




Women's
Hornsby Kuringgai Shelter

Annual Report 2023-24



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Acknowledgement of Country

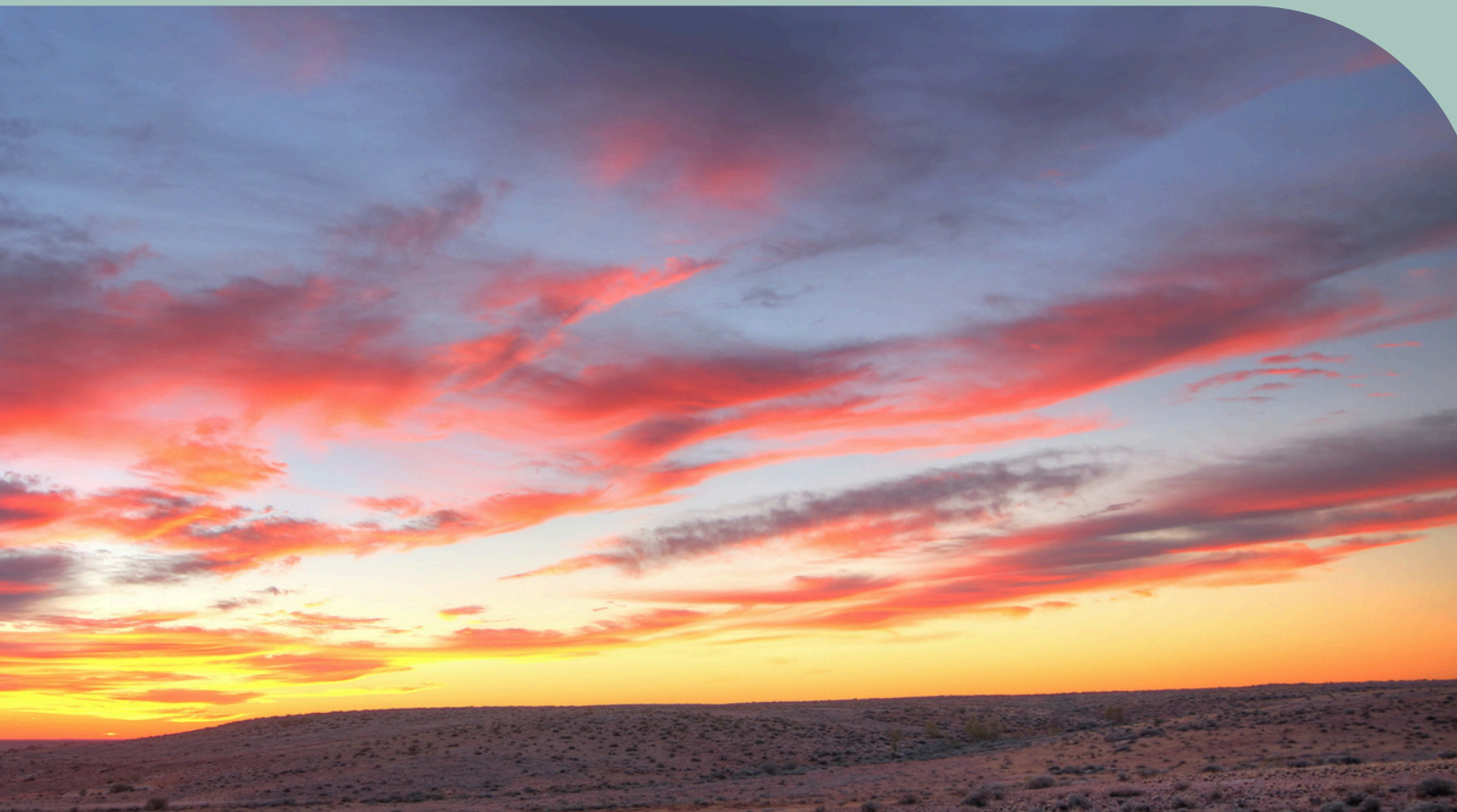
Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter acknowledges the Dharug and Guringai people who are the traditional owners of the lands, waters and communities in which we live and work.

We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging, especially Elders working to eradicate homelessness and domestic and family violence.

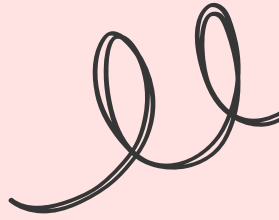
We acknowledge that homelessness and domestic and family violence are both problems experienced disproportionately by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

We acknowledge the strength, resilience and wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and celebrate their ongoing custodianship of this beautiful land we all share.

We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.



Women
experiencing
domestic
violence and
homelessness
are at the heart
of all we do.



The Shelter was established in 2015 in response to an identified need in the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai area to provide a safe place for women experiencing domestic violence and homelessness. Every woman deserves shelter, safety, and opportunity. HKWS Shelter is located on Dharug and Guringai land.



Mission

To provide a safe place for women experiencing domestic violence and homelessness. We treat all women with dignity and respect, empowering them to create a better future.

Vision

A community that values all women, particularly vulnerable women, and supports those experiencing the trauma of domestic violence and homelessness.

Values

Compassion, Integrity, Respect, Advocacy, Empowerment.



Purpose

We provide support for women experiencing domestic violence and homelessness through crisis accommodation and outreach services in the community.

Our home is a place where women in need can access, short-term accommodation, safe, and secure, without judgement, or obligation. We facilitate holistic services and provide practical assistance. We empower vulnerable women, through opportunities for personal growth, and the development of life skills, for a future that is self-reliant.

We commit to fostering a culture that is free from discrimination, where all women matter, regardless of age, sexuality, cultural and linguistic diversity, disability or mental illness. We are advocates for the individual and for a society in which every woman can live free from fear and experience life to her full potential.

During FY2024, our Shelter Manager and Caseworkers worked tirelessly to provide tailored holistic casework, improving outcomes for the women who sought support from HKWS. Women were provided with safe and secure accommodation and empowered to reach their personal goals.



78

women were assisted by HKWS to start a new life free from the danger of domestic abuse and homelessness.

16

women and families were supported in our HKWS Outreach Program.

36%

of women were assisted by HKWS to secure employment, ensuring income security and independence.

90%

of women were exited into secure and long-term accommodation.

332

clients have been supported by HKWS programs since 2020.

69%

of women supported by HKWS identified as coming from a culturally and linguistically diverse background.

1627

short-term and emergency accommodation bed nights provided by HKWS.

49

nights was the average stay for a woman at HKWS.

61%

of women spoke English as a second language.

5129

bed nights provided by our transitional home, Beecroft House.

406

nights was the average stay for a woman at Beecroft House.

19%

of women presented to HKWS due to housing insecurity.

61%

of women presented to HKWS due to domestic and family violence.

22%

of women supported by HKWS were over the age of 55.

20-65

was the age-range of women supported by HKWS.





Chair's Report

Women and children escaping domestic violence and homelessness are vulnerable, often fearful and traumatised. Our Shelter Manager and caseworkers treat every woman with dignity and respect, providing a warm, welcome and a safe space. Everyone at HKWS keeps our clients at the heart of all we do.

We offer so much more than a bed for the night. Ours is a message of hope.

With tailored support, professional expertise and kindness, our highly trained shelter staff empower women to rebuild their lives. Through transformative change, women can create a future for themselves that is free from violence, and one that is self-reliant.

I am delighted to present the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter 2024 Annual Report.

We have had a year of growth, with a renovated trauma informed shelter, caseworkers delivering new programs, and the establishment of new partnerships. Our crisis shelter has been operating at capacity. We have also provided outreach services, and support to women aged 55 years and over at Beecroft House transitional accommodation.

We have provided trauma informed, women centred, strengths-based support to all clients with an increased focus on outcomes and impact. Each woman is supported to develop her own goals, and achievements are celebrated.

Our caring and engaged community makes this work possible.

As a volunteer led, community-based organisation, Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter continues to value the support we receive from individuals, organisations and businesses. Our vital work is only made possible through the donations of time, funds and expertise so generously shared with us. Meaningful change is only made possible through the commitment of inspired individuals, determined to provide the resources necessary to empower the women who seek our care.

Achievements for 2024

I am pleased to report that all strategic priorities remain front and centre of our business plan, and our mission remains unchanged, to provide a safe place for women experiencing domestic abuse and homelessness. Our core values continue to guide us. Compassion, Integrity, Respect, Advocacy, Empowerment.

Of note:

- August 2023: HKWS successfully gained ASES accreditation.
- August 2023: External renovation of the shelter completed.
- September 2023: Pro bono trauma informed interior designers completed work, transforming the amenity for residents and staff.
- September 2023: New Shelter Lead and staff onboarded
- October 2023: Residents returned to the shelter
- March 2024: International Women's Day lunch

HKWS has been operating at capacity, and residents are achieving wonderful outcomes.

This year our networks have expanded through the support of businesses such as Granny Flat Solutions, BradyMarcs Buyers Advisory, Cheeky Food Events, Temple & Webster, Bunnings, Ku-ring-gai Plant Rescue.

HKWS is very grateful to businesses and community organisations and schools who continue to provide assistance, including, KPMG, Clayton UTZ, Bendigo Bank Lindfield Community Bank, SOS Removals, Kipling's Garage Turrumurra, Pymble Ladies' College, Barker College, Knox Grammar School, local Rotary Clubs, and Soroptimists.

We have also been overwhelmed by the extraordinary generosity from a number of individual donors, who wish to remain anonymous. Some have committed to support us financially for a number of years.

Collaborative relationships and funding assist us deliver legal, health, financial wellbeing, employment, and life skills support.

Community and Sector Engagement

Everyone at HKWS advocates for our services and the women we support, through representations in many settings. This year we have contributed to the Ku-ring-gai Council Domestic Violence Prevention Action Plan, the Northern suburbs DV Network, the 16 Days of Activism Working Group. We speak widely to many audiences, from school students, to community groups, and to politicians. Through advocacy we increase awareness and work to address the underlying drivers of gendered violence.

Philanthropic support is our major source of income. We're always grateful to individuals and organisations who fundraise for us. Our major fundraiser for 2024 was our International Women's Day Lunch. This sold out event led to many conversations and ongoing generosity from our community.

HKWS Team

Our professional team, Shelter Lead and Caseworkers are at the core of HKWS.

We were delighted to welcome our Shelter Lead, Angelica Molina, in September 2023. Angelia brings with her a wealth of experience from the community housing and the mental health sectors. Angelica has created a warm and welcoming culture for both staff and clients. She leads a dedicated team of skilled professional caseworkers.

Noush Bentley stepped into the GM role while HKWS GM Emily Tweddell was on Maternity Leave. Noush was inspirational and worked tirelessly with volunteers and staff, managing multiple projects. We welcomed Emily back to her role in January 2024 and she has hit the ground running.

HKWS volunteer board members must be recognised for their dedication and commitment. It's a joy to share this journey with people who have such passion and expertise. We welcomed Nick Blackwell and Tanya Raubenheimer to the board at the AGM in December 2023. I would like to acknowledge the very tragic death of Jenny Tallis, Deputy Chair and Company Secretary, from a rare and aggressive form of brain cancer. Jenny brought commitment and significant expertise to the board. She was warm and generous and is sadly missed by us all.

Our board members chair committees of highly dedicated and committed volunteers.

We are grateful for the support of volunteer patrons, Ambassador Nick McArdle, volunteer committees members, and all the volunteers who assist in many different ways throughout the year.

The Future

Following a year of growth, the future for HKWS looks exciting. We have identified the need to support women and children and are searching for a new rental property. We are also anticipating the work commencing on our NSW government funded purpose-built shelter. HKWS is focussed on sustainable growth and well positioned to increase and diversify the services we offer women and children, empowering them to develop new skills and build a better future.

In 2025 we will celebrate 10 years supporting women in crisis. We are grateful to the founders, the inaugural board and staff, who shared the vision and built the strong foundations from which we have grown.

It is a privilege to work with such talented, dynamic and compassionate people.

We are very grateful to everyone in our community for their kindness, dedication, financial support and advocacy. Together, we can inspire hope, and bring meaningful change to the lives of women and children escaping domestic abuse and homelessness.

Catherine Knox



Catherine Knox with Deputy Chair, Jacquie Murray

“With tailored support, professional expertise and kindness, our highly trained shelter staff empower women to rebuild their lives.”





General Manager's Report

The women in our care

Our mission at Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter is to empower women in crisis to create a better future. Our clients are at the heart of everything we do. They are the reason our team, be it our incredible caseworkers or voluntary board members, show up (and go above and beyond) each and every day.

It is easy to be overwhelmed by the national crisis that is domestic violence and homelessness. The statistics are truly shocking;

- 1 in 3 Australian women has experienced physical and/or sexual violence perpetrated by a man since the age of 15.
- Domestic violence is the leading cause of homelessness in Australia.
- So far in 2024 in Australia, one woman has been murdered every four days.

We all wish HKWS didn't have to exist and that we weren't in these roles. However, the reality is, is that it does and we have to be.

Women who seek our care usually do so after multiple attempts at leaving a violent situation. They come to our Shelter traumatised with little hope.

Across 10 weeks, our team of caseworkers walk alongside every woman. Treating her with dignity and respect. Understanding her unique needs and working towards her unique goals - be it finding employment, or supporting her during a legal case. And of course, connecting her to secure accommodation.

Our approach is client-centred and trauma-informed. Each woman is the expert of her experience and the agent of her life. We hope she leaves our doors empowered, with independence and choice - and most importantly to a future free from fear and violence.

Our passionate team

Each woman's bright future is made possible thanks to the support of our professional and hard-working caseworkers, led by our Shelter Manager Angelica Molina. A Clinical Psychologist with over 20 years experience in mental health and community services sectors, Angelica has brought a wealth of knowledge, energy and compassion to the role. She has established a cohesive, committed and collaborative team who not only empower each resident, but empower one another.



The Shelter team

Community angels

I would like to thank this passionate team - Angelica, Munira, Ami, Mimi, Ana and Nikita. You are all an inspiration. You deliver this important work with such heart, empathy, vigour and care. I feel so proud to be surrounded by strong and competent women helping women.

My gratitude extends to our many volunteers, those who help out with various tasks or wellbeing sessions at the Shelter. Those who support HKWS by helping at community events. And of course our committee members and our board members, led by our Chair Catherine Knox, who give so much time and energy to HKWS.

Cathie's unwavering dedication to this cause and passionate leadership filters down. We have a diverse team from many different backgrounds and professions, however one thing is shared; a deep care and a fierce determination to support women, and mother's with their children, escaping domestic violence and homelessness.

In August 2023, HKWS achieved the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES) accreditation. Introduced for the first time, this process means adhering to a new set of internationally recognised standards mandated by the Department of Communities and Justice.

Achieving accreditation was a culmination of hard work and dedication by many current and former HKWS team members, notably former Shelter Manager Hylette Evans and spearheaded by former Acting GM Noush Bentley. The next date for accreditation is at the end of 2026.

At HKWS, we are committed to quality and continuous system improvement, ensuring we deliver the best possible service.

The last financial year has seen an abundance of angelic energy gracing every facet of our work at HKWS. Our work is not possible without community. Whether you are an advocate, a donor, a volunteer, a service provider, a community sector agency - you are all angels.

With limited government funding, HKWS relies on philanthropic donations. The generosity we have seen this year has been astonishing. Particular thank you to everyone who supported the significant Shelter renovations which took place from May - September 2023. These essential works would not have been possible without you.

Over the past year, community groups, foundations, corporates and individuals have continued to believe in the service we are providing and the women empowered by this service. For this, we are so grateful.

Our connection with community organisations and sector networks has strengthened this year with the solidification of meaningful and useful partnerships. We continue to be part of a broader network of shelters, under Women's Community Shelters, who are an invaluable source of wisdom and practical support. Community connections, like the area DV Network, continue to be a hub for collaboration and innovation in our practice and approach.

Local organisations, be it Bendigo Community Bank or various Rotary Clubs to name just a few, continue to be our biggest advocates. By raising funds and awareness for our service, these groups are keeping the issue of domestic and family violence front and centre, creating impactful community change. Thank you also to our many pro-bono service partners who work invisibly to provide assistance in their area of expertise, notably KPMG and Clayton Utz.

Looking ahead

Next year, 2025 will mark 10 years since the inception of HKWS. What a legacy the founding members have created.

Today, HKWS stands as a strong and established organisation. Over the last decade it has gone from strength to strength and grown in its service and vision.

Next year will be a year to celebrate and recognise the incredible foundation upon which HKWS has been built, and the many people who made this possible. It will also be a year of galvanising, of harnessing that very foundation to move onwards and upwards in our capacity and subsequent impact.

I have nothing but optimism for the year ahead, knowing that in each stride we take, the women and children who seek our care will remain at the core of everything we do.

Emily Trueddell

“Over the past year, community groups, foundations, corporates and individuals have continued to believe in the service we are providing and the women empowered by this service. For this, we are so grateful, thank you.”





Shelter Manager's Report

Outcomes for Women

The women we support are our top priority in everything we do. Our HKWS team is fully committed to meeting their needs, bringing together passion, professionalism, and a spirit of collaboration to empower each woman escaping domestic violence and homelessness.

At the heart of our shelter's success lies the remarkable dedication of our Caseworkers, whose tireless efforts have transformed the lives of every woman we support.

From the moment a resident steps through our doors, the Caseworkers become a source of guidance, strength, and compassion, tailoring their support to meet each individual's unique needs and goals.

Our Caseworkers work from a person-centred, strengths-based, and trauma-informed framework, ensuring that every woman feels safe, respected, and empowered. They take the time to listen to each resident's story, building trust and creating personalised pathways for healing and progress.

With empathy at the core of their work, they foster an environment where women can reclaim their voices, rebuild their confidence, and take steps toward a brighter future.

Beyond individual case management, our Caseworkers actively collaborate with external services and community organizations to ensure residents have access to comprehensive resources. Whether coordinating legal aid, mental health services, financial support, or employment opportunities, they act as advocates, navigating complex systems to help each woman achieve the best possible outcomes. Their ability to forge strong partnerships ensures no resident walks this journey alone.

Each resident is paired with a dedicated Caseworker and participates in weekly meetings to assess progress and refine their goals. Guided by the Empowerment Star tool, these plans cover critical areas such as safety, housing, relationships, employment, legal matters, and emotional well-being. Caseworkers use this tool to track milestones and provide the encouragement residents need to stay motivated and empowered throughout their journey.

This year, the strength of our Casework team has been remarkable. They not only offer practical solutions but also inspire hope, helping residents see possibilities beyond their current circumstances. Their commitment, professionalism, and collaboration have created a ripple effect of positive change, enabling women to rebuild their lives with dignity and independence.

We are deeply honored to support the remarkable women who come to our program, each carrying a profound strength and resilience. Despite the immense challenges they've faced, they find the courage to reclaim their voices, rediscover their power, and reconnect with who they truly are.

Every day, we are inspired by their bravery as they rise above their past, proving that with the right support, they can overcome any obstacle and embrace the powerful women they are within. It is our greatest privilege to witness their transformation, filled with renewed determination and hope.

Thank you

When I joined this community, I never imagined I would find such an immense sea of generosity and compassion. During my year managing the shelter, I have constantly been surprised, witnessing miracles made possible by generosity from individuals, organisations, and our board members. There are times when we look at each other, uncertain whether we'll find the resources or support we need from outside. And just at that moment, I will receive a phone call or a response to a request, and we look at each other again, thinking the same thing: when it comes to these women, miracles happen.

I have no words to express my gratitude to all the generous hearts that change lives through our shelter. It is only because of your incredible support that we are able to help every woman who comes to our door and give her hope for a better future.

Whenever I have the chance, I remind our residents of the amazing community that surrounds them, making them feel supported and cared for. THANK YOU!

Angelica Molina



Angelica Molina with domestic violence survivor and advocate, Simone O'Brien

“Together, we look forward to continuing this vital work, knowing that every small step taken with compassion and care leads to lasting change.”



A woman's journey

Focus on safety and wellbeing

1

Conduct a needs assessment and establish a case plan

2

Linking with support services

3

Facilitating DV specific payments

4

Assess readiness for employment

5

Identify job opportunities and start application process

6

Follow up on services and support options

7

Begin exit plan discussions

8

Seek accommodation options

9

Exit logistics toward a new, brighter future

Beyond individual case management, our caseworkers at HKWS actively collaborate with external services and community organisations to ensure residents have access to comprehensive resources.

Whether coordinating legal aid, mental health services, financial support, or employment opportunities, they act as advocates, navigating complex systems to help each woman achieve the best possible outcomes.

Across 10 weeks, they forge strong partnerships to ensure no resident walks this journey alone.

Each woman is empowered to create a brighter future.



Maria's story

"My name is Maria (not her real name). I'm a fifty one year old woman who came to Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter in February 2024.*

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.

I finally called HKWS and this was to be my introduction to a truly wonderful woman. Her name is Munira. Luckily for me she became my key caseworker.

By the time I came to HKWS 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) at HKWS has a special place in my heart. I cannot thank them enough. Every shelter needs people like the beautiful souls there. They work so hard and you can tell it's more than just a job to them.

Angelica the Shelter Manager is a wonderful supportive, kind and caring person who runs the shelter with compassion and treats everyone with dignity and respect. The staff and the clients. She has created a place where I felt like I was at home. 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. Once again thank you!"

Outcomes Star

The Outcomes Star™ is an evidence-based tool for both supporting and measuring change in the women who come to our Shelter.

At the beginning of a woman's stay at HKWS, she uses this tool to measure where she sits across a range of domains. At the end of her stay, she rates these areas again.

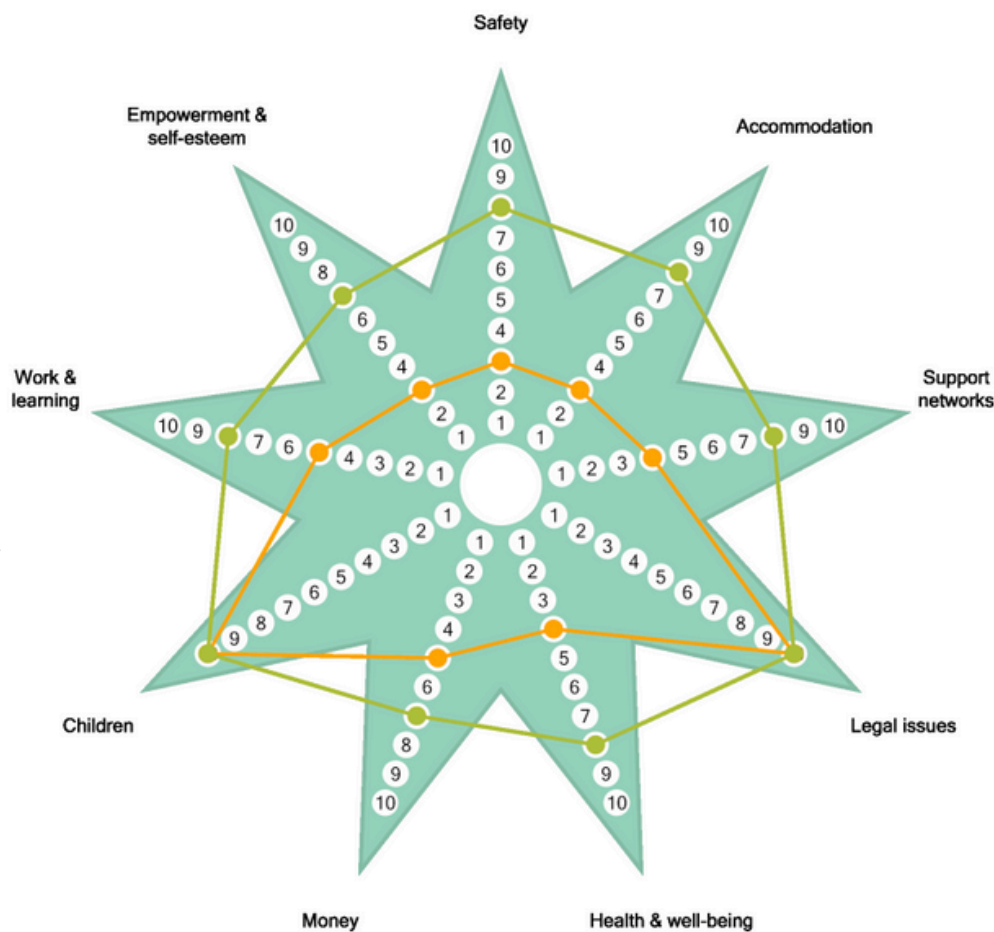
The 'distance travelled' between the beginning and end of her stay on this tool, is helpful in both assessing a woman's improvement and supporting her ongoing journey.

In FY24 we are pleased to report that HKWS clients travelled an average of 2.89 points or 29% across all domains on Outcomes Star.

The greatest improvement was seen in the domain of Safety at 3.77 (or 38% improvement) followed by the domain of Accommodation (35%) and Work (34%).

HKWS has the highest 'distance travelled' across all shelters in the Women's Community Shelter network. We are so proud of this result.

You just read Maria's story, now here is her Outcomes Star:



The orange line represents Maria's* rating at the beginning of her stay at HKWS, the green line at the end of her stay.

Notes from women in our care

Dear Munira :

You are a very powerful person!

I have countless words of gratitude in my heart. But I don't know how to express it.

On the edge of my weakest, most vulnerable, and almost on the brink of collapse, sincere and kind hands have repeatedly embraced me.....

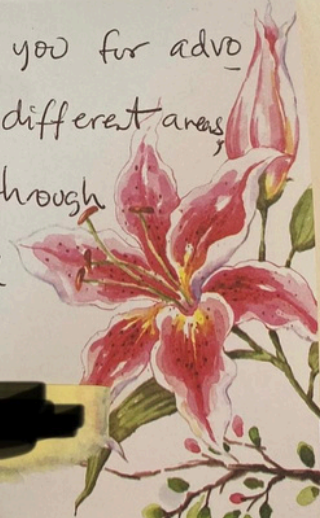
Your efforts will never be forgotten in my life.

3 June '24

Dear Munira:

Just wanted to thank you for all the help and support you gave me while in a very difficult season in my life. Thank you for advocating for me in the different areas, and for walking ^{with} me through this journey, before and while at the shelter.

Thank you!



Dearest Angelica,

I can't thank you enough. The team of "care workers" you have are amazing.

You taught me so many things during my placement. You are one of the most kind and compassionate people I have ever met.

Thank you!

♡ [redacted] ☺☺☺

* Dear Angelica

* Thank you for helping [redacted]. You gave me another life. Without you, I would not be where I am today. I will never forget your kindness. You have such a wonderful team. [redacted]

☺ Love [redacted]



Committee Reports

Property and Grants

Following the extensive repairs made to the shelter last year, we farewelled Warren Waddell from the Property and Grants Subcommittee, who left us in good shape to continue improvements into 2024. This included the building of a partition by Jeremy, one of our very kind volunteers.

Other achievements for the year included the completion of essential roof maintenance work, with thanks to funding from the Rotary Club of Wahroonga. We were also recipients of a grant from Alinta Energy to install a battery energy storage system, which is helping us to reduce our electricity bills. To assist with transport to appointments we were very pleased to acquire two vehicles. These projects would not have been possible without the kind support of grantmakers and donors.

In June this year we received notification of approval of the development application for the Clarke Rd Core & Cluster Shelter. We are currently anticipating this to commence by the end of this year, with construction to be completed in 2025.

Also over the coming year we are exploring options to provide essential meeting spaces for the caseworkers and our clients, and we are working towards the renovation of our bathrooms, residual moisture damaged flooring in the living area. Where possible, we will continue to match grant opportunities to repairs and improvements.

We look forward to supporting the wonderful work of the Shelter team over the coming year.

Nick Blackwell

Chair, Property and Grants Committee



Property and Grants Committee

“These projects would not be possible without the support of grantmakers and donors.”

HR and Operations

As we enter the new financial year, the HR/Operations Committee remains steadfast in supporting the Board by overseeing critical human resources and operational matters. This includes ensuring the Shelter's policies, procedures, and practices are robust and effective, as well as managing recruitment, performance, remuneration, organisational structure, change management, and employee relations.

The past financial year has seen the Committee focus heavily on recruitment and creating a stable workforce.

Acknowledging our dedicated team

We were thrilled to introduce Angelica Molina as our new Shelter Lead, who joined us in late September 2023, coinciding with the reopening of the Shelter after a significant renovation. Under Angelica's leadership, there has been a renewed emphasis on team cohesion and collaboration, fostering an environment that is supportive, safe, and positive for both staff and clients.

Our Shelter Lead and caseworkers are a well-bonded team who are delivering exceptional service to the women in our care.

We also bid farewell to Noush Bentley in November 2023, who served as Acting General Manager during Emily Tweddell's parental leave. Noush played a pivotal role in helping the Shelter maintain its ASES accreditation and she also managed the shelter renovations and refurbishment. We are deeply grateful for her drive and dedication.

We also said goodbye to:

- Our longstanding Administration Officer, Melissa Golby, who resigned in December 2023 to take up a new opportunity after many years of dedicated service;
- Mi-Kyong Lee in February 2024, who worked at HKWS as a Support Worker, positively impacting the lives of those around her.
- Aminata Tengbeh in June 2024, who made an enormous contribution to the Shelter and the lives of women in our care since she joined as a Caseworker in 2021.

In November 2023, we warmly welcomed back our General Manager, Emily Tweddell, following her parental leave. Emily rejoins us after the birth of her beautiful baby boy.

As of the end of the financial year, the Shelter's workforce includes:

1. General Manager – Emily Tweddell
2. Shelter Lead – Angelica Molina
3. Administration Officer – Nikita (Nikki) Jain, who joined us in November 2023
4. Caseworker – Munira Kachwalla
5. Casual Caseworkers – Ana Nuku and Aminata Mansaray

The Committee extends its deepest gratitude to our Shelter employees for their unwavering commitment and exceptional service over the past year.

Investing in professional growth

We are committed to the ongoing development of our team. Several staff members have completed advanced training in domestic violence and related areas, further enhancing their ability to support our clients effectively.

Training initiatives include:

- Black Dog Institute, Mental Health Training
- Women's Community Shelters, Outcomes Star and CIMS Training
- Lifeline, DV Alert Training
- Women's Health NSW, It Left No Marks Training
- Living Works, Suicide Prevention Training
- Specialist Homelessness Services (DCJ), a variety of training courses
- Attendance at the Elsie Conference

Strengthening our legal partnership

Our valuable partnership with Clayton Utz continued over the last financial year, with the Workplace Relations and Safety team providing pro-bono legal support, particularly in the areas of workplace relations, employment, and safety law. This support has been instrumental in helping the Shelter navigate complex regulatory landscapes and uphold the rights and well-being of our workforce. Notably, Clayton Utz assisted in developing a new suite of employment contracts tailored to our needs.

Building a culturally competent workforce

We are grateful to SBS for offering our staff access to the SBS Inclusion Program, Australia's leading online inclusion training course. This program has empowered our team to embrace diversity and promote a safe and inclusive workplace and Shelter environment.

We are proud of the diversity of our workforce, with staff speaking a number of languages other than English including Creole, Hindi, French, Korean and Spanish.

Enhanced focus on compliance and safety

With the increasing complexity of workplace and industrial relations regulations, the Committee has diligently monitored legislative changes, including updates to the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth) and the relevant modern awards. As part of our commitment to compliance, we have outsourced payroll functions to ensure accuracy and efficiency.

Our focus on safety and privacy has also intensified, with several initiatives undertaken last year, including:

- The purchase of ergonomic chairs for the Shelter office;
- Conducting monthly WHS safety checks at the Shelter and addressing identified hazards. This has included replacement of all fire alarms and safety switch power boards and acquiring additional fire blankets;
- Safety check of the house by Hornsby Police. As security of the house was identified as a risk, we have updated key pad locks, fixed cracked windows, installed CrimSafe security screens on windows and doors, installed additional security cameras and additional sensor lights at the front and rear of the property.
- Termite inspection, with plans to monitor termite activity on an ongoing basis;
- Prioritising staff wellbeing by reinforcing access to the Employee Assistance Program;
- Exploring the installation of a granny flat to provide a private space for confidential meetings and religious practices, such as prayer, for our staff;
- Replacement of our old Shelter car for safety purposes.

Looking ahead

In the coming year, the Committee will continue to ensure that the Shelter has the resources, skills, and tools needed to deliver high-quality services. Upcoming proposed initiatives include:

1. Release of the Shelter's Sustainability Strategy
2. Implementing retention goals and KPIs for staff
3. Introducing a new paid Parental Leave Policy
4. Recruiting a Volunteer & Donations Coordinator
5. Recruiting a Fundraising Coordinator
6. Exploring the use of LinkedIn for community engagement and recruitment
7. Allocating a budget for staff wellbeing and recognition

Jennifer Teh

Chair, HR and Operations Committee



HR and Operations Committee

"We are proud of the diversity of our workforce, with staff speaking a number of languages other than English including Creole, Hindi, French, Korean and Spanish."



Community Engagement

Our brilliant community again came out to support us in many different ways this year to support women and children escaping from domestic violence and homelessness.

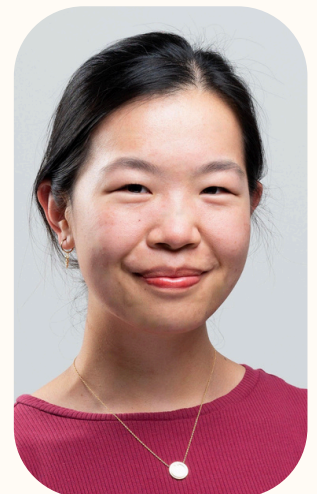
We are incredibly grateful for the massive fundraising initiatives held by individuals, corporates, Rotary clubs, schools and churches as the shelter would not be able to continue its services without this outstanding generosity.

Volunteers

The work of the shelter would not be possible without our volunteers who have helped in the shelter, at community events and on our committees. Particular thanks go to our long term volunteers, including Jo-Ann Moffatt and Dick and Dot Babb, as well as the ongoing contributions from many local businesses, including Bendigo Community Bank - Lindfield and Districts, Graceful Advisory, Berowra Quilters, Brady Marcs Advisory, Magpies Waitara, Hornsby RSL Club, and SOS Removals. Without the work of our volunteers, many of whom have busy day jobs and still find time to support us, we would not be able to do the work we do.

“My clinical work as a doctor in Women’s Health (Obstetrics and Gynaecology) is tied with volunteering at Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women’s Shelter. My goal is always to improve the safety of women.”

- Jess Teoh, HKWS volunteer Grant Writer & Member of the Assets Committee, Registrar, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Churchill Fellowship Recipient, investigated 'Domestic Violence in Early Pregnancy'



Berowra Mini Fete 15 July 2023

An enormous amount of gratitude and thanks to Berowra Christian School, APEX Berowra, Berowra Baptist Church, Bugs About, The Rural Fire Service and importantly, Ann Leslie who again organised the Berowra Community Mini Fete in support of the shelter. The event was a wonderful community event that raised much needed funds to support the work of the shelter.



Community Pitch 12 September 2023

HKWS was one of 10 charities invited to pitch a proposal to local businesses. An initiative supported by Bendigo Community Bank. We were successful in receiving significant funds to support a Financial Wellbeing program for our residents, in collaboration with Lifeline.



Walk the Talk 6 December 2023

As part of 16 Days of Activism, this event saw members of the local community come together in solidarity and participate in important discussions, taking a pledge and a minute's silence for those who have lost their lives to domestic violence this year - "We do not tolerate inequality and domestic and family violence." Special thanks to Hornsby PCYC, local schools and Hornsby Police.

The Cleftomaniacs & Friends Concert 6 August 2023

The music was joyful and vibrant as the Cleftomaniac choir, an all female a cappella group, performed a sold-out concert with all proceeds going to helping the women and children assisted by HKWS.



Wahroonga Village Fair 3 December 2023

Massive appreciation to SOS Removals for sponsoring the stall for the Shelter and for the organisation and passion of Jo-Ann Moffatt in the lead up to the event. Volunteers from Pymble Ladies' College manned the stall, selling very popular Christmas cards, t-shirts, felt love hearts, books and other items, as well as wrapping presents.



The Bobbin Head Classic 24 March 2024

A huge thank you to the over 40 volunteers that helped out at the Bobbo. Our amazing volunteers were course marshalls and manned our stall, ensuring the event ran smoothly and providing important education about the work the shelter does. It was a wonderful day of community spirit and support!



IWD Lunch 1 March 2024

A very special (sold out!) event to celebrate International Women's Day was held in celebration of women and to explore how we can ensure women are safe and empowered. Guests enjoyed delicious food at Roseville Golf Club, hearing from the courageous Simone O'Brien who shared her story with Georgie Gardner.



Lindfield Fun Run 19 May 2024

The annual Lindfield Fun run was held this year, a wonderful event where many of our local community came out to run, walk or dance the 2km, 5km or 10km event. Thanks to the support of local schools, including Lindfield East Public School, Barker College and Pymble Ladies College, as well as our community volunteers who helped with course marshalling and the stall.

Special thanks to Ku-ring-gai Rotary Club, who raised funds (\$17500) from the event to generously support our shelter and other local charitable organisations.



“The Lindfield Fun Run was so much fun and the atmosphere on the course was exciting. Seeing the community come together to support the important work of HKWS and KYDS was so special.”

- Kate Giles, Board Member and Chair of Community Engagement Committee

Local Schools standing with women in our community

Many local schools continue to support the work of HKWS, including Barker College, Pymble Ladies' College, Loreto Normanhurst, Warrawee Public School and Turramurra High. We are particularly grateful for the amazing efforts of all of the generous school students who are wanting to make a difference in their local community and know the future of our community is in good hands with their generosity and passion.



Community Engagement Committee

Finance, Audit, Risk, Compliance and Governance

The Finance, Audit, Risk, Compliance and Governance (“FAR”) Committee is made up of the Shelter Secretary, Treasurer, volunteers, General Manager, and with a standing invitation to the Chair to be involved. The committee meets monthly and present back to the Board on progress against deliverables.

The FAR committee and finance function continues to be supported by management (General Manager and Administration Officer) and KPMG. Management have overseen:

- Day to day bookkeeping and maintenance of the books and records
- Bank reconciliations
- Banking approvals
- Monitoring and recording of Management Committee, subcommittee and volunteer police and working with children checks, terms of reference, confidentiality agreements and code of ethics
- Insurance renewals

KPMG’s Newcastle Enterprise unit, under the leadership of Stephanie Loadsman, provide generous pro-bono assistance with:

- Tax accounting and lodgements;
- Monthly reconciliations and management / treasurer reports;
- Maintenance and reconciliation of the fixed asset register;
- Employee super guarantee lodgements, wages declarations for work cover insurance and STP finalisations for FBT;
- Preparation of the annual financial statements in preparation for the year-end audit; and
- Preparation of annual info statement for ACNC

In FY23 we introduced an external payroll provider to provide additional segregation of duties, bolster controls and enhance this function.

During the period the FAR committee completed the following activities:

- Annual review and refresh of the Business Continuity Plan,
- Maintenance of the risk register and periodic, scheduled reviews of the register with both the FAR committee and the Board,
- Ongoing monitoring and update of the compliance register,
- Committee goal setting and monitoring,
- Budget setting,
- WCS liaison on FY25 funding,
- Review and preparation of management accounts,
- Review of the annual financial statements,
- Involvement in the WCS treasurer’s forums,
- Oversight of Shelter delegation policy and signatories register,
- Managing banking arrangements, access and payment approvals,
- Arranging for term deposits to earn interest on surplus funds,
- Review of insurance submissions,
- Review and update of committee charter,
- Involvement in risk management discussions regarding operational matters arising, and
- Periodic lodgements and returns to statutory bodies including the NSW Department of Trade and ACNC.

I thank all the members of the FAR committee, our Shelter team and KPMG for their contributions this year.

Chania Rodwell

Treasurer and Chair of FAR Committee

Treasurers Report

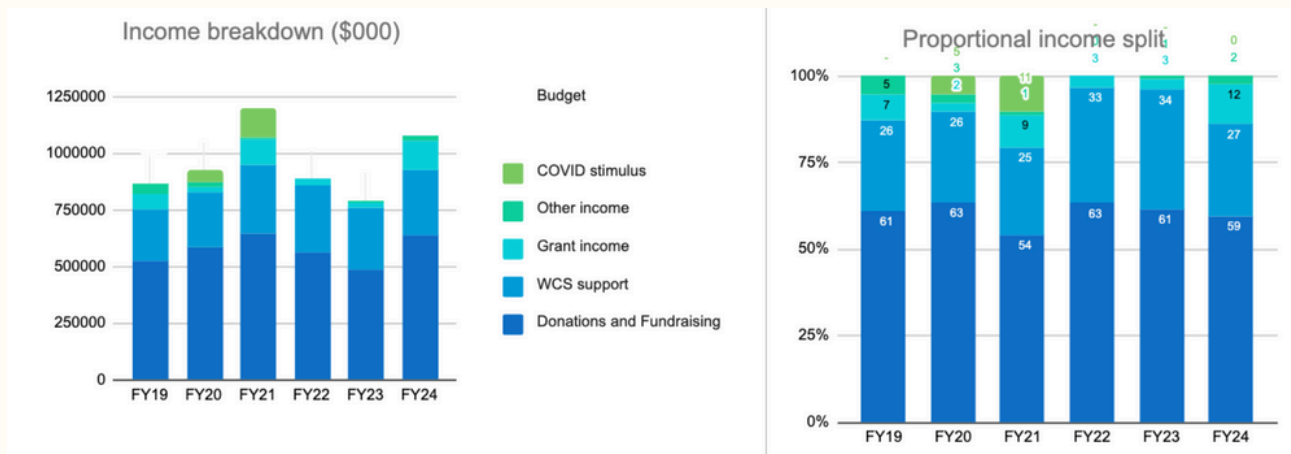
Financial Summary

FY24 was strong year for the shelter financially, thanks to some generous bequests and grant success, coupled with below budget operating costs, notwithstanding this was a high occupancy year.



FAR Committee

Income



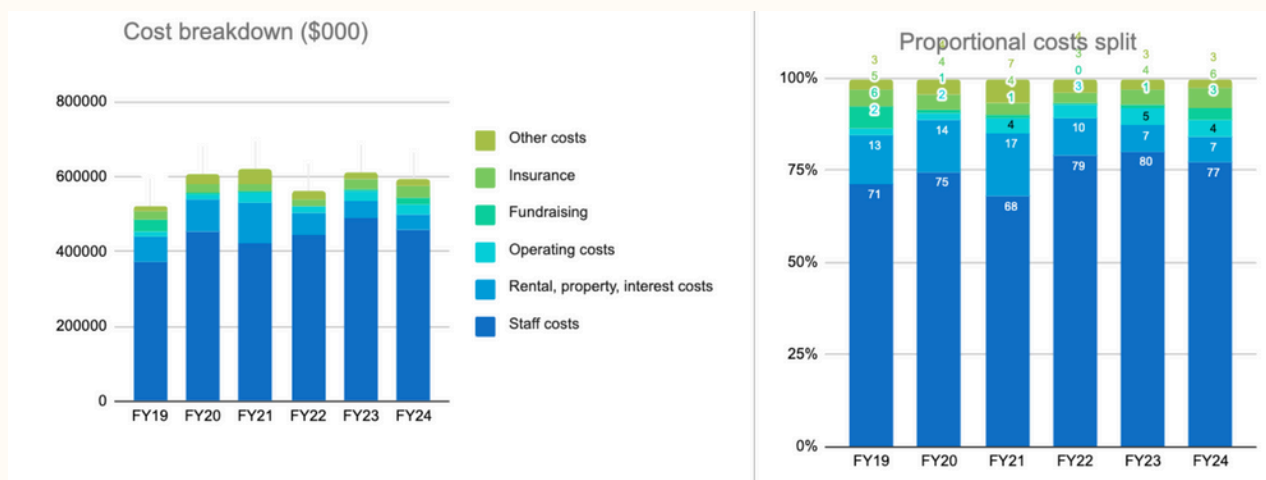
Total income of \$1,079k in FY24 represented the shelter’s second highest income year on record, or the highest if the COVID government stimulus funding in FY21 is excluded. This was 5% higher than budgeted income for FY24.

FY24 income was heavily supported by two unexpected bequests, totalling \$210k. There were three further significant donations for which \$95k of income was recognised in the year. Excluding these significant donations, underlying donations totalled \$398k, which was slightly down on community donations (excluding larger donations) of \$423k in FY23, and consistent with \$396k raised in FY22 from smaller donors. We are expecting further large donations in FY25, but are continuing to focus on our normal community fundraising channels through our Community Engagement Committee.

The shelter also enjoyed success on a number of grant applications in FY24, securing \$125k in income, again the best on record, after \$113k raised in FY21 from COVID related stimulus initiatives. This outcome is testament to the strength of the current grants subcommittee and the commitment of its volunteers.

\$287k support from WCS in FY24 represented 27% of our income. This proportion was down from 34% in FY23, largely as a result of grant income increasing from 3% to 12% of the total in FY24. WCS funding covered 49% of our FY24 costs, vs 44% in FY23, representing an increase of \$16k. We have just entered into a new 3 year agreement to secure WCS’s ongoing support of our operational costs and network synergies.

Costs



FY24 costs of \$592k were below FY23 and almost 19% under budget, largely as a result of staff vacancies in the first quarter. With the shelter now fully operational and staffed we anticipate staff costs will be higher in FY25. Staff costs represented 77% of total costs, so remain our most significant expense but also the shelter's greatest asset.

We continue to enjoy lower property costs since the purchase of the property, and final payout of the mortgage last financial year. We have maintained this line of credit on the house loan to give us flexibility in funding should we wish to draw on this, but it was not utilised in FY24. A further \$41k was invested in property improvements, and recognised on the balance sheet as higher asset values, rather than expenses in the profit and loss.

Other costs have remained fairly consistent with historical trends with the exception of insurance costs which we have seen rise disproportionately over the past couple of years compared with FY22.

Financial Position

The strong net income position for the year has bolstered the cash reserves of the shelter and positioned us well to invest in expansion of our services to a second property. We are exploring rental options and also progressing work associated with the Core and Cluster funding for a build of a second property.

We have also received advanced funding from a very generous donor, which will be recognised monthly as income over the next financial year as the donation is intended to cover a year's worth of support. Accordingly, the cash received and the offsetting deferred income relating to this donation has been recognised in the shelter's balance sheet as at 30 June 2024.

In summary, the shelter remains in a strong financial position with debt on the property fully paid off, and sufficient funds to meet its prudential objectives of running operations for 12 months in the absence of other income.

A message from Women's Community Shelters CEO, *Annabelle Daniel OAM*



It is a privilege to write about the achievements of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter (HKWS), the first shelter established under the Women's Community Shelters (WCS) umbrella.

This past year has been pivotal in our collective efforts to address women's homelessness and domestic and family violence (DFV), crises that devastate the lives of far too many women and children across Australia.

In 2024, our national conversation on these critical issues intensified, spotlighting the alarming statistic that 54,000 women experience homelessness each night, with DFV being the leading cause.

At WCS, our mission is to create an Australia where women and children are safe, secure, supported and equal. We aim to empower communities across Australia to tackle women's homelessness and domestic and family violence. Over the next three years, we plan to double the number of those we support, requiring continued effort from our shelters, increased philanthropy, and new shelters and programs. With over 11 years of impact, we are confident in our ability to expand effectively and innovatively.

I'm thrilled to share that this year, HKWS has made a tremendous impact, supporting 78 clients and delivering a total of 6,756 bed nights of safe, stable accommodation. The shelter's dedicated staff, board members, and volunteers have been integral in transforming the lives of women and children in their community, providing vital care and safety to those experiencing homelessness and DFV.

In July 2023, HKWS successfully completed a major refurbishment, significantly improving the living environment for both residents and staff. In September, we welcomed Angelica Molina as the new Shelter Lead. Angelica brings a wealth of experience and expertise, and her leadership will be critical in addressing the immediate needs of women and children affected by DFV and homelessness. We are truly excited to have her on board.

The HKWS team have worked tirelessly to strengthen their already strong connections with the local community, fostering deep relationships with individuals, businesses, and community groups. This concerted effort to raise awareness about the shelter's critical role in supporting women facing homelessness and domestic and family violence has resulted in a notable increase in local engagement and support.

As a direct outcome of these outreach and advocacy initiatives, the shelter has seen a substantial rise in commitments to support - both in-kind and financial - which have been instrumental in enhancing the services and programs offered to women. From local fundraising events and corporate partnerships to individual contributions, the generosity of the HKWS community has been overwhelming. This growing network of support not only ensures that the shelter can meet the immediate needs of its residents but also allows for the expansion of outreach programs, empowering even more women to rebuild their lives with dignity and hope.

Another significant achievement this year has been the successful ASES accreditation achieved by HKWS through WCS, reflecting the team's ongoing commitment to quality and excellence in service delivery.

I am proud of the strong relationship between our organisations and the operational support from the WCS Hub, which has bolstered HKWS and expanded outreach at Beecroft House, particularly for older women. With core funding and new programs, Beecroft House now provides essential transitional accommodation, relocation services and resources, aiding older women's transition to permanent housing.

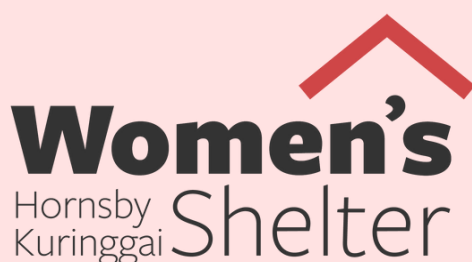
To enhance our support, we've introduced new initiatives: the Treasurers Forum for financial management, the Continuous Quality Improvement Forum for service improvements, and the Emerging Leaders Forum to develop future leaders. These, along with existing forums for Shelter Managers, Chairs, and HR professionals, help our shelters, including HKWS, address operational challenges and maintain high service standards.

Huge congratulations to the team at HKWS on a wonderful 12 months. WCS is immensely proud of your dedication, community engagement, and genuine care for the women in your community.

We wish you every success for the next year and will continue to walk alongside you!

Annabelle Daniel

Chief Executive Officer, Women's Community Shelters





People and Structure

Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter is proud to be a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) (ABN: 49735037904). HKWS is governed by its Constitution, with the utmost commitment to transparency, accountability and governance.



Catherine Knox, Chair



Jacquie Murray - Deputy Chair, Secretary



Chania Rodwell - Treasurer and Chair of FAR Committee



Jennifer Teh - Board Member and Chair of HR and Operations Committee



Warren Waddell - Board Member and Chair of Property and Grants Committee



Nick Blackwell - Board Member and Chair of Property and Grants Committee



Kate Giles - Board Member and Chair of Community Engagement Committee



Martin Paech - Board Member



Tania Raubenheimer - Board Member and Chair of IT Committee



Neesha Eckersley - Board Member and WCS Representative



Jennifer Anderson - Patron



Carmel Aitken - Patron



Barbara Ward - Patron



Alison Stewart - Patron



Judith Hopwood - Patron



Matt Kean - Patron



Nick McArdle - Ambassador



“Domestic abuse isn’t just a women’s issue. It is a society issue, a silent pandemic. It is only when the community works together, men and women, that we can help stop abuse.” - Nick McArdle, HKWS Ambassador

We'd like to thank all of our supporters for their *unwavering support*



Thank you to our supporters and volunteers for making our work possible.

Many people in our local community, businesses, government and partners contribute to HKWS. Without their support we would not be able to assist the hundreds of women and children seeking our shelter, safety and support to escape domestic and family violence. Many more women in our community would find themselves homeless.



Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks to the following businesses, community organisations and schools who provided significant support this year:

Barker College
Bendigo Bank - Community Bank
Lindfield & Districts
Brady Marcs Buyers Advisory
Bunnings Thornleigh
Cheeky Foods
Clayton Utz
Freedom
Graceful Advisory
Granny Flat Solutions
Hornsby Chamber of Commerce
Hunter's Hill Quilters
Kiplings Garage Bar
KPMG
Ku-ring-gai Rotary
Ku-ring-gai Plant Rescue
Law Ensure
Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury
Lions Club Hornsby
OzHarvest
Pymble Ladies' College
Robertson & Greenwood Chartered Accountants
Northern Beaches Women's Shelter
Soroptomists
SOS Removals
St Ives Rotary
Wahroonga Rotary
Women's Community Shelters
Zantzoo

We also thank the following individuals for their amazing support:

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Ann Leslie
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Brady Yoshia
Bryan Moffatt
Chris Goatley
Des Sheehan
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Dot Babb
Hannah Daghighi
Jeremy Nambiar
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Jocelyn Rose
Julie Griffin
Julie Shaw
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Mastaneh Daghighi
Mathew George
Matt Macoustra
Olivia Smith
Prue Honson
Sallianne McClelland
Sarah Rouhan
Sharon Franke
Shauna Britton
Stephen Bruce
Stu Wilson
Vijay Roach





To learn more about
Hornsby Ku-ring-gai
Women's Shelter

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Contact: office@hkws.org.au

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