

Hawkesbury Area Women's & Kids Services Collective Inc.

The Women's Cottage



Annual Report 2019 - 2020



The Women's Cottage

Hawkesbury Area Women's & Kids Services Collective Inc.

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The Women's Cottage Management, Staff, Volunteers and Students acknowledged the Darug People as the Traditional Owners on this Land where we live and work.

We pay our respects to all Aboriginal people and to Elders past, present, and future. We recognise and acknowledge the ongoing effects of colonisation, oppression, racism, injustice, and inequity that impacts Aboriginal people today and we commit to address these issues wherever we can.

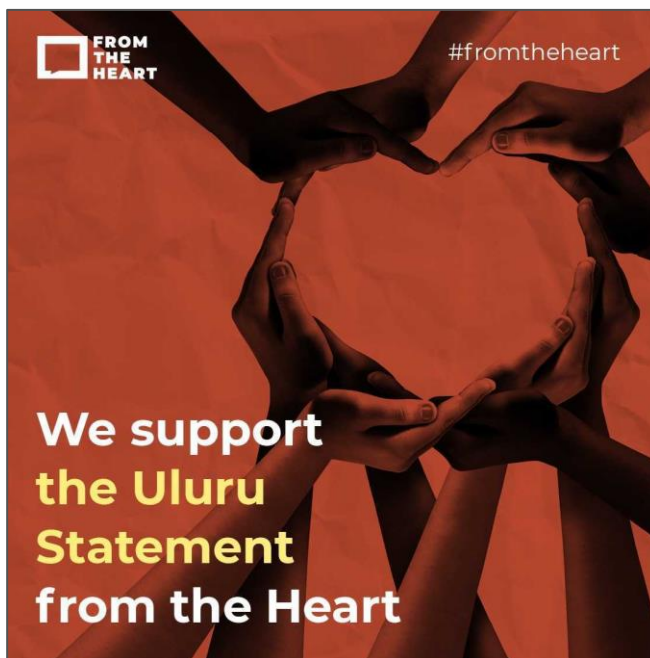
We are sorry and we stand with you

The Uluru Statement From the Heart

"We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart: Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from 'time immemorial', and according to science more than 60,000 years ago. This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link

is the basis of the or better, of never been ceded or exists with the Crown. How could it be peoples possessed a millennia and this from world history in years?

With constitutional change we believe this ancient through as a fuller Australia's nationhood. are the most on the planet. We are criminal people. Our from their families at



ownership of the soil, sovereignty. It has extinguished and co-sovereignty of the otherwise? That land for sixty sacred link disappears merely the last 200 substantive and structural reform, sovereignty can shine expression of Proportionally, we incarcerated people not an innately children are aliened unprecedented rates.

This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future. These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is the torment of our powerlessness. We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country. We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution. Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination. We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history. In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future."

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Who Are We?

Hawkesbury Area Women's & Kid's Service Inc.

The Women's Cottage

In 1983, The Cottage opened its doors for the first time in premises at Windsor Street, Richmond. In 1986, The Women's Cottage moved to its current premises here at 22 Bosworth Street, Richmond. Over the years the Cottage has grown, along with the population in the Hawkesbury. There are currently 10 amazing part-time staff as well as wonderful relief workers, students and volunteers that support the work of The Cottage as we strive to provide services and support for Women.

The Women's Cottage is a place where all women; regardless of age, class, race, religion, or sexual preference; are valued and treated as equal. It is a place for women to nurture themselves, a place of safety, and a place to learn and grow. It is a place for all women. It is a place that believes that access and equity are more than ideas and principles, they drive how we operate and what we offer.

The Women's Cottage is an information, resource, referral, advocacy and crisis support service for women and children living, working, or studying in the Hawkesbury region. NSW Department of Communities and Justice (formally Family and Community Services) funds our Domestic Violence Support Project, Anti-violence work, 'drop-in' support, advocacy, and referral services and up to two group programs under the Targeted Early Intervention (TEI) funding Program. All other group programs are self-funded and reliant on past, present (and future) community donation.

The Women's Cottage also received funding from the Department of Social Services (DSS). This project initially provided support services to women effected by the work of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. It has now evolved into the formation of the National Redress Support Project. This new project provides specialist counselling / casework support to women considering making a claim application for redress. The National Redress Scheme started July 2018 and is set to run for 10 years. This project covers the area from Parramatta to Lithgow but does not turn away out of area requests for assistance. In these situations, we work with women via phone and Skype while connecting them to services closer to where they live and/or on an ongoing basis if local Redress Support Services are not available.

As a Feminist organisation, The Women's Cottage takes a strength based and trauma informed approach in all our work. All work is within the context of understanding social inequity and the gendered nature of violence that impacts women's lives, and through the Feminist framework lens that acknowledges and supports women's self-determination as the central expert in their own lives.

The Women's Cottage is committed to our role as advocate for social justice, for women and children in this Community.



Vision Statement

Hawkesbury Area Women and Kids Services Inc. is a Feminist community-based organisation that is run by women for women and children.

We are committed to all forms of freedom for women and children.

We are committed to an ecologically and socially just and diverse society, where all women are valued and treated as equal.

We are committed to assisting and supporting women and children to determine their own lives and choices.

We uphold women and children's rights to a safe environment whether within the home or in the community.

We actively pursue political measures to address the elimination of social and environmental oppression, injustice, and violence, locally and globally.

Objectives

1. To help alleviate poverty, misfortune, distress and suffering to women and children in the Hawkesbury region and surrounds through direct provision of material aid, emergency accommodation / referral services, counselling, and other services to improve their lives directly.
2. To promote the health, education and welfare of disadvantaged women and children, particularly those residing in the Hawkesbury Shire.
3. To collect and distribute information for individuals and groups concerning services and issues of relevance to disadvantaged women and children.
4. To reduce the isolation of disadvantaged women by encouraging the development of support networks and self-help activities.
5. To provide emotional and practical support to disadvantaged women and children.
6. To promote full public participation in the planning of services based at the centre.
7. To promote public discussion on issues relevant to disadvantaged women and children.
8. To reduce the oppression of women and children regardless of age, class, race, religion, or sexual preference.

Thanking Our Supporters

The Women's Cottage could not continue without the generosity of individual and community donations and support. We offer our sincere thanks to everyone who has donated, through groups program support, membership fees, groceries for hampers, time, and energy.

Alison Disbray from Grand Miam – donations of cupcakes for open day and other events
Bendigo Bank Richmond – hosting a donation box throughout the year and Christmas presents
Collective Family Day Care – bulk Christmas Hampers from all its members
Food Bank NSW – For donated fruit and vegetables
Good 360 - access to low cost clothes, toys, and other items
Hawkesbury Chamber of Commerce –donations of Christmas food Hampers
Jasmine Seymore – Facebook Support
Kurrajong North Richmond Rotary Club – For including us in their fundraising raffle
Margaret - art works for women using The Women's Cottage to choose from
NRMA Richmond – For hosting and supporting the 2019 Christmas Tree in their branch
Richmond RAAF Base Community – cash donation for emergency food supplies
Richmond Rotary – Thank you John from Stylecraft Blinds for doing the Foodbank pickups
Share the Dignity – supplying handbags and personal care items for women
Windsor Golf Club's Lady Golfers – donations to our emergency food cupboard
Windsor Lions Club – ongoing support of the emergency food cupboard
Windsor Rotary – for continuing support
Winmalee Neighbourhood Centre – emergency relief outreach partner
Yvonne – school supplies packs
Zonta Club of Cumberland West – donations for emergency relief
Cash and Other Donations – G Cherrie, U3A Quilters Group, S Beseau, Western Sydney Community Forum, Richmond Rotary Club, Richmond RAAF Community, Kenthurst Rotary Club, R Kousal

Special mention of major sponsors who donated the equivalent of \$5,000 or more, helping pay for increased hours and programs to meet community needs.

ADFLMF Investments Pty Ltd – cash donation for open use
Hawkesbury City Council – for a 30-year lease at \$1 per year for our premises at 22 Bosworth Street Richmond in support of vulnerable women and children in the Hawkesbury.
Richmond Lions Club – For continued support of The Women's Cottage
The Scully Fund – donation to employ extra WAVE worker for a year to respond to women in crisis
VivCourt Trading - donations for increased emergency relief, Christmas relief and staffing.

And our heartfelt thanks to Margaretta Kopplehuber ('Reit'). A friend and donor to The Women's Cottage for many years. Your passing is a sadness, and we miss you.

**Please consider donating to The Women's Cottage this coming year.
ALL donations over \$2 are tax deductible**

Staff and Management Collective 2019 – 2020

Management Collective:

Lisa Bartels
Mary Conyard
Jude Irwin
Irene Kendall
Janine Madden
Sonya Parker

Permanent / Part Time Staff

Maria Losurdo	Manager
Meg Keith	Finance Manager
Mel Olsen	Anti-violence Community Development Worker
Melissa Brodie	WAVE Support Worker
Kim Ward	WAVE Support Worker
Jess Reed	WAVE Support Worker (from May 2020)
Lauren Galdos	WAVE Support Worker (from May 2019 to June 2020)
Angie Gleeson	National Redress Specialist Counsellor / Caseworker
Sarah Dillane	National Redress Specialist Counsellor / Caseworker
Kelly Haines	National Redress Locum Support Worker (from December 2019)

Casual / Relief Workers

Melanie Sheffield	Database Development and Support
Lauren Galdos	Relief WAVE Support Worker
Jess Reed	Relief WAVE Support Worker

Students

Kelly Haines	Diploma of Community Services
Jess Reid	Bachelor of Community Welfare Western Sydney University
Melanie Sheffield	Graduate Diploma of Counselling Australian College Applied Psychology

Volunteer

John Gray	Food Bank pick and delivery – every fortnight!
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Local Suppliers helping to keep The Women's Cottage so beautiful

Karen Brown	Cleaner
Arben Gashi	Gardener

For the commitment, skill and effort of you all we say,
"Thank You"

Management Collective Report 2019 – 2020



What a year! Natural disasters one after the other, ongoing drought, devastating bushfires, floods! What next?

COVID, that is what! While people living in Australia may be used to droughts, bushfires and floods, COVID was and remains new territory all together. The collective impact of these events on people and communities has been huge and probably yet to be fully realised. It is a struggle to find adequate words in response to all of this, so instead of trying to find them, I will focus on how the amazing women of The Women's Cottage have responded.

They leaned in and kept their eyes firmly on what needed to be done to continue to provide meaningful services to women and children in the Hawkesbury. Rallying together with other local organisations, looking at an unfamiliar community landscape and the resulting emerging needs. Developing policies and procedures on the run, organising physical changes to the building that could accommodate COVID safe practices, the list goes on.

These were and are the most challenging of times and all that has been achieved has certainly not been easy. The Cottage as one of 2 specialist domestic violence services in the Hawkesbury plays a significant role and I believe now more than ever is at the forefront, in terms of advocating for women, looking for opportunities to expand, staying up to date with trends and research.

In addition to all of this I think what makes an impression on me the most is the care these women demonstrate towards each other and the commitment they demonstrate towards the community that they serve.

I would like to acknowledge the generosity of the Hawkesbury community; the Cottage has received generous support from a range of sources over the past year.

For those of us on the Management Collective, we contribute and support where we can, there are opportunities for us to learn and gain knowledge, especially recently, around using technology like iPad, email, and the ever-present Zoom! In these COVID days 😊

On behalf of the Collective, Sonya, Irene, Mary, Jude, Lisa and myself, I would like to express our heartfelt thanks to Maria, Meg, Mel, Kim, Melissa, Angie, Sarah, Kelly, Lauren, Jess and Melanie, for all that they do and the heart with which they do it, they are 'The Cottage'.

Janine Madden - On Behalf of the Management Collective

Manager's Report and Updates 2019 – 2020

I asked a friend, where do you even begin reporting on this past year, she said *“Just say 2020 sucks!”* And it is true, there is possibly not an annual report anywhere this year that is not filled with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Women's Cottage has faced many challenges to stay open and respond to increased community needs through these challenging times. But equally important is recognising that even before COVID, Hawkesbury communities were impacted by bushfires and floods. And before that still, long years of drought which has caused hardship for many families and businesses. All these disasters have had a major impact on the local community and increased levels of stress, trauma, and crisis that has flowed on to women and children. Poverty and financial hardship have significantly increased, so too levels of distress, anxiety, depression, and isolation. But perhaps the most disturbing impact is the ongoing and dramatically increasing rates of domestic violence.

In response to these issues, The Women's Cottage has had to assess community needs and adjust service provision within limited resources to best meet clients' needs. Thankfully, we have not been alone in this challenge. Community groups, corporate and small business, and individuals have come forward to support our work. The Scully Fund donated funds to increase our capacity to respond to women in domestic violence; Vivcourt Trading and ADFLMF Investments supported our emergency relief, Gabriella Fund and staffing needs. The Richmond Lions Club has been a constant support with funds and supplies for our emergency food shelves. Hawkesbury City Council continues to provide our premises and building upgrades. And there have been many individual and one-off donations in support of vulnerable women and children in the Hawkesbury. For all of which we are very grateful.

This year we also enhanced our IT capacity, updated our website, developed new data base systems and moved the service through the TEI funding reform. In response to COVID we had to provide rapid new responses for safe work and screening procedures, establish of work from home systems, and find new ways to stay connected as a team, all while pivoting to online formats for service delivery where needed to maintain and support client connection.

It has been challenging to respond to significant increases in client and community needs while adapting to a new world order not experienced before. And this year, more than ever before, management and staff have gone above and beyond to get the best outcomes for vulnerable women and children seeking support from The Women's Cottage. Their work practice and commitment of the whole team has been exemplary. As has their support of me and each other.

“THANK YOU” Meg, Mel, Kim, Melissa, Angie, Sarah, Kelly, Lauren, Jess and Melanie

I invite you to read through this annual report detailing our service delivery and achievements.

I also invite you to be a supporter of The Women's Cottage as we continue our work into the future.

Maria Losurdo - Manager

Overview of major changes and achievements since last year's annual report...

TEI Reform: Targeted Early Intervention (TEI) reform has now been applied to all areas of DCJ funding. Significant work was involved in transitioning to the new funding framework. Advocating to retain the core principles and business of The Women's Cottage to support women with and without children and to respond to domestic violence as a core role was an important part of these negotiations. The process also involved mapping services in line with the TEI framework and establish new funding formulas and contracts. The Women's Cottage has successfully signed off on a 5-year contract under TEI and is funded under all 5 TEI service delivery categories from general centre based activities and information through to high risk issues and trauma. Work continues on TEI program logic framework and the development of new data base systems to collect the data required under TEI and to enhance data collection for the service as a whole. Deadlines for this work has been extended to the end of 2020 because of the effects of COVID.

Building Grant: Progress has been made on extension plans for The Women's Cottage. Concept plans have been drawn up and negotiations with Council to finalise design are underway. The Women's Cottage has the funds to match the \$75,000 and it is hoped that work will commence in early 2021. The renovation will increase of group, meeting and office space and facilities which will greatly relieve current issues of overcrowding and limited capacity to meet ongoing increasing community needs and increase services offered.

Regional Partnerships: Participation in HUBS (Hawkesbury Unites for Better Services) continued this year. HUBS is aimed at strengthening relationships and build the capacity of local services to best meet community need and for exploring areas for joint response to local issues and maximize on the benefits of collective impact principles and practice. Highlights from 2019 – 2020 include a shared community gathering calendar, which is currently on hold until health restrictions for larger gatherings are lifted. Another significant HUBS achievement was a joint submission for responding to domestic violence at a social policy, community and individual level. While that grant application was not successful, what was remarkable was the enthusiasm and participation of all HUBS members to develop a regional plan and consortium and project model in a very short time frame. This has further strengthened collaboration, trust and determination for future joint work.



Crisis Accommodation Success for Hawkesbury!

In that last days of writing this report we received word that a joint submission by The Women's Cottage and Wentworth Housing for local crisis accommodation for women escaping domestic violence had been successful. The Federal Safe Places program and will provide over \$1.1 million dollars for the construction of dedicated multi-dwelling units. Construction is due to start some time in 2021 and comes after over 30 years of lobbying by The Women's Cottage and other local services.

Responding to COVID-19

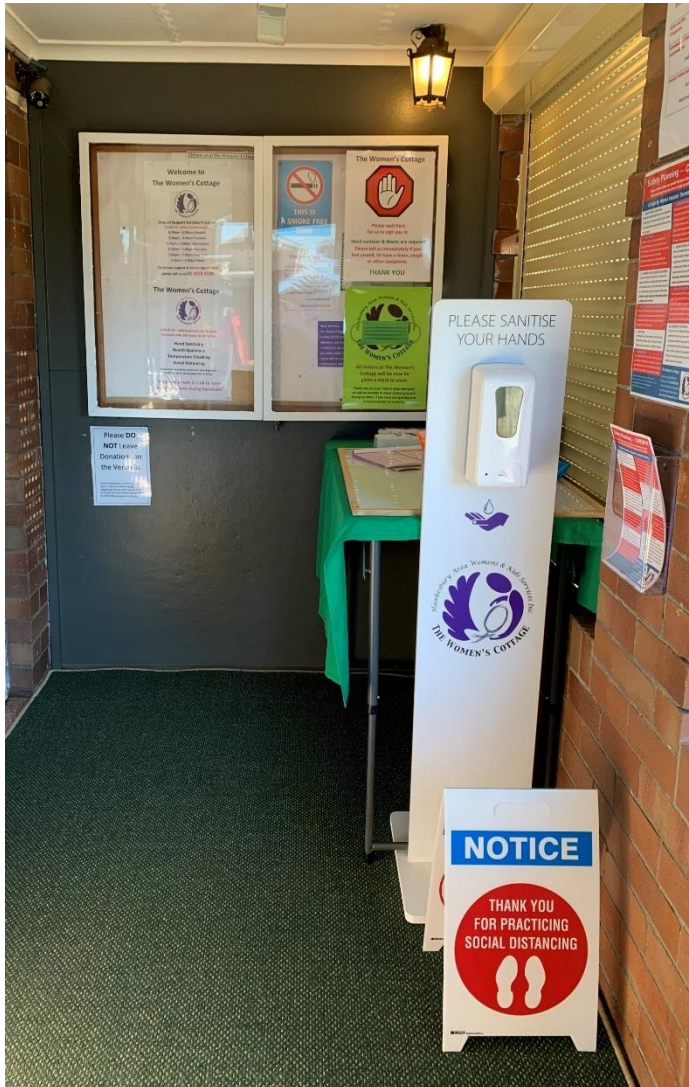
The Women's Cottage maintained uninterrupted service delivery during COVID

Both onsite and offsite service delivery were maintained throughout the worst of the COVID-19 lockdowns and ongoing health restrictions. All National Redress services and community development activity was moved offsite to reduce workers in the building and comply with health directives and social distancing. The doors of The Women's Cottage remained open for crisis drop-in during normal opening hours. Staffing hours were increased to meet increased demand. Service provision was provided through a mix of online, phone and face to face. All centre based groups were suspended and online formats explored and provided where possible.



These approaches were guided by the development of a Business Continuity Plan developed in April 2020 that set out policy and procedures for maintaining service delivery; identify and mitigate risks; and set guidelines for virus containment and response if needed. A second Business Continuity Plan developed in June 2020 further identified worker roles and responsibilities for daily practice. Policy and procedures were reviewed and adjusted, sometimes weekly, to comply with the rapidly changing situation and corresponding health directives. Service provision during periods of lockdown were also adjusted to provide for ease of access, increased eligibility, and contactless emergency relief.

New spaces and work practices strategies were established:



New closed in veranda screening point

Setting up / supporting safe work from home arrangements.

Flu shots and ongoing COVID testing protocols for staff.

Revised and increased team support, supervision and move to online team meetings.

Revised online management meetings, and increased frequency of meetings as needed.

Closed in front veranda for main entrance screening point.

Workplace signage and safety / screening and signing in procedures.

Closure of childcare room.

Setting up new office space to comply with social distancing and people capacity per space.

New policies and procedures: daily cleaning, hand sanitising, mask / disposal of masks; foot traffic flow, removal / covering loose papers, single serve refreshments.

New arrangements for client contact: New phone and/or phone first procedures for client appointments; welfare calls and care packs for clients; trauma informed care guidelines for responding to and supporting clients who were unwell; client info sheets on local testing facilities; partnership with local GP for immediate testing.

Community and sector support initiatives were expanded:

Expanded Emergency Relief Eligibility (for those not eligible to Government relief programs).

Client Care Packages delivered to all National Redress clients.

Welfare calls to current vulnerable WAVE clients

‘DV Self-Care During Lockdown Tip Sheet’ developed and widely shared with community and sector partners.

Participated and presented in online forums on maintaining service delivery during COVID and best practice responses to increased rates of domestic violence.

Working from Home Self-Care Guide was developed and shared with sector partners.



New client greeting and sign in area

Business Continuity Plans were shared with sector partners for adapting to their own service context.

Practice Guide for Recognising and Responding to DV during COVID was developed and shared with sector partners.

Media Releases on local needs, impacts of domestic violence and services offered.

Advocating for local issues and needs relating to COVID-19 and domestic violence.

A Special Tribute to The Women's Cottage Team

A review of this last year would not be complete without a special mention of the extraordinary efforts by whole Women's Cottage team. They have worked tirelessly to keep The Women's Cottage operational and responsive to rapidly growing and changing community needs through very challenging times.

- They keep the service going through the fires even when almost the whole team lived in fire affected areas themselves. One of the team, Kelly, was out fighting the fires when not at work.
- They drove the long way around to get to and from work during floods.
- They set up offices at home and continued to work at full capacity.
- They keep services going in the building to respond quickly to women in crisis.
- They rapidly learnt new technologies and different ways of service delivery.
- They all took on new and different roles to meet all the new challenges and requirements. Meg especially greatly expanded her role to keep us up to date.
- They went above and beyond keeping in contact with clients and providing extra contact and support through out COVID to support emotional distress, isolation and financial hardship.
- And they have been incredibly supportive of each other through the year.



A story mirrored across many parts of the community sector, but one recognised with respect and gratitude by The Women's Cottage Management team and the women and children we supported.

The Women's Cottage worked with 'Sanctuary for Families' in New York City, USA to develop and the first, and as far as we know only, Australian edition of this resource. Shared widely and viewed by 1,744 on one Facebook post!

Safety Planning — COVID19

**Times of extra stress can greatly increase risks to your safety.
Plan ahead and think about how to stay as safe as possible**

A Guide for Women impacted Domestic Violence

1. BUDDY SYSTEM CODE WORD

Identify at least two people that you can contact with a "code word" to let them know if you are in trouble. Plan in advance what they should do if you send them the code word.

2. "SAFEST ROOM"

If there is an argument, identify an area of the home you can move to where there are no weapons and there are ways for you to leave the building such as a door or window.

No room may feel safe, so at least identify the lowest risk areas, to reduce possible risk of harm.

3. PLANNING WITH CHILDREN CODE WORDS

If you have children, decide how to communicate urgency with them. A sign that tells them to come to you for safety and/or a "code word" that means go to the "safest room" you have already told them about.

If children are old enough, give them safety numbers to call if you are not able to.

4. NOTIFY POLICE BEFORE AN EMERGENCY

Talk to the DVLO office at your local police station or a service you trust of your concerns ahead of time. Tell them the history and your concern of being in isolation due to coronavirus.

5. EXIT PLAN

In case you have to flee, create an exit plan ahead of time with someone who can help you. A friend, relative you can stay with, or a worker to help you.

6. EMERGENCY BAG

Pack a bag with extra set of keys, clothes for you and your children, mobile phone, medications, copies of important documents (also see #7). Along with some food that is long lasting / easy to prepare if needed.

7. IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Make copies or take pictures of your important documents and send them to a trusted friend, relative or worker. (ID, birth certificates, MyGov and DSS / Pension Card, Family Law documents and past / present Apprehended Violence Orders). Be mindful of sending information via phone or computer. Please use the method safest for you.

8. SEEKOUT SOCIAL SUPPORT

With social distancing and quarantining you may feel very isolated. Abusers may also increase isolation even further as a power and control tactic. Identify trusted friends, relatives, workers or online support where you can still connect virtually.

If you have a friend who may be experiencing abuse, reach out to them even more during this time.

9. CREATE A 'PEACEFUL' SPACE

If you cannot leave home, try to create a "peaceful space" for yourself (if that is safe for you). Put up pictures or symbols to support yourself emotionally and remind you of safety and connection. You can do this with your children. You can also add words and affirmations remind yourself of your self worth.

10. HOLDING TO YOUR PLAN

Keep a list of your safety plan in your phone or somewhere safe for you. If you write your plan down somewhere, consider listing only key words that help you remember but that would not be clear to your abuser. If this is not safe, try to memorise your plan, focusing on memorising at least one key emergency number on your list of resources.

This resource has been adapted to the Australian Context with permission from the authors Sanctuary for Families in New York USA. sanctuaryforfamilies.org/safety-planning-covid19
We extend our thanks and appreciation.

The Women's Cottage

Is open during COVID-19.
Please call first: 02 45784190
If we can't help over the phone we will arrange other options.
Your safety is important to us.



Thinking Globally / Acting Locally: Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)

At The Women's Cottage, we recognise the valuable role we play by providing a community Centre that offers women and children a place to go where they can get information, support and where they can experience a sense of belonging and safety. For many women, who have not experienced this before in their lives, this offers a new window of possibility into what they deserve and could have for themselves and their family. The Women's Cottage also recognises the importance of standing for the rights of all women in the community regardless of race, religion, sexuality, lifestyle, family make up, and for women with and without children.

The work done at The Women's Cottage is vital for supporting the rights and safety of women and children locally. it is also in line with global efforts to improve conditions and lives. This is highlighted by The Women's Cottage Vision, to *'Actively pursue political measures to address the elimination of social and environmental oppression, injustice and violence, locally and globally'*. The Women's Cottage is working to strengthen our awareness and capacity to do this by using the **United Nations 'Sustainable Development Goals' (SDG's)** as a framework for what we do and what outcomes are achieved. One year on as a registered member to this global movement through LCSA, our results will eventually feed into and be captured by United Nations in Australian and globally.

The United Nations describes the SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS as the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address global challenges of poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, peace and justice. The SDG's interconnect and seek to leave none behind, with a 2030 achievement target.



The Women's Cottage SDG's Contributions 2019 - 2020

While still in early days of formally connecting our work to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), The Women's Cottage is committed to deepening our understanding of the SDG. **The Women's Cottage has linked to eight (8) of the 17 SDG's.** We are identifying where our work already supports these goals, and where we can strengthen our capacity and achievements moving forward. This has included how to best strengthen partnerships with others to support positive collective impact. We will also work with peak body LCSA to establish formal participation in and reporting back to the United Nations SDG's Program.

In the 2019 – 2020 year, the conflation of natural disasters and the global pandemic has significantly increased the level of suffering in the community with work with. It has also provided both barriers and opportunities to building on our efforts to contribute towards the SDG's and has called for flexibility and working in partnership more than ever before.

The Women's Cottage SDG's Contributions 2019 - 2020



What we did: Expanded the amount and availability of ALL areas of financial and food assistance for women experiencing financial disadvantage and poverty:

- Emergency Relief and food / fuel vouchers
- Gabrielle Fund for women in DV
- Food Relief, (bread, meat, dry goods)
- Operating Foodbank for fresh fruit & Vegetables
- Broadened eligibility during COVID



What we didn't do:

- Have not yet set up as a 'No Interest Loans' NILS scheme outlet. We hope to introduce this service option in the coming year.
- The fresh food program was suspended during COVID. This will be re-assessed once it is safe to do so.

The Women's Cottage SDG's Contributions 2019 – 2020



What we did: Offering physical and emotional support for those impacted by domestic violence, past and present trauma, poverty and hardship, group programs, National Redress Support Services

- Maintaining service delivery during COVID
- Increased resources and services during COVID
- Provided targeted support & care packages during lockdown

What we didn't do: Groups and childcare cancelled due to COVID



What we did: Provided support / information / advocacy / referral services for individual women experiencing injustice and inequality. Supporting the rights of women and children to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect, organising public awareness events

- Reclaim the Night
- International Women's Day
- Stop Domestic Violence initiatives
- Increased services to women during COVID and increased eligibility for services to those not assisted by Government COVID relief measures (eg: overseas students, nonresidents)
- Increased the development of resources for community and sector partners during COVID to support women in DV
- Increased lobbying and political representation on behalf of women's equity & safety issues
- Increased submissions for funding to address women's equity & safety issues (Successfully secured Govt. funding for crisis accommodation units and corporate grants for increased hrs)
- Increased use of social media on the rights of women and raising awareness on equity and safety issues
- Introduced new policy and procedures supporting best practice service delivery for Aboriginal clients and support of Aboriginal workers
- Assessed and adjusted work practice and consistency to support equal access to available services and resources provided by The Women's Cottage

What we didn't do: Plans to for an in-service forum with workers and management on 'what does it mean to be a feminist service' have been put on hold because of COVID. Still on agenda

The Women's Cottage SDG's Contributions 2019 – 2020



What we did: Improved recycling systems and reduced waste:

- Separated paper and waste disposal
- Introduced new plastics recycling system
- Participated in milk bottle caps collection for manufacture of prosthetics in India
- Provide fresh nutritious foods for clients & group programs
- Modelled recycling & reducing waste for client participation
- Shared excess food with other services

What we didn't do: Had planned to install a visual display on 'Eco Feminism'. What it means and easy ways of doing your part. This initiative was sidelined because of COVID, but still on the agenda.



What we did: Supporting women's legal rights:

- Access to Apprehended Violence Orders
- Referrals for legal advice /Family Law advocacy
- Advocacy: police, DCJ, court support & SAMS meetings
- Victim Services applications support
- National Redress (Institutional Sexual Abuse) application support
- Convening local domestic violence networking group
- Representing the issues of women's rights at local, state and federal levels (including with the NSW Governor).



What we did: Increased partnerships at all levels of service:

- Joint HUBS submissions (Hawkesbury Unites for Better Services)
- New connection with international services for COVID & DV
- New funding partnerships with corporate business
- New funding partnerships with local business
- Local representative to LCSA
- Increased partnerships with sporting and community groups: eg: Lions Club, Rotary, CWA, Zonta, women's golf group.



GOVERNMENT HOUSE
SYDNEY

Wednesday, 1 July 2020

Ms Maria Losurdo
Manager, The Women's Cottage
PO Box 305
RICHMOND NSW 2753

Dear Maria,

Thank you for your recent correspondence, and for including the *Annual Report* of The Women's Cottage and the *Mirrored Images* chapter. I look forward to reading these documents and gaining an additional understanding of areas of your work and the impact of intergenerational trauma on First Nations people.

It was wonderful to meet you and members of the Women's Cottage team in a virtual discussion on 22 May 2020. Your comments on the difficulties faced by women and children in domestic violence situations, while in some ways similar to comments by other organisations, also provided unique insights. More broadly, the limited availability of crisis accommodation and long-term support for women in the Hawkesbury were areas of concern that I noted.

Our community owes organisations that provide emergency support and relief a great debt of gratitude. It is clear The Women's Cottage is achieving positive outcomes in providing safer pathways for women and children.

A heartfelt thank you to you, your staff and volunteers for your valuable work assisting women and children in the Hawkesbury region.

The Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC
Governor of New South Wales



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

WOMEN'S HEALTH WEEK ADVERTISING FEATURE

Safe place to find support

THE Women's Cottage has been supporting local vulnerable women and children in the Hawkesbury for 40 years.

It offers confidential support and direct assistance to women on the phone or in person around issues of safety, financial hardship and all forms of emotional distress.

Service manager Maria Losurdo said local women needed support now more than ever.

"Families in the Hawkesbury have been going through hard times for a long time," she said. "Long term impacts from years of drought, catastrophic bushfires, flooding and now COVID-19 has taken a significant toll."

"And for many families the traumatic impacts of the recent bushfires and flooding feel like they have been forgotten as COVID has taken over."

"In some cases, this increased family stress, financial and employment worry and isolation has caused a significant increase in arguments and sometimes in domestic violence and safety issues at home."



SOMEWHERE TO TURN: The financial and emotional stress of COVID-19, among other things, has caused an increase in domestic violence against women.

Figures from around the world have demonstrated a dramatic increase in the rates of domestic and family violence since the COVID-19 pandemic started.

This has been true here in Australia also. Official figures for NSW point to an increase of more than 10 per cent, which is thought to be conservative as it only includes the rate of women seeking

assistance. And is known to be higher in regional and isolated areas.

"It can be hard for women to know what to do when things start to spiral out of control," Ms Losurdo said.

"For many women it may be the first time they have experienced these types of issues which can make it hard to understand what is happening or how to get help."

“Believe women that talk about safety concerns

"And in many situations, it is hard for women to reach out for help because they do not have confidential space to themselves at home to make those types of calls, even if they knew who to call."

The Women's Cottage encourages family, friends and neighbours to play an important role in supporting someone they are concerned about.

"Believe women that talk about safety concerns and let women know you are concerned about them," Ms Losurdo said. "Let them make phone calls from your own house or phone if that is needed. And let them know how services like The Women's Cottage can help."

Details: 4578 4190 or contact 1800 Respect (1800 737 732) 24 hours a day.



The Women's Cottage 22 Bosworth St Richmond

Phone and Drop-In Support Available: 02 4578 4190

Monday to Wednesday: 9.30am to 3.00pm

Thursday: 9.30am to 1.00pm and 3.00pm to 7.00pm

Friday: 9.30am to 1.00pm

The Women's Cottage offers confidential support to women by skilled and compassionate workers.

You will be treated with respect and offered non-judgemental support and assistance:

- Emotional distress or isolation
- Financial distress
- Feeling unsafe at home
- Relationship breakdown
- Past and present impacts of domestic violence, sexual assault and other types of trauma
- Advice, Information, referral, and advocacy services

During COVID it is best to call first to plan your visit to The Women's Cottage.

Safety screening and social distancing are in place for the safety of all visitors and workers.

Drought, Bushfires, floods and now COVID has caused major stress for many local families. This has led to more women experiencing new or increased safety issues at home: traumatic arguments and subtle or direct physical, emotional & financial abuse.

If this is happening for you or if you're unsure what is happening but feel unsafe please call us for support.

Community Engagement: Website and Social Media

Website

www.womenscottage.org

This year we began a major overhaul of the website. We explored several options for outsourcing to external sites, but this proved too expensive, so we are instead slowly working through the process internally. Once finished information will be updated, National redress will have its own page, searching order will be maximised and an easy to use online donation facility will be available. That having been said the existing website continues to be used regularly by the community which was very telling in the increase in hits on those looking for information on support for domestic violence in the early stages of COVID-19, with over 80 individual page hits in April 2020.

IT Support: We would like to extend our special thanks and appreciation to Rashid Mostafa who has become a keen supporter of The Women's Cottage by providing both low cost and free IT support and advice.

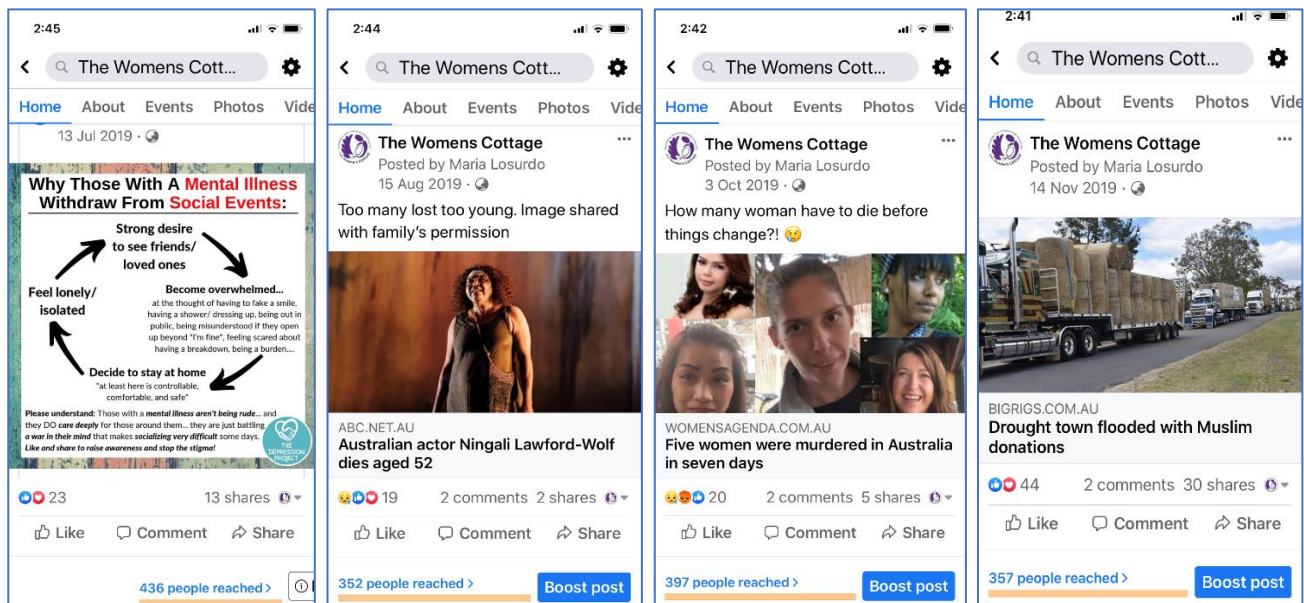
Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/The-Womens-Cottage-194124280711819>

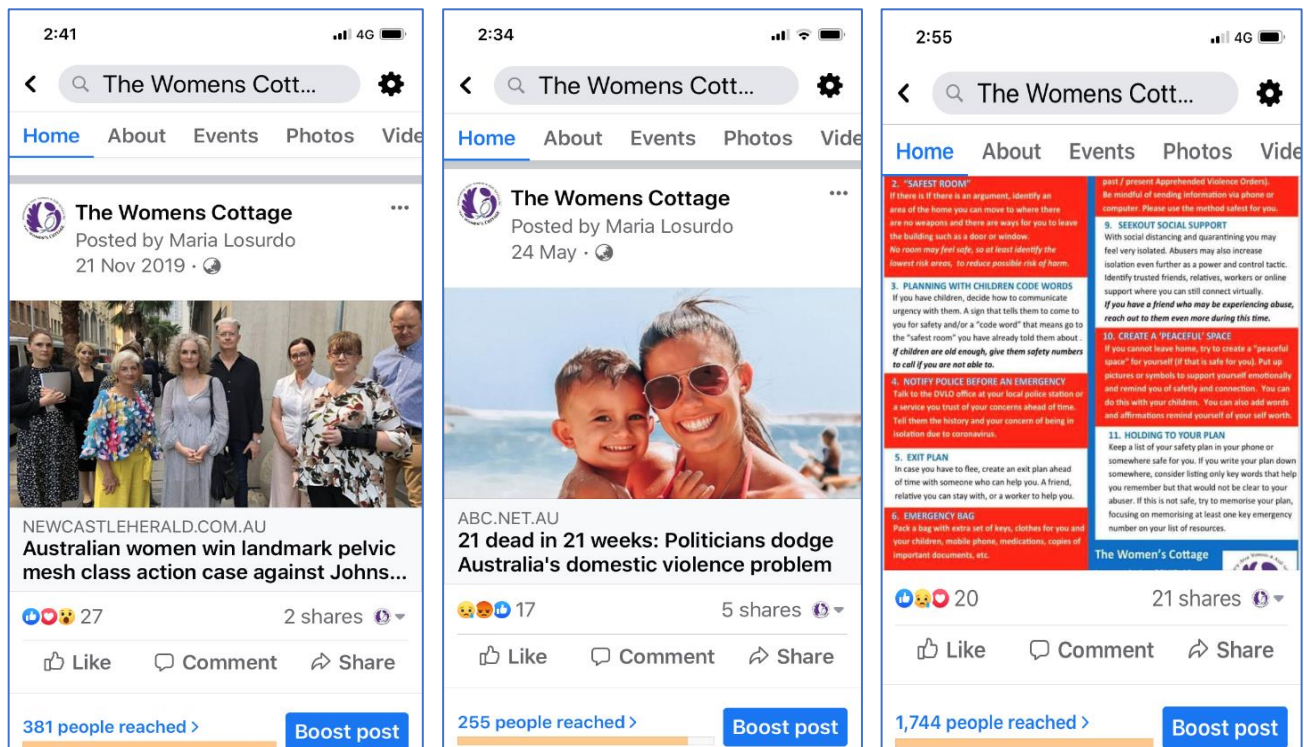
Our Facebook page currently has around 1,000 followers and women regularly engage with, share and comment on posts. Posts cover a variety of topics that focus on issues of women's rights and safety, community news, resources, self-care and feel good stories.

Women also use the messaging facility to ask questions about services we offer and/or seek advice for themselves or friends struggling with issues of concern.

Facebook Support: We would like to extend our special thanks and appreciation to Jasmine Seymore for her ongoing support as assistant editor and creating posts for The Women's Cottage throughout the year.



A Selection of popular Facebook posts over the year that collectively reach around 4,000 views





A window into our work...

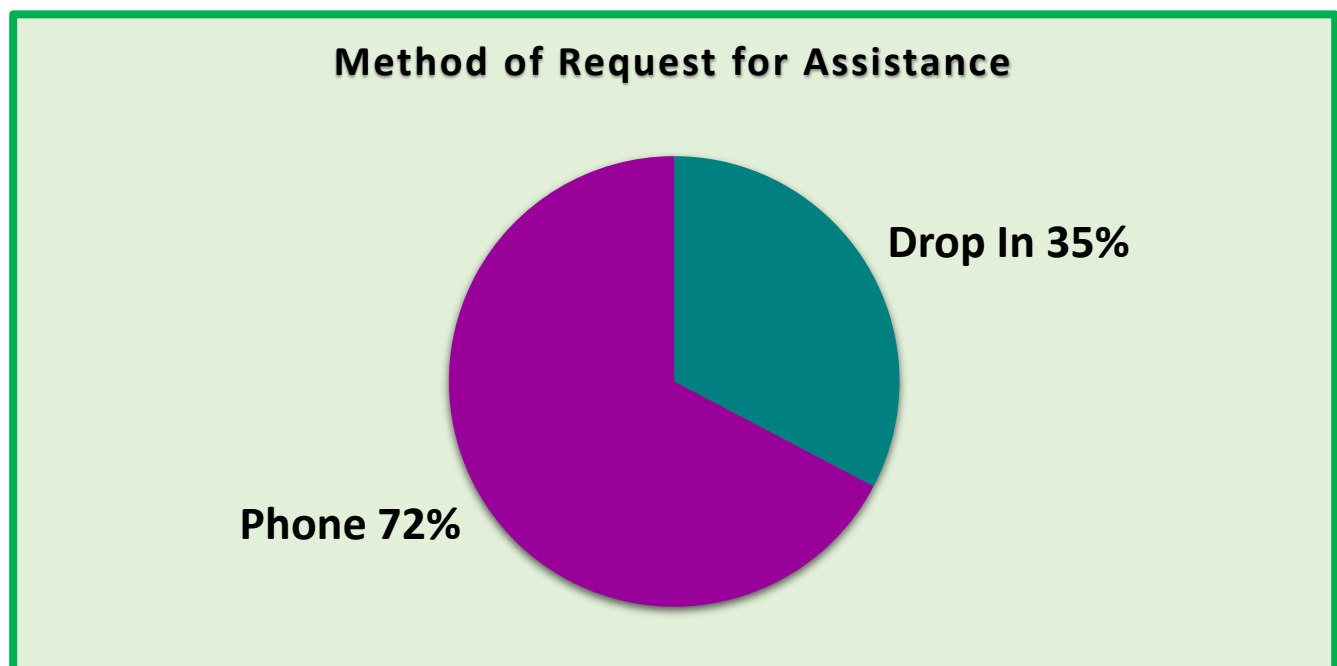
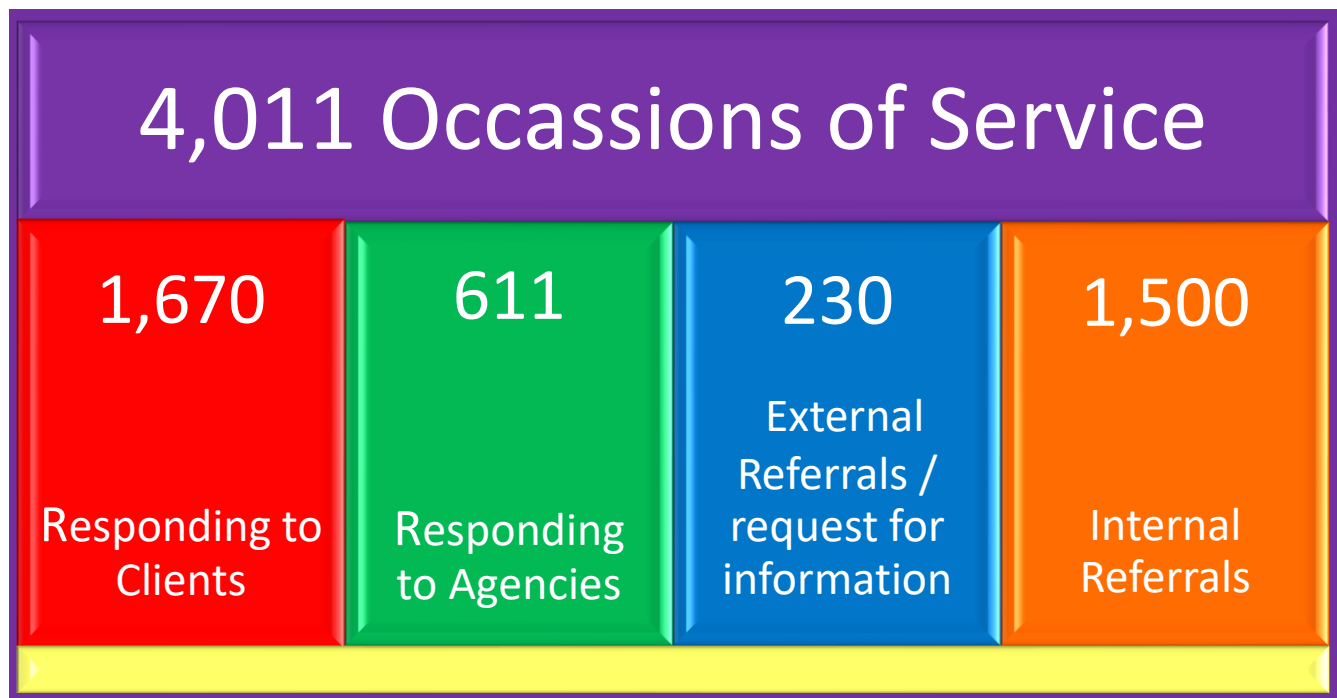
Centre Based
Service Provision
and Groups

2019-2020

DCJ Funded Centre Based Service Delivery 2019 – 2020

Service delivery data is based on records of incoming phone calls, contact and conversations with clients and agencies and from client case files. Statistics are based on whole year or whole group data collection and/or on client feedback, sample periods and six-monthly averages. We are transitioning to new data base systems this year so not all data sets will match previous years but will hopefully provide a more comprehensive picture in years to come.

How Much Did We Do?



How Well Did We Do?



Client Needs During COVID January to June 2020

The impacts of the covid-19 pandemic were significant and showed up in client and community needs in several ways. Of most significant were a **surge of financial distress related requests** in the earlier months of the pandemic until Government relief was implemented, and then **rising rates of requests for assistance for domestic violence**. Also, of note was the number of **new clients seen** during this time and often from women who had never used support services before. At the height of community distress during the earlier part of the year we could be seeing up to 3-5 new clients every day, the majority seeking help for domestic violence and risks of homelessness issues.

Client Activity During COVID January to June 2020

506 x client sessions



60 x new clients



158 x DV specific cases



Client needs as related to the new TEI Funding Categories

83 x requests under Categories TEI 1 - 2
(requests for information / lower level support needs)

160 x requests under Category TEI 3
(lower level risk domestic violence and financial distress)

148 x requests under Categories TEI 4 - 5
(high to very high levels of risks domestic violence & financial distress)

158 x children 0 – 12 years in families seen

66 x children 13 – 18 years in families seen

Financial Hardship Support Provided in 2019 to 2020

The Women's Cottage provides a range of support to clients in financial hardship including food packs from food shelf supplies, personal care items, nappies and baby needs, vouchers for use at local super markets, vouchers to buy fuel, assistance to buy medical supplies and fill scripts and for women escaping domestic violence funds for needs such as short term crisis accommodation, moving and relocation costs. Christmas hampers and toys are also provided each year. There is no funding source for these services. All financial hardship support comes from community donations and/or The Women's Cottage own fund raising.

Approximately 240 clients were assisted for Financial Hardship

160 x food hampers

44 x personal care packs

36 x Christmas food and toy hampers

General Needs:

\$320 for general needs

\$1800 in food vouchers

\$1340 in fuel vouchers

Domestic Violence Specific Support:

\$1294 for crisis accommodation, moving fees, other needs

\$430 in food vouchers

\$670 in fuel vouchers



What Difference Did We Make?

Our work supported clients to achieve self-determination and positive outcomes. Results are drawn from client feedback, worker observations and casework conversations. (Sample size - 200 clients).

41%

- Increased Connection to Other Services

79%

- Increased Emotional Resilience

67%

- Increased Confidence

85%

- Increased Trust

73%

- Increased Knowledge and Skills

73%

- Improved Feelings and Attitudes

67%

- Increased Feelings of Safety

It is important to note that the reduction in safety outcomes is directly linked to the major increase in the number of women we are seeing who are in serious ongoing Domestic Violence where they remain at risk and are not safe.

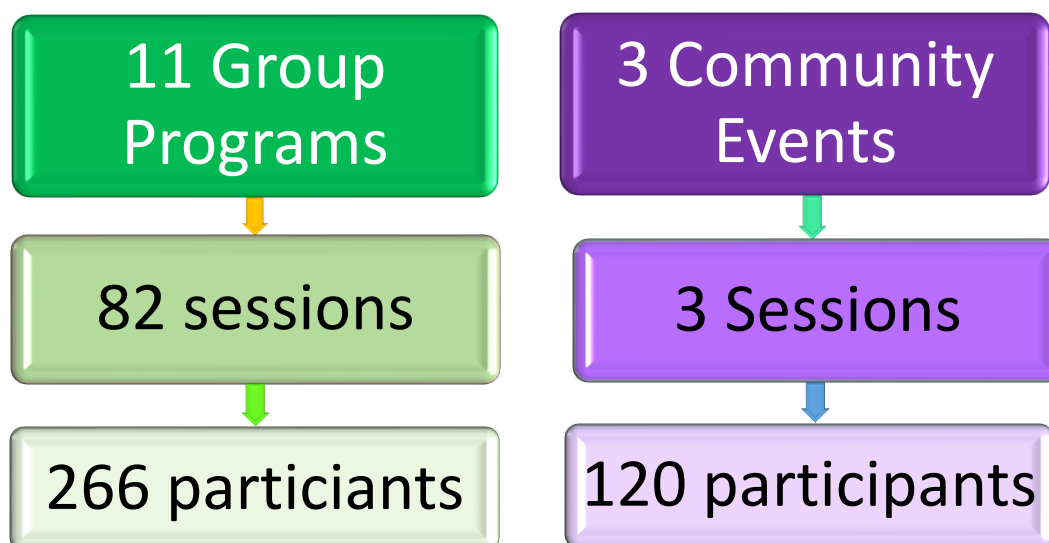
Groups Programs and Community Events 2019 – 2020

The Women's Cottage runs a range of group programs every year. Groups that are offered are aimed at giving women an opportunity to:

- ⊗ Supporting specific issues of distress, i.e. impacts of domestic violence and trauma.
- ⊗ Develop self-care and emotional self-regulation skills and confidence.
- ⊗ Connect with other women and share strengths and stories of survival.
- ⊗ Grow in a sense of belonging to and participating in the community.

Most importantly, Groups provide a soft entry point into other support services that might be needed.

DCJ / TEI funds 2 groups each year. All other groups are funded by The Women's Cottage and Community Donations. All group programs in term 2 2020 were cancelled because of COVID-19.



COMMUNITY EVENTS



GROUP PROGRAMS

Yoga Class for Women

Yoga class for women on low incomes or women who are currently going through emotional hard times

FREE entry coupons available from Women's Cottage



Open to WOMEN of all ages

This gentle 1 hour class is specifically designed for women who need time out to reconnect with themselves. Building strength, flexibility and relation of body and mind. This is an open drop in class, you do not need to commit to ongoing classes and no previous experience is needed.

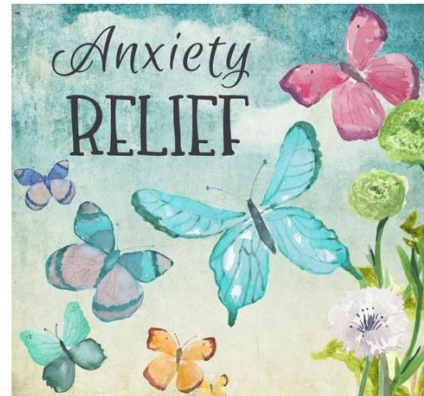


Tuesdays 11am
The Yoga Shed St Andrews Church Hall
25 West Market St Richmond
 (please arrive 10 minutes early)



Guided Meditation Group

A safe place aimed at supporting anxiety and stress relief



Open to WOMEN of all ages

This group offers guided meditation, body scanning and mindfulness activities to support women who experience stress and anxiety

Fridays 10am - 12pm

Venue: The Women's Cottage
 22 Bosworth St Richmond
 Refreshments Provided



Free Childcare Available—Booking Needed 02 4578 4190

The Women's Circle Drop In Group

A safe place to be with others and share support and fun

**Every Second
 Wednesday
 Term 4 2019**

16 October
30 October
13 November
27 November
11 December



Open to WOMEN of all ages

A group offering company and support and shared activity

Wednesdays 10.30am - 12.30pm
Fortnightly Starting 16/10/19

Venue: The Women's Cottage
 22 Bosworth St Richmond



Free Childcare and Refreshments

Childcare Bookings are Required—Call 02 4578 4190



FREE Singing Workshops for Women

**Group sing-a-longs with
 wonderful local singing coach
 Suze Pratten**

**Wednesdays
 1.30pm—3.00pm**

Starting 24th JULY 2019

Running for 10 sessions

**Finish time can be flexible
 to allow for school pick ups**

**Workers from local services are
 welcome and encouraged to
 come along with their clients**

**Optional Performance at
 The Women's Cottage AGM**

No Experience Needed

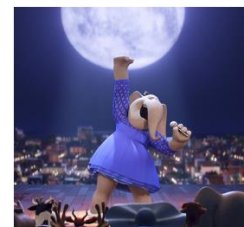
Come for company

Come for Fun

Come for Happiness

Come for Laughs

Ok to be nervous or shy



**Venue: The Women's Cottage
 22 Bosworth Street Richmond**

No childcare but kids welcome

Refreshments provided

Call to book or for more Info: 02 4578 4190

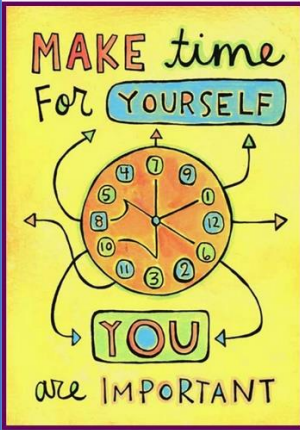


GROUP PROGRAMS

Women Carer's Support Group

Oct to Dec 2019

Because You're Important Too!



Term 4 2019
Alternate Wednesdays
Starting 23/10/19
10.30—12.30

The Women's Cottage
22 Bosworth Street Richmond

This group is for **Women** foster and/or kinship carers and those caring for grand children or other kids in the family.

Time for yourself, meet others who know the challenges, get support, enjoy a cuppa, have a laugh and make and do things together!

Sessions Dates—Wednesday 10.30am—12.30pm

23/10 • 6/11 • 20/11 • 4/12 • 18/12

To book in for the group, book childcare or to ask questions please call 02 4578 4190

Managing Difficult Emotions

Working With Feelings That Overwhelm



Anger, sadness, despair, fear, confusion and other hard feelings can overwhelm our lives. Sometimes suddenly, sometimes all the time. This safe supportive group will explore ways of taking care of yourself before during and after big feelings.

Lead Facilitator: Mel Olsen

Open to WOMEN of all ages

Tuesdays 10.30am - 12.30pm

8 WEEKS: 18th Feb to 7th April

Venue: The Women's Cottage
22 Bosworth St Richmond

Free Childcare & Refreshments

Call 02 4578 4190 to BOOK CHILDCARE



Mindful Mums Group

Learn about mindfulness and parenting in a safe and fun group



Open to WOMEN of all ages

Tuesdays 10.00am - 12.00pm Term 4—2019

6 WEEK GROUP: 12th Nov to 17th Dec

Venue: The Women's Cottage 22 Bosworth St Richmond

Free Childcare & Refreshments Call 02 4578 4190 to BOOK IN

Women's Singing Group

ALL WOMEN WELCOME

Women Exploring Redress Warmly Encouraged to Come Along



Laugh
Feel Free
Have Fun
Meet Others
Lessen Stress
Enjoy Yourself
Find Your Voice
Process Emotions

No Experience Needed, and it's ok to feel nervous or shy!

Wednesdays 1.30pm—3.00pm

5th Feb • 12th Feb • 19th Feb • 26th Feb • 4th March • 11th March

At The Women's Cottage 22 Bosworth Street Richmond



National Redress Scheme
For people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse

Find out more at
www.nationalredress.gov.au
or call 1800 737 377

REDRESS SUPPORT SERVICE

a project of
Hawkesbury Area Women & Kids Service Inc The Women's Cottage 02 4578 4190
(This project is funded by the Federal Department of Social Services)

Group Participation Feedback

Group	Sample Feedback
Difficult emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I liked the hard conversations• Knowing I am not the only one who has reactions and triggers• Learning new strategies (dealing with difficult emotions)
Singing Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher was amazing• Great learning opportunity• Learning new skills• Just singing in a group was uplifting• Having fun together
Mindful Mums	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Felt peaceful• Opened my mind and calmed down• Relaxing and comforting• Informative• Learning more about mindfulness• Learning more about being present in the moment
Meditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group discussion and various meditations• Atmosphere was relaxing and company good• The meditation was powerful• Fantastically relaxing• I loved the environment• Liked being welcomed by everyone

Reported Improved Resiliency Factors from Group Participants 2019 - 2020

- Increased sense of belonging (in places and with people)
- Increased connection with others
- Feeling more comfortable with other people
- Trying new things (self-agency)
- Increased sense of pride in self (self-esteem)
- More able to deal with difficult feelings when they come up
- Increased sense of having someone to turn to if feeling overwhelmed



Women's Advocacy Violence Emergency (WAVE) Report 2019 - 2020

Women's Advocacy Violence Emergency (WAVE) services refer to all services provided to women seeking assistance over the phone or in person at The Women's Cottage. These services are predominantly funded under DCJ and include crisis response, counselling, casework, referral, information, advocacy, and emergency relief.

It has been an exceptionally busy year for WAVE, and we have been fortunate enough to have added Lauren and Jess to our team in February 2020 and they have been such a great asset to the service and the clients. We have been fortunate enough to see them expand their knowledge and skills since they did their placements as 4th year Uni students with us. Lauren has since moved onto full time work in a refuge and it is lovely to know her passion to support women and children started at The Cottage, we miss her skill and professionalism immensely.

We have had a huge increase in the number of women accessing our service for support, particularly around domestic violence issues and homelessness. We have assisted many clients through the processes of obtaining safe housing, accessing victim services for claims, AVO matters and ongoing counselling support. We have also been able to assist many women with our material aid thanks to the generous donations The Cottage receives throughout the year from the community and groups and been able to assist women and children with a safe night in a motel when they have fled violence if no accommodation has been available through other channels.

Then Covid-19 became prominent and changed the way the cottage functioned, we have been extremely diligent in our efforts and policies to be Covid-19 safe and up to date on best practices to manage this. Whilst most of The Cottage team worked from home due to social distancing restrictions and The Cottage being the small space that it is, the WAVE team continued to work from The Cottage daily to ensure that

The WAVE team operated all through the pandemic

"We have had a huge increase this year in the number of women accessing our service for support, particularly around domestic violence issues and homelessness."

"the WAVE team continued to work from The Cottage daily to ensure that women and children continued to receive the high level of professional support they always have. We have introduced all the appropriate safety measures which meet NSW Health guidelines to keep us all safe."

women and children continued to receive the high level of professional support they always have. We have introduced all the appropriate safety measures which meet NSW Health guidelines to keep us all safe.

The first few weeks of “lockdown” were difficult for all, there was high anxiety about Covid-19, its transmission and health of everyone in general.....plus a special mention to the great toilet paper debacle. We were all especially concerned about women and children in lockdown in their homes experiencing domestic violence, we knew that although we were initially quiet that the damage this would do to those families would result in a large influx of women reaching out for support when it was safe to do so. The influx did come and we were so thankful to have extra WAVE workers on board to support these women and not have to turn any away, had this have occurred with just Kim and I only managing WAVE I don’t believe we could have adequately responded to all the requests for assistance, thank you to Maria for securing this additional funding grant.

We have had so many new clients during Covid-19 reach out to us for support, we are still seeing women face to face but are doing this as much as possible by appointment to regulate how many people are in the cottage at one time.

Melissa Brodie & Kim Ward

Women’s Advocacy Violence Emergency (WAVE) Workers

**74 Australian women
and
27 Australian children
were killed in 2019**

WAVE Case Study

A new client came to us for support during COVID in June. She had been speaking with a counselor and identified that her husband was controlling her financially, socially and emotionally. This behaviour escalated as he began working from home.

She was supported by WAVE workers with a safety plan as she wanted to leave her husband. Part of her plan was relocating to family until she could secure her accommodation for her and her child.

As she had no access to money and did not have her own bank account, we also supported her with practical assistance to facilitate her ability to leave, such as petrol & Coles cards to use on her journey to her family.

We also referred her to Nurreen Women's Housing Services for housing longer term support options and assistance.

As a result of the practical and emotional support offered, this client and her child secured safe accommodation, sorted out Centrelink payments and are now moving forward with their lives without domestic violence.

New WAVE Worker Reports 2019 - 2020

This year, I was given the amazing opportunity to move from student to WAVE worker alongside Lauren. It has been an incredibly rewarding experience, albeit challenging at times given current circumstances. It was also incredibly sad to see Lauren go but I am so excited for her achievement and her future!

I have become quite accustomed to submitting Victim Services counselling applications and I am pleased to say that their online form process has changed, making it much faster and easier to submit. Their approval turn-around is now less than 24 hours, which is fantastic for the women and children needing immediate support. Even during Covid-19 times, women are still able to access counselling services as many of our providers are offering alternatives such as phone consults or even Skype calls. It is very humbling to know that even during such unprecedented times, there is still a strong support network available that we can access and deliver to the women and children that come to us.

I am looking forward to what the year ahead brings us, and I'd like to say thank you to everyone who has helped support The Cottage and allows us to do what we do.

The last twelve months in the WAVE role has been busier than we can ever recall, the volume of Women using the WAVE Service feels like it has doubled, our workload has increased and many more hours are being spent on each Women – face to face and in the background (completing notes, referrals, support letters, advocacy and liaising with other services).

What I have most noticed is that the complexity of Women's needs that they are presenting to us has increased immensely. Just one example being how many women are coming in for support around NDIS. These women report feeling overwhelmed by having their specific needs minimised by the NDIS process, and by the process they are required to adhere to use and/or to apply for or an NDIS package.

Jessica Reed

I first came to The Women's Cottage in 2018 as a University student doing my last placement to complete my social work degree. In 2019 once my placement had ended, I was then offered a relief W.A.V.E position. During my time at the Women's Cottage I have been able to grow both professionally and personally.

I was involved in various services that the cottage provided to women in the community. Such as fortnightly food banks, community events such as NAIDOC, HANADV meetings and provided with professional development opportunities like Wrapped in Angles. I also attended my very first protest at The Reclaim the Night march in 2018.

After some time at the Cottage I was able to start seeing the women that were dropping in to access the service and thus became more involved in the W.A.V.E. support worker role. For this I am eternally grateful to Maria our manager and the W.A.V.E. workers Kim and Melissa, who put their trust in me and always created a space where I could come to them for support or advice.

During my time as a W.A.V.E Worker no two days were the same. I was always learning new things as different situations would appear and learning to adapt to constantly changing circumstances. For this I also want to thank the women who accessed the service and who put their trust in me. The women that have come in have all been amazing, kind and demonstrated such strength, resilience and vulnerability which will stay with me as I continue to move forward in my professional journey.

So again THANKYOU!! To all the workers I have nothing but positive memories and look forward to hopefully meeting again in the future.

Lauren Galdos

Anti-Violence Project Report 2019 - 2020

The Anti-violence Project Worker plays a key role in community development and education projects and activities that raise awareness about the effects of violence in communities, to reduce violence against women and children. This position also involves front line work providing crisis support, offering information, and making appropriate referrals as well as developing and running group programs at The Women's Cottage.

This Year's Summary:

Direct Support: Part of my role is to provide short term DV case management as part of my WAVE support role. Cultural support of Aboriginal clients is also part of this role.

Carer Support Group: This group was well attended. Participant numbers fluctuated from 8-10 to 2-3 carers each group. This was an opportunity for carers to discuss things that were important to them and to support each other with the challenging task of fostering and kinship care.

Women's Circle Drop-in Group: This group evolved over time from an unstructured group meeting for coffee and a chat to a rostered activity group. Attendees could choose what activities they would like to see provided. The number of attendees varied depending on the activities but ranged from 2-5 women. The most popular activities for this group were Weaving and African Drumming.

Managing Difficult Emotions: This group was a 7-8-week structured group. It was well attended 4 women at each group. Participants were very disappointed that they could not complete the group due to COVID.

Guided Meditation: I have facilitated this group since early 2020. This group has always been our most popular. Moving to weekly sessions allowed more women to attend and opened it up to a new client base to access this essential group.

Networking: It is my role to attend and participate in relevant networks and to develop and sustain partnership with key government and Non-government services. Main partners and networks:

Hawkesbury Action Network Against Domestic Violence: My role involves convening the group and minute taking. Meetings moved to ZOOM after COVID hit.

Metwest Violence Prevention Network: Participation in this meeting has been shared with other HANADV members to reduce the strain on my workload. Due to COVID there has been no meetings in 2020.

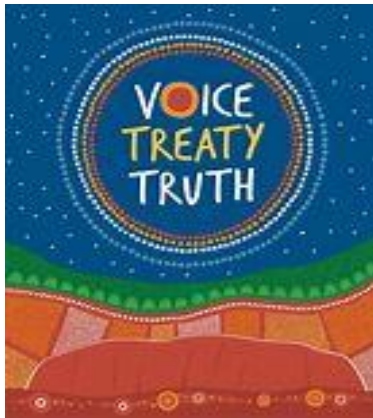
Safety Precinct Meetings: This has involved attending meetings a number of times in 2019.

Campaigns and Events: A big part of my role is to represent and involve The Women's Cottage in local anti-violence events and campaigns, including:



2019 International Women's Day: The Women's Cottage held an Open Day for IWD this year. Smaller than previous years but enjoyed by everyone. It was a successful day that also resulted in a new referral to WAVE. A big thank you to Alison Disbray of 'Grand Miam' for donating the beautiful cupcakes to share with women.

2019 Reclaim the Night: Was well attended this year despite the rain with around 30-40 people getting involved. The rain held off just long enough for the speeches, with Danielle Wheeler acted as our MC. We had great entertainment from young local artist Madison Disbray and Women's Song. The sausage sizzle is always a hit. Thanks to Bligh Park youth worker for cooking up a storm. Feedback was very positive apart from disappointment about the rain.



2019 NAIDOC Stall: This is a great experience every year where we hold a stall at the local NAIDOC festival in the park. It gives us the opportunity to show solidarity and support for the Aboriginal community, connect with and engage local families and to share information on what The Cottage offers. Lolly bags, fruit and drinks are also well received. One of the highlights was having time to talk with local Elders and individual women about their lives and any support they may need.

Highlights, Challenges and Goals:

My highlight for this year was being involved in the successful submission for NEW Crisis Accommodation Units in the Hawkesbury. This submission is a partnership between The Women's Cottage and Wentworth Housing and construction is due to start in 2021. This is a long overdue need that The Women's Cottage has been lobbying for many years. While we have a long way to go it is a step in the right direction.

Though out 2020 I have spent a lot of time lobbying and advocating for the Hawkesbury to receive some of the domestic violence specific money that has been rolled out under COVID support programs. As part of this I was asked to be a speak at the DVNSW webinar focused on people and animals experiencing DFV and Maria and I also met with the Governor general.

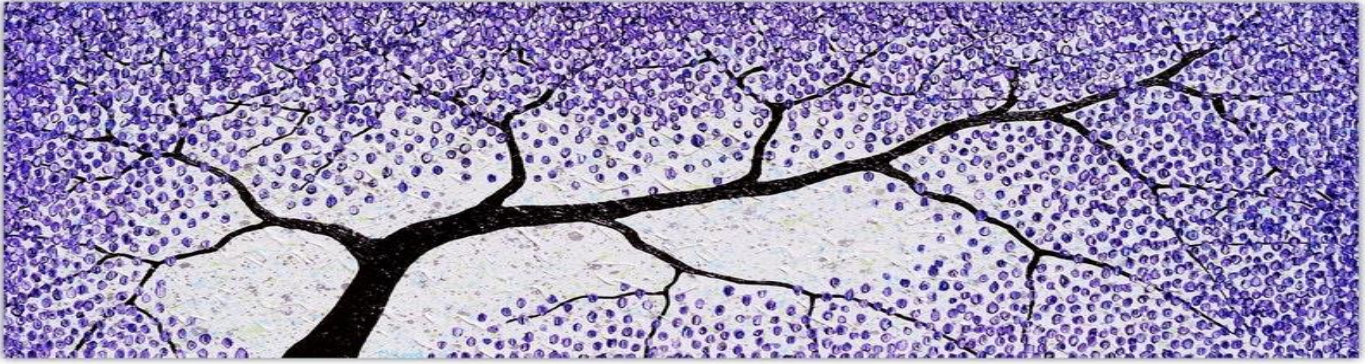
I have also spent a lot of time working on information and resources for the sector as a whole to support women experiencing violence. This included a best practice guide and information on new numbers, services and systems put in place during COVID.

My biggest challenge this year has been working from home and the increased use and need of technology to continue to do events, meetings, and groups. I want to further master facilitating groups via zoom, and I would like to see face to face groups return to the cottage even if they are only small. Overall, it has been a challenging year, but I have developed new skills that will serve me well into the future.

Mel Olsen

"To keep our faces toward change, and behave like free spirits in the presence of fate, is strength undefeatable". Helen Keller

Jacaranda Group Report 2019 - 2020



This year marks the 10th Anniversary of the Jacaranda Group!

The Jacaranda Group is a social networking and activity group for women 50 years plus that meets fortnightly for low cost activities. The Jacaranda Group provides members with non-judgmental respect and connection. Where women get to know other local women, make new friendships and share ideas, talents, life milestones and of course the fun and laughter.

Dear Women's Cottage,

It is good to report that our group is going as strong as ever, with around 32 members. Due to COVID-19 we, like many other groups, have had to curtail our activities down. We have gone from bus trips, outings, activities and meetings to phone calls, mail connection, birthday lunches and coffee mornings. All 2020 trips have been local. We have also supported many members through health issues: doctors and hospital visits and carpooling among members.

We appreciate The Women's Cottage helping in funds for stamps, cards and occasional gifts for members which I look after on behalf of the group. The Cottage also helps with funding for our Christmas lunch, which we will still have this year with social distancing in place because of COVID.

Jacaranda members are also offered the opportunity to apply for association membership of The Women's Cottage if they would like, and we support housebound members with this if needed. Thank you, Trish, for helping collect membership fee and getting this to the Cottage.

In looking forward we would love to get flyers on other activities running at The Women's Cottage in 2021 which we will get out to everyone.

Many thanks to The Women's Cottage and staff. A great service to the community.

Mrs. Joan T Oakley

On behalf of the Jacaranda Group Richmond

For more information, about the Jacaranda Group contact The Women's Cottage on 02 4578 4190

BLUSH Report 2019 - 2020



BLUSH (Bi and Lesbian United Sisters of Hawkesbury) is a community run self-directed social group. It has been going from strength to strength for over 12 years and is auspiced and supported by The Women's Cottage.

When the Women's Cottage asked for BLUSH's 2020 Annual Report, we thought what could we possibly report on after this incredibly difficult COVID year? We decided to look back on what we had written for 2019 and read these words "we are looking forward to 2020 and the challenges it will bring". Well how true that turned out to be.

When we thought more deeply, we realised BLUSH has proven to be strong and valuable because regardless of the obstacles, regulations, restrictions and fear, BLUSH members have continued to provide connectivity and friendship to one another.

During the year we all learnt to embrace technology in one giant learning curve. We had to adapt to meetings via Zoom and although Zoom is not a patch on face-to-face contact, it served its purpose and helped to keep us connected and laughing. There are a few funny stories that could be shared but "what happens on Zoom, stays on Zoom"!

A few of us were sent home from our offices early March and we are still working from home. I can honestly say that for the first time in 25 years I have experienced *real* flexible working practice. Other members had to turn face-to-face teaching into an online experience virtually overnight. This is no mean feat when you have been educating in a certain way for over 30 years. Others have managed to keep businesses alive and flourishing by developing safe, creative practices. Amazing achievements indeed!

Over the last few months, we have welcomed a new member and managed a few meetings over meals in a range of COVID-conscious venues. We enjoyed a lovely lunch and games afternoon in a private home and celebrated our twelfth birthday in style at a lovely café in Annangrove. All outings have been well supported. We are embarking on a Mystery Trip in the coming weeks and will look at planning next year's calendar with careful consideration.

All in all, we are pleased to report BLUSH continues to be a safe and happy social/support group who welcomes and appreciates the diversity we all individually bring and collectively share with one another.

Once again, we thank the Women's Cottage for the continued support and encouragement. We feel very 'protected' under your auspice. Continue to stay safe!

Kathy and Meaghan Adam-Cross

BLUSH Co-Coordinators

For more information, about BLUSH contact The Women's Cottage on 02 4578 4190



National Redress Scheme

For people who have experienced
institutional child sexual abuse



The Women's Cottage National Redress Support Service

Funded by Federal Dept of Social Services

DSS Funded National Redress Support Service 2019 - 2020

Redress Support Service Workers Report

This is the year we give thanks in an even bigger way to the Collective, our Manager, The Cottage and our co-workers. Without all of you we could not have continued to make the Redress Project a lively and successful project in this year of drought, bushfire, floods and COVID. We have been supported and encouraged by everyone at The Cottage, plus we have particularly noticed this year the support and encouragement we have received from the team at the Department of Social Services who run the National Redress Scheme.

Part of that support has been extra DSS funding which has allowed us to expand and solidify what we do. This has been put into action by having Kelly Haines join the team, in the role of Admin/Case Work Support and by using the money to broker services and resources for clients.

Kelly has swiftly and efficiently picked up a whole lot of administrative tasks so that Angie and Sarah can focus on client work and community engagement work. She has taken over the arranging, planning and minute taking of meetings, the collection and collation and input of data we are required to submit, the time-consuming research and follow up with sourcing supplies and resources.

We had been looking at ways to make the process of applying to the Redress Scheme more possible for our clients. With the extra funding we have been able to experiment, in conversation with clients with what helps them to stay calm, what works for them to reduce stress, and then finding ways to assist them to get that experience. We have been able to do things like take clients to massage therapists, get them music they love, craft supplies and essential oils.

The challenges that we have shared with everyone in the area have been the bushfires, the floods and COVID. The challenges, that are specific to this project, have been the lack of knowledge about Redress that we have discovered in the professional and general population, and the complexity of vulnerabilities our clients live with. Those challenges have of course intersected.

Our response to the lack of knowledge about Redress has been to continue our program of information sessions with community agencies, and to feed back our findings to DSS. We planned a series of 'Information Breakfasts' in local areas, in collaboration with other Redress Support Services. We advertised in the local papers and online, booked venues, and were about to buy the croissants when COVID restrictions came down. Our engagement strategy has had to go on-line and has relied a lot on extending phone conversations with workers in other services. We have also started the process of deciding on priority areas we will reach out to, as it is clear that we do not have the capacity as a small service to do the population-wide education that is needed for the Redress Scheme to truly be available to all who might benefit.

Bushfires had a very big impact on everyone, physically, emotionally and mentally. Clients' health was affected by smoke and heat, there was an emotional drain from missing out on Christmas and summer relaxation, everyone was continually on alert, trying to make big decisions about staying or leaving. Our response was of course affected by that same impact - not being able to get to work at times, heightened levels of worry etc. We made sure to keep in consistent contact with our clients, to make well-being checks and to keep talking about what priority the application had in their lives during this time.

Floods followed and added to stress in the general population, and when COVID arrived many felt under relentless pressure, that the carpet had been whisked from under our feet, and that many assumptions about daily life were being challenged.

All this meant that already vulnerable people were likely to be in a more stressed and unstable state than usual. We were very lucky to have the extra money available so that we could put together Care Packs which were delivered to all clients during April. A lot of thought went into the contents including COVID specific supplies, self-care items, things of beauty and nurture. Having Kelly on board ensured this project was rolled out successfully. And clients' feedback really underscored the importance of this initiative.

As part of the ongoing COVID related client support, we learnt of a project called '1000 Hearts', and took from it the idea of support and connection through making little hearts, and supplying the 'makings' of a heart to clients who wanted to make something with their hands and reach out to others. We also received a wonderful donation of sunflower seed planter packs from HCOS. We intend to send those out to clients in the Spring.

During this time, we have rapidly learnt new ways of working, finding creative and flexible ways to continue to support clients in COVID safe ways. We came to arrangements that suited individual clients about what to do with their Redress applications. We had more meetings outside at a safe distance (a little cold sometimes) and dealt with problems of keeping confidentiality in public spaces.



We took on the steep learning curve of online work and found out what could and couldn't be done over the phone and the internet. We are continuing to develop more collaborative ways of promoting the Redress Scheme with other Redress Support Services and maintain collaborative partnerships with other community organisations. We have continued to update current training needs. The need to work from home led to a whole lot of set up involving trial and error, and we discovered how laborious and complicated working in a team can be when you can't pass on a simple message to a colleague in the kitchen.

The Redress Team

Angie Gleeson, Sarah Dillane and Kelly Haines

Aboriginal Engagement and Cultural Safety

Aboriginal clients make up a significant proportion of all the clients seeking assistance from our service. This is recognised as a direct result from the ongoing impacts of colonisation, child removal and treatment of Aboriginal children and people over past, and present, generations.

In recognition of the importance of creating culturally safe and respectful space and genuine relationships, the Redress Team has put much effort into talking to Aboriginal clients about their cultural needs and providing culturally appropriate support.

Part of these efforts involved the engagement of Ngunnawal / Wiradjuri artist Tracie Harris. Tracie created an artwork for The Women's Cottage dedicated to Aboriginal women going through Redress for us to display for their comfort and connection and to use in promotion to support Aboriginal community engagement.

This beautiful artwork will support Aboriginal clients well into the future and we extend our sincere thanks to Tracie for her creativity and support.



Artwork by Ngunnawal / Wiradjuri artist Tracie Harris

**The Redress Support Service
worked with 24 women in 2019 - 2020**

1,203 Instances of
Service Provision

38% clients
identify as
Aboriginal

100% clients live
with complex
Trauma

58% clients
living with
a disability

13% clients were
over 70 years old

20+

Redress Information
Sessions were provided,
reaching over 150 people

30+

Working partnerships
where formally established to
support Redress Clients

Flexible Intergrated Service Delivery

100% of clients were connected to
'Knowmore' for specialist legal advice

45%
Clients Received
Home Visits

17%
Clients Received
Outreach Visits

100%
Clients Received Support via
Phone, Email and/or Skype

50%
Clients Were Provided
Supported Referrals
to other services

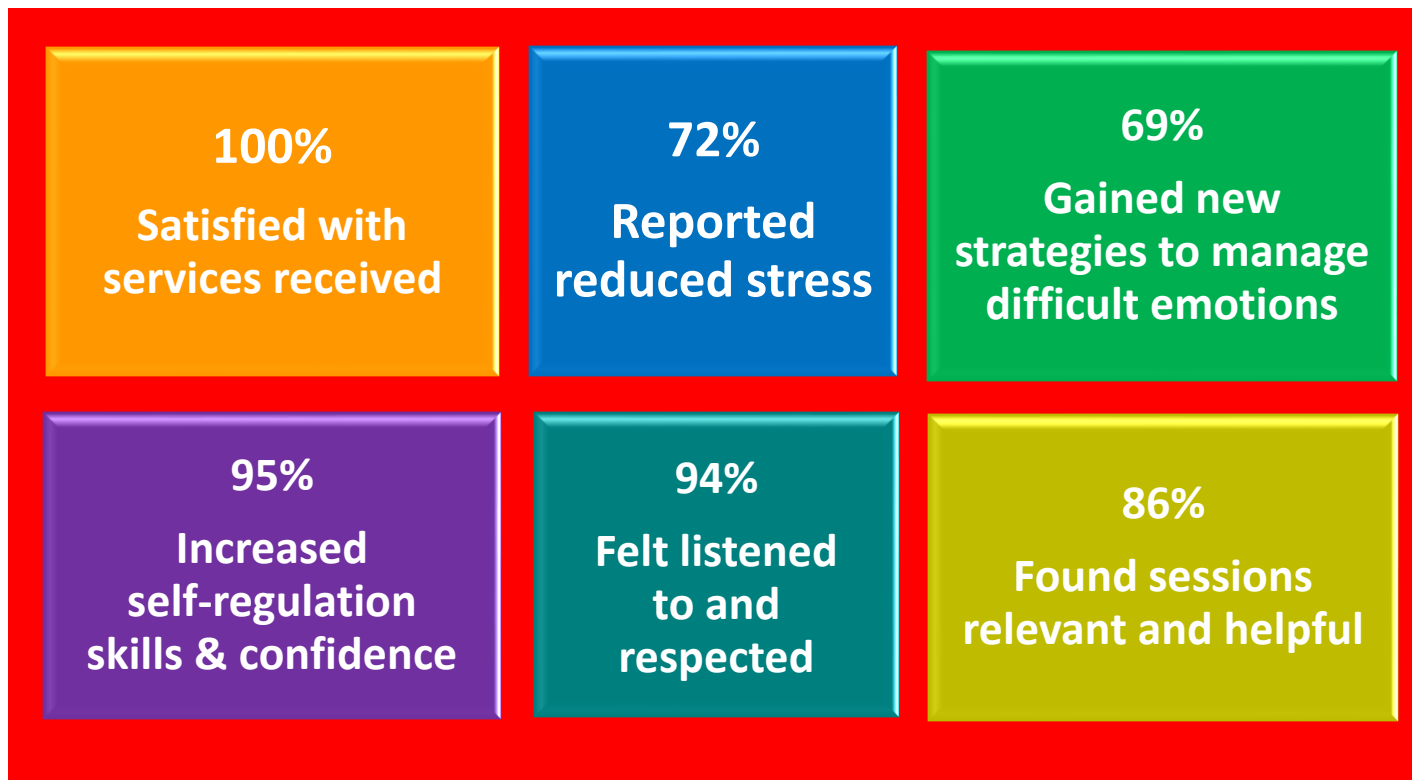
The National Redress Scheme:

- Acknowledges many children were sexually abused in Australian institutions
- Recognises the suffering they endured because of this abuse
- Works to hold institutions accountable for this abuse, and
- Helps people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse gain access to counselling, a direct personal response, and a Redress payment

For more info: Call 1800 737 377 Mon - Fri 8am - 5pm

Or visit: www.nationalredress.gov.au/

Redress Client Outcomes and Voices



After each session we ask clients: What Stands Out Most for You?

(a sample of representative responses included)

- "It was easier than I thought, you are easy to talk to"
- "I feel calm and relaxed, I got some breathing skills, feel very comfortable."
- "Meditation at the end helped. I'm feeling 10/10 relaxed now"
- "Wonderful! Thankyou!" / "It's nice there (at the Cottage)"
- "I can't believe how beautiful you ladies are! Thank you, Angel," (care package)
- "Thank you for finishing on something nice"
- "Thanks, I really appreciate it, it's really helped"
- "You got me out of a pit"
- "When I chat with you, I feel great- I can think, I feel good"
- "Thank you for hearing. I feel a little better- it's like getting things off my chest"
- "The timeline picture we did"
- "Getting on with it"
- "I did it!" (Knowmore intake)
- "Thanks so much for talking for me. I just get in such a panic when I get a call"
- "I felt comfortable. 10/10! I even feel relaxed now" (after important meeting)
- "A new way of thinking for me, you've given me some good nourishment here"
- "Phone call means so much to me, I really appreciate The Cottage and all you do"
- "It's good to talk, been inside too long"
- "A bit more info and understanding about the scheme"

Redress Client Responses to COVID Care Packs

“Thank you so MUCH!! Love the Care Package and the Quest For Life CD...I will enjoy, I bet.”

“I love it. So many things...still opening them up...like Christmas. Thank you for delivering it. I love the colouring in book and the textas. I will use them. Very calming. Card is special”

“Thank you, a lovely thought. I listened to the CD. Thought it was good to help with anxiety and passed it on to neighbour who had serious injury and need it for anxiety”

“Your wonderful ‘care package’ arrived yesterday. It was just great and so thoughtful of you and the Cottage Team. I’m not feeling the best at the moment, so it really cheered me up no end. Thanks, SO much it was just beautiful. I’ll try to phone when I’m feeling a bit better. Every object said ‘care’ whether it was the practical ‘household sponges’ to the handmade flower magnet sayings.... (partner) also thought it was so beautiful.”

“Everything about the pack said ‘Care’. The tissues said ‘Confidence’ on the pack, soap had chamomile in it – very calming. The tea bags were herbal. Might sound clichéd, but you could tell it was all done with a woman’s touch. The gift voucher came at the right time. I love ironing, it calms me. I had an old ironing board which was very dear to me for family reasons. It had broken. I was able to get a new ironing board and cover. IT was like Xmas or a birthday. I was quite moved”

“Thank you, just not used to it. It’s nice to get something unexpected for myself.”

“Thank you so much, I feel so lucky to get this as it reminds me of when I was a kid, before the abuse started, and I would take my music with me to the paddock to feed the animals. Music helps me be in my happy place. Please tell all of the Women at the Women’s Cottage that I said thank you.”

“I just wanted to let you know how much better I feel and how much better I am breathing. Thank you so much”



Financial Reports



2019 - 2020

Financial Report 2019 - 2020

The 2019-2020 financial year has been a year like no other for The Women's Cottage.

This year The Cottage

- Matched the \$75,000 grant previously received from the NSW Department of Family and Community Services (now the Department of Communities and Justice) for building extensions, expensing \$51,000 and allocating \$24,000 from Balance Sheet provisions.
- Benefited from the Cash Flow Boost by \$37,122 from the Federal Government as part of the COVID 19 Stimulus package
- Received an additional \$75,000 in funding from the Federal Department of Social Services for Redress Scheme support services. And
- Received 3 separate donations of \$10,000 to provide additional services and supports to Women in need.

These unusual circumstances in funds received and allocated were in addition to the annual recurrent contracted funding received for the projects run by The Women's Cottage during the year.

While the full story of our year can be found in the Financial Reports at the back of this book, as usual, our main source of income was our recurrent funding from government departments for specific projects. The NSW Department of Communities and Justice fund the Community Builders and Child, Youth and Family Support projects and the Federal Department of Social Services funds the Redress Scheme projects.

This past financial year staffing costs increased primarily due to the additional staff and additional hours funded by donations and the additional funds for Redress support services. Staffing Costs continue to be the major expense of the organization.

Overall, The Cottage operated at a loss for the year of \$26,180. We continue to be financially secure, with adequate funds in the bank and can meet the expenses of the organization as and when they fall due.

It is a privilege to be part of the team at The Women's Cottage (Hawks Inc.), a wonderful and supportive team made up of fellow staff, volunteers and Students. I look forward to many more years working here with this team of compassionate and resourceful women.

Meg Keith, Finance Worker

"Everyone is a Genius, but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree it will live its life believing it is stupid" - Einstein

Auditor's Report and Financial Statements 2019 - 2020

STATURE FINANCIAL GROUP

T (02) 4577 6688
E windsor@staturefinancialgroup.com.au
W staturefinancialgroup.com.au
P PO Box 529, Windsor, NSW, 2756

AUDIT CERTIFICATE

Standard full Audit Certificate by a Qualified Accountant in respect of Community Funded Organisations.

I, Sue Ann Paine, of Shop 9, 100 George Street, Windsor NSW 2756, being a qualified accountant within the meaning of the Community Funding Program, do hereby certify that I have examined the books and financial records of **Hawkesbury Area Women and Kids Services Collective Inc.**

In my opinion the financial statements present fairly the financial position of the organization and the results of its operations for the year ended 30 June 2020 in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards.

I have satisfied myself that:

- Establishment of all reserves/provisions is justified and represents funds set aside for Long Service Leave, Annual Leave and Relief Workers and Maternity Leave.
- Payments to associated and/or affiliated bodies have been adequately disclosed.

Signed


Sue Ann Paine, FIPA

Date:

16th September, 2020.

Qualification: Fellow, Institute of Public Accountants

No: 104947

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation

"Stature" is comprised of: Stature ARV Accounting Pty Ltd, ABN 51 820 298 752; Stature Mortgage Solutions Pty Ltd, ABN 79 128 982 804; Stature Lending Services Pty Ltd t/as Iconex Lending, ACN 147 948 089; Stature Wealth Management Pty Ltd trading as Stature Financial Group, ABN 57 130 323 792 which is an authorised representative and credit representative of Hillross Financial Services Pty Ltd, ABN 77 060 323 035, AFSL and Australian Credit Licensee. Hillross is not involved with, and not responsible for, the provision of accounting, mortgage or lending services. This letter contains general information only. It does not take into account your objectives, financial situation or needs. Please consider the appropriateness of the information in light of your personal circumstances. Before you make any investment decision, you should read the current Product Disclosure Statement. If you decide to purchase or vary a financial product, your Stature Wealth Management adviser, Hillross and other companies within the AMP Group will receive fees and other benefits, which will be a percentage of the premium you pay and/or the advice fee you agree with us. Further details are available from us or Hillross, who can be contacted on 1800 445 767 or email at info@hillross.com.au.

Level 4, 92 Pitt St
Sydney NSW 2000

A28, 24-32 Lexington Drive,
Bella Vista, NSW, 2153
(Building A, Level 2)

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1 Queens Rd
Melbourne VIC 3004

Level 3, 349 Coronation Dr
Milton QLD 4064

82 Melbourne Street,
North Adelaide SA 5006

**FINANCIAL
INDEPENDENCE
STARTS HERE**

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF
HAWKEBURY AREA WOMEN AND KIDS SERVICES COLLECTIVE INC.**

Report on the Financial Report

I have audited the accompanying financial report of Hawkesbury Area Women & Kids Services Collective Inc., being a special purpose financial report, which comprises the Statement by Members of the Committee, the Statement of Comprehensive Income, the Statement of Financial Position, the Statement of Accounting Policies and explanatory notes for the financial year ended 30 June 2020.

Committee's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The Committee of The Association is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (including Australian Accounting Interpretations). The Committee is responsible for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, by selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies, as stated in Note 1, and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor's Responsibility

My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on my audit. I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the

auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Independence

In conducting my audit, I have complied with the independence requirements of the Australian professional ethical pronouncements.

Auditor's Opinion

In my opinion:

- i) The financial report gives a true and fair view of the financial position of Hawkesbury Area Women & Kids Services Collective Inc. as at 30 June 2020, and of its performance and its cash flows for the year ended in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards; and
- ii) the financial report also complies with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements.

Signed on: September 16, 2020



Sue Ann Paine, FIPA
Institute of Public Accountants

HAWKESBURY AREA WOMEN & KIDS COLLECTIVE INC.

Notes to and forming part of the accounts For the year ended 30 June 2020

Note 1. Statement of Significant Accounting Policies

The financial report is a general purpose financial report that has been prepared for the use by the members of the Association in accordance with the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission act 2012, and Australian Accounting Standards and other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Standards Board. A statement of compliance with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) cannot be made due to the Group Applying not-for-profit specific requirements contained in the Australian Accounting Standards.

The financial report covers Hawkesbury Area Women & Kids Services Collective Inc. as an individual entity.

The following is a summary of the material accounting policies adopted by the Association in the preparation of the financial report. The accounting policies have been consistently applied unless otherwise stated.

A) Basis of preparation

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historical cost and does not take into account changing money values or, except where stated, current valuations of non-current assets for which the fair value basis of accounting has been applied.

B) Accounting Policies

a) Plant and Equipment

Each class of property, plant and equipment is carried at cost less, where applicable any accumulated depreciation and impairment losses.

The carrying amount of plant and equipment is reviewed annually to ensure it is not in excess of the recoverable amount from those assts. The recoverable amount is assessed on the basis of the expected net cash flows that will be received from the assets employed and subsequent disposal. The expected net cash flows have not been discounted to present values in determining the recoverable amounts.

All other assets acquired during the year have been expenses at the date of purchase.

b) Depreciation

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets are depreciated over the useful lives of the asset to the Association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

The asset residual values and useful lives are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at each balance sheet date.

c) Employee benefits

Provision is made for the liability for employee entitlements arising from services rendered by employees to balance date. Employee entitlements have been measured at the amount expected to be paid when the liability is settled. Any re-measurements arising from experience adjustments and changes in assumptions are recognised in profit or loss in the periods in which the changes occur. The Committee has determined that these amounts are adequate.

d) Provisions

Provisions are measured at the estimated expenditure required to settle the present obligation, based on the most reliable evidence available at the reporting date, including the risks and uncertainties associated with the present obligation. No liability is recognised if an outflow of economic resources as a result of present obligations is not probable. Such situations are disclosed as contingent liabilities, unless the outflow of resources is remote in which case no liability is recognised. The Committee has determined that these outflows are adequate.

e) Income taxes

No provision for income tax has been raised as the entity is exempt from income tax under Div. 50 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

f) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and demand deposits, together with other short-term, highly liquid investments that are readily convertible into known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value.

g) Revenue

Revenue comprises revenue from government grants, fundraising, donations, interest and memberships.

Interest revenue is recognised on a proportional basis taking into account the interest rates applicable to the financial asset.

Revenue from the rendering of service is recognised upon the delivery of the service to the customers.

h) Government Grants

A number of the entity's programs are supported by grants received from the federal, state and local governments.

If conditions are attached to a grant which must be satisfied before the entity is eligible to receive the contribution, recognition of the grant as revenue is deferred until those conditions are satisfied.

Where a grant is received on the condition that specified services are delivered to the grantor, this is considered a reciprocal transaction. Revenue is recognised as services are performed and at year end a liability is recognised until the service is delivered.

Revenue from a non-reciprocal grant that is not subject to conditions is recognised when the entity obtains control of the funds, economic benefits are probable and the

amount can be measured reliably. Where a grant may be required to be repaid if certain conditions are not satisfied, a liability is recognised at year end to the extent that conditions remain unsatisfied.

i) Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office. In these circumstances, the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of the expense. Receivables and payables in the balance sheet are shown inclusive of GST.

Cash flows are presented in the statement of cash flows on a gross basis, except for the GST components of investing and financing activities, which are disclosed as operating cash flows.

j) Goods held for distribution

Donated goods and goods purchased for nominal consideration held for distribution are initially recognised at their current replacement cost at date of acquisition. Inventories of goods purchased and held for distribution are initially recognised at cost. The cost of bringing each product to its present location and condition is determined on a first-in, first out basis.

k) Economic dependence

The entity is dependent upon the ongoing receipt of Government grants and community fundraising to ensure the ongoing continuance of its programs. At the date of this report, management has no reason to believe that this financial support will not continue in the short term.

HAWKESBURY AREA WOMEN & KIDS SERVICES COLLECTIVE INC.

**Statement by Members of the Collective
For the year ended 30 June 2020**

In the opinion of the Collective the Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Financial Performance and Notes to the financial Statements:

1. Present fairly the financial position of Hawkesbury Area Women & Kids Services Collective Inc. as at 30 June 2020 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, mandatory professional reporting requirements and other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board.
2. An amount equal to the payments received for the year less any advance grants has been spent on the projects, and
3. Establishment of all accruals is justified, and
4. A full and complete set of financial records has been maintained, and
5. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the association will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Collective and is signed for and on behalf of the Collective by:


Management Collective


Management Collective

Dated this 27th day of October, 2020.

Hawkesbury Area Womens & Kids Collective

22 Bosworth Street
(P.O. Box 305)
RICHMOND NSW 2753

Balance Sheet [Last Year Analysis]

June 2020

ABN: 12 756 046 044

	This Year	Last Year
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash On Hand	\$386,291.71	\$345,983.70
Pre payments	\$6,363.63	\$0.00
ATO GST refund	\$1,357.00	\$0.00
Total Current Assets	\$394,012.34	\$345,983.70
Plant & Equipment		
Plant & Equipment - At Cost	\$9,466.00	\$9,466.00
Plant & Equipment - Accum Dep	-\$5,407.00	-\$5,058.00
Total Plant & Equipment	\$4,059.00	\$4,408.00
Total Assets	\$398,071.34	\$350,391.70
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Grants & Funding Provisions	\$227,446.74	\$164,876.95
Other Current Liabilities	\$670.39	\$4,485.21
GST Liabilities	\$5,022.72	\$12,149.12
Payroll Liabilities	\$73,121.29	\$50,383.43
Total Current Liabilities	\$306,261.14	\$231,894.71
Network Funds Held		
HSVPN Funds	\$2,532.76	\$2,532.76
HANADV Funds	\$2,476.53	\$2,983.55
METWEST Funds	\$260.06	\$260.06
White Ribbon Event Funds	\$265.40	\$265.40
Total Network Funds Held	\$5,534.75	\$6,041.77
Total Liabilities	\$311,795.89	\$237,936.48
Net Assets	\$86,275.45	\$112,455.22
Equity		
Retained Earnings	\$112,455.22	\$123,167.63
Current Year Surplus/Deficit	-\$26,179.77	-\$10,712.41
Total Equity	\$86,275.45	\$112,455.22

This report includes Year-End Adjustments.

Hawkesbury Area Womens & Kids Collective

22 Bosworth Street
(P.O Box 305)
RICHMOND NSW 2753

Profit & Loss [Last Year Analysis]

July 2019 To June 2020

ABN: 12 756 046 044

	This Year	Last Year
Income		
Recurrent funding	\$547,720.56	\$413,508.58
Other grants	\$0.00	\$500.00
Other Income	\$40,676.84	\$15,327.83
Total Income	\$588,397.40	\$429,336.41
Gross Profit	\$588,397.40	\$429,336.41
EXPENSES		
Financial	\$3,638.36	\$8,760.27
Operating costs	\$9,422.14	\$8,029.66
Equipment	\$5,582.21	\$26,884.90
Employment Expenses	\$519,799.46	\$383,779.82
Client/Community ServicingCost	\$29,921.87	\$49,986.07
Special Grant Expenses	\$51,000.00	\$0.00
Occupancy Expenses	\$19,637.84	\$17,519.91
Other Expenses	\$0.00	\$25.00
Total EXPENSES	\$639,001.88	\$494,985.63
Operating Profit	-\$50,604.48	-\$65,649.22
Transferred Income		
Funds Carried Forward	\$0.00	\$53,462.94
Management Contributions	\$0.00	\$55,832.25
Cash Flow Boost from Fed Gov	\$37,122.00	\$0.00
Unexpended Gabrielle Fund	\$0.00	\$3,529.76
Unexpended JG Grant	\$1,131.41	\$0.00
Total Transferred Income	\$38,253.41	\$112,824.95
Transferred Expenses		
Management Contributions	\$0.00	\$55,832.25
Tfr - Christmas Provision	\$0.00	\$621.45
Emergency Relief Provision	\$5,731.13	\$1,434.44
Unexpended RCF c/f	\$8,097.57	\$0.00
Total Transferred Expenses	\$13,828.70	\$57,888.14
Net Profit/(Loss)	-\$26,179.77	-\$10,712.41

This report includes Year-End Adjustments.

Hawkesbury Area Womens & Kids Collective

22 Bosworth Street
(P.O Box 305)
RICHMOND NSW 2753

Statement of Cash Flow

July 2019 To June 2020

ABN: 12 756 046 044

Cash Flow from Operating Activities	
Net Income	-\$26,179.77
Salary Benefits	\$611.00
Cash on Hand - Gabrielle Fund	\$20.00
Red - Petty Cash	-\$108.50
Pre payments	-\$6,363.63
ATO GST refund	-\$1,357.00
Plant & Equipment - Accum Dep	\$349.00
Provision for Program Funds	-\$2,584.72
DSS- Funding in Advance Redres	\$8,097.57
Provision- Extra Programs	\$1,497.22
Emergency Relief Provision	\$5,731.13
JG Grant Unexpended	-\$1,171.41
Program Funds carried forward	-\$12,000.00
Provision - Building	\$65,000.00
Provision for Governance	-\$2,000.00
Trade Creditors	-\$4,000.00
Staff Fund Donations	\$185.18
GST Collected	-\$7,383.21
GST Paid	\$256.81
PAYG Tax Payable	\$2,220.00
Annual Leave Provision	\$18,648.72
Long Service Leave Provision	\$1,869.14
HANADV Funds	-\$507.02
Net Cash Flow from Operating Activities	\$40,830.51
Cash Flow from Investing Activities	
Net Cash Flow from Investing Activities	\$0.00
Cash Flow from Financing Activities	
Net Cash Flow from Financing Activities	\$0.00
Net Increase/Decrease for the period	\$40,830.51
Cash at the Beginning of the period	\$345,056.10
Cash at the End of the period	\$385,886.61

Hawkesbury Area Womens & Kids Collective

22 Bosworth Street
(P.O Box 305)
RICHMOND NSW 2753
ABN 12756046044

Equity Reconciliation As of June 2020

Equity			
Retained Earnings balance as at 30 June 2019			\$112,455
Current Year Surplus/Deficit for 2019-2020	Loss		-\$26,180
Equity Balance as at 30 June 2020			\$86,275
	Balance	Balance	Change
	1/7/2019	30/6/20	
Retained Earnings	\$112,455	\$86,275	-\$26,180
Total Equity	\$112,455	\$86,275	-\$26,180
Hawkesbury Area Womens & Kids Services Collective does not have shares or owners, it is an incorporated association			
All changes to Equity are due to changes in retained equity from operations.			



Appendices:

1] ACNC Charity Register Summary

2] 2019 Annual General Meeting Minutes

3] How Can You help?

4] 2020 – 2021 HAWKS Inc Membership Form

APPENDIX 1: Australian Charities / Not-For-Profits Commission Summary

Overview: Hawkesbury Area Women's & Kids Services Collective

Charity details:

Also known as: The Women's Cottage

ABN: [12756046044](#)

Address: Po Box 305, Richmond NSW 2753 Australia

Email: manager@womenscottage.org.au

Charity Size: Medium

Who the charity helps:

- Children - aged 6 to under 15
- Early childhood - aged under 6
- Families
- Females
- Financially disadvantaged people
- People from a culturally and linguistically diverse background
- Victims of crime (including family violence)
- Youth - 15 to under 25

Date established: 1970

Financial Year End: 30/06

Summary of Activities: Support, advocacy, emergency relief and other services to women and their children in various difficult circumstances including victims of domestic violence and poverty.

Where the charity operates: NSW

The charity's subtype history:

Purpose	Start Date	End Date
Public Benevolent Institution (PBI)	1 January 2014	—
2012 Another purpose beneficial to the community	3 December 2012	31 December 2013
2012 Public benevolent institution	3 December 2012	31 December 2013

Registration status history:

Effective Date	Status
3 December 2012	Registered

Enforcement action history: There have been no enforcements for this charity. Enforcement action refers to the exercise of powers under the ACNC Act.

APPENDIX 2: AGM Minutes 2019

Hawkesbury Area Women & Kid's Services Collective Inc

The Women's Cottage

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 29th October 2019

Chair: Janine Madden **Minute Taker:** Meg Keith

Returning Officer: Melanie Sheffield

Welcome to all Attendees

In Attendance: Janine Madden, Meg Keith, Joan Oakley, Melanie Bissaker, Suze Pratten, Mary Conyard, Lisa Bartells, Jude Irwin, Sonya Parker, Jackie Varley, Thryone Handson, Irene Kendall, Temperance Cooper, Stacey Gosper, Belinda Karp, Carol Musgrave, Pat Naylor, Sarah Lake, Helen Sobiesiak, Hannie Hoffman, Jan Harry, Kim Cowper, Liz Jones, Dicki Murphy, Nasa Schouler, Kate Hen, Linda Alliband, Chantell Leonard, Shayanne Ricketts-Leonard, Melanie Sheffield, Kelly Haines, Elizabeth Gray, Michelle Hoolihan, Angie Gleeson

- 1) **Meeting Opened at 3.05pm**
- 2) **Welcome to Country by Shayanne Ricketts-Leonard**
Acknowledgement of Darug Women by Ella Olsen
- 3) **Smoking Ceremony was conducted by Mel and Ella Olsen**, Ella acknowledging Elders past, present and emerging and mother earth.
- 4) **Janine Madden acknowledged that we meet on Darug Land and paid her respects top elders past, present and emerging.** Welcome to Special Guests: Kim Cowper, the representative of MP Susan Templeman.

Kim Cowper spoke on behalf of Susan Templeman thanking The Cottage for the work that we do and for providing a safe space and urging people to become volunteers which are vital to organisations like The Cottage.

- 5) **Apologies read by Janine Madden:** Susan Templeman, - Federal member, Belinda Pauline –FACS CPO, Yatra Sherwood, Can Yasmut, Dawn Gray, Eileen Reed, Karen Hodges & Lauren Galdos.
- 6) **Motion to ratify the minutes of the 2018 AGM.** No amendments
Moved by: Mary Conyard **Seconded:** Angie Gleeson

- 7) **Business Arising from the AGM minutes from 2018** None

- 8) **Staff Reports:** Full staff reports are available in the Annual Report; however, some staff members spoke of their work during the year.

Maria Losurdo – Manager: Acknowledged the commitment to the service by the workers of the Cottage and thanked the students who have contributed over the year. Maria spoke of the increase in demand for services, 800 more occasions of service in 2018-2019 than the previous year and the significant increase in the levels of complexity and crisis being experienced by clients.

Angie Gleeson – Redress Counsellor: Thanked Maria and the Cottage team for their support and welcome to the service. Angie spoke of the diverse and interesting work in helping people access the Redress scheme and the opportunities to network with other services to provide better outcomes for clients. Enquiries have come from as far away as Northern NSW and the Victorian Border and the need to link those people with services that are more accessible to them. Angie welcomed Sarah Dillane the most recent appointment to the Redress team at the Cottage.

9) Staff reports tabled and Accepted

10) Financial Accounts presented by Meg Keith.

The full financial report is on pages 37-46 of the Annual Report, which includes the audit report and the notes to the accounts.

The main source of income is the funding from the Department of Family and Community Services – State Government fund the Community Builders and Antiviolence projects and the Department of Social Services – Federal government funds the Redress and Royal Commission Counselling projects.

Our funding covers our staffing costs but not the practical assistance costs of helping women flee DV. These costs are paid from fundraising and donations. Fundraised money and donations will be of vital assistance to the Cottage to fund the Emergency relief and Gabrielle Fund.

The Cottage is in a sound financial position.

11) Motion to accept the Financial Report and the Workers Reports of Hawkesbury Area Women's and Kids Services Collective Inc.

Moved: Sonya Parker

Seconded: Mary Conyard

12) Management Collective of 2018-2019 dissolved by the Returning Officer Melanie Sheffield.

Melanie thanked the outgoing Collective members for their time and dedication to the Cottage. Gifts of appreciation were given to the outgoing Collective members.

13) Nominees for the Management Collective were announced.

Nominees are: Lisa Bartels, Mary Conyard, Jude Irwin, Irene Kendall, Janine Madden and Sonya Parker.

14) New Collective Announced.

All nominees accepted their nomination and Voting not required due to the number off nominations received.

15) Welcome to the 2019-2020 Management Collective

Mary Conyard, Lisa Bartels, Jude Irwin, Irene Kendall, Janine Madden and Sonya Parker.

There are still vacancies on the Collective and if anyone is interested in joining the management Collective they can speak to a current collective member or call to request an information pack.

16) Motion to appoint Sue Wingate from Stature Chartered Accountants as the auditor for 2019-2020.

Moved: Sonya Parker

Seconded: Mary Conyard

AGM closed at 3.40

Women's Song performed for the attendees.

APPENDIX 3: How Can You Help?

How can you help? So glad you asked!

The Women's Cottage is only able to provide the extent of the services we do, the emergency relief and food supplies, and a full group program with the support of our local community. **If you or your agency can support us in any way to help us support vulnerable women and children that would be wonderful.**

Christmas Appeal (Hampers and Toys):

- You could give a cash donation or foods suitable for a Christmas hamper.
- You could buy a gift for a child for Christmas and drop it in (we find it especially hard to get enough gifts for older children 12 – 16).
- You could set up a Christmas tree / gift box at your work and encourage others to donate something as well.



Emergency Relief & Food Supplies: You could give a cash donation or non-perishable food supplies to help fill our food shelves for families struggling financially.

Building Fund: The Women's Cottage has received funds to help us extend the building to increase space and capacity to meet the expanding community needs we are trying to meet. To make this a reality we must match these funds (at least \$75,000 in cash or kind) to move ahead with the project. There are lots of ways the community can help:



- Individual donations or group fundraising. Could be an open donation or you could nominate specific things, eg: furnishing new group room / children play area.
- Local businesses and trades people donating time and materials for the demolition or building costs, furnishings, carpets, blinds, desks, IT connections, painting etc.

Responding to Domestic Violence:

The number of women seeking help in relation to escaping domestic violence has doubled in the past year. The complexity and risks faced by the women is also increasing. We often see women where police involvement is urgently needed, where there are guns involved, where we need to keep women safe at the cottage until Police arrive and/or where women and children are unable to safely leave and have their movements controlled or monitored.



Gabrielle Fund: Your cash donation will help us assist women escaping domestic violence.

Group Programs: Most of our group programs (currently attended by over 400 women each year) are funding solely by community donation. Any money, even the smallest amount, can support us to continue to run a full group program and support women with a soft entry point to more support if needed.

If you want to run a fundraiser you might be able to raise enough to fund a whole group and you and/or your group, service or business can go on our sponsors list. A 10-week group costs us around \$8,000 to \$10,000.

Crisis and Counselling Support: We do not have the resources or worker time to meet current and growing needs for the number of women seeking safety from violence. Business, group or community fundraising efforts will help us meet these needs.

Crisis Support – 1 day / week	1 year	\$30,000
	6 months	\$15,000
Counselling 1 day per week	1 year	\$30,000
	6 months	\$15,000

**For information or to donate phone us on 02 4578 4190
or visit: www.womenscottage.org.au**

ALL DONATIONS OVER \$2 ARE TAX DEDUCTABLE

APPENDIX 4: Association Membership Form 2020



THE WOMEN'S COTTAGE
HAWKESBURY AREA WOMEN'S & KIDS SERVICES COLLECTIVE INC.
ABN 12756046044

22 Bosworth Street (P.O. Box 305) Richmond NSW 2753
Phone: 02 4578 4190 Fax: 02 4578 2480
Email: womcot@pnc.com.au
Website: www.womenscottage.org.au

Application for MEMBERSHIP FORM 2020 – 2021 Year

Name _____ DOB _____

Address _____

Telephone: Home _____ Mobile _____

Email _____

Signed **Date**

Total \$2.00 (inc. GST) Pay by Cheque / Cash or Direct Debit to:

The Women's Cottage BSB: 633 000, Acc: 129 954 459
(reference: please add you your name and 'membership')

Please tick one box:

Please post
completed
form to: The Women's Cottage
PO Box 305
Richmond NSW 2753

Or drop it in to: 22 Bosworth Street
Richmond NSW 2753
02 45 784190

Or email it to: manager@womenscottage.org.au

- ☐ Update contact details
- ☐ Renew membership
- ☐ New membership

Thank you for supporting and being part of The Women's Cottage - ***always striving to meet the needs of all women and children in the Hawkesbury area***. For more information about membership of The Women's Cottage please read Sections 3 and 4 of the Constitution.

Office Use - Receipt No

Donations over \$2 are Tax Deductible
This service is funded by Department of Family and Community Services | Community Services

Notes / Networking:

HERE'S TO
*Strong
Women.*

MAY WE KNOW THEM.

MAY WE BE THEM.

MAY WE RAISE THEM.



The Women's Cottage

Hawkesbury Area Women and Kids Services Collective Inc.

22 Bosworth Street (PO Box 305)

Richmond, NSW 2753

Phone: (02) 4578 4190

Email: manager@womenscottage.org.au

Website: <http://www.womenscottage.org.au>