

AGM ANNUAL REPORT

Prepared For: WCSSI Members



www.wcssi.org.au

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO COUNTRY

We acknowledge and pay respects to all First Nations People across Australia, who are the custodians of the land and of the oldest continuous living culture on Earth. We honour First Nations Peoples' ongoing connection to sea, waterways, and Country. We pay respects to Elders past, present, and emerging and we acknowledge the leadership role First Nation People have played in addressing Domestic and Family Violence from our communities.

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MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT PRESIDENT MESSAGE

It is with great pleasure that I am able to share WCSSI's past year with you. We have implemented the final stage of our comprehensive Strategic Plan which provides a clear roadmap to delivering safety, support and respect to victim-survivors of Domestic and Family Violence.

The Management Committee's focus continues to centre on delivering strong governance and providing strategic guidance to ensure the responsiveness and sustainability of the organisation. Looking back on the past year we are reminded of the crucial role that shelters and non-profits play in our communities, and how our work helps victims navigate challenges and barriers to safety. We continue to remain true to our mission; providing a safe place for women experiencing Domestic and Family Violence, and whom had to leave their homes to protect themselves and their children.

The executive committee is fully committed to guiding the development and operations of WCSSI. We aim to achieve our mission while ensuring service delivery and organisational practices align with the Human Services Quality Framework.

I extend my personal thanks to the members of the Committee, Jan, Kim, Di, Sophie, and Hilda. Quality governance is only possible with the knowledge, skills, and life experience of each individual member, thank you for so generously sharing yours with WCSSI. I would like to thank our retiring board members Janette Snewin and Kim Schiemer for their many years of contributions. Kim has served on the committee as an executive member for nine years and Jan has been with us for as long as anyone remembers, primarily as Chairperson. Thank you for your commitment to WCSSI, we will miss you.

Welcome to our incoming Committee members, Cathy Schilpzand and Kelli Cullen. Every new member brings with them new insights and knowledge which adds to our abilities. Lastly to our association members, thank you for your support of WCSSI in whatever way our paths cross. Knowing that others share our desire to support women and children who are vulnerable gives each of us a little more strength to continue with our vital work.

In closing, I thank Cathy and the dedicated and passionate team for their hard work, professionalism, humility, and respect. You are all exceptional workers and your commitment to supporting women and children experiencing Domestic and Family Violence is exceptional. It takes great skill to work with people who are in crisis, to build rapport with women from a wide and diverse backgrounds and support those women to safety, while removing complexities of the impacts of Domestic and Family Violence. WCSSI is an excellent service because of you all.

Tracey Amos WCSSI President



Women and children who are experiencing Domestic Violence and homelessness are at the heart of all we do.

WCSSI ORGANISATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS



We have forged bonds with new supporters who embrace our vision for a violence-free community WCSSI secured funding contracts for all our programs to continue into the future

Community Gambling Benefit Fund

WCSSI was successfully awarded a Gambling Grant in the 2023 Super Round. We are able to upgrade our very old bus. This is the last vehicle that required updating in the WCSSI fleet. We are so pleased with this milestone.

MANAGER REPORT

I proudly report the progress we have made over the past twelve months.

Our Priorities This Past Year

1. Ensure we deliver high-quality services for women and children experiencing Domestic and Family Violence.

2. Ensure our workplace culture is happy and healthy.

3. Continue to strengthen our governance and leadership.

4. Continue to develop meaningful partnerships and relationships with external stakeholders and community supporters.

5. Explore innovative ideas to support all women in the wider community.

6. In conjunction with the Combined Women's Refuge Group, we have contributed to the consultation process that has driven legislation changes related to Domestic and Family Violence laws. These changes have increased protection for survivors, increased legal accountability for the person using violence, allocation of additional resources and raising community awareness and education. Ten days paid Domestic and Family Violence was also introduced for all employees. This includes full-time, part-time, and casual employees.

Demand for Services is Extremely High

The housing affordability crisis has reached a point where home ownership and private rental is beyond the reach of many. Women attempting to leave Domestic and Family Violence must often choose between remaining in an abuse situation or taking themselves and their children into potential poverty.

Many women do not want to enter temporary shelter accommodation and they need confidential, practical, and emotional support in their own home or in a safe place in their community. Support is needed throughout the process of dealing with Domestic and Family Violence; from making themselves and their children safe, to navigating the legal system, to rebuilding their lives. Our Mobile Support Team provide tailored services, drawing on expertise on safety and housing, police and legal referrals, finances and debt, access to employment or training, and culturally specific language services. We continue to support women whenever and wherever they need it: in their own homes, community sites, or parks and local libraries.

Our Staff and Volunteers are Incredible

Staff changes in 2022/23 saw us welcome Emma to the Temporary Supported Accommodation Program. We farewell Stefanie from the Mobile Support team and Makaita moved from TSAP to the Mobile Support program. This year Carla completed a student placement and contributed to the development of the Connecting Women Program at The Pink Door.

Our greatest assets are our people, their dedication, energy, and creativity. I wish to thank the staff for their tireless work during the year and their enduring commitment to preventing and responding to violence against women. We are a values-driven organisation with outstanding skills which achieves results in the support of the women who rely on us.

MANAGER REPORT

Our Supporters are Unbelievably Generous

A highlight for the shelter program was Stage One of the playground upgrade, completed in partnership with Rotary Club Kenmore and Rotary Club Karana/Bellbowrie. Stage one included the installation of a sandpit and replacement of soft fall in one section of the communal playground. Additionally, I was honoured to be nominated and named as a Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Club.

WCSSI fosters a range of close partnerships and relationships to provide holistic and quality support services to women and children accessing support. Community Clubs, local community members, donators and other external stakeholders have been invaluable in assisting us in 2022-23. A list of our partners and supporters is provided in this report and I ask you take the time to read through this and share in our gratitude of their support. It is with their support that we can create opportunities for women and children to lead independent and fulfilling lives.

I thank the Management Committee for their contribution to WCSSI. Their expertise and commitment to strong governance have been invaluable and greatly appreciated. I particularly acknowledge Janette Snewin and Kim Scheimer, who will conclude their term as President and Treasurer at the 2023 Annual General Meeting and thank them for the guidance and support during my term as Manager.

As we look towards the year ahead, we are committed to meeting challenges head-on while providing our innovative specialist services to support women and children to live lives free from fear and violence. Moving forward we are well placed to navigate a path through whatever future challenges we encounter.

Congratulations to the entire team. Our achievements have been remarkable.



"

I must acknowledge the strength and resilience of the women and children we support. Survivors of Domestic Violence are not defined by their past, but by their strength, resilience, and courage in breaking free from the chains of abuse.

Cathy Johns WCSSI Service Manager



wcssi **ROTARY**

We have celebrated the first twelve months of our partnership with Rotary Kenmore and Rotary Karana/Bellbowrie. A huge thank you to all club members for their commitment in supporting our organisation, clients, and staff. We have already achieved so many great things together, and we are only just getting started.



Rotary Kenmore Rotary Karana/Bellbowrie

Assembling cubby house (total cost \$2296 -District Grant \$1148 – Kenmore and Karana Bellbowrie each \$574) December 2022.

Gary and Tony from Karana/Bellbowrie sealed and reinforced the cubby for to protect it from the elements - June 2023.

Rotary Club Kenmore has donated quality clothing on seven occasions this year and Rotary Club Karana Bellbowrie had donated exceptional furniture to the shelter. Other vital support they have provided includes covering medicals for a client and connecting us with a solicitor who has graciously volunteered his time and expertise. To date, Rotary Club has invested \$10,636 in this partnership.

Deep Cleaning at the Shelter

The unrelenting rain in 2022 and the subsequent conditions created an environment for mould to thrive on every external surface at the shelter, and we could not keep on top of it. Rotary came to the rescue and covered the entire cost for the complex to be deep cleaned and treated to prevent the recurrence. This would not have been possible without the Rotary's generosity.

Paul Harris Fellow

The Paul Harris Fellow recognition is a great honour to receive and acknowledges individuals who make notable contributions to their community. Cathy, our service manger, was nominated for and received this prestigious award for her tireless commitment to ending Domestic and Family Violence. Cathy has presented to the Rotary on four occasions over the past year.



ROTARY - WCSSI - CRUICE CREATIONS

Stage One of the new Children's Outdoor Area is complete with the installation of a new cubby house and sandpit. The sandpit design is amazing and well received by our young residents.



SIMTARS

The wonderful team at SIMTARS have supported WCSSI for many years and continue to provide hampers and gift packs to our women at significant times of the year. Their gifts are always thoughtful, beautifully presented, and bring a little bit of joy to our clients in an otherwise difficult time.



TSAP TEMPORARY SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION PROGRAM

The Temporary Supported Accommodation Program provides emergency accommodation to women and children escaping Domestic and Family Violence.

The Temporary Supported Accommodation has provided support to 39 Women and 68 children in the past 12 months. Domestic Violence can have profound and lasting impacts on survivors, affecting them physically, emotionally, psychologically, and socially. The consequences of domestic violence can vary in severity and duration, and they often leave survivors struggling with both immediate and long-term challenges.

Women's shelters are essential because they provide a lifeline for survivors of domestic violence, offering safety, support, resources, and a pathway to rebuilding their lives free from abuse. They also contribute to broader societal efforts to address and prevent Domestic Violence through advocacy and awareness-raising. The impact of domestic violence goes beyond the individual level. It perpetuates harmful gender norms and contributes to a culture of violence.

Program Updates

INTEGRATED SERVICE COUNSELLOR

We have been fortunate to integrate a social work counsellor into our program. This milestone not only fulfils a long-standing goal but also enhances the quality of care and assistance we can provide.

Our counsellor comes to the service every Monday and clients who wish to engage are provided with 6 sessions at no charge. The presence of a regular counsellor has played a crucial role in empowering women to address and heal from the trauma associated with escaping violence. The consistent and professional support offers safe space to work through their trauma and begin the healing journey and regain control over their lives.

The overwhelmingly positive feedback from clients highlights the significant impact the service counsellor is having. This feedback serves as a testament to the value and effectiveness as it continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of women effected by Domestic and Family Violence.



FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Economic dependence can be a significant barrier for anyone, especially culturally and linguistically diverse women leaving a relationship. Economic Empowerment is crucial to have the freedom and resources to escape an abusive situation and rebuild their lives.

The Federal Government expanded a pilot program to ease financial insecurity for temporary visa holders by increasing financial assistance from \$3,000 to \$5,000. This brings payments in line with those given to women with permanent residence. It is an important step in aiding recovery, particularly when 1 in 3 migrant women experience Domestic and Family Violence.

The Federal Government's Escaping Violence Payment has been extended for a further three years and this increased financial support is an essential step toward addressing immediate needs and ensuring safety and wellbeing. Due to the increased cost of living, these payments have been instrumental in empowering women to rebuild their lives after escaping a domestic violence relationship.

79% of women who assessed the TSAP program this year have benefited from these funds, which assists with tenancy debt, white goods, furniture, removalist and storage costs and car maintenance. Our continued connection and support from RizeUp have seen women and children exiting refuge to fully furnished homes.

HOUSING CRISIS

The housing crisis continues to exacerbate the impact on domestic violence victims. Housing shortages and rising rental costs can make it difficult for victims to find safe and affordable housing options. This has significant impact on shelter vacancy and capacity. Single women leaving shelter are most impacted around affordability.

The TSAP team have worked collaboratively with a number of services to overcome barriers as a result of the housing crisis. This year, the average length of stay for women was 11.2 weeks and 82% of clients exited into sustainable long-term housing, including private rental, social and the affordable housing initiative.

Kelli + Emma

TSAP Case Managers





Bed Nights 7714



G Client Feedback

Everything I experienced exceeded my expectations. The support was incredible, the apartment was homely and comfortable. The staff was warm, friendly and helpful too. The service was altogether excellent.

TREASURER'S

It is my pleasure to present the Treasurer's Report for Women's Crisis Support Service on behalf of the Management Committee. WCSSI has had an exceptional year and we look forward to the continued success.

Kim Schiemer - Treasurer

Report Card

The Financial Audited Report has been prepared by Mr Neil Harding of Carbon Ipswich. We are pleased to announce that WCSSI has complied with all their financial and performance reporting obligations with respect to all funding received and all services were delivered according to contractual obligations.

WCSSI will be able to meet its financial obligations in coming financial year and the full Audited Financial Report is available at the Annual General Meeting. This report is also submitted to the relevant funding bodies and the Australian Charities and Non-profits Commission.



Grant funding increase of 5.5% to \$914,937 was applied inline with the CPI



Cash resources at 30 June 23 \$363,704 including WCSSI staff entitlements account



Rental income decrease of \$11,557 due to supporting more no/low income women.



Client support funding was boosted due to one-off federal and state covid funding.



Interest earned on bank accounts in 22/23 amounted to \$3,481 compared with \$74 in the 21/22 year. This is due to an increase in rates.



WCSSI FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Statement of Financial Position 30 June 2023

Income	\$1,015,745	
DJAG Funding (Including Enhancement)		\$914,937
Rent and Outgoings		\$73,284
Other (Including Intere	est)	\$3,888
Donations		\$23,636

Expenses	\$989,924	
Wages and Superannuatior	ı	\$675,404
Insurance & Audit Fees		\$34,133
Operational Expenses (Incl	uding Maintenance)	\$170,437
Client Support Services		\$109,950

Assets	\$619,184	
Property, Plant and Equipment		\$255,050
Cash and Cash Equivalents		\$363,704
Other Current Assets		\$430

Liabilities	\$159,902	
Trade and Other Payables		\$47,890
Provisions		\$112,012

wcssi DONATORS

\$23,636

Financial Donations WCSSI sincerely thanks all our donators and contributors, and we are grateful every year you continue to support us. Your contribution assists us to provide the best possible services to women and children escaping homelessness and Domestic and Family Violence.

Government

DJAG Office for Women and Violence Prevention Department of Housing Ipswich City Council Services Australia - Centrelink

Corporate Partners

- •Masonic Queensland Lodge #2
- •Hand Heart Pocket
- •Sheridan Sleep Safe Program
- •Australian Communities Foundation
- •The Shepherd Family Foundation
- •Order of the Eastern Star
- •Oz Harvest
- •Challenge DV
- •Rotary Club Kenmore
- •Rotary Club Karana/Bellbowrie
- •SIMTARS
- •Zephyr Education
- •Rize Up
- •Friends with Dignity
- •Em. Hair
- •Walker Pender Group
- •RSL Ipswich Sub-Branch
- Pro Drive Driving School
- •Country Quilt Co & Sew n' Sews
- •St David's Church
- •City hope Church
- •Brigidine College Indooroopilly

Outstanding Citizens

The constant support from our community is immeasurable. The countless hours of their time they donate to our service and expect nothing in return is something we can never give enough thanks for. We appreciate you.

Mark and Donna Bramwell
Anne Martin –Gretta Joy Gift
June Rice
Donna Cavanagh
Owen 'Oggy' Smith
Dr Alison Scandrett
Rita & the Springs community
Pauline Freed
Wattie and Christine Young
Martin Grabert
David and Mary Kearney
Rhiannon Hetherington

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WCSSI CHRISTMAS

Christmas at the shelter was changed forever when we met the incredible woman that is Donna Cavanagh. Donna and Owen from Helping Support Minds co-ordinate with our team to ensure every single woman and child engaged with WCSSI has a special Christmas. Together, with the Ipswich Community, they build and deliver hampers to our families and make everyone's day just a little bit brighter. We are eternally grateful to their large group of volunteers and donators that make this possible.











WCSSI OFFICE MAKEOVER

As WCSSI expands, we have also had to expand our office space to accommodate our team. The TSAP Case Managers have moved into a new office area and the current office space is under renovation.





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WASP

WOMEN'S ADVOCATE & SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Women's Advocate & Support Program offers case-managed Domestic and Family Violence assistance to help keep women safe in the community.

The mobile support program had an amazing twelve months, and the passionate team are determined to achieve more in the year ahead. The WASP Case Managers have continued to provide care and guidance through case management as it is critical to a woman's long-term recovery and resilience.

The mobile support team underwent a restructure with the new funding streams. With this, Lisa moved to the AHI program and Makaita joined the mobile support program from TSAP. The program is now staffed by Christine, Theresa and Makaita.

Our experienced team understand when women are getting back on their feet, what might seem like simple everyday tasks to others can be overwhelming for our clients. Tasks such as navigating services, booking and attending appointments, connecting to the local community can seem impossible alone and we empower women to achieve their goals as they grow their confidence to plan for their future.

During the 2022/23 period we identified women's and family needs were diverse and the ultimate aim is to work with women to help them become independent and develop relationships within their local communities with points of access to local services. For some women, this was regular phone-based checks to ensure they are on-track and to identify any potential crisis events early. Others required home visits, help understanding tenancy agreements or court support and advocacy.

This year, we experienced an influx of referrals and as always, we adapted and worked effectively with the women to ensure they are safe within the community. A majority of the women supported by WASP were in the peak working and parenting years aged between 18 and 44 years of age. WCSSI saw an increase in one-off support requests which can be challenging with the complex and varied needs of women experiencing homelessness and Domestic Violence.

Over the next twelve months, our goal is to further develop our existing program and forge new partnerships and collaborations with other services.

We wish to celebrate the brave women that we work with every day. We thank them for the trust they put in us as we walk along side them on their journey.

Christine, Theresa & Maka

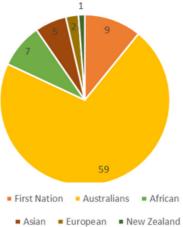
WASP Case Managers

WASP

WOMEN'S ADVOCATE & SUPPORT PROGRAM

The data we collect throughout the year is valuable to support us in selecting our professional development opportunities within the team, and for us to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of our client needs.





Client Feedback

You all are amazing. Thank you for everything you helped me and done for me and my children.

Thank you for your support Kelli... Keep up the great work, it makes everything else so much easier to handle.

I appreciate your work, I like how passionate you are towards helping me with my situation and I feel satisfied with support. On behalf of my kids and I thank women WCSSI for the support we have been given.

Lisa was professional in every aspect, made me feel safe and that any concerns were heard and addressed. Gave me inspiration to look for a safer and better future. Great support to myself, granddaughter and family

Macca was so personable and made a tough situation more enjoyable than I thought was possible, she validated me and helped me talk through my decisions and I am so grateful for all her assistance and support

Theresa is amazing and thankyou for everything you have done I'm not sure what I would of done without your support

Christine was just delightful and helpful. She listened and gave me advice and support you were amazing and thank you for helping me with my Alarm it's much appreciated

THE PINK DOOR CONNECTING WOMEN

The Pink Door is the evolution of a program previously funded by the Ipswich City Council Domestic Violence Prevention Grant. N.E.W Zone gave our most vulnerable women an opportunity to connect with other women in the community at no cost to them. This was so successful WCSSI has self-funded the initiative for the next year.



The Connecting Women project is in its infancy and will be fully operational in the coming year. WCSSI will continue to facilitate The Shark Cage (Human Rights Education Program) and this will be held at The Pink Door. We have lots of other exciting ladies groups and projects planned to connect women in the community to reduce loneliness and isolation.



WCSSI CONNECTING WOMEN

The month of May marks Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month in Queensland, an annual initiative to raise community awareness of Domestic and Family Violence and coercive control. WCSSI participates in community events during the month.

Picnic in the Park

WCSSI held an afternoon picnic in the park, making signs to join the sunset march in Ipswich.



#It's in our control to end coercive control

International Women's Day

This year WCSSI hosted a lunch for International Women's Day. Staff, clients, and friends celebrated 'girl power' with a mini pamper, some fun games, and an amazing gospel song written and performed by the wonderful Koda-Jo.







FISH! People want to love their work

WCSSI participated The FISH! Philosophy experience to gain new skills to build a stronger, more engaged team. The four practices behind FISH! have helped us design a workplace full of inspiration, creativity and innovation.

BE THERE™

It's the glue that brings teams together.

Life is full of distractions. They pull our focus away from the person who needs us now. Be There is a choice to put them first. The payoff? You'll learn more and build successful relationships with your coworkers and customers.



Barbie Pay







It increases enthusiasm and reduces stress.

It's easier to achieve serious goals if you have fun doing it. Sharing moments of enjoyment with coworkers builds camaraderie and trust. A playful approach encourages customer service that is genuine and friendly. A playful approach drives creativity, as in "Let's play with that idea!"



Every interaction is a chance to make a positive impact.

Everyone wants to be appreciated and acknowledged. Simple gestures make a bigger impact when they come from your heart. When you brighten someone's day, you receive a gift that gives meaning and purpose to your life.









The FISH! Philosophy offers a unique approach to improving company culture by focusing on four key principles: be present, make their day, choose your attitude, and play. By embodying these principles, WCSSI can cultivate a more engaged and motivated workforce, leading to improved productivity, client satisfaction, and a more positive overall work environment.

Culture is everyone's responsibility!

It starts with intention and awareness.

CHO^ose Your Attitude"

You choose your attitude the moment you wake up. Is it a conscious choice or are you on autopilot? Ask yourself, "Who do I want to be today? What impact do I want to have?" When you are aware of your choice, you control your attitude it doesn't control you.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING INITIATIVE

The Affordable Housing Initiative was developed as a result of the postcovid housing crisis and WCSSI partners with other funded organisations to deliver this program.

WCSSI partnered with Community Housing Limited and other existing housing services to deliver a longer-term housing pathway for women and children exiting Shelter Crisis Accommodation. The Queensland Government Department of Housing provides the funding for Community Housing (Qld) Ltd to headlease eleven properties in the Ipswich region. WCSSI has been awarded funding through Department of Justice and Attorney General to deliver targeted mobile support to women and their children accommodated in these headlease tenancies.

Initially, due to the impact of the housing crisis and increases in rental prices only seven of the eleven funded cap headleases were obtained. This enabled the program to redirect resources to the support the WASP team, increasing the number of clients being provided case managed support.

Women accessing the program worked in conjunction with Case Managers to build their capacity to enter the private rental market and workforce. The participants are also increasing their skills through English classes, TAFE Courses and skill building workshops.

Positive Outcomes of the Program

- 2 Social Housing allocations
- 3 properties converted to Community Rent Scheme properties.
- 3 clients undertook study and went on to enter the workforce.
- 1 client housed through RentConnect Cap Headlease property.

WCSSI has been successfully awarded a two-year extension of the service agreement to deliver targeted mobile support to the Affordable Housing Initiative. This was unexpected and has been a welcomed opportunity to create an implementation Plan to develop the program in conjunction with Rent Connect, Community Housing Limited and WCSSI.

lisa AHI Case Manager



WCSSI FUTURE OUTLOOKS

The WCSSI 5-Year Strategic Plan is nearing the end of its life and as we begin to develop the next phase of our organisational strategies, we consider our priority is to respond to the immediate and long-term impacts of violence and homelessness will continue to have on our clients and our community. We shall continue to prioritise the health and wellbeing of staff by ensuring our workplace culture is safe, happy, and healthy.



Human Services Quality Framework

In January 2024 WCSSI will commence the HSQF Maintenance Audit through ICHA Certification Services.



Client Response Times

Introduce measures to ensure clients are responded to in a timely manner when services are in high demand.



Networking & Peer Support

Strengthen collaborative opportunities with like-minded organisations to support better client outcomes.



Community Presence

Increase promotion of WCSSI programs externally, raising our profile and positioning the organisation as the leading local provider of housing, Domestic and Family Violence and Women's Support Services.



Our Supporters

Strengthen relationships and connections with external stakeholders and community supporters.



Connecting Women

Promote the Connecting Women Program (delivered at The Pink Door) to the wider community, fostering the physical and mental health and wellbeing of women. The Pink Door provides access to social connections and opportunities for friendship.



Our Therapy Support Manager

Valentine is a much loved member of our team and is turning 12 on her next birthday.

She is a rescue cat from the Animal Welfare League.

CONTACT US

Women's Crisis Support Service Inc. operates under a feminist framework providing holistic services to women and their children in the Ipswich community. We offer case-managed support to women who are experiencing Domestic and Family Violence.



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