercy  
 Twilight Aged Care  
 Uniting Church Parramatta

## GOVERNMENT SUPPORTERS

Australian Government  
 Bayside Council  
 Camden Council  
 City of Sydney  
 NSW Department of Communities & Justice  
 NSW Government  
 Parramatta City Council  
 Service NSW

## WCS PATRON

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

## WCS AMBASSADOR

Sarah 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 Hodge

## WORKPLACE GIVING

Achievers; Atlassian; Australia Post; Challenger Group Services Pty; Electronic Arts; Equinix; Ernst & Young; Findex; Global Reward Solution; Google; IBM; LexisNexis; Macquarie; Morningstar; REA Group; Reece Australia Pty Ltd; Rio Tinto Services Ltd; Salesforce; Suncorp Group; Sydney Water; TripAdvisor; TTC Global; Veeva; Westpac Group; Zurich Foundation



## With Gratitude

The list shown here highlights contributions of \$5,000+ from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024, and includes a selection of our long-term major partners.

We sincerely thank those who have chosen to remain anonymous. Your support is truly valued, and we are deeply grateful for your contribution.

If any names have been mistakenly omitted, we sincerely apologise and please let us know so we can promptly address it.

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





Life certainly has ups and downs for all of us. And I thought I'd had my fair share of the downs! But I was not ready for the curve ball that struck me early this year. I was settled in a house with a garden and very supportive friends around me. Life was OK! Then through unforeseen circumstances I was given six weeks to leave the house and find a rental.

I had never rented and it didn't take long to realise that a private rental on the Central Coast was out of my reach. I did not sleep for a week. I trawled the internet checking every rental, in every town, even out the back of Bourke. There was nothing! Then it was put to me that Allawah House was opening and would I be interested!

I said NO Way as my support people were in a different area. So, I kept searching. I signed up for social housing, but I came crashing down when I received the news that 'Hey there's nothing out there for you'!

I finally gave in and went to look at Allawah House. I was pleasantly surprised when I walked in. It felt like I could make it home. I said yes to moving in there and signed up and moved in a few days later. I just sat in the room and cried with relief. I wasn't going to be continually hassled to move out! They were sad tears but GOOD tears as I felt safe. I had time now to gather myself and prepare for the next phase of my life. The support from everyone has been amazing and I can now look forward with optimism.

There are many generous, caring people on the Central Coast and you all here are amongst the best. Thank you.

**Ivy, former WCS transitional client**





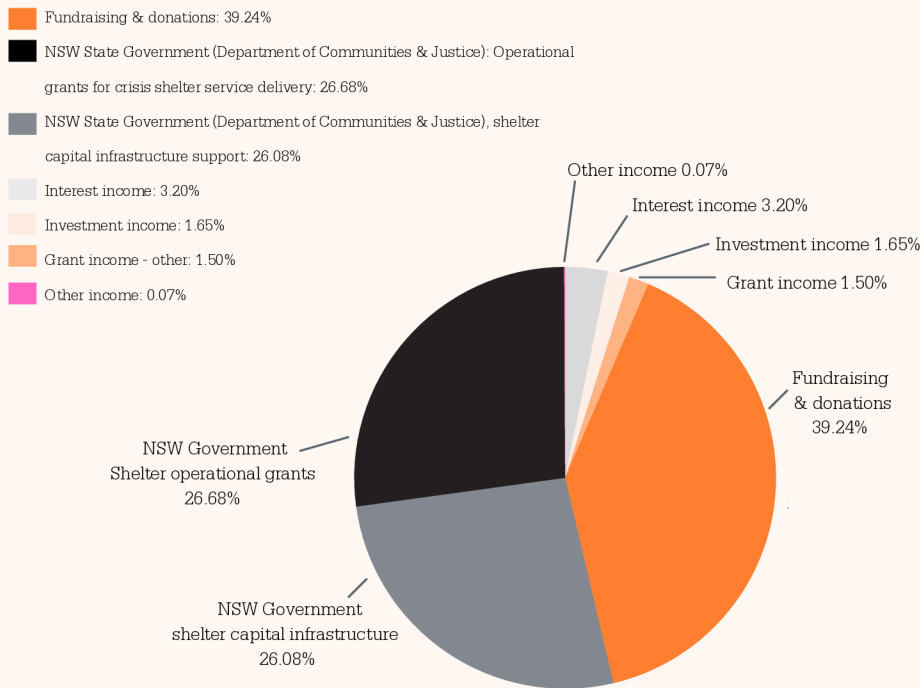


# WCS FINANCIALS 2023/24

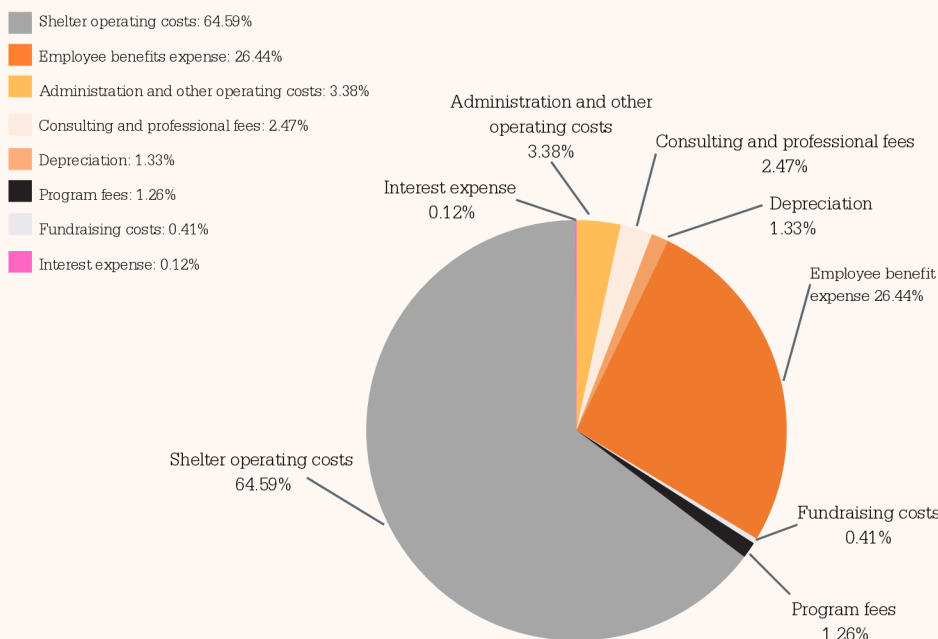
As highlighted in this report, WCS has significantly expanded its impact to meet the increasing needs of women and children across NSW. This growth is supported by diverse funding sources and strategic financial management, both essential to sustaining and expanding our services.

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

## WCS Income



## WCS Expenditure



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

## Accountability

### WOMEN'S COMMUNITY SHELTERS LIMITED

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

### ACCOUNTANTS

Purpose Accounting  
583 Elizabeth Street,  
Redfern NSW 2016

### AUDITORS

SDJA Audit Specialists  
PO Box 324,  
West Pennant Hills  
NSW 2125

### SOLICITORS

Hicksons Lawyers  
One International Towers,  
Level 24,  
100 Barangaroo Avenue,  
Barangaroo NSW 2000

### OFFICE

418a Elizabeth Street,  
Surry Hills NSW 2010

ABN 54 153 006 556

ACN 153 006 556



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



“

Our long-term goal is that WCS is no longer needed. We will have helped create safety, shelter and support for all women and their children experiencing domestic and family violence in Australia.

Former residents will be living free from homelessness and violence, will have social and emotional wellbeing, with community connection and belonging.

”

**Annabelle Daniel OAM**  
**WCS CEO**









**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT  
WOMEN'S COMMUNITY SHELTERS OR  
SCAN THE QR CODE**

-  [www.womenscommunityshelters.org.au](http://www.womenscommunityshelters.org.au)
-  [hello@womenscommunityshelters.org.au](mailto:hello@womenscommunityshelters.org.au)
-  (02)9539 6859
-  [womenscommunityshelters](https://www.facebook.com/womenscommunityshelters)
-  [womenscommunitysheltersau](https://www.instagram.com/womenscommunitysheltersau)
-  [women-s-community-shelter](https://www.linkedin.com/company/women-s-community-shelter)
-  [WCS\\_001](https://twitter.com/WCS_001)
-  [womenscommunityshelters1450](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwomenscommunityshelters1450)