

Hawkesbury Area Women's & Kids Services Collective Inc.

The Women's Cottage



**Annual Report
2020 - 2021**



The Women's Cottage

Hawkesbury Area Women's & 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>

The Women's Cottage Management, Staff, Volunteers and Students acknowledge 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 ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown. How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last 200 years? With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood. Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at 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."

Contents

Who Are We?	5
Thanking Our Supporters	7
A Special Thank You.....	9
Staff and Management Collective 2020 – 2021	10
Management Collective Report 2020 - 2021.....	11
Manager's Report 2020 - 2021.....	12
Our Tribute to Melanie.....	13
Funding and Donations Report 2020 – 2021.....	14
Renovation Report.....	15
Safe Places Crisis Accommodation Partnership Report	16
Responding to COVID-19 in 2020 - 2021	17
Compounded Impact of Multiple Natural Disasters.....	18
A Special Tribute to The Women's Cottage Team.....	19
Thinking Globally / Acting Locally: Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's).....	20
The Women's Cottage SDG's Contributions 2020 - 2021.....	21
Online Community Engagement 2020 - 2021	25
Occasions of Service for ALL Projects July 2020 – June 2021.....	30
Targeted Early Intervention Project Outcomes 2020 – 2021	31
Financial Hardship Support Provided in 2020 to 2021	34
COVID DV Project Outcomes January to June 2021	35
National Redress Support Project Outcomes 2020 - 2021	37
National Redress Support Project Special Projects Report	39
Redress Support Project Worker Report 2020 - 2021.....	41
WAVE Worker Report 2020 - 2021.....	43
COVID Domestic Violence Project Worker Report January – June 2021	46
Anti-Violence Worker Report 2020 – 2021	49
Community Groups and Events	51
Jacaranda Group Report 2020 – 2021	52
BLUSH Group Report 2020 - 2021	53
Finance Worker Report 2020-2021	55
Audit Pages 2020 - 2021.....	56
Appendix 1] ACNC Summary	67
Appendix 2] How Can You Help?	68
Appendix 3] Association Membership Application Form	70

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, children, and young people in the Hawkesbury region.

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 donations.

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 who are 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 Collective Inc. (The Women's Cottage) is a Feminist community-based organisation that is run by women for women and children / young people.

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 of 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 cash donation, groups program support, membership fees, Go Fund Me, groceries for hampers, time, and energy.

Active Property Investing – Donation towards Building Fund

Bendigo Bank Richmond – hosting a donation box and Christmas presents

Computus Australia – for IT support and assistance

Cubitt's Granny Flats and Home Extensions – for the design of the Extension and support to get the construction started

Food Bank NSW – For donated fruit and vegetables and access to food items at low cost

Good 360 - access to low-cost clothes, toys, sanitiser, and other items

Uniting Hawkesbury Village – Proceeds from Scone Back Off 2020

Hawkesbury Valley Baptist Church – for Christmas Food Hampers

Kurrajong North Richmond Rotary Club – For including us in their fundraising raffle

NRMA Richmond – For hosting and supporting the 2020 Christmas Tree in their branch

Office Works Mulgrave Store – Gift card for office equipment

Priceline Pharmacy Richmond – donation of goods - makeup / products to assist women

Richmond Lions Club – for their continuing support of emergency food supplies and Christmas Cakes and Puddings

Richmond RAAF Base Community – cash donation for emergency food supplies and for organising the Christmas Hams for 2020

Share the Dignity – supplying handbags and personal care items for women

UCW Hawkesbury Village- Sodexo Australia – donation for general use

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 –Embroiderers and Quilters of the Hawkesbury, U3A Quilters Group, S Besseau, Western Sydney Community Forum, Richmond Rotary Club, Richmond RAAF Community,

D Hartz, M Currell, E Reid, L Rowan, T Steward, D Stockwell – Bears from the Heart, J Irwin, C Naylor.

Thank you also to supporters of the Building Extension who donated through the Go Fund Me campaign. We hope the construction will begin soon and to be completed by June 2022: K Haines, M Grimson, Susan Templeman, M-L Harvey, L Haynes, W Morgan, Y Ping Chan, A Hili, S Rosengaard, I Wagner and those who wished to remain anonymous

Thanking Our Supporters

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.



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.

Reit Koppelhuber Estate – \$5,000 Donation to support Christmas and food shelves.

The Scully Fund – \$50,000 donation to increase WAVE hours to June 2021 to respond to women in crisis.

PayPal – \$50,000 donation contribution to increasing open hours and workers to respond to women in crisis in 2020-21.



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

The Go Fund Me Campaign to fit out the new extension is still open

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/womens-cottage-domestic-violence-support-space>

A Special Thank You

The Women's Cottage would like to acknowledge the life, passions and passing of local woman Gemma Jocelyn Thompson. This a tribute to the memory of Gemma, her support of women and girls and for the generosity of her family and friends.

Gemma (27.11.92- 02.11.21) passed away suddenly in a car accident whilst travelling to work. At the time of her passing she was a Science Teacher at Bede Polding College, her alma mater. Gemma was known for being a determined, courageous, vivacious, generous, witty, hard- working and beautiful person. She enjoyed cooking, gardening, quilting, reading, spending time with loved ones, and caring for her cats and chickens. She championed many important causes and particularly worked to support and educate youth in her work as a teacher. Gemma was passionate in advocating for women and girls so they could achieve their goals and recognise their full potential. She expressed particular interest in wanting to alleviate the difficulties survivors of domestic violence face. In honour of her memory, donations were made by family and friends to The Women's Cottage Gabrielle Fund to support women and children escaping domestic violence.



Staff and Management Collective 2020 – 2021



Management Collective

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

Permanent / Part Time Staff

Maria Losurdo	Manager
Meg Keith	Finance Manager
Mel Olsen	Anti-Violence Worker
Melissa Brodie	WAVE Support Worker
Kim Ward	WAVE Support Worker
Jess Reed	WAVE Support Worker
Angie Gleeson	Redress Specialist Worker
Sarah Dillane	Redress Specialist Worker
Kelly Haines	Redress Support Worker

Casual / Relief Workers

Melanie Sheffield	Database Development and Support
Emma Belling	Relief WAVE Support Worker

Students

Emma Belling	Cert IV Mental Health
--------------	-----------------------

Local Suppliers helping to keep The Women's Cottage looking great!

Karen Brown	Cleaner
Arben Gashi	Gardener



Management Collective Report 2020 - 2021

2021 has continued to challenge us all personally with the impact of floods earlier in the year and the pandemic.

The challenges this posed for the Women's Cottage were many and ongoing. The Management Collective feels privileged to be working with a staff team who are strong, committed, hardworking and compassionate and who were able to make adjustments to the way they worked, whether it was from home or from the office, to ensure that the Cottage remained operational and the women and children they were supporting continued to receive the encouragement, help and assistance that they needed. This was all done in a year the staff team had to deal with a number of personal issues, including the sudden death of a dearly loved team member and staff and their families who experienced serious health issues. The care and support these women provided to each other and to women and children in the community is truly amazing!

The Management Committee has continued to meet monthly via Zoom. We had hoped earlier in the year to be meeting face to face but are grateful for technology in enabling us to come together to discuss key opportunities and issues.

The cottage has received generous support from the community over the last year – thank you to those in the community that were able to support the Women's Cottage. It has also received some additional funding from government sources and generous corporate donors which has enabled us to extend the services we provide to help women and children. We are excited by the plans we have in place next year to renovate the space and provide crisis accommodation to help even more women and children to feel safe and move forward.



On behalf of the collective, Sonya, Irene, Mary, and Janine, we would like to thank Maria Losurdo for her strong and dedicated leadership throughout this challenging year, and Angela, Emma, Jess, Kelly, Kim, Meg, Mel, Melanie, Melissa, Samantha, and Sarah for your unwavering commitment to continue to provide services for a diverse range of women, children, and young people in the context of such difficult circumstances.

Jude Irwin and Parvinder Gill on behalf of the Management Collective.

Manager's Report 2020 - 2021

I write this report in October 2021 on the day of re-opening from the second COVID-19 lockdown and after nearly 2 years of a worldwide pandemic. As a service that has stayed operational throughout this whole time, it highlights the massive effort and commitment that this has involved. And from that perspective, I dedicate this report to the amazing team of women that worked so hard to help make this happen.

Our WAVE and COVID DV workers continued to provide centre based services by phone and face to face. Staying focused on COVID screening and safety measures and volunteering to have weekly COVID surveillance testing through both lockdowns. At the height of lockdown and restricted travel out of LGA's of concern, impacted workers continued to provide back-up services where possible. With all workers committed to ensuring vulnerable women and children had the support they needed.

Our Redress Workers have moved from office to home based work during periods of lockdown without reducing contact and support to clients. Additional COVID support for clients was also established.

Our Anti-violence worker moved to home-based service delivery during lockdowns without losing contact with meetings and groups and helped keep other local workers connected during these difficult times.

And our finance worker continued a very full workload from both office and home.

But more than all this, the whole team stepped up again and again to support each other through very hard times. Perhaps the most difficult being the sudden death of our dear co-worker Melanie Sheffield.

It has also been a year when sickness of workers and family members has added pressures on the team. But in response the support, care and extra effort has continued to fill in any gaps and to make sure everyone had the support needed. To one of the most amazing, skilled, compassionate, hardworking, and committed team of women a service could ever hope for.

Maria Losurdo, Manager

Paid Staff Team

“Thank You”

“Thank You”

“Thank You”

Angela Gleeson

Emma Belling

Jess Reed

Kelly Haines

Kim Ward

Maria Losurdo

Meg Keith

Mel Olsen

Melanie Sheffield

Melissa Brodie

Samantha Campbell

Sarah Dillane

“Thank You”

“Thank You”

“Thank You”

Our Tribute to Melanie

Melanie's connection with The Women's Cottage began with a 200-hour placement as part of her Graduate Diploma in Counselling. We all got to know her warm, funny, sometimes shy, and often quirky nature. Melanie was eager to learn, reflect and grow. She worked alongside Mel Olsen facilitating groups and supporting women in the group and at the cottage.

During her placement, Melanie proudly carried the Reclaim the Night banner. She was also the returning officer for our 2019 annual general meeting, facing her fear of speaking in public!

When reflecting at her placement review, Melanie said: *"I have learnt more about sitting with grief and trauma and feel more confident working with complex needs. I better understand deep listening. I am more open and curious about how Aboriginal women are impacted by inter-generational trauma. I now know about the importance of NOT seeing clients as difficult, but rather having complex needs. And I see more clearly where my own biases and beliefs can impact my interactions and I am developing skill and resilience in owning my reactions and looking after myself if I feel reactive."*



After her placement, Melanie kept in touch and called in from time to time. On one of these visits, I was tearing my hair out trying to make sense of new funding body requirements for data collection that didn't match with our current data collection systems. I said out loud 'No one here is a hidden expert in data bases, are they?!' Melanie says quietly, "I am".

There began Melanie's next journey with us as she applied her incredible intellect and knowledge and came up with a brilliant multi-layered data base solution that will be her legacy to The Women's Cottage for many years to come.

During this time, Melanie also took on the role of relief worker and was once again providing support to women in need. She was excited about getting back into direct service work.

Melanie was a very caring and compassionate woman who felt things very deeply and wanted very much to give back. She had spoken about wanting to find ways of setting up some sort of private practice where she could support women who were isolated and lonely at home because of trauma, anxiety, depression, agoraphobia, and hoarding.

It meant a lot to Melanie to feel part of the team and to belong. I know we very much felt her to be 'one of us' and really valued everything she was doing, and we will miss her very much.

The Women's Cottage is in the process of planning a new extension and in honouring Melanie and her care and commitment to others.... ***With her family's blessing, we will call our new group space the 'Melanie Sheffield Room'.***

And when it is time to open that space, we will be honored if her family and friends could come along to be part of that new beginning.

From the Team, We Miss You.

Funding and Donations Report 2020 – 2021

The Women's Cottage has received a range of grants and large donations this year that have assisted the service to expand service delivery to ever increasing needs.

Government Support Initiatives

NSW Government COVID DV Funding Round 1: Covered 1 year's funding to provide casework services for victims of domestic violence and to extend WAVE / open hours during 2021. This included 1 extra hour a day and opening on Saturdays.

PayPal: Approached the Women's Cottage after the major floods in early 2021 with a \$50,000 donation. The donation was provided to support the devastation for flood victims and the escalation of need that follows a natural disaster. It is also in line with PayPal's corporate focus on the empowerment and support of women and girls.

NSW Gov Funded Social Sector Transformation Fund (SFFT): \$20,000 base funding was received by all DCJ funded services for IT and related upgrades. These funds will be put towards Website development and upgraded IT integration.

A further \$20,000 was applied for and approved, which will support the purchase of multi-media TV / video conferencing capacity to run meetings, training, and client groups online in both the existing building and planned extension. Extending IT capacity into the new part of the building will also be paid for.

NSW Government COVID DV Funding Round 2 (Infrastructure): This grant was aimed at improving / expanding services to support victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. We were successful in securing a \$250K grant to move ahead with the renovation plans to extend the building.

Go Fund Me Campaign: Was established to keep the community connected with our renovation plans and to invite individuals and business to support the fitting out of the extension once it is built. Around \$2,000 in donations had been received by June 2021. <https://www.gofundme.com/f/womens-cottage-domestic-violence-support-space>

Community Donations: Many individuals and groups continued to support the Women's Cottage over the past year with donations of money and food. All are listed on our acknowledgment page. We extend our ongoing thanks and gratitude to everyone who has helped us help vulnerable women and children through a very tough year for everyone.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Renovation Report

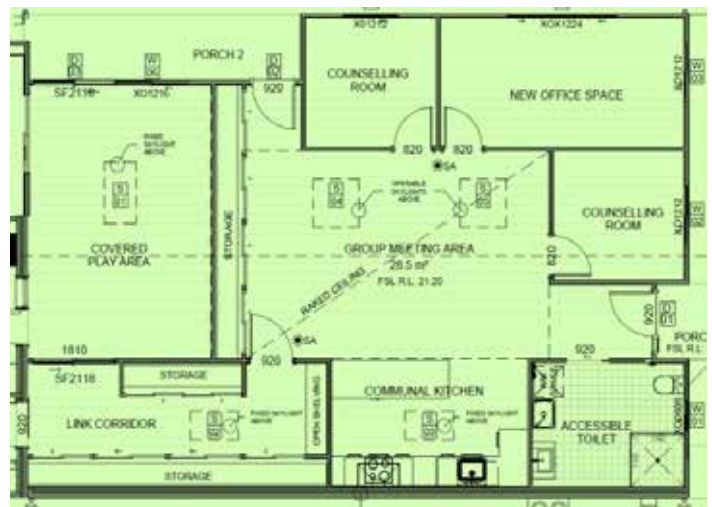
The Women's Cottage has been in its current location at 22 Bosworth Street for close to 40 years. These premises are a small residential scale cottage that is owned by Hawkesbury Council. The Women's Cottage is currently 2 years into a 30-year lease on the building.

Growing community needs over many years and the significant impacts on the community in more recent years (from drought, fires, floods, COVID and more flooding) has placed enormous pressure on local families. This has led to significant increases in financial hardship, isolation, stress, and mental health issues. The rates and severity of domestic violence continues to rise, accounting for over 40% of all our work.

The extension will give The Women's Cottage the space to provide more services and groups for the Hawkesbury community as well expanding the availability of on-site workers.

In response to increasing community needs and the ever-diminishing available space in its current location, The Women's Cottage has worked for the past 5 years to try and raise the funds needed to expand. Every square inch of our building is used for client work, but we can't expand to meet needs anymore unless we have more space.

The Women's Cottage has now successfully raised enough community funds and secured government funding to build a \$400,000 extension.



The funds were kicked off by a \$75,000 grant from an NSW Government Capital Works matching grant in 2018. The Women's Cottage is contributing over \$100,000 from its own funds and past community donations and most recently a further \$250,000 was successfully received via the NSW Government's COVID-19 Sexual, Domestic and Family Violence Infrastructure Grant.

The builder chosen for the project is Cubitt's Granny Flats and Home Extensions, who have not only designed a functional and elegant building, but will also support The Women's Cottage with a very generous donation in 2022 as part of the build.

Hawkesbury City Council will support The Women's Cottage by providing project management. The Women's Cottage hope the renovation will be completed by mid-2022.



Safe Places Crisis Accommodation Partnership Report

In 2020, The Women's Cottage partnered with Link Wentworth Housing Ltd in support of a Federal Government funding application to build short term accommodation for women and children (and their pets) escaping domestic and family violence. This application was successful and around \$1.3M was awarded to Link Wentworth for the cost of the build. The Women's Cottage role will be to support the development and implementation of the service and support model for residents and to support the ongoing oversight of planning, evaluation and running of the premises.

This wonderful outcome is the culmination of over 30 years of local lobbying from local services and the community.

Our shared vision for the project is for women and children of the Hawkesbury experiencing domestic or family violence to have a safe, warm, and healing home place in a welcoming, caring, supportive community to escape to with their pets. A place where they take their first steps to creating the life of their choice in the confidence that they journey with the support of their community.



Nurreen Link Wentworth will act as the lead casework and support service for residents. The Women's Cottage will work closely with Nurreen to support referrals, casework, and the development of work practice.

The Women's Cottage will also deliver some onsite groups and activities to residents to support emotional wellbeing and community connections.

The building is due for completion by June 2022.

Responding to COVID-19 in 2020 - 2021

The Women's Cottage continued to maintain uninterrupted service delivery during the second COVID-19 DELTA wave.

Onsite service delivery for WAVE and Domestic Violence casework continued via phone and where needed in person. The doors of The Women's Cottage remained open for crisis drop-in during normal opening hours through all lockdowns. Systems were developed to provide contactless provision of food hampers and emergency relief and priority response to clients in crisis and/or where safety issues were present. National Redress services moved to new premises at a nearby community centre and then to home based work during lockdown. Redress clients were supported by phone and via additional contact and care packages during lockdown. Anti-violence community development also moved back to home based and online. This included a very successful first time live streamed Reclaim the Night event supported by HANADV (Hawkesbury Area Network Against Domestic Violence).



Enhanced systems were also put in place access and share daily information from the Department of Health on rapidly changing restrictions, COVID cases and contact lists to guide workers and to strengthen our internal screening procedures. QR Code check-in systems were also established, and all staff having client contact participate in weekly COVID surveillance testing. At the writing of this report, all staff are double vaccinated.

Women seeking support during COVID presented with increasing concerns of stress, anxiety, financial hardship, and domestic violence. The additional impacts of COVID also compounded and made more complex any ongoing issues, concerns, and vulnerabilities.

Compounded Impact of Multiple Natural Disasters

The Hawkesbury and surrounding communities have been hit very hard from multiple disasters of past years. Ongoing impacts of a long history of drought, the devastating fires of 2019/20, followed by flooding then the first wave of COVID, then massive flooding in March 2021 with over 4000 homes affected and then the second wave of the even more contagious Delta variant of COVID. Not only are many families exhausted and financially distressed, but many families have not had the chance to recover fully from one disaster before the next hit. The distress of families who lost homes in the fires and their ongoing needs has often been overshadowed by the new / next disaster. Families still rebuilding lives and homes after the floods are doing so in the middle of a pandemic, severe health lockdown and restrictions. Many families were also home schooling on top of this ongoing trauma.

The Women's Cottage has seen the impacts from multiple disasters and restricted life, unemployment and access to support taking different forms for the women and children coming to the Cottage for help:

- Increased domestic violence
- Increased severity of violence
- Increased complexity of needs and issues
- The use of COVID restrictions to further isolate women and as a form of threat and coercion
- Decreased availability of affordable housing and crisis accommodation
- Increased financial disadvantage and distress and the need for emergency relief
- Increased stress, distress, and anxiety
- Fear for children's education falling behind
- Parent and children home schooling distress
- Increased despair and feelings of not coping



A Special Tribute to The Women's Cottage Team

At the end of a second year of COVID and multiple natural disasters, the amazing team of women working at The Women's Cottage continue to show their commitment skills and courage to keep going. Holding our own increased stress while responding to rapid and ongoing increases in client numbers and needs.

- Continuing to support their own communities / families still impacted by the fires.
- Driving the long way around to get to and from work during floods.
- Setting up home offices (again) continuing to work at full capacity.
- Keeping services going from The Women's Cottage and responding quickly to women in crisis.
- Increased demands of having to adjust to new technologies and different ways of service delivery.
- Covering extra shifts and supporting teammates going through hard times.
- Going above and beyond keeping in contact with clients and providing extra contact and support throughout COVID to support and relieve emotional distress, isolation, and financial hardship.



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

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

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 recognises 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 to identify where we are doing this well and where we can improve our actions. **Now in year three (3) of our SDG journey we are learning and improving as we go, aspiring to do better, and moving towards our goals of developing formal evaluation systems to assess our outcomes and to report our results to United Nations in Australia and Internationally.**

The Women's Cottage SDG's Contributions 2020 - 2021

In 2020 – 2021 we had mixed success in progressing in some SDG work because of the immediate and overriding focus on supporting our community during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in other areas our existing commitment to the United Nations 'Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's)' spurred us on and invited us to think more broadly and look for ways in which we could be better citizens and advocates to the SDG goals. This led us to expand our usual criteria to support those being left behind by existing formal supports and to expand where and how we spoke out for those with less access to resources, support, and vaccines – as well as highlighting the unequal impacts of those already disadvantaged pre-pandemic.

IFS Virtual Conference 2021

SOCIAL JUSTICE
THE UNFINISHED JOURNEY

**Global Issues - Local Solutions.
A Rights-based Approach to Social Issues**
Panel Discussion:
Cameron MacRae (ANHCA)
Bobbi Nassar (IFS/UN)
Brett Martin (UNAA NSW)
Maria Losurdo (The Women's Cottage)

The Women's Cottage was asked to take part in the International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres Conference. The conference aimed to inform and engage NGO's (worldwide) with the SDGs' and the importance of starting somewhere, however small, to address micro to macro community issues.

Networks and connections made at the conference will greatly support our future Sustainability Development Goals work.

The Women's Cottage was recognised by Neighbourhood Houses Victoria | Australian Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association in their resource: **SDG's for Neighbourhood and Community Houses and Centres**

[SDG's for NCHC's | ANHCA](#)


Neighbourhood and Community, Houses and Centres (NCHC's) deliver on this Goal!

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Examples of services provided	2021	2020	2019	Primary Goal	2	3	4	5
Engage other community organisations	52%	60%	81%	Peace and justice				
Community advocacy	50%	66%	64%	Peace and justice				
Community information/forums advice bureau	58%	68%	67%	Peace and justice				
Grant writing support	33%	50%	46%	Peace and justice				
Referral (both formal & informal)	78%	91%	92%	Peace and justice				
Hotlines	2%	8%	8%	Peace and justice				

Womens Cottage (NSW)
The Women's Cottage recognises the valuable role it plays 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. The Women's Cottage 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 Womens Cottage supports women's legal rights & access: Apprehended Violence Orders, Family Law, Referrals for legal advice, advocacy with police/FACS, court support / SAMS meetings participation

The International Association for Community Development identifies this goal within 'Leadership and infrastructure' which the Neighbourhood Houses Sector Principals interpret as 'Partnering' and 'Self-help' which is to collaborate broadly and come together to share experience empowering others to reach their goals.



The Women's Cottage SDG's Contributions 2020 – 2021



What we did:

- *Applied community donations and internal funding to expand 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)*
 - *Sourcing fresh meat, fruit & Vegetables where possible*
 - *Broadened eligibility during COVID*
- *Set up contactless options for receiving food hampers and emergency relief*
- *Advocated for food drop-off and welfare checks with police and other services for families in home quarantine due to COVID-19 Infection*
- *Established partnership with the 'No Interest Loans' NILS scheme to support women escaping violence*



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*
- *Set up online groups for emotional support*

The Women's Cottage SDG's Contributions 2020 - 2021



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 (virtual event)*
- *International Women's Day (small in person event)*
- *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, non-residents)*
- *Increased the development of resources for community and sector partners during COVID to support women in DV and working with Visa holders*
- *Increased lobbying and political representation on behalf of women's equity and safety issues, including access to services by non-vaccinated clients*
- *Increased submissions for funding to address women's equity & safety issues*
- *Increased use of social media on the rights of women and raising awareness on equity and safety issues*
- *Assessed and adjusted work practice and consistency to support equal access to available services and resources provided by The Women's Cottage during COVID*

What we didn't do:

Plans for an in-service forum with workers and management on 'what does it mean to be a feminist service' were put on hold again because of COVID. However, connections were made at the International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres Conference to get support in making this happen in the coming year.

The Women's Cottage SDG's Contributions 2020 - 2021

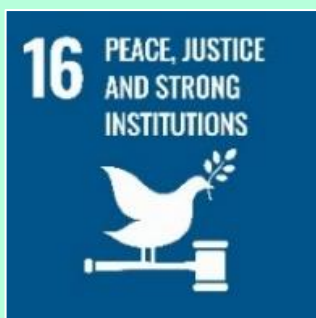


What we did:

Maintained improved recycling systems and reduced waste:

- *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: The development of visual display and resources on 'Eco Feminism' was again sidelined because of COVID. Connections were made at the International Federation of Settlements and Neighbourhood Centres Conference to get support in making this happen in the coming year.



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 and advocacy*
- *Convening local domestic violence networking group*
- *Representing the issues of women's rights at local, state and federal levels*



What we did:

- *Multiple successful new funding partnerships at community, local business, and corporate level to increase services available to vulnerable women and children*
- *Successful joint submissions with Link Wentworth Housing for new crisis accommodation building*
- *Increased partnerships work with Hawkesbury City Council on the local Domestic Violence Action Plan*

Online Community Engagement 2020 - 2021

This past year more than ever it has been important to find a variety of flexible and innovative ways to stay connected to the community and ensure women know about the support that is available to them. During this time, The Women's Cottage has increased its social media presence, kept our website up to date and moved group programs and events to virtual and online formats.

Website

www.womenscottage.org

Ongoing updates have been made to the website, especially during COVID Lockdowns to ensure women knew what services were on offer and how to access them.

Quick exit button was set up so women looking at the site could shift pages if unsafe.

Increased information was provided on accessing National Redress Project support.

Community donations information was also increased (which supported increased support for food shelves and emergency relief)

**Funding was received to upgrade the website,
and as at the writing of this report that work was close to completion.**

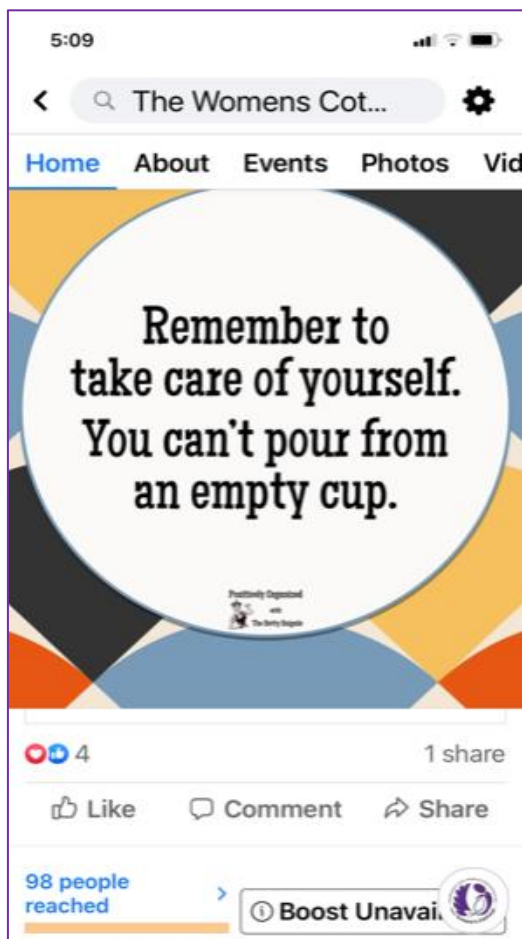
Facebook

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

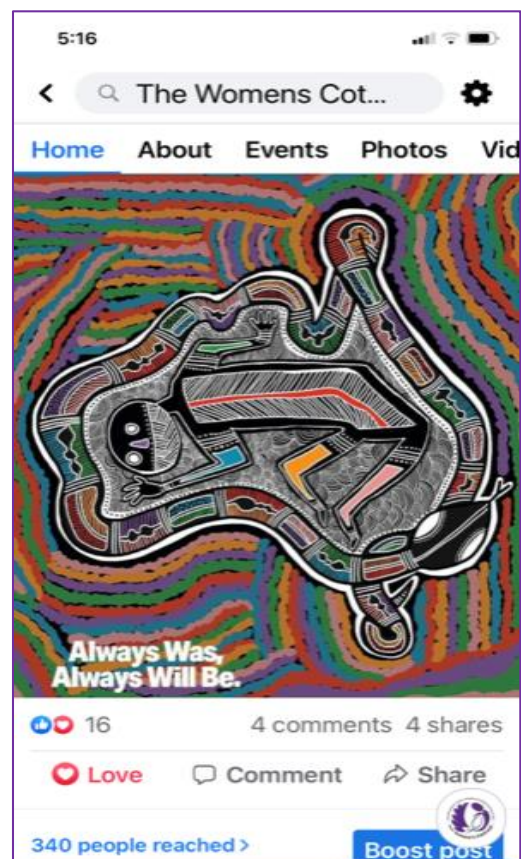
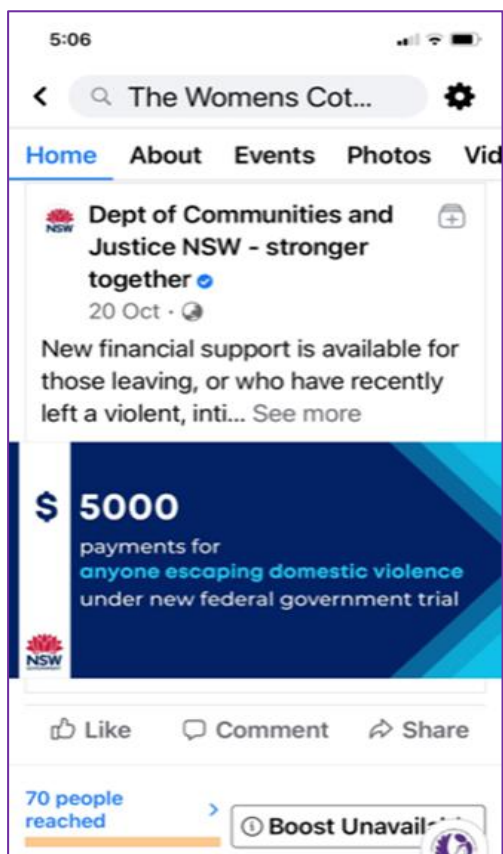
Our Facebook page currently has around 1,200 followers and women regularly engage with, share and comment on posts. Posts cover a variety of topics that focus on issues of women's rights and safety, community news, resources, self-care. Significant focus we also given to COVID news, restrictions, and support. 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.



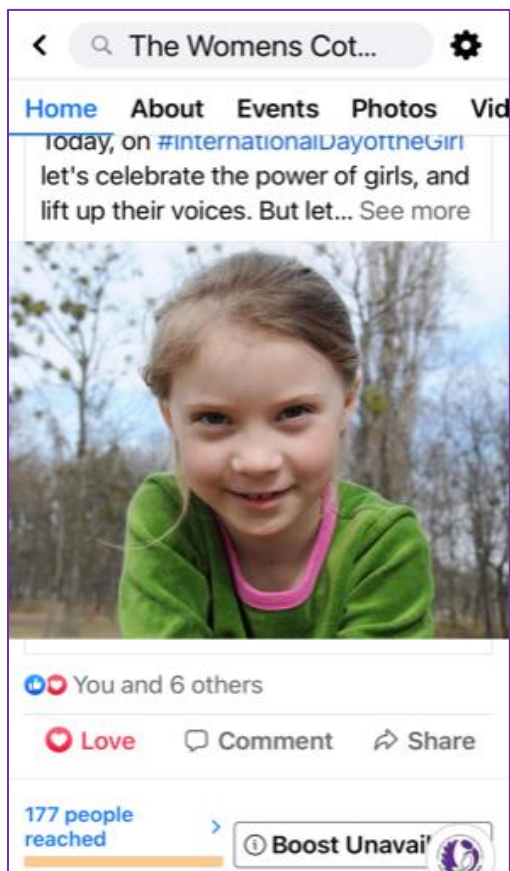
A Selection of Popular Posts (Over 3,000 reached):



Popular Posts



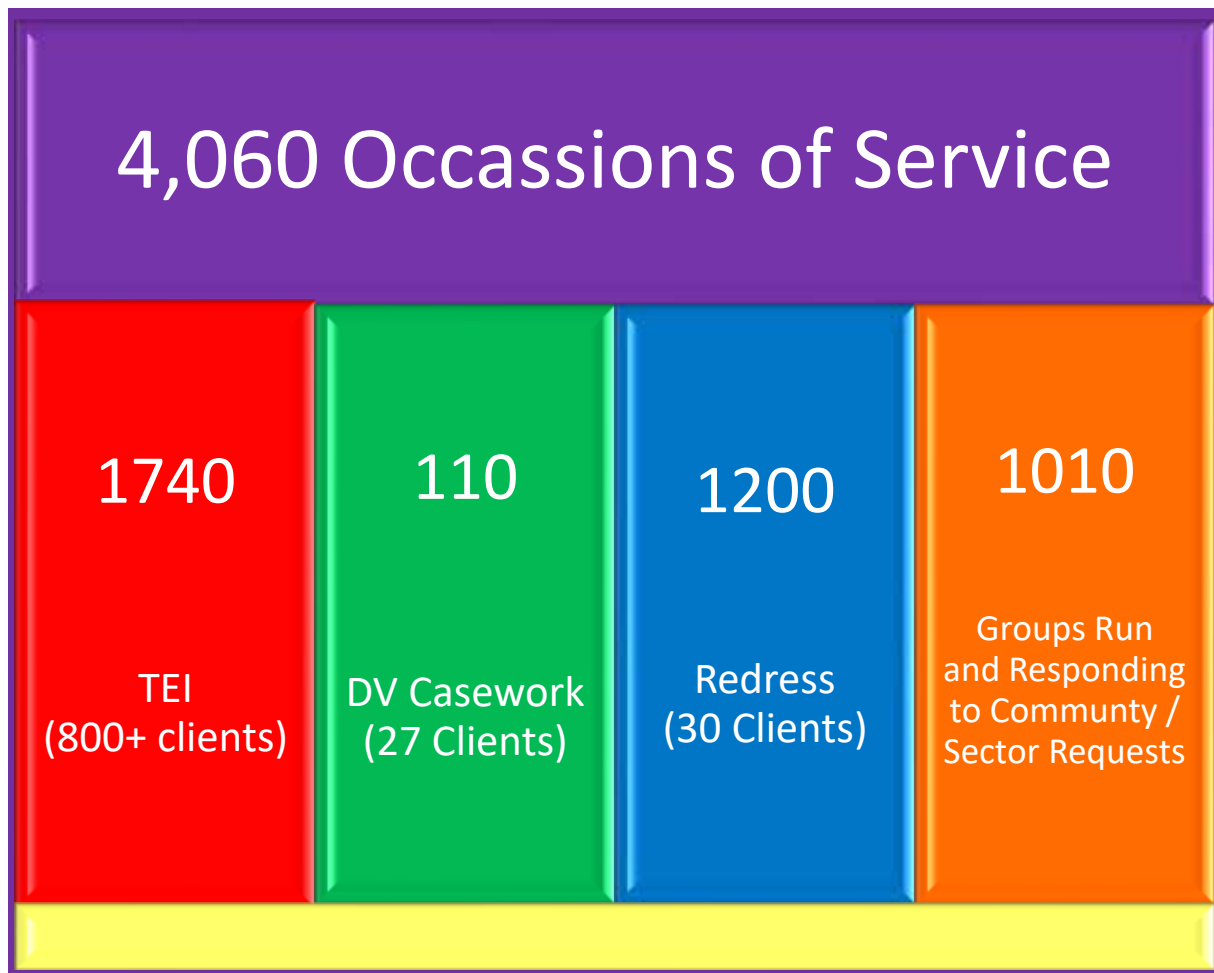
Popular Posts





**A Window
into
Our Work
2020 - 2021**

Occasions of Service for ALL Projects July 2020 – June 2021



DV Casework Project data is from Feb – June 2021

All functions of The Women's Cottage continued to operate throughout

COVID-19 lockdowns. Office open hours were maintained.

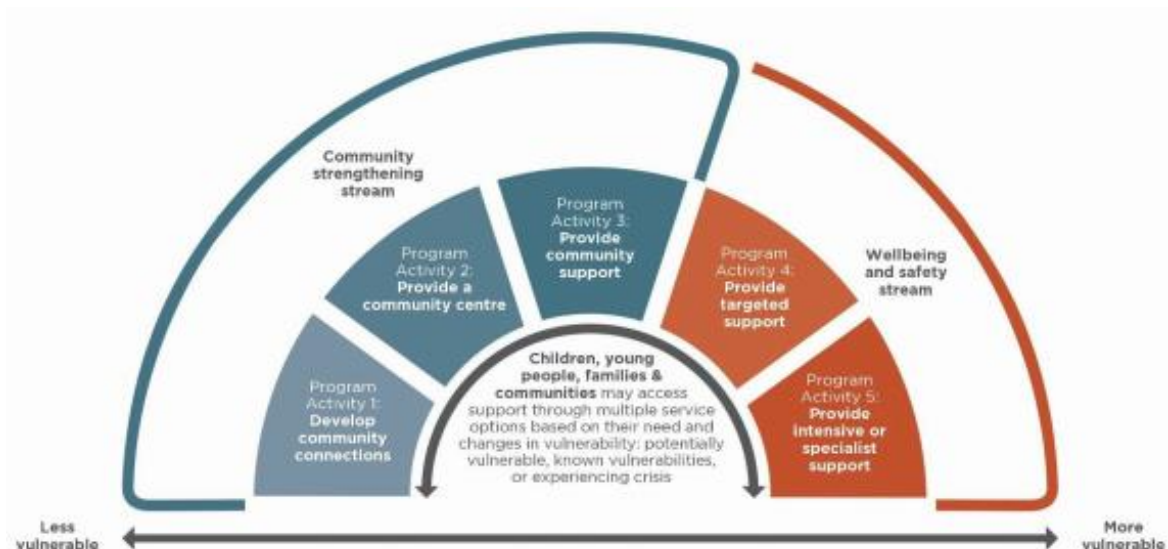
Phone and in person crisis support and DV casework continued.

Face to face groups and events were moved online. Anti-Violence community development work moved online.

Redress support services were maintained and extra COVID specific support to Redress clients was provided.

Targeted Early Intervention Project Outcomes 2020 – 2021

The TEI Program is the new funding program for all services funded by the Department of Communities & Justice (DCJ). TEI replaces the former EIPP Child, Youth and Family program. The TEI program is aimed at children, young people, families, and communities within NSW who are experiencing or at risk of vulnerability.



The TEI program covers a range of activities from community development through to responding to high risk. The Women's Cottage is funded to provide services across all TEI program activity levels 1 – 5.

TEI Programs at The Women's Cottage:

WAVE (Women's Advocacy, Violence, Emergency) assistance program covers all requests for assistance received by The Women's Cottage.

In 2020 – 2021 WAVE workers provided: 1740 responses, to over 800 clients (550 new clients) in families with over 900 children. Over 40% of requests to WAVE related to women impacted by domestic violence.

Anti-Violence Project provides group work programs, community events, sector planning support and strengthens and maintains stakeholder relationships to address violence against women and girls. This position also holds responsibility to support and enhance connection with and support to the local Aboriginal Community.

In 2020 – 2021 Anti-Violence Project organised / convened the following events:

Online Art Therapy Group

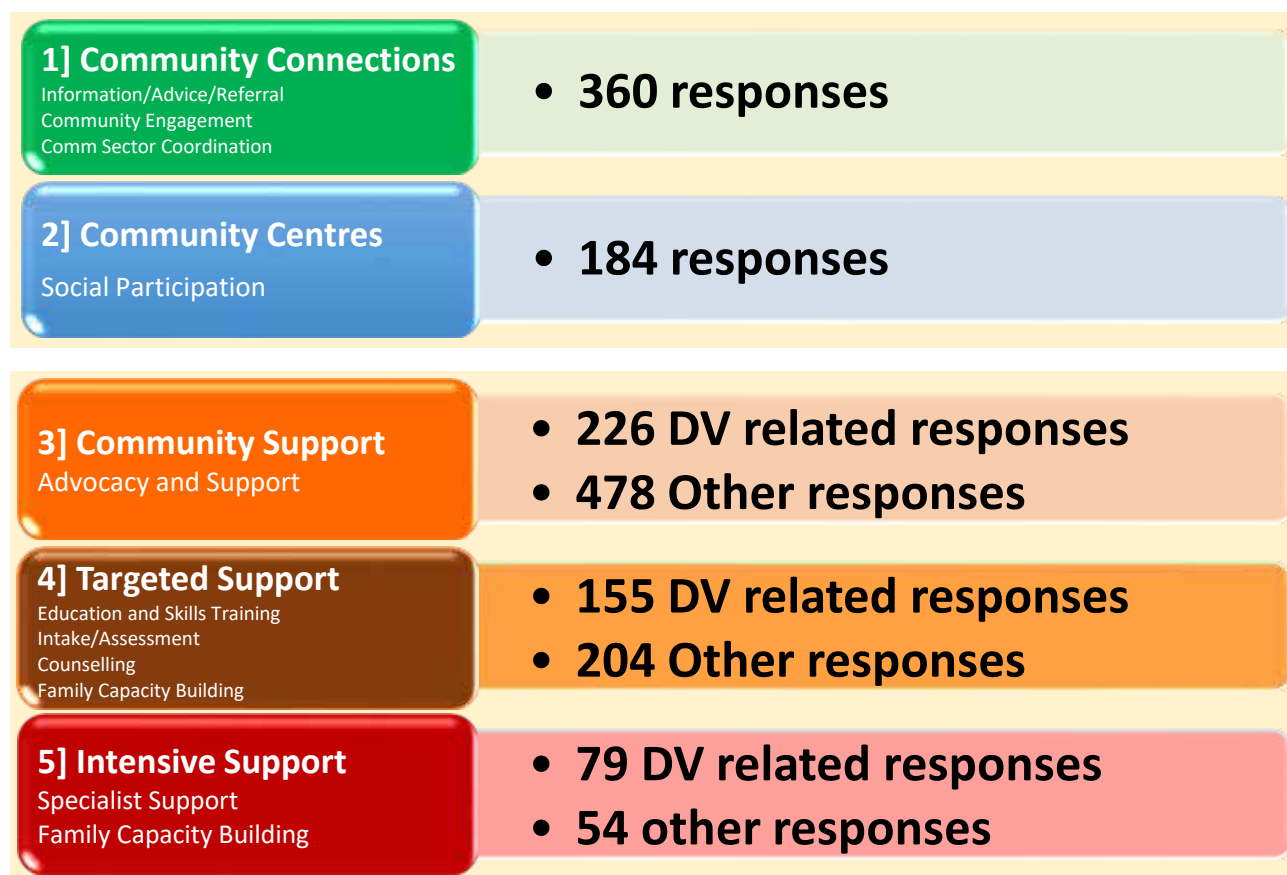
International Women's Day Event

NAIDOC Stall

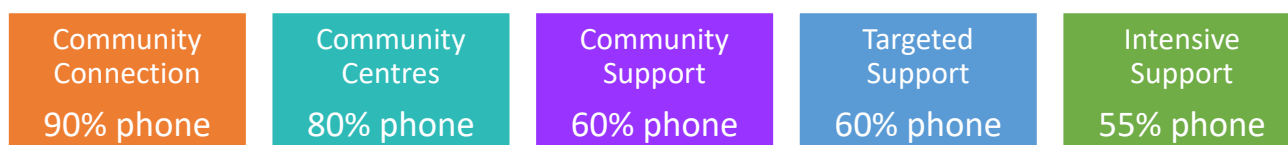
Reclaim The Night

Hawkesbury Action Network Against Domestic Violence (HANADV)

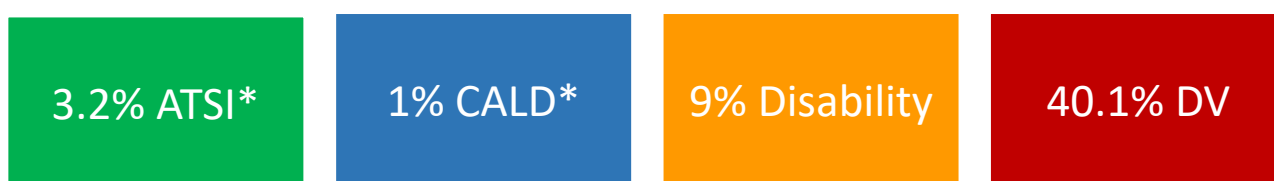
TEI Program Activity Breakdown 2020 - 2021:



Method of Response – *significant increase in phone access during COVID*



TEI Client Demographics 2020 – 2021



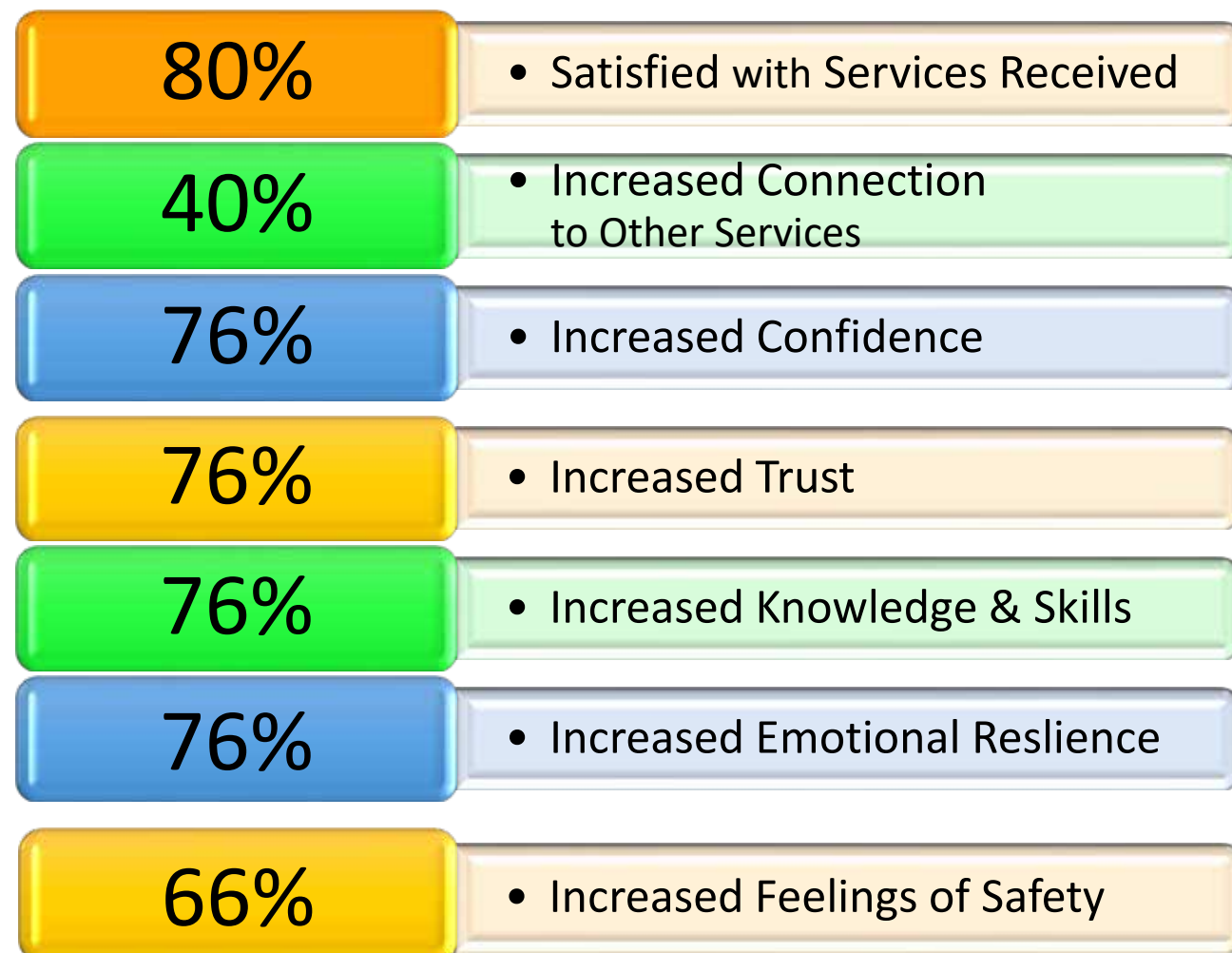
* ATSI – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

* CALD – Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

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).

TEI Client Outcomes 2020 – 2021:



It is important to note that many women we support are in serious ongoing Domestic Violence where they remain at risk and/or are not safe.

Financial Hardship Support Provided in 2020 to 2021

In addition to funded programs, The Women's Cottage provides a range of support to clients in financial hardship. This includes food packs, personal care items, nappies and baby needs and food and petrol vouchers. Assistance to buy medical supplies and fill scripts is also provided. These services are funded by Community donations and The Women's Cottage own funds. For women escaping domestic violence support for short term crisis accommodation, moving and relocation costs are made possible from the Gabrielle Fund. This fund was set up in honour of a local woman who lost her life to domestic violence and is funded by community donations. Christmas hampers and toys are also provided each year.

Approx. 250 clients were assisted for Financial Hardship in 2020 to 2021

150 x food hampers

86 x personal care packs

40 x Christmas food and toy hampers

General Needs:

\$360 for general needs

\$2740 in food vouchers

\$1620 in fuel vouchers

Domestic Violence Specific Support:

\$2205 for crisis accommodation and other needs

\$1440 in food vouchers

\$500 in fuel vouchers

This assistance to clients in need was only made possible by the ongoing generous donations from our community and business supporters.

You are named on our Supporters Page and we thank you all!

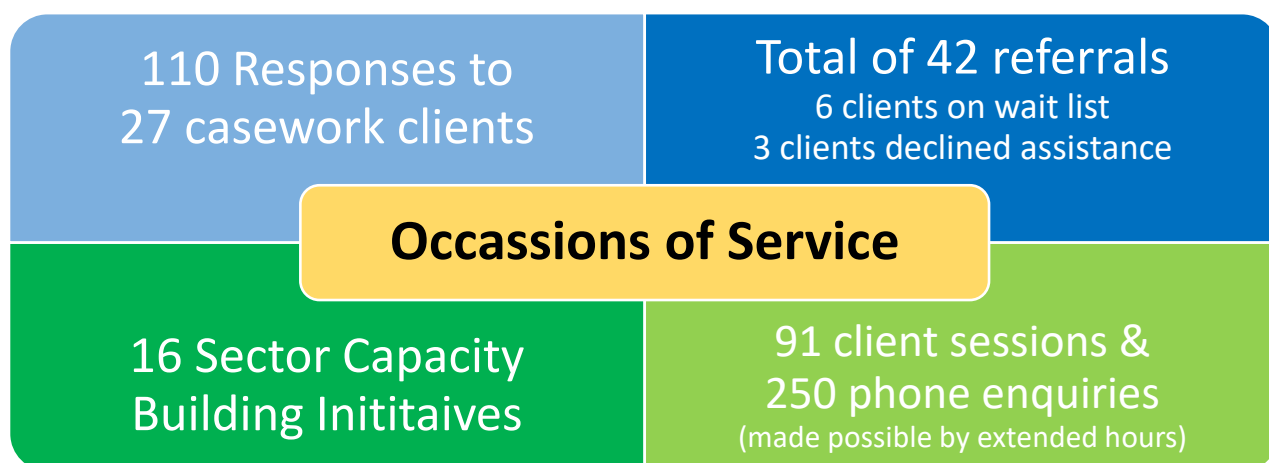


COVID DV Project Outcomes January to June 2021

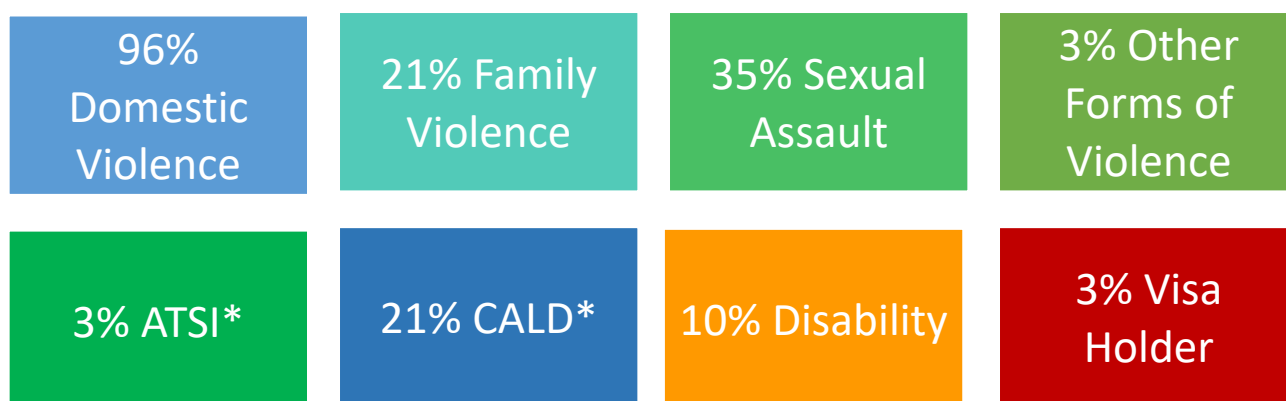
COVID-19 Domestic and Family Violence Grant funding was released by the NSW Government to address increased experiences of domestic violence and sexual assault during the pandemic. The Women's Cottage received \$150k of funding to run an 'Intensive Domestic Violence Support Project' for 12 months (2021). The funding was allocated to 2 main areas. The bulk of the funds were allocated toward casework services for women impacted by domestic / family violence. This has been a significant area of unmet need that has been increasing dramatically since the 2019 bushfires, since which time the proportion of clients impacted by DVF has continued to rise. This increase in need has been continually pushed up with the event of the post fire floods and then COVID. And more recently the major flooding in March 2021.

In addition to casework services, the COVID DV funding was also used to increase standard service open hours to improve ease of access for women needing help. This has included 1 extra hour per day during the week and new open hours on Saturdays.

COVID Domestic Violence Support Project Activity Breakdown: (Feb – June 2021)



COVID Domestic Violence Support Project Presenting Need & Demographics:



* ATSI – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

* CALD - Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

COVID Domestic Violence Support Project Community and Sector Engagement:



COVID Domestic Violence Support Project Client Outcomes & Voices:

The COVID DV Project offers longer term Case Work Support, allowing for assessment and response to complex issues of gendered violence, exploring the impacts of unsafe situation and safety planning to assist women in moving beyond the initial stage of trauma.



At the end of each session, we ask clients how they felt about their experience.

100% of clients felt listened to and understood

100 % of clients found their sessions helpful & relevant to their most important needs

100% of clients felt their sessions were enjoyable, safe, and respectful

100% of clients felt well supported with difficult emotions

We also ask, ‘What stood out the most for you today?’

A sample of responses....

“Talking through things”

“Listening to me. Teamwork, we fill in the holes together, and having the same goal in mind, safety, security and justice.”

“Keeping an eye out for my daughter / slowing down my thinking to medium term goals.”

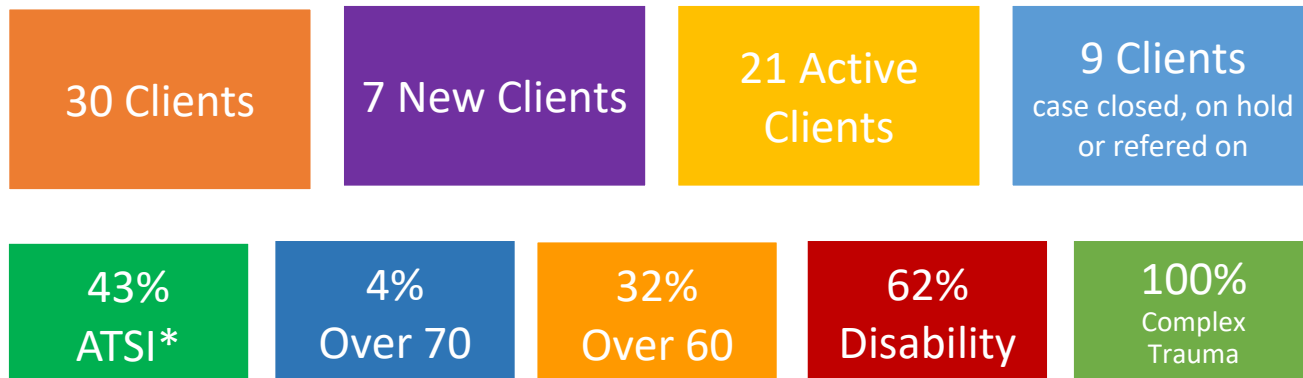
“Helping me organise it, make sense of it, making a plan and then following up.”

“The support and always having the right answer.”

National Redress Support Project Outcomes 2020 - 2021

The National Redress Support Project is funded by the Federal Department of Social Services. The project provides free support to women who are applying or considering applying to the National Redress Support Scheme which was established for people who experienced sexual assault in Institutions as children.

Clients Supported – Redress Support Project:

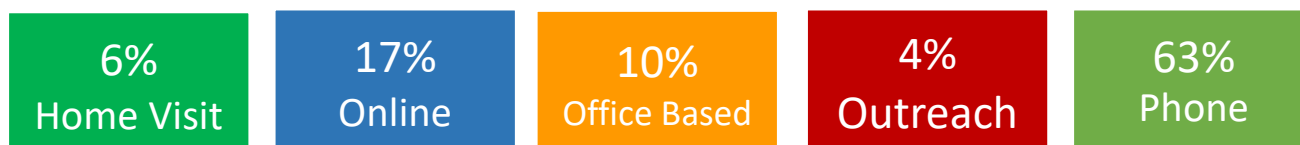


* ATSI – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

1203 Occasions of Service:

53% Counselling
16% Intensive Support (Writing Application)
12% Record Searches
8% Advocacy / Support
4% Information and Referral
2% Intake and Assessment
5% Promotion of National Redress Scheme

Flexible Access – Redress Support Project:



Client Outcomes – Redress Support Project:

Client Outcomes are identified through practitioner observations and client reports.

76% of clients reported a reduction in stress / distress

71% of clients reported increased strategies for managing difficult emotions

86% of clients were supported to learn new self-regulation strategies and skills

81% of clients increased their self-regulation capacity, skills, and confidence

95% of clients reported feeling satisfied with the services they received

At the end of each session, we ask clients how they felt about their experience.



We also ask, ‘What stood out the most for you today?’

A sample of responses....

“Felt like I could be myself”

“You listened and believed me”

“I feel better for talking with you. Your voice is calming. My breathing feels more relaxed.”

“Thank you for believing me”

“Talking to you helped me so much”

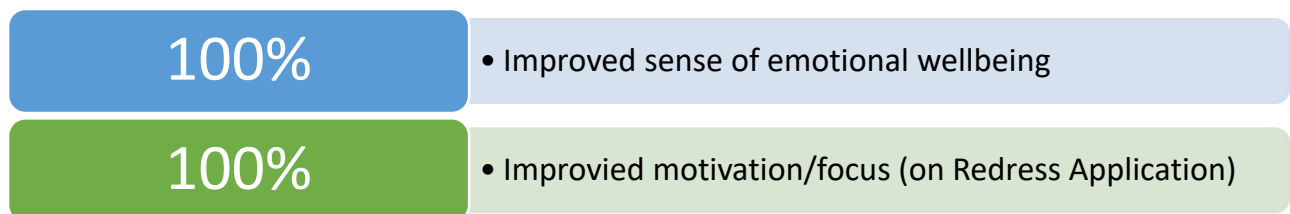
“The 3-way phone call with the solicitor – she was nice and easy to understand and having you there to help me”

National Redress Support Project Special Projects Report

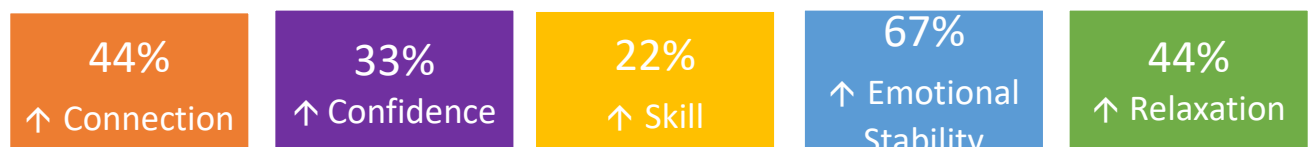
Client Well Being Project:

In response to the high degree of trauma for women supported by the National Redress Support Project, a pilot was set up to assist women with activities to calm and soothe them. Activities were tailored to each participants needs, and offered things such as massage, supporting hobbies, arts and craft materials, and outdoor interests. The project was trialed to support clients with an interest or self-care strategy in addition to standard support offered. This was aimed at supporting the client's overall wellbeing; to increase capacity and skills for their window of tolerance and self-regulation; and to increased capacity to work on their application. Nine (9) clients participated in the pilot.

Overall Outcomes:



Increase in Protective Factors:



Decrease in Risk Factors:



"Thank you so much for organising those massages for me"

Thank you (for the extra support) I feel more motivated now to work on my application"

"Doing latch hook settles me when I think about those times"

"Thank you so much, I love doing my art. It's been great showing it to you all and seeing that everyone likes it"

"Thank you for the massage. She knew exactly how to listen to do what I needed to ease the pain"

"I feel calmer. It is nice to walk together"

Redress Special Projects


The Redress Support Project received additional funding in 2021 to work on 2 special projects to enhance Redress Support work practice here at the Women's Cottage and more broadly. The two projects include a work practice discussion paper and a group program.

Do No Harm – Duty of Care: Is a discussion paper, exploring the complexities involved in making an application to the Redress Scheme. Giving specific attention to the potential for psychological distress or injury for clients going through the Redress application process, and responsibilities of workers to mitigate these issues in support of clients. The paper is due for release by December 2021.

Redress Group Program: This 'Steps on the Journey' group program is based on a resource that was developed by our team to support clients at the different stages of the Redress application process. The creation of 'Steps on the Journey' resource and group program came out of the experience of the team supporting women victims/survivors through the redress process. It was observed that while each woman had her own experience, themes also emerged. For example: similar questions, similar fears and hopes, and similar barriers face be a significant proportion of clients. The group program consists of 4 separate modules, with four sessions per module, each session running for between 45 minutes and 1.5 hours. The group program will be adaptable to face to face and online format. The program is also due for completion by December 2021.

The Women's Cottage National Redress Support Service

What do the stages of the National Redress journey look like - and what support can we offer?

<div>  <div> We support you at your own pace and we are guided by your own choices. You can speed up or slow down whenever you want without losing access to support. </div> <div> National Redress Scheme For people who have experienced childhood child sexual abuse </div> </div>				
Window Shopping	Gathering Information	Writing Your Application	Waiting for Response	Getting Answer and Journey Forward
<p>What is Redress? Is it for me? Do I want to move forward now or later?</p> <p>At this stage we answer your questions about Redress and explore if you are eligible to apply.</p> <p>We support you to decide if you want to apply and talk about what that journey may look like.</p> <p>At this stage we only need basic information. You do not need to provide in-depth information about what happened to you until later in the process when it comes time to do your application.</p> <p>This is also a good time to explore personal support networks and options and your choices about who to share this with.</p>	<p>What information and professional advice do I need for my application? How will this happen?</p> <p>When you have decided to go ahead, we talk with you a little more about what happened to you and what information might be needed to move forward.</p> <p>You may already know details like dates and places, and if not, we can support you to get hold of things like medical records, school records, foster care records etc.</p> <p>This is also the time we connect you with free specialist advice to find out more about your legal rights and options.</p> <p>We also explore with you what other formal or informal support you may need around you during this time and help make that happen.</p>	<p>What does an application look like? What questions do I have to answer? What support will I have to do this?</p> <p>Applications can be written by hand or on a computer. We can do the writing/typing with you or for you. This is when we spend the most time with you to get the application completed.</p> <p>It is when the most detailed information is needed about what happened to you and how this has impacted your life. This happens at your pace, in your time and in your own way. You can start and stop as much as you need to.</p> <p>You can come to our office. We can come to you. Or we can talk via phone /online meetings. Or a combination of any of these.</p> <p>We know it can be hard to revisit these experiences and we are ready to offer you support and/or find you any extra support you might need.</p>	<p>What do I need to think about while waiting for a response? How can I be emotionally ready and supported while I wait?</p> <p>Once your application is submitted, we offer you support for your emotional and practical needs and hopes around the application.</p> <p>It can be a good time to think more about your hopes and dreams moving forward and what support and planning might be helpful.</p> <p>We stay in close contact with you during this time, if you want that, to support you with any issues the 'waiting' brings up.</p>	<p>What do I do when I get an answer to my application? What are my options and choices now? Can I still get support while working all this out?</p> <p>Now we support you to manage your offer and related emotions or practical issues or needs.</p> <p>This can include supporting you with transition to long term counselling and taking part in direct personal response processes. It can also include things like setting up bank accounts to receive funds offered; updating your Will; and finding ongoing financial advice and support.</p> <p>It is also the time to explore what you may want to get from a personal direct response if you want that to happen.</p> <p>It is a good time to reflect on and acknowledge your strengths and resilience and celebrate your journey to this point.</p> <p>It is also the time we say goodbye to you as an ongoing client and you help with this transition.</p>
<p>If you have any questions or concerns at any time along the way, we are here to listen and support you.</p> <p>We will also check in with you about how you are going, if you are satisfied with the support we offer and how we might do better if needed.</p>				

This Resource was developed by The Women's Cottage National Redress Support Service ©

Redress Support Project Worker Report 2020 - 2021

The Redress Support Project provides support to women who are considering and/or applying to The National Redress Scheme for those who experienced sexual abuse in institutions as children.

What a year it has been for all of us. As a team we have to say a big Thank You to our Management Collective, our manager, and our co-workers for being the amazing supportive women that you are.

The Redress Team worked from home providing phone and online services during the last half of 2020. This was due to the ongoing COVID situation. Once restrictions started to ease, we were fortunate to secure a beautiful new office space at the Hawkesbury Leisure and Learning Centre in Richmond, just around the corner from our Cottage sisters. We busily set about making it a warm, friendly, safe space for our clients to meet with us. We also purchased new audio-visual technology to help make virtual interactions successful. Mick and Deborah, from Computus Australis, have been invaluable to our team with their tech support and knowledge.

Many of our clients enjoyed the return to COVID safe face-to-face interactions either in our new office, in their home or at a public venue. One of our highlights was the Wrapped in Angels group facilitated by Sarah, Kelly, and Jenny Pitty from Cara House. Participants were really enjoying this creative, resilience-based group but unfortunately was cut short because new Delta COVID restrictions. We stayed in contact with participants during the lockdown and look forward to finishing our projects when we meet again.



New Office Space



Wrapped in Angels Group

Although the National Redress Scheme has been running for 3 years now, we are still finding that a lot of health professionals and community members have never heard of it. We have been working hard to change that in our area. We stepped outside of our comfort zone to make the first video in a four-part series that introduces the National Redress Scheme and how we, at The Women's Cottage, can support applicants. It was a great experience, and we look forward to making the rest of the series.

The Redress team, together and individually, engaged with many services to promote the scheme. One of our highlights was a 'Pop in' Breakfast session that Angie and Kelly delivered at Hawkesbury Community Health. We made many great connections that day and it was very pleasing to see so many health professionals eager to know more about the Redress Scheme. The toasted ham and cheese croissants were also a hit! The positive way in which our

resources were received on the day led us to continue refining a tailor-made clinician information pack. Once the latest COVID restrictions ease our focus will return to face-to-face Community Engagement along with our ongoing newspaper articles, social media posts and video distribution.

Redress Support Project Worker Report 2020 - 2021

As well as our video series and information pack we have been working on two other specialist resources. We also received additional funding from the Department of Social Services to create a group program for applicants which can be delivered online or face-to-face; and a professional practice discussion paper, 'Do No Harm – Duty of Care' designed for Redress Support workers across the country, highlighting the complexities of working with Redress applicants.

Our experience last year assisting women on their Redress Application journey with personalised self-regulation resources encouraged us to continue with our wellbeing project this year. This included massages, art supplies, essential oils and items that provided connection to community. Resources were received with heartfelt warmth. This extra support was very well received, "The massage made me feel more peaceful"; "Thank you, something made for me in my Aboriginal colours made me proud".

When COVID restrictions tightened again in June 2021 we again sent out Care Packs to our clients. These packs consisted of beautiful handmade Aboriginal print face masks, disposable face masks, hand sanitiser and chocolate treats. We finished off June in tight lockdown and working from home. We quickly found our feet (we've done this before!) and began our team catch ups weekly online to ensure our communication around our clients and our own wellbeing was being managed. We picked up again the task of finding out which virtual way works best for each client. The end of June also saw us meeting all our reporting requirements, a lot more tech savvy and more comfortable seeing our faces look back at ourselves via a screen.

On a personal note, we also faced shared and individual sadness and challenges.

We lost our co-worker Melanie Sheffield, who is still in our memories and thoughts. We extend our love to her family and friends. And then, on the 19th of June 2021, our dear co-worker Kelly Haines experienced a major health issue.

"I had a seizure. The first one in my life. It was scary and took me by surprise. It was found that I had a brain tumor. I was operated on with great results and a given a life management plan.

My absolute heartfelt thank you to all the amazing women at The Women's Cottage. The support, understanding and check ins that I received were something that I have never experienced before in my 35 years of working life. I feel grateful to work with every single one of you and look forward to our future times together."

Sarah Dillane, Angie Gleeson, and Kelly Haines



WAVE Worker Report 2020 - 2021

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. **WAVE operated continuously throughout the pandemic. Shifting to phone support where possible, while maintaining face to face crisis work wherever needed.**

The past twelve months have passed in a blur, WAVE has been extremely busy and seems to get busier as each shift progresses.

The introduction of Saturday shifts has been of great benefit to women who access our service, those three opening hours are usually booked in advance and allow more working women the opportunity to access our service for support.



We are so fortunate to now have a fantastic Caseworker, Sam, join our team. Sam's skills, knowledge and expertise have enhanced The Women's Cottage enormously and our clients now get a much more in-depth level of support that was never possible through WAVE due to the volume of clients we support every shift and the crisis nature of our work.

There has been a high demand of requests on our service to provide material aid for clients, this has been in part due to the floods the Hawkesbury experienced earlier this year and due to covid from last year and re-surfacing this year.

We have also experienced higher demand for service/support from women experiencing domestic violence. A large volume of these clients identified domestic violence at an increased rate during covid lockdown times due to perpetrators working from home and escalating their abuse.

The floods also greatly impacted many clients, and we had an increase in demand to support women and children displaced by the floods and the need to support them to navigate finding alternative accommodation through housing services.



WAVE Worker Report 2020 – 2021

An emerging trend over the last twelve months has been some of our client's requesting support/advocacy with issues they are experiencing with their NDIS plans and the systems around how their plans are managed/co-ordinated. Many hours have been spent by WAVE workers trying to facilitate the best and most supportive outcome for these clients with other services within the parameters of their funded plans. These demands highlight a significant gap in the system for trauma informed NDIS planning, management, and coordination. This is an area The Women's Cottage is investigating in order to help improve services for women impacted by trauma.

WAVE has also spent a lot of time holding and advocating for clients with mental health issues, even though we are not a mental health service. WAVE is assisting more clients with significant mental health challenges which is reflective of the gaps in the mental health system. This work can involve supporting women with complex multiple mental health diagnoses, working intensely with allied health workers, psychiatric specialists and GP's, and higher rates of suicidal ideation and crisis responses. COVID has also impacted on overall mental health of many clients leading to a higher degree of need and requests for assistance.

Sadly, we experienced the loss of a dear, valued, and respected staff member, Melanie, in April 2021. Melanie's passing was a shock to us all and we miss her deeply, she will always live on at The Women's Cottage in her spirit of cheekiness, love, and light.

COVID restrictions significantly impacted one of our WAVE worker Jess as it saw her locked out of work from an LGA of concern. This was very challenging for Jess and involved a reduction of hours and work from home duties where possible. Jess was able to follow up on Victim's Services claims from home and took on a specialist role of keeping the whole team and other key workers up to date of COVID case locations, restrictions, and financial support for clients. Of this time Jess said, "This year has been particularly challenging for me as a WAVE worker, not only the challenges of working from home and home schooling, but also not being able to be at work when the client need was so high."

During Jess' absence we were very lucky to have the help of student turned WAVE relief worker Emma. Emma is very skilled and caring and has done a great job engaging and supporting vulnerable clients.

This year has seen a significant increase in client needs due to both system gaps and because of the COVID pandemic

Increase in the rate and severity of domestic violence.

Increase need for emergency relief, food & material aide.

Increase in the overall mental health issues, stress, and anxiety of clients.

Increase requests for support related to NDIS from women impacted by trauma.

Increase requests for support for clients living with complex mental health issues.

Increase demands on workers and work-related stress

WAVE Worker Report 2020 – 2021

Emma says “I was lucky enough to be able to do work placement at The Women’s Cottage this year. Over my time at the Cottage all the ladies have been so welcoming, and I have learnt so much from everyone. Towards the end of my placement, I was lucky enough to be offered a position and I jumped at the opportunity to be able to stay and work within the cottage. I have been training within the WAVE team and have loved every moment and I have really enjoyed working with the clients I have met. I cannot wait to see where The Women’s Cottage will take me and cannot wait to see all the lovely people I will get to meet.”

WAVE workers acknowledge our amazing, strong, and capable team of workers, the support we offer to each other reflects the amazing service we work with. Here’s to hoping we can all be in the same working space again soon.

And most of all, WAVE workers give much gratitude and thanks to all the women and children who trust us enough to tell their stories to. Working alongside you is a privilege every day and we are always in awe of your courage, strength, and resilience. We learn and gain as much from you as you do from us.

Melissa, Kim, Jess & Emma

WAVE Case Study **Name changed*

Several agencies were involved with the support and eventual escape from domestic violence of Sally () and her young child.*

Sally was referred by her GP and came to us unsure if we were able to assist. She had previously attempted to get help from the police after physical assaults from her husband, but those attempts had been unsuccessful.

Sally’s husband had escalated his controlling behavior and had moved the family to a small caravan on a friend’s property, isolating Sally and leaving her with very few belongings. Sally had also been forbidden to look for employment or having any type of financial independence – including Centrelink payments for their child.

We worked with Centrelink and their social work team to instate Family Tax Benefit and set up her own bank account for these payments to go into. A referral was done to Nurreen for housing, and we continued to support Sally. However, when COVID began it made planning for escape very difficult. Sally’s husband’s shifts began to drop, and he was home more often. Several times, we had to change the days in which we had planned her escape.

Finally, after several weeks, we were able to get Sally and her young child to safety. A Victims Services claim to assist with furniture and ongoing counselling was made. The Cottage supplied personal care items, blankets, food, and vouchers. Nurreen supplied hampers and ongoing support. Sally reaches out for ongoing support as needed.



COVID Domestic Violence Project Worker Report January – June 2021

COVID-19 Domestic and Family Violence Grant funding was released by the NSW Government to address increased experiences of domestic violence and sexual assault during the pandemic. From the beginning of the project in February to the end of June 2021, 27 clients were supported.

Spirit and unnerving strength are words that come to mind when reflecting upon the women of the Hawkesbury this year. I am proud to have commenced as the Specialist Domestic and Family Violence Case Worker at The Women's Cottage in January 2021, into a calm environment that quickly began to storm. Quite literally, a storm engulfed The Hawkesbury, causing flooding and geographical restrictions that raised the vulnerability of women and children experiencing domestic violence and family violence. The power that Mother Nature displayed was one to take note of, demonstrating for many the preparation, experience and recovery that goes into a traumatic event that is outside of our control. Why then, do we not respond as succinctly and energetically to domestic and family violence in Australia?

It is with decades of advocacy and through the collective voices of many women in The Hawkesbury, that this case work position was finally funded. My task is to take this opportunity to support and empower women of The Hawkesbury to create a life beyond violence, not simply accept the reduction or absence of violence. Change requires fierce advocacy in response to fear, power, violence, and control. Gendered violence is weaved into the hidden cracks of psychological abuse and emotional torment, designed to undermine, silence, and disempower women's voice and experience.

In the words of Luvvie Ajayi-Jones

*"In a world that wants women
to whisper, I choose to yell"*

Let your SPIRIT yell and be heard... Within the first case work session I ask women to dream. To dream of a life that holds peace and healing. To dream of a life that is empowered. To dream of a life that dismantles the barriers they have experienced. I ask women to put this dream into words, drawings, songs, any form that helps them communicate to me and to themselves, the empowered life they envisage beyond violence.

Let your VOICE yell and be heard... At The Women's Cottage we create spaces for women's voices to be heard by collaborating with them in the design of their safety and support needs. Case plans and safety planning considers the individual needs of a woman and her children, as voiced by her. For some women this is escaping immediate harm or advocating for justice within the existing structures. For others it is long term support to build an empowered life, using a feminist approach to dismantle the patriarchal institutions that do not protect women and children from domestic and family violence. We cannot use patriarchal tools to dismantle the houses of patriarchy. The collective voice of women must motivate social change.

Let your INDEPENDENCE yell and be heard... Building an independent life can be confronting for women who have experienced severe isolation, social abuse, emotional abuse, and financial abuse. Financial safety planning is a key part of the case work support women receive, assisting them to know and trust their own financial capabilities to build a sustainable future for them and their children. Engagement with community and rebuilding social supports is a core value in the case work model, encouraging women to expand and engage with groups and services that support wellbeing and an experience of belonging. This approach directly challenges the isolating and belittling tactic of domestic violence abuse.

Let your HUMANITY yell and be heard... Case work in isolation is only part of the solution. Community awareness, advocacy and engagement is an essential part of supporting The Hawkesbury community to understand that domestic violence is a fundamental abuse of human rights. Gendered violence can be overlooked or excused by people and systems that are not served by changing the current functioning of society. I have been active in consulting with colleagues across the Hawkesbury to engage in building a community that see's the heart of gendered violence and understands the damaging and devastating impacts of domestic violence and family violence. This includes challenging gendered language and systems that deny accountability of the abusive person. Working in partnership with local Police, housing services, mental health services, multicultural services, and legal services, we are building a network of local support services that have a deeper understanding of the impacts of gendered violence and how our approach to supporting women and children directly impacts their experience and healing. We must challenge our own fears or restrictions to speaking out. We must collectively challenge gendered language that is used to perpetrate further inequality. We must envisage a life for women and children that is not merely the absence of violence. We must see the dignity in humanity and living an empowered life. It takes a community effort to agitate for social and systemic change.

Thank you to Maria, the Management Collective, and the whole team at The Women's Cottage for your warm welcome, collaboration and engagement. **Thank you to women of the Hawkesbury who have trusted me with your voice, I hold it with dignity.**

Samantha Campbell



COVID Domestic Violence Project Case Study * Pseudonyms used for all names

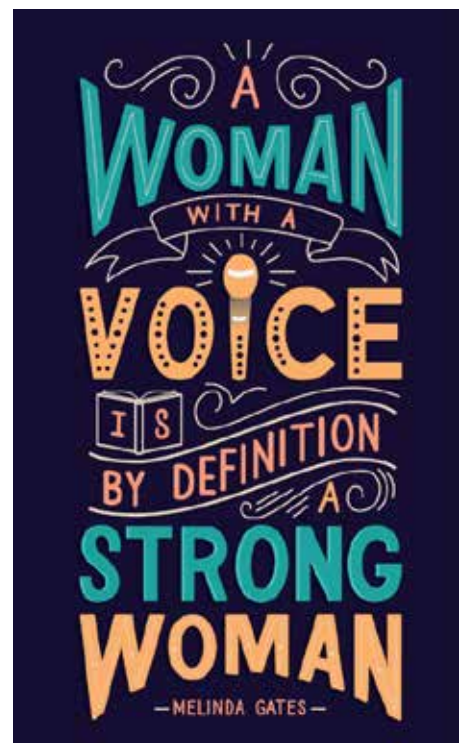
Rayne is an intelligent, warm, aspirational, and compassionate woman. She was employed full time and in a strong financial position prior to meeting her partner, Malcolm. Rayne disclosed early feelings of discomfort in the relationship and felt disrespected by Malcolm's open criticism of her in front of colleagues, family, and friends. Rayne planned to end the relationship after a few months due to Malcolm's aggressive behaviours, but then fell pregnant. His use of verbal and psychological abuse continued during Rayne's pregnancy. Shortly after the birth of their child, Malcolm coerced Rayne to leave her own home and job to move in with him, where she became even further isolated. This isolation reached the point where all her time was spent under the watch of Malcolm or his family. Rayne had no privacy at home. Malcolm would regularly go through her belongings, dictate what they ate, how to cook, how to clean and take household supplies Rayne had purchased.

Malcolm's use of financial abuse started with his coercion to restrict her employment, then continued to include signing her on to a family trust without her consent, effectively blocking her from accessing financial or housing support to be able to leave the home or relationship, relying on her to fund the family's living expenses, spending both of their money on non-essential items, leaving no money for food. Malcolm has threatened to kill Rayne's cats and used physical intimidation to coerce Rayne.

Rayne was referred to our project by Centrelink for support with separating from her violent partner and safety planning to leave the home and relationship. Upon first meeting with Rayne, she was visibly fearful about accessing a domestic violence support service because Malcolm was often monitoring her whereabouts. Rayne's employer was also helping her to leave Malcolm, allowing her time off work to attend case work appointments. Rayne had come prepared with options for leaving Malcolm, including options for housing and other employment, but felt stuck and uncertain how to do this in a safe way. Rayne disclosed that when her child started primary school, this helped her to decide to leave Malcolm and see that their experience of domestic violence was impacting on them both. Safety planning became the foundation of case work support with Rayne, collaborating on safety plans to move in with a friend, change enrolment for her child's school, financial safety planning and making a safe plan to leave the home on a day Malcolm was at work. Over many weeks we worked together to develop safety plans that built Rayne's confidence to leave, reduced the psychological impacts of Malcolm's abuse and increased her self-worth and belief in a life free from violence.

On the day Rayne left, she felt both fearful and powerful. Rayne disclosed that the long history of emotional and psychological abuse by Malcolm played through her mind, second guessing her ability to leave safely. Rayne left 5 weeks after commencing case work support.

Rayne and her child are now thriving. Rayne is employed full time. Parenting orders are in place with firm boundaries set by Rayne to increase emotional and psychological safety. Rayne is rebuilding her financial independence and well on her way to saving for a house deposit. Rayne and her child are exploring new social interactions and friendships, new foods, new sports, movies, hobbies, and local parks.



Anti-Violence Worker Report 2020 – 2021

Anti-violence Project Worker takes a key role in community development and education projects and activities that raise awareness about the effects of violence in communities and to reduce violence against women and children. This position also involves front line work providing group programs, crisis support, offering information, and making appropriate referrals.

Much of the past year I have worked from home due to COVID. This involved a lot of work setting up home office equipment and systems and moving meetings, planning sessions and event online via zoom/teams. Ironically, this increased the number of meetings / networks I was able to attend.

Groups:

The Women's Circle drop-in group started up face to face for 6 weeks but was cancelled due to the Delta-COVID lock down. Participant feedback was that they enjoyed the group and activities. I rostered activities and booked the Richmond neighbourhood centre to ensure we could still maintain social distancing.

Art therapy group via zoom ran for four weeks in November 2020 and was well attended. Art supplies were posted to participants. The focus of the group was on wellbeing during COVID.



Anti-Violence Events and Campaigns:

Reclaim the Night 2020: Was live streamed due to COVID. We held a candlelight vigil for women who had lost their lives to violence, and guest speakers highlighted the impact of violence on women. This recording was shared via Facebook and is available on The Women's Cottage Web page.



IDAHOBIT Movie Night: I represented The Women's Cottage at a viewing of 'Grease sing along' at Richmond theater with prizes for fancy dress. The event was aimed at recognising and supporting diverse sexualities and identities and promoting tolerance, inclusion, and safety. Thanks to HCOS for organizing and coordinating the event.

NAIDOC 2020: was cancelled due to COVID lockdown.

Networks and Partnerships:

- Hawkesbury Action Network Against Domestic Violence: I am convenor of this meeting and due to COVID, I have taken up the responsibility of writing minutes after COVID hit. This has allowed meetings to continue via zoom.
- LGBTIQ++ Domestic and Family violence interagency.
- CAVA Interagency Blue Mountains.
- Nepean D.V. Network interagency.
- Hawkesbury Connect (face to face and online).
- I've also been a part of several Aboriginal Work force referral/advisory groups.
- Safe places operations and evaluation meetings. Safe Places Crisis Accommodation units are being built after many years of local community consultation and planning.
- Recognise Respond Refer Steering committee.
- *The Metwest Violence Prevention Network meetings did not meet due to COVID.*



In March 2021 I was employed by Lucy's project to deliver a training package, Animal ready communities and to develop a resource directory providing cross collaboration with the animal community/services. This work is being done in partnership with my role at The Women's Cottage to increase community capacity to support women with pets and livestock who are escaping violence.

Throughout 2020-2021 I have spent a lot of time lobbying and advocating for the Hawkesbury to receive D.V. specific money that has been rolled out because of COVID. As Part of this I was asked to be a speaker at the DVNSW webinar focused on people and animals experiencing DFV.

My hope for 2022 is that we will all be back in the office working together and supporting clients, and that groups will be able to be in person.

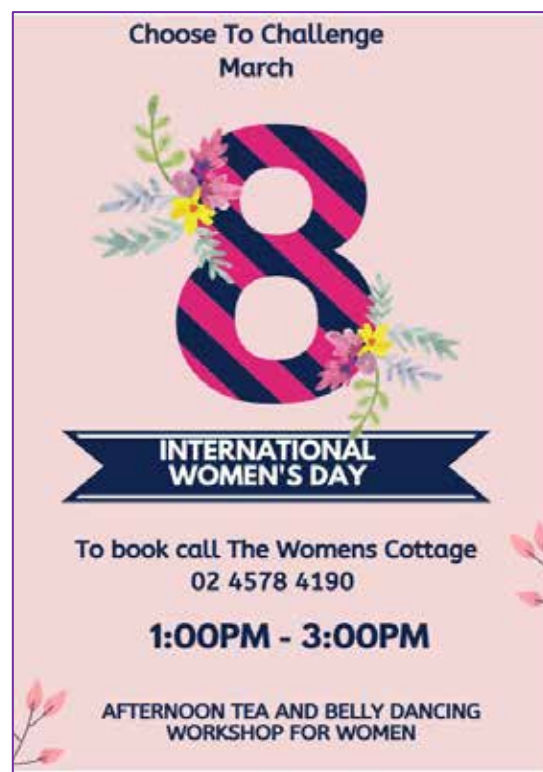
This past year I've felt very inspired by many of my peers as they have met the challenges and difficult times of the past year and continued to support clients and community and be a voice against violence against women and children.

Anti-Violence Worker Mel Olsen

Community Groups and Events



In Person and Online



In Person



In Person and Streamed



Self-Care in Challenging Times
Art Therapy Group

Run online by Art Therapist
with support between sessions

Jacaranda Group Report 2020 – 2021

The Jacaranda Group currently has around 32 members on our contact list, aged between 50 and 85 years.

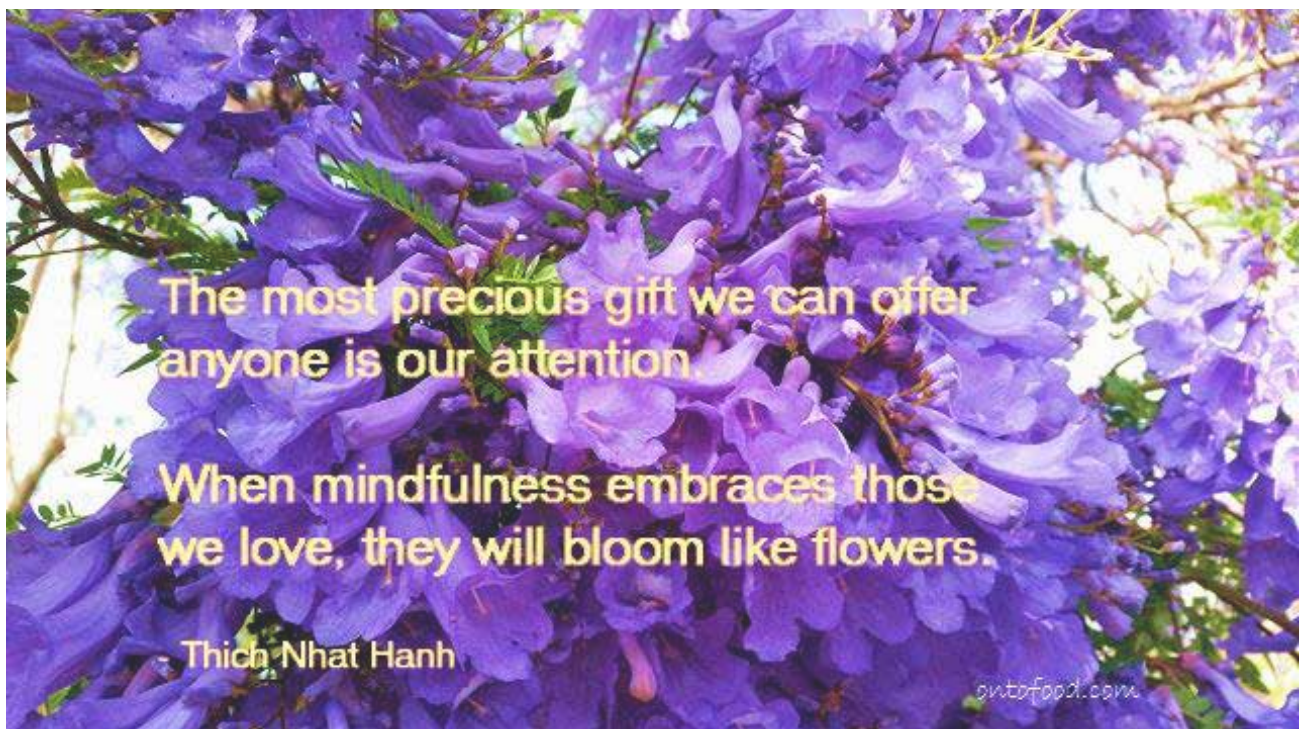
Since COVID our activities have been restricted, but all members have checked up with each other on a weekly basis during Lockdown.

As we are being allowed more freedom, we are planning face to face gatherings in October and November 2021. This will include lunches, bus trip, trash and treasure event, planning meetings and Christmas lunch. All members attending will be double vaccinated.

The Jacaranda Group is very beneficial for all our members in avoiding loneliness, staying connected, making new friends, and supporting each other through hard times and illness. We also send out birthday and get-well cards.

Our group is most needed in today's world. Long may we continue with the support of The Women's Cottage and government assistance.

Joan Oakley Founding Member



BLUSH Group Report 2020 - 2021

BLUSH started 2021 on a high!

We held our yearly planning night in November 2020 and the full year was scheduled – we were ready to go! We had great activities planned from Barefoot Bowling to Picnicking, Potluck Dinners to Games Afternoons. We also planned on visiting the Botanic Gardens, going to the flicks, and of course eating and socialising at various venues in and around the Hawkesbury.

We were very fortunate to get the first half of the year in and we all enjoyed the Barefoot Bowls at Windsor Bowling Club under the guidance of Eddie and the Potluck Dinner and Movie Night at Wilberforce. Good attendance, lots of laughs and shared friendship. This is what BLUSH is all about!

Then COVID hit! We were back in lockdown and some of our members were very isolated. After the first month the BLUSH Coordinators realised that possibly we would not be meeting face-to-face for some time, so decided to try and introduce monthly Zoom meeting catch-ups.

Zoom become our new best friend and like any friendship we had our highs and lows. One of the positives Zoom enabled was the opportunity to reach-out and connect with a wider audience. We had women join us from Sydney and the Central Coast who normally were unable to join our monthly meeting / dinners due to distance. It was a real pleasure to experience this extended friendship and hopefully it helped reduced the social isolation for these women as well.

The negatives were the frustrating issues that we all experience when relying on technology and the concerns some of us feel when out of our comfort zones. Having said that, most of our members embraced the challenges and we ALL learnt a lot about technology, especially how to use a mute button, and each other's lounge rooms lol!



On a sad note, we lost a dear friend in 2021. Sue was a great friend to BLUSH and many other Lesbian support / social groups, and her sage advice and enthralling stories will be missed greatly. Sue's farewell was held on her family property overlooking the mighty Hawkesbury River surrounded by her beautiful family and many of her friends from the various groups across Sydney. It was a spectacular day and the uniquely Australian wildlife, that Sue loved so much, all contributed to a fitting tribute to a strong, proud Hawkesbury Woman.



During 2021 some of our members were legally married after decades of being 'partners', some welcomed new Grandchildren and others new 4-legged friends into their families. Others were made redundant from positions held over long periods of time, some new careers we embarked on, and others retired. We saw a few changes of addresses and some friends moved away from the Hawkesbury - yes, the normal ebb and flow of life but these things can affect us and the group dynamics in different ways!

As always, we appreciated the ongoing support of the magnificent Women's Cottage. BLUSH is very independent and low maintenance, but we know if we reach out, we would be supported in any way possible. Thank you so much Women's Cottage for EVERYTHING YOU DO for ALL the Women and Children who live, love, work, and study in the Hawkesbury.

Looking forward to increased participation, continuing friendships and developing new relationships in 2022.

BLUSH Coordinators

Kathy and Meaghan Adam-Cross

Finance Worker Report 2020-2021

Well, if the 2019-2020 financial year was a year like no other, 2020-2021 set a new precedent!

In the 2020-2021 financial year The Cottage:

- Benefitted from the Cash Flow Boost by \$51,910 from the Federal Government as part of the COVID19 stimulus package.
- Received a donation from The Scully Fund of \$50,000 that paid wages for additional hours of service provision.
- Received increased funds from Department of Social Services for Redress Scheme projects.
- Received \$150,000 from the NSW COVID-19 Domestic and Family Violence program for the 2021 calendar year, which is paying the wages for a specialist Domestic Violence Caseworker and allowing the Cottage to open on a Saturday morning to provide services for working women.
- Received \$250,000 from NSW COVID-19 Domestic and Family Violence Infrastructure Program to help fund a larger extension than was originally planned.
- Received two technology and infrastructure grants from the Department of Communities and Justice (totally \$47,000) to upgrade technology / connectivity, website upgrades and online group capacity to enhance future service provision.
- Benefitted from a donation of \$50,000 from PayPal after the March 2021 floods, which also contributed to wages for additional hours of service provision.

These funds were in addition to the annual recurrent contracted funding for the projects run by The Women's Cottage during the year. Funds that were received for future endeavors have been allocated to the Balance Sheet as funding in advance to be spent in the 2021-2022 financial year.

The NSW Department of Communities and Justice funds the TEI projects which include WAVE and Antiviolence work, and the Federal Department of Social Services funds the Redress Scheme projects. The Cottage has also received wonderful support from the community which has included donations of funds, groceries and back to school items.

In the past financial year staffing costs have increased primarily due to the additional staff and extra working hours funded by additional grants and donations. Staffing costs continue to be the major expense of the organization as is expected in a service industry.

The full story of our year can be found in the financial reports at the back of this book. Overall, the Cottage operated at a profit of \$17,755 for the 2020-2021 financial year and is in a financially secure position with adequate funds in the bank to meet the expenses of the organisation as and when they fall due.

It is a privilege to work with this team of wonderful, compassionate, and supportive women and I look forward to many more years working with them.

Meg Keith, Finance Worker

***"A woman is like a teabag: you can't tell how strong she is, until you put her in hot water."**
Eleanor Roosevelt.*

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 2021 in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards.

I have satisfied myself that:

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

Signed *S. Paine*
Sue Ann Paine, FIPA

Date: 23 August 2021

Qualification: Fellow, Institute of Public Accountants
No: 104947

W www.josephbanksandco.com.au

A Shop 9 Lachlan Court, 100 George St, Windsor, NSW, 2756 T 02 4577 6688

A A28, 24-32 Lexington Drive, Bella Vista, NSW, 2153 T 02 9899 3977

Jbandco pty ltd ABN 61 820 298 752

Liability Limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation.

**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 2021.

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 2021, 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: 23 August, 2021



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 2021

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 assets. 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 Committee
For the year ended 30 June 2021**

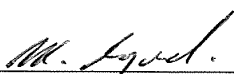
In the opinion of the Committee the Statement of Financial Position, Statement of Financial Performance and Notes to the financial Statements:

1. Present fairly the financial position of Hawkesbury Area Women & Kids Services Collective Inc. as at 30 June 2021 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act and 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 Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:



Management Collective



Management Collective

Dated this 28th day of SEPT., 2021

Hawkesbury Area Womens & Kids Collective

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

Balance Sheet [Last Year Analysis]

June 2021

ABN: 12 756 046 044

	This Year	Last Year
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash On Hand	\$804,460.95	\$386,291.71
Sundry Debtors	\$59,682.15	\$0.00
Pre payments	\$0.00	\$6,363.63
ATO GST refund	\$0.00	\$1,357.00
Total Current Assets	\$864,143.10	\$394,012.34
Plant & Equipment		
Plant & Equipment - At Cost	\$9,029.00	\$9,466.00
Plant & Equipment - Accum Dep	-\$5,320.00	-\$5,407.00
Total Plant & Equipment	\$3,709.00	\$4,059.00
Total Assets	\$867,852.10	\$398,071.34
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Grants & Funding Provisions	\$641,855.99	\$227,446.74
Other Current Liabilities	\$186.34	\$670.39
GST Liabilities	\$22,414.13	\$5,022.72
Payroll Liabilities	\$94,256.25	\$73,121.29
Total Current Liabilities	\$758,712.71	\$306,261.14
Network Funds Held		
HSVPN Funds	\$2,532.76	\$2,532.76
HANADV Funds	\$2,050.71	\$2,476.53
METWEST Funds	\$260.06	\$260.06
White Ribbon Event Funds	\$265.40	\$265.40
Total Network Funds Held	\$5,108.93	\$5,534.75
Total Liabilities	\$763,821.64	\$311,795.89
Net Assets	\$104,030.46	\$86,275.45
Equity		
Retained Earnings	\$86,275.45	\$112,455.22
Current Year Surplus/Deficit	\$17,755.01	-\$26,179.77
Total Equity	\$104,030.46	\$86,275.45

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 2020 To June 2021

ABN: 12 756 046 044

	This Year	Last Year
Income		
Recurrent funding	\$991,084.98	\$547,720.56
Other grants	\$50,000.00	\$0.00
Other Income	\$64,400.60	\$40,676.84
Sundry Incomes	\$200.00	\$0.00
Total Income	\$1,105,685.58	\$588,397.40
Gross Profit	\$1,105,685.58	\$588,397.40
EXPENSES		
Financial	\$7,836.41	\$3,638.36
Operating costs	\$17,056.78	\$9,422.14
Equipment	\$14,314.21	\$5,582.21
Employment Expenses	\$634,595.78	\$519,799.46
Client/Community ServicingCost	\$48,633.03	\$29,921.87
Special Grant Expenses	\$0.00	\$51,000.00
Occupancy Expenses	\$26,380.60	\$19,637.84
Other Expenses	\$150.00	\$0.00
Total EXPENSES	\$748,966.81	\$639,001.88
Operating Profit	\$356,718.77	-\$50,604.48
Transferred Income		
Funds Carried Forward	\$9,448.25	\$0.00
Management Contributions	\$84,360.00	\$0.00
Cash Flow Boost from Fed Gov	\$51,910.00	\$37,122.00
Unexpended JG Grant	\$0.00	\$1,131.41
Total Transferred Income	\$145,718.25	\$38,253.41
Transferred Expenses		
Management Contributions	\$84,360.00	\$0.00
SSTF Funding in Advance	\$40,000.00	\$0.00
DSS Funding In Advance	\$267,430.00	\$0.00
Carry Forward future use	\$83,502.06	\$0.00
Tfr - Christmas Provision	\$1,819.95	\$0.00
Emergency Relief Provision	\$0.00	\$5,731.13
Unexpended RCF c/f	\$0.00	\$8,097.57
Loss on disposal of Asset	\$70.00	\$0.00
Fraud- Cyber Scammed	\$7,500.00	\$0.00
Total Transferred Expenses	\$484,682.01	\$13,828.70
Net Profit/(Loss)	\$17,755.01	-\$26,179.77

This report includes Year-End Adjustments.

Statement of Cash Flow

July 2020 To June 2021

ABN: 12 756 046 044

Cash Flow from Operating Activities**Net Income** **\$17,755.01**

Red - Petty Cash	\$161.50
Sundry Debtors	-\$59,682.15
Pre payments	\$6,363.63
ATO GST refund	\$1,357.00
Plant & Equipment - At Cost	\$437.00
Plant & Equipment - Accum Dep	-\$87.00
SSTF Grant Funding In Advance	\$40,000.00
2021 DV- COVID Grant-DSS	\$99,633.89
Provision -COVID Expenses	\$15,350.11
Provision for Program Funds	\$77,841.79
DSS- Funding in Advance Redress	\$9,332.43
DSS - Building Grant	\$250,000.00
Provision- Extra Programs	-\$1,497.22
CDSE - Accommod Pilot Unexpended	-\$3,827.07
Emergency Relief Provision	-\$1,236.00
Unexpended Grant	-\$2,360.54
JG Grant Unexpended	\$552.64
Gabrielle Fund provision	\$2,591.07
BuildingMatchingGrantgovtfunds	-\$72,999.45
Provision for Client Christmas	\$2,708.13
Program Funds carried forward	-\$12,831.93
Provision - Building	\$11,151.40
Staff Fund Donations	-\$484.05
GST Collected	\$27,842.08
GST Paid	-\$10,450.67
PAYG Tax Payable	\$498.00
Annual Leave Provision	\$18,085.39
Long Service Leave Provision	\$2,551.57
HANADV Funds	-\$425.82

Net Cash Flow from Operating Activities **\$418,330.74****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** **\$418,330.74****Cash at the Beginning of the period** **\$385,886.61****Cash at the End of the period** **\$804,217.35**

Hawkesbury Area Womens & Kids Collective
22 Bosworth Street
(P.O Box 305)
RICHMOND NSW 2753

Equity Reconciliation
As of June 2021

Equity			
Retained Earnings balance as aty 30 June 2020			\$86,275
Current Year Surplus/Deficit for 2020-2021	Surplus		\$17,755
Equity Balance as at 30 June 2021			\$104,030
	Balance	Balance	Change
	1/07/2020	30/06/2021	
Retained Earnings	\$86,275	\$104,030	\$17,755
Total Equity	\$86,275	\$104,030	\$17,755
Hawkesbury Area Womens & Kids Services Collective Inc does not have shares or owners, it is an Incorporated Axssociation.			
All changes in equity are due to changes in retained equity from operations			

Appendix 1] ACNC Summary

[Hawkesbury Area Womens & Kids Services Collective | Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission \(acnc.gov.au\)](https://www.acnc.gov.au/hawkesbury-area-womens-kids-services-collective)

HAWKESBURY AREA WOMENS & KIDS SERVICES COLLECTIVE

Also known as: The Women's Cottage

ABN: 12756046044

Address: 22 Bosworth St, Richmond NSW 2753, Australia

Email: manager@womenscottage.org.au

Address For Service email: manager@womenscottage.org.au

Website: www.womenscottage.org.au

Charity Size: Medium

Who the charity helps:

Youth - 15 to under 25

Victims of crime (including family violence)

Financially disadvantaged people

Females

Families

Early childhood - aged under 6

Children - aged 6 to under 15

Adults - aged 65 and over

Adults - aged 25 to under 65

Date established: 1970

Last reported: 19 January 2021

Next report due: 31 January 2022

Financial Year End: 30/06

Summary of Activities: We are a community-based crisis support and resource centre, run by women, for women (and their children) who live, work or study in the Hawkesbury region. We specialise in supporting women experiencing domestic violence, isolation, financial distress, parenting distress and other forms of emotional distress or trauma. Our services are for all women with and without children.

Enforcement Action History: There have been no enforcements for this charity.

Appendix 2] 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 & Equipment Upgrades:

The Women's Cottage is in the process of expanding our premises to increase capacity for service provision. You could help us through individual, group or business fundraising and donations for things like:

Child's Play Area Equipment

Fit Out Costs

IT / Office furniture

Group Work and Program Resources



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 3] Association Membership Application Form



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

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 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 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

Notes and Networking

"EACH TIME
A WOMAN
STANDS UP
FOR HERSELF,
SHE STANDS
UP FOR ALL
WOMEN."

- Maya Angelou