

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025



GROUNDWORK: SECURING THE FOUNDATIONS AND NURTURING
THE SEEDS THAT MAKE CHANGE POSSIBLE



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Women’s and Girls’ Emergency Centre (WAGEC) acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country and recognise their continuing connection to land, waterways, language, and culture.

WAGEC works on the unceded lands of the Gadigal, Wangal and Dharawal people of the Eora Nation, and we pay our deepest respects to Elders past and present.

WAGEC also recognise the inter-generational trauma and structural racism that colonisation has, and continues to, inflict on First Nations people. That includes our position in a system whose history is one of perpetuating and exacerbating genocide, removal, oppression, and racism.

We pay tribute to the many generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who have led, and continue to lead, the way in creating safer futures for women and children, as well as culturally safe spaces for community. We do our best to honour their strength and resilience as allies in the fight for safety, equality and justice.

ALWAYS WAS, ALWAYS WILL BE, ABORIGINAL LAND.



Women’s and Girls’ Emergency Centre (WAGEC) is a public benevolent institution and an incorporated entity, registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). It is endorsed as a deductible gift recipient (DGR) and to access the following tax concessions: GST concession, FBT exemption, and income tax exemption.

The activities of the organisation are regulated by relevant State and Commonwealth laws and the WAGEC Constitution, which is governed by an elected voluntary Board of Management.

ABN 92622900342

WELCOME



This year, WAGEC's story is one of **groundwork**—strengthening the systems, programs and partnerships that make lasting change possible.

But this isn't a story about starting from scratch. The ground we stand on has long been cared for, by generations of women, families, and staff who came before us.

THEIR COURAGE AND COMMITMENT HAVE MADE THE SOIL RICH WITH EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE AND AMBITION; GROUND THAT CONTINUES TO SUSTAIN AND SUPPORT US TO THIS DAY.

Last year, we rallied through crisis—a long-overdue recognition of both the urgency and necessity of our work. Yet even in crisis, **moments of clarity and creation** emerged. From that place, new seeds were planted and new ways of working were sown.

Groundbreaking programs like **From Now** started to surface, and trauma-informed approaches began to anchor more deeply, all as a result of listening directly to women, understanding what was needed, and responding with intention.

DAILY ACTS OF CARE AND CONNECTION ARE WHAT WE'VE COME TO BE KNOWN FOR AT WAGEC — A TEAM STEADFASTLY CULTIVATING SYSTEMS GROUNDED IN DIGNITY AND RESPECT, WHILE CLEARING A PATH FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO FOLLOW.

Since the organisation was founded back in 1977, we have known that the kind of **change worth creating** does not happen overnight. It can be slow and, at times, agonising, built through the patient, persistent and often unheralded labour of many.

In this sense, **groundwork is both noun and verb**: the strong foundation we stand upon, and the deliberate, ongoing actions we take as a community.

Amidst so much uncertainty, we remain committed to this **steady, necessary work** of sowing the seeds that allow systemic change to take root, even when the outcomes are not yet visible.

Until then, you will find us in the grassroots and the treetops, extending branches and building safer futures for all. We can't wait to shape **what grows next**, together.

WE'RE CREATING
SAFE FUTURES
FOR WOMEN
AND FAMILIES
BY
**ENDING
GENDER-BASED
VIOLENCE IN
A GENERATION**

MEET THE BOARD



ELIZABETH WILKINS CHAIR

Elizabeth is an experienced company director with more than 25 years working across not-for-profit organisations, publicly listed companies, and private enterprises. Her background includes senior executive roles and consultancy work spanning aged care, disability, family, and community services. She now runs her own business providing executive coaching, leadership development, change management, and strategic advice. Elizabeth brings deep expertise in governance and purpose-driven leadership. She holds a Master of Commerce (E-Commerce), an MBA and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD).



HELEN DEAS VICE CHAIR

Helen brings a wealth of experience across many areas of law enforcement, with a strong focus on supporting marginalised communities. She has worked extensively in the areas of sexual assault, child abuse, and domestic and family violence, driven by a deep commitment to safer outcomes for those most at risk. Helen holds an Executive Master of Public Administration, a Master of Management and Leadership (Policing), a Bachelor of Social Science, and is a graduate of the AICD. A WAGEC Director since 2016, she is also a founding member of WAGEC's Child Safe Committee. She is also a masters athlete and surf lifesaver.



MADINA AZIZ TREASURER

Madina is an audit partner at Grant Thornton Australia with more than 18 years' experience providing audit and assurance services to multinationals, listed companies and medium-sized enterprises. She holds a Bachelor of Economics from the University of Sydney and is a chartered accountant and registered company auditor. Madina is passionate about mentoring women leaders and championing cultural diversity and inclusion. Bringing her financial governance expertise to WAGEC as Treasurer, outside of work, Madina is a mother of two boys and enjoys staying active and travelling.



ANGELA PRIESTLY ORDINARY BOARD MEMBER

Angela is the founding editor of Women's Agenda and co-founder of Agenda Media, a women-owned newsroom publishing daily stories across business, politics, and tech. Her career spans multiple leading digital publications and developing creative partnerships with major Australian brands. A dedicated advocate for independent media, climate justice, women's health and safety, and diverse leadership, Angela also advises ActionAid Australia's Arise Fund, supporting women's leadership in climate emergencies. Angela brings deep expertise in storytelling, advocacy, and systems-change communications to the WAGEC Board.



MICHELLE BARCLAY ORDINARY BOARD MEMBER

Michelle is the Head of Sector Development and Engagement at the ACT Council of Social Services, previously having worked as a senior lawyer at the National Indigenous Australians Agency, specialising in commercial law. She also has a decade of marketing and communications experience across the not-for-profit, government and private sectors. Michelle was awarded the 2020 Westfield Local Hero Award for her work with Street Law, providing free legal advice to women in prison and people experiencing homelessness. She is passionate about social justice and community advocacy. In her spare time, she enjoys gardening, walking her dog and going on bush walks.



CHARLOTTE GLANVILLE ORDINARY BOARD MEMBER

Charlotte is the Chief Financial Officer at Voodoo Pty Ltd, a high-growth data technology company. With more than 20 years' experience across chartered accounting and executive finance, she brings deep expertise in data-driven decision-making, financial strategy, and cross-cultural collaboration. Charlotte previously served as General Manager of Finance at Quantum and spent over two decades with Grant Thornton in Australia and the UK. A mother of three teenagers, she is passionate about supporting organisations that advance women's safety, wellbeing, and economic independence.



JO DEVERY ORDINARY BOARD MEMBER

Jo is a company director with more than 30 years' leadership experience across publicly listed and private companies in Australia and Asia. Her background spans fashion, luxury goods, e-commerce, and retail before founding her own consultancy supporting women-led and founder-led businesses. Jo specialises in strategic advisory, executive coaching, leadership development and change management. She holds a Bachelor of Design, a Master of Business and is a graduate of the AICD. A mother of three, Jo is committed to addressing the systemic drivers of homelessness and its impact on women and families.



CATHY YUNCKEN ORDINARY BOARD MEMBER

Cathy is an Independent Non-Executive Director of MA Financial Group (ASX:MAF) and FleetPartners Group (ASX:FPR), where she chairs and sits on key board committees. She brings more than 15 years of governance experience across financial services, health and medical research, superannuation, social services, and the arts. Cathy also has over three decades of commercial leadership experience, including senior roles at Bank of America, Barclays Capital, GE Capital, Commonwealth Bank, and Westpac Group. She has led large-scale banking and private wealth businesses and brings deep strategy, governance, and risk expertise to WAGEC.



CLAIRE NICHOLSON ORDINARY BOARD MEMBER

Claire is a fundraising operations and data governance specialist with more than 15 years' experience in the not-for-profit sector across Australia and the UK. She is the National Manager of Fundraising Operations & Insights at The Smith Family and has worked with high-performing teams at The Salvation Army and Cancer Research UK. Claire brings strong expertise in major gift operations, fundraising systems, data integrity, and evidence-based decision-making. She looks forward to applying her sector knowledge and operational leadership to WAGEC's mission of creating safe futures for women and families.





A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

ELIZABETH WILKINS

AS I REFLECT ON 2024-25 AND PREPARE TO CONCLUDE MY NINE-YEAR TENURE ON THE WAGEC BOARD, THIS YEAR'S THEME OF GROUNDWORK FEELS PROFOUNDLY APT. THIS HAS BEEN A YEAR OF **GROWTH, CONSOLIDATION, AND FUTURE-BUILDING**, FOR AN ORGANISATION THAT HAS EXPANDED FAR BEYOND WHAT ANY OF US MIGHT HAVE IMAGINED WHEN I FIRST JOINED THE BOARD NINE YEARS AGO.

In 2016, WAGEC was a grassroots organisation serving Sydney and the Inner West. Today, we provide services right across NSW. Our client base is ten times larger, our staff is six times bigger, and our revenue has grown more than sevenfold. This **remarkable expansion** is not something we celebrate lightly.

EVERY STATISTIC REPRESENTS WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN CRISIS, AND THE UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTH IS THAT OUR GROWTH REFLECTS AN ESCALATING SOCIETAL FAILURE TO ADEQUATELY ADDRESS THIS COUNTRY'S DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE CRISIS.

While governments have pledged increased funding, the flow of resources remains frustratingly slow, the bureaucracy difficult to navigate, and the shortage of affordable housing critically inadequate.

Yet amid this reality, 2024-25 has been a year of preparing for the next chapter. Our search for a property in south-west Sydney marks a **pivotal investment** in our future. This facility will house priority client programs and create a permanent base for some of our most vital work, ensuring the services we provide today can continue to support women and children for decades to come.

Equally important has been our focus on financial stewardship. Under the **diligent leadership and expertise** of our Treasurer, Madina Aziz, we are ensuring every dollar works harder for those we serve. This year, the Board also focused on amplifying our advocacy work, because **silence is complicity**, and WAGEC must be part of the solution at every level. This work has been led primarily by our CEO and senior management who witness the devastating consequences of domestic violence and housing insecurity daily, alongside frontline staff.

Throughout my time on the Board, what has resonated most is WAGEC's **unwavering commitment** to women and children who are too often overlooked.



Our geographic expansion beyond Sydney reflects this commitment to reaching women and children **wherever they need us**. Through outreach services and primary prevention initiatives, WAGEC is working to stop violence before it starts, while maintaining a trauma-informed approach that defines our practice.

I AM IMMENSELY PROUD THAT THIS ORGANISATION HAS COURAGE TO DO THE HARD WORK, NEVER TURNING AWAY FROM COMPLEXITY, BUT MEETING IT HEAD ON.

Serving on the WAGEC Board is voluntary, but the **responsibility is immense**. Every member brings expertise, time and compassion to an organisation working at the sharp end of a national crisis.

I want to acknowledge Deputy Chair, Helen Deas, whose own tenure also concludes this year. Helen's insight and partnership have made my role as Chair infinitely more manageable and meaningful.

To our CEO, Nicole Yade, my heartfelt thanks. Nicole leads with both strength and heart. Her recognition as Burwood Council's Citizen of the Year is testament to her exceptional leadership and unwavering dedication to women's safety.

As I hand over the role of Chair to Libby Lloyd AO, I do so with optimism and pride. Libby brings outstanding expertise and deep commitment, and I am confident WAGEC will continue to grow in both **reach and impact** under her leadership.

WAGEC STANDS ON SOLID GROUND; A FOUNDATION THAT'S FINANCIALLY SOUND, STRATEGICALLY FOCUSED AND FUTURE-READY.

To everyone at this incredible organisation, thank you. You are all phenomenal human beings; deeply committed hands that build and hearts that hold.

While this work demands ongoing vigilance from us all, I am certain WAGEC will keep leading with **integrity, courage, and compassion**, creating safer futures for women and children across generations.



CEO REPORT

BY NICOLE YADE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

48 YEARS AGO, JEANNIE DEVINE, FOUNDER OF WAGEC, OPENED A ONE-ROOM SHOPFRONT IN CENTRAL SYDNEY TO SUPPORT WOMEN AND GIRLS EXPERIENCING SOME OF THE TOUGHEST MOMENTS OF THEIR LIVES.

Many were escaping violence, with no safe place to stay. Some were leaving prison with nowhere to turn. Jeannie understood that crisis does not happen in isolation, and she laid the groundwork for the grassroots, feminist organisation we are today.

Across 9 sites, that **same spirit** continues to guide us. Our commitment to service, to honouring women's lived experience, and to walking beside each woman and child who comes through our doors has not wavered.

As we have grown, so has our impact. Today we provide a **continuum of support** — from crisis accommodation to tailored programs and recovery services. Our firsthand understanding of the complexity of gender inequality and domestic and family violence shapes every decision we make.

WHILE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PERSISTS, WE REMAIN FOCUSED ON STRENGTHENING OUR RESPONSES, INNOVATING WHERE THE SYSTEM IS FAILING, AND ADVOCATING FOR THE STRUCTURAL CHANGE REQUIRED TO CREATE SAFE FUTURES.

This work is only possible through **genuine collaboration**. To our government partners, philanthropic supporters, individual donors, corporate partners, and foundations: thank you. Your belief in our work strengthens our ability to respond to women and children in crisis every single day. Your support helps us break the ground needed for change to take root, one family at a time.



I would like to sincerely acknowledge the **enormous contribution** of our outgoing Chair, Elizabeth Wilkins, and Deputy Chair, Helen Deas. Over the last nine years, Elizabeth and Helen have led WAGEC with remarkable insight, integrity and strategic stewardship. Elizabeth's commitment to deepening impact and Helen's dedication to child-safe practice leave a lasting legacy.

Together with our Board, they have ensured strong governance and a **clear, values-aligned path** forward. I look forward to working closely with Libby Lloyd, our incoming Chair, as we continue to build on this strong foundation.

Likewise, our entire staff team brings deep **commitment, expertise and diligence** to their work at WAGEC. Right across our organisation, from roles behind-the-scenes to our frontline crisis work, each team member works with tenacity and purpose.

I want to pay special mention to our Deputy CEO, Althea Mackenzie, and the Senior Leadership Team at WAGEC for their tireless commitment to excellence and evolution. It shines through everything they do. Every day, you hold our feminist **values in action** and create the conditions for women and children to rebuild on solid ground.

Most importantly, I want to thank the **women and children who trust WAGEC** to support them on their journey through crisis and healing. Your courage shapes every part of our work. It is an honour to walk beside you, to witness your strength, and to support the futures you are building.

YOUR BRAVE STEPS REMIND US THAT CHANGE IS POSSIBLE, AND THAT TOGETHER, WE CAN END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN A GENERATION.



DEPUTY CEO REPORT

BY ALTHEA MACKENZIE, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

THIS YEAR HAS BEEN ONE OF DEEP REFLECTION, BOLD DECISIONS, AND STEADY GROWTH. EMBRACING THE GROUNDWORK, NURTURING OUR FUTURE, AND RESPONDING TO CHALLENGES WITH RESILIENCE, CLARITY, AND PURPOSE.

We began the year by separating WAGEC's Client Services from our Client Programs, a strategic move designed to **clarify focus** and improve service delivery.

Client Services now leads our Specialist Homelessness Service (SHS), while Client Programs drive **innovative responses** to preventing and addressing violence and disadvantage. This separation has allowed each team to deepen its expertise and better meet the needs of our clients.

Our **commitment to cultural safety** was furthered through the Yamurrah consultation, a vital process to embed First Nations' leadership and perspectives across WAGEC. This work is

ongoing and forms a key part of the groundwork for a culturally safe and responsive organisation.

We also completed Kind Enterprises training, which is designed to support teams to engage and reflect on systemic racism with compassion and care. This training has already begun to **shift how we show up** for each other and for our clients. We also started a series of improvement projects across Client Services, from refining systems to enhancing team structures, all to improve client outcomes.

ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT DECISIONS WE FACED THIS YEAR WAS HAVING TO CLOSE OUR HEAD OFFICE FOLLOWING SIGNIFICANT FLOOD DAMAGE.

While the temporary loss of our physical home was deeply felt, the decision was made with **safety and sustainability** in mind. It also prompted us to reimagine how we work together and connect across sites.

On the governance front, we began the process of becoming a company limited by guarantee — an important milestone that strengthens our organisational resilience and positions us for **future growth**.



As the sector continues to shift, we have remained agile and steadfast; doing what women's services have always done. We began the SHS re-contracting process with a clear focus on strengthening our value proposition. Our aim is to **demonstrate our impact** and secure ongoing funding to continue this essential work.

In response to our client's growing needs, we contracted Abracadabra Childcare Services to provide **flexible, trauma-informed support** for families. This partnership has enabled more women to access our services while knowing their children are safe and cared for.

THIS YEAR, WE ALSO MOVED AWAY FROM A FUNDING-LED PROGRAM MODEL TO LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR A SUITE OF FLAGSHIP PROGRAMS THAT BRING OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES TO LIFE.

From Now is now refunded and embedded as business-as-usual. **All In** is successfully deepening its inclusive practice and community engagement. **Access** continues to strengthen pathways to safety and stability. And our new **Building Tech Safety** team is responding to emerging forms of violence in an increasingly digital world.

Each of these programs is designed to **create lasting change**; rooted in evidence and shaped by the lived experience of victim-survivors. As we move into the next phase of our strategic plan, our focus will remain on cultivating the groundwork we have laid, scaling what works, and continuing to listen deeply to our community.

The **resilience, creativity, and care** shown by our teams this year has been nothing short of extraordinary. Thank you to every staff member, partner, and supporter who has contributed to this year's achievements.

Together, we are building a future where safety, dignity, and justice are not just aspirations but realities.



TREASURER'S REPORT

BY MADINA AZIZ, BOARD DIRECTOR

THIS YEAR HAS BEEN ONE OF **CONSOLIDATION AND CAREFUL EXPANSION** AS WAGEC CONTINUES LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR LONG-TERM IMPACT. OUR SERVICES GREW, OUR PROGRAMS DEEPENED, AND OUR COMMUNITY OF PARTNERS, DONORS AND SUPPORTERS STOOD STRONGLY BESIDE US.

Against a **backdrop of rising demand** and increasing pressure on the social sector, WAGEC has remained steady, deliberate and responsible in the way we invest in our people, our programs and our future.

The financial year (FY25) closed with a deficit of \$48,598, compared to a surplus of \$526,494 in FY24. This result reflects **intentional and considered investment** as WAGEC expands its services and deepens its impact, rather than any weakening in financial performance. In fact, this year WAGEC surpassed **\$10 million in revenue**, achieving **13.7 per cent growth** from the previous year.

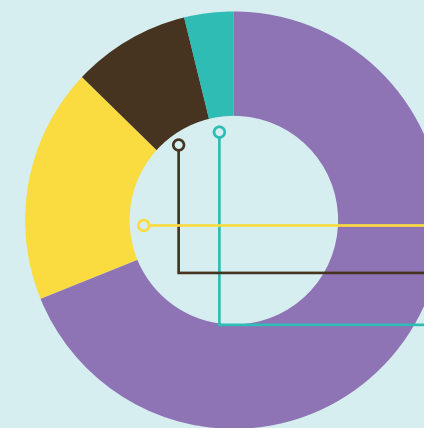
Our growth was driven largely by strong government funding, philanthropic grants, and a **record-breaking** Walk for WAGEC campaign, which raised over \$734,000.

THESE ACHIEVEMENTS REFLECT THE TRUST PLACED IN WAGEC BY OUR COMMUNITY AND THE STRONG ENGAGEMENT OF PARTNERS WHO BELIEVE IN OUR MISSION.

Our financial position remains **stable and secure**, with net assets of \$5.9 million and strong liquidity. Key developments included new property leases to expand service delivery and ongoing preparations to transition to a company limited by guarantee. The audited accounts confirm that WAGEC complies with all relevant standards, maintaining a solid financial foundation for continued growth.

This careful balance between strategic investment and preservation of reserves demonstrates our commitment to both **immediate service delivery** and **long-term financial sustainability**.

Looking ahead as we enter FY26, our focus remains on strengthening WAGEC's financial capacity so the organisation can continue to **adapt, innovate, and deliver life-changing support** to women and families across our communities.

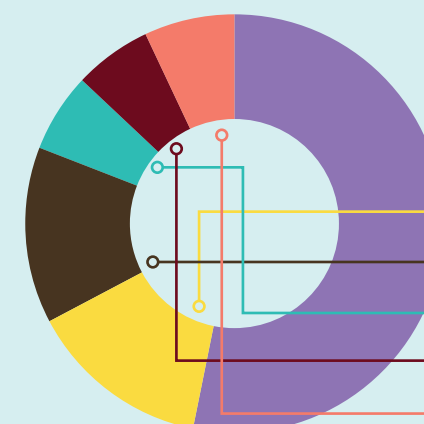
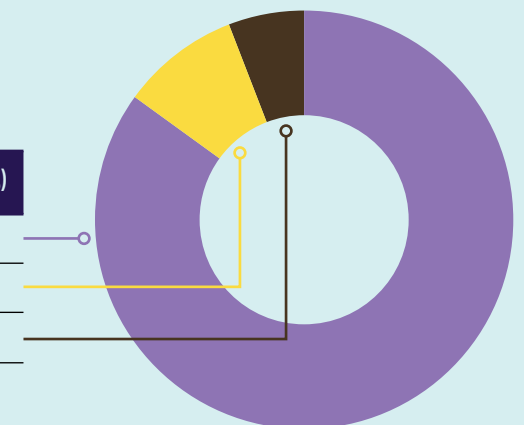


TOTAL REVENUE

SOURCE	TOTAL (\$)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Government	7,370,174	69
Community & Corporate Supporters	1,976,209	18
Philanthropy & Trusts	973,009	9
Other	385,578	4

HOW FUNDS WERE ALLOCATED

AREA	TOTAL (\$)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Programs & Services	9,133,870	85
Fundraising	991,295	9
Operations & Management	644,761	6



INVESTMENT BY PROGRAM OR SERVICE

PROGRAM OR SERVICE	TOTAL (\$)	PERCENTAGE (%)
Crisis Housing	4,832,373	53
Children & Young People	1,292,635	14
All In (Primary Prevention)	1,288,271	14
From Now (Women Exiting Prison)	591,033	6
Access (Mentoring)	522,878	6
Other	606,679	7

OUR IMPACT



2252* CLIENTS WERE SUPPORTED ACROSS ALL SERVICES

* **Note:** This total includes ~400 clients who accessed more than one service or program — a true reflection of the holistic and integrated nature of WAGEC's support model, where clients are encouraged to engage with a range of services tailored to their evolving needs.



82

different countries of birth represented across WAGEC's client group



42

different primary languages were spoken by clients



61,494

nights of safe accommodation provided



42%

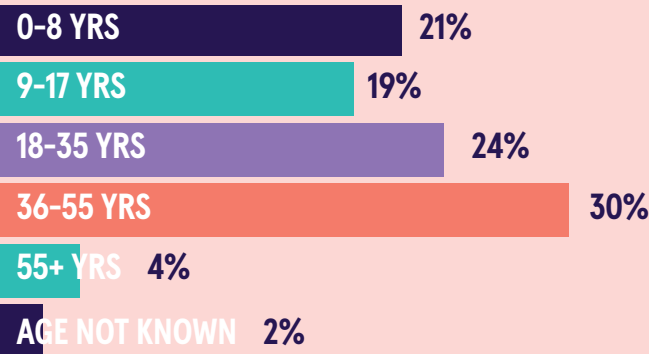
of clients are children or young people (aged 0-17)



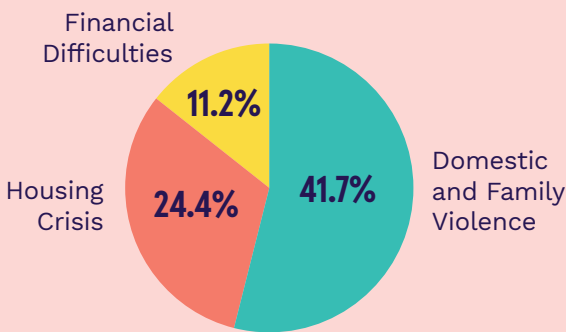
26%

of clients identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

CLIENT AGE BREAKDOWN



PRIMARY REASON FOR SEEKING SUPPORT



136 CHILDREN & 81 PARENTS/CAREGIVERS supported by **Helping Children Heal**



10 EVENTS + 300 ATTENDEES brought together by the **All In** program

59 WOMEN & GENDER-DIVERSE PEOPLE & 15 CHILDREN supported through the **From Now** program



253 WOMEN & CHILDREN supported to continue living safely in their homes through the **Staying Home Leaving Violence** program

The **Access** program supported **132 MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS**

78 MENTORS COMPLETED the **Access** Mentor Training

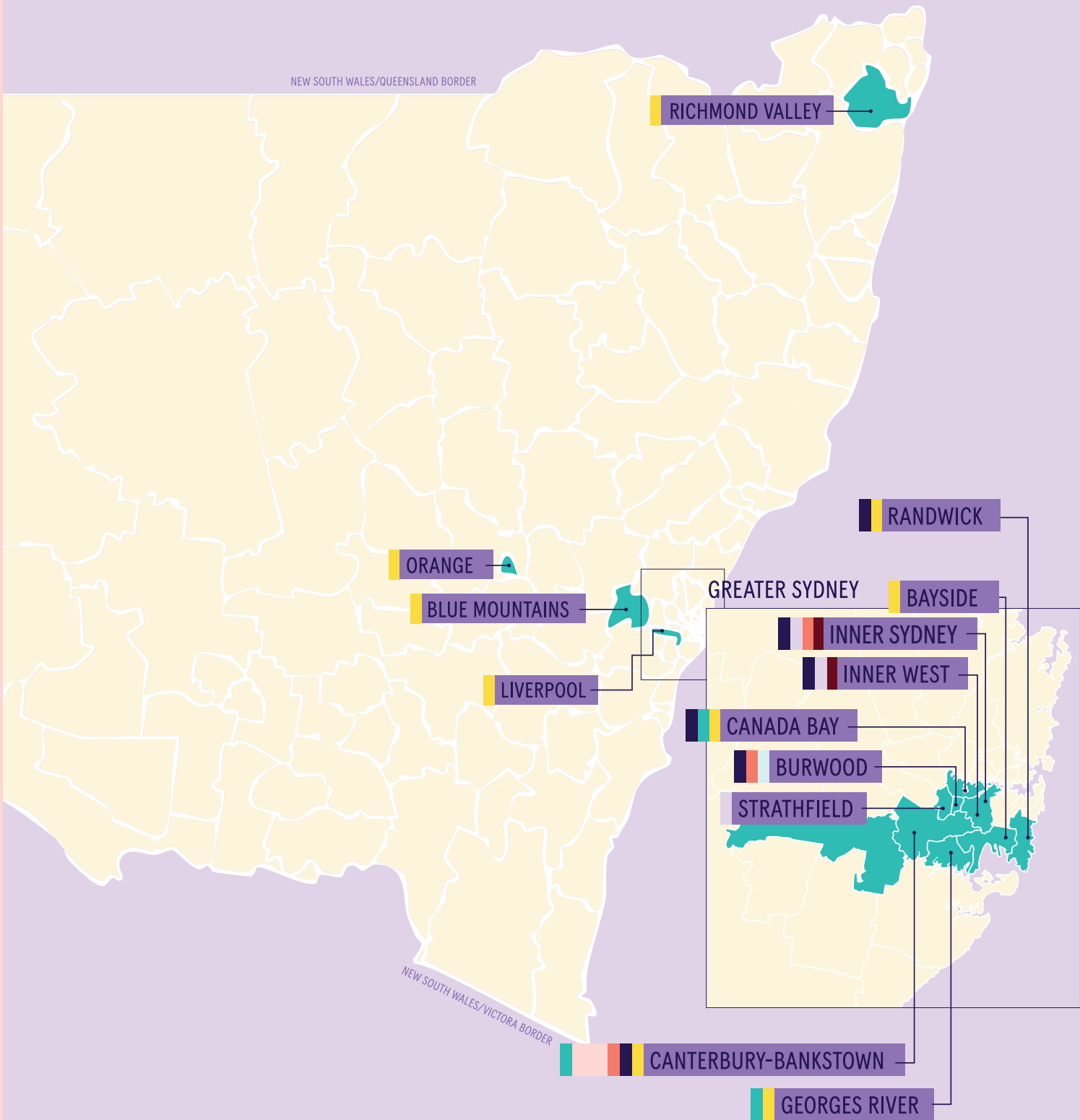


122 PEOPLE VOLUNTEERED TIME AND SKILLS



~40 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS and others trained, impacting up to **558 CHILDREN**

OUR SERVICES: WHERE WE WORK



KEY

SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

- ALL IN PROGRAM
- ACCESS PROGRAM
- FROM NOW
- HELPING CHILDREN HEAL

LOCATIONS

- CRISIS ACCOMMODATION
- TRANSITIONAL ACCOMMODATION
- CASE WORK
- LOCAL COUNCIL



MEETING WOMEN WHERE THEY ARE

BY KATIE WYNNE, DIRECTOR OF CLIENT SERVICES

AS THE HOUSING CRISIS CONTINUES, OUR WORK HAS NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT. MORE AND MORE FAMILIES ARE FINDING THEMSELVES IN HOUSING STRESS, UNSURE WHERE TO TURN FOR SUPPORT, ADVICE, AND ADVOCACY.

WAGEC's Client Services provides case management support to women and children impacted by violence and experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. Our dedicated team is with clients through every stage of their journey, ensuring each woman and child receives the right support, at the right time.

The ultimate goal of case management is to empower clients, enhance their quality of life, and promote self-sufficiency through coordinated and compassionate support.

Every day, our team lays the groundwork for long-term thriving by navigating complex systems, advocating across sectors, and holding space for hope, even in the most challenging circumstances.

This year we are proud to share a glimpse into the people and programs shaping that impact, from a reflection on what a day in the life of a case manager truly looks like, to a case study on how outreach support can transform safety and housing outcomes.

Together, these stories show what it means to meet women where they are, and the belief that every person deserves a safe place to call home.



STORY FEATURE

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A WAGEC CASE MANAGER

BY AILEEN CRAWLEY, MALACHITE TEAM

RISE AND SHINE

My day usually begins at the refuge, greeting colleagues and preparing for the week ahead. We start with a team meeting that always opens with positive reflections — a ritual I really look forward to. It sets a hopeful tone and reminds me that having a **supportive team** makes all the difference.

Each morning, we walk through the refuge together. We make sure the living spaces are welcoming, that personal care items are topped up, and note anything that needs attention. A well-kept space is about more than cleanliness; it also signals **safety, dignity, and care**.

HEART OF THE DAY

By the middle of the day, I am often in my first case management meeting. This really is the **heart of the work**. These sessions are where trust is built, and goals take shape. Sometimes we face tough barriers, like navigating housing shortages or complex immigration systems, but we work through them together.

After meeting with clients, I write up my notes and follow through on the actions we have agreed on. **Accountability is everything**. When I say I will do something, I want clients to know that I mean it. That reliability builds the kind of trust that can make all the difference during times of crisis.

FINDING HOPE

Before I finish for the day, I take a moment to reflect on what went well, what was hard, and what I can learn. Being a case manager means **meeting challenges head-on** and finding hope in the process. It is an honour to be trusted to support clients during one of the most vulnerable times in their lives.

Recent wins have included clients securing new jobs, taking steps toward independence, finding rental homes, and perhaps most importantly, expressing **hope for the future**.

Every day, there are moments — sometimes big, sometimes small — that remind me why I do this work. Those moments keep me believing that change is always possible.

PLANTING SEEDS FOR SAFETY

BY ISABEL SEAMAN, JEANNIE TEAM

When Gabby first connected with WAGEC in late 2024, the risk of homelessness was imminent. Forced to navigate **complex systems** alone, she was determined to keep herself and her two children safe from ongoing domestic and family violence. As the primary carer of two children with additional support needs, Gabby faced **multiple barriers** accessing what she needed, from limited service options to the daily demands of full-time caring.

Despite these challenges, she remained focused and determined. When traditional crisis accommodation was not viable due to her children's additional needs, she worked closely with our outreach team to explore other pathways. Together,

they mapped out a plan to connect Gabby with other service providers and prioritised **safety, housing, and connection**.

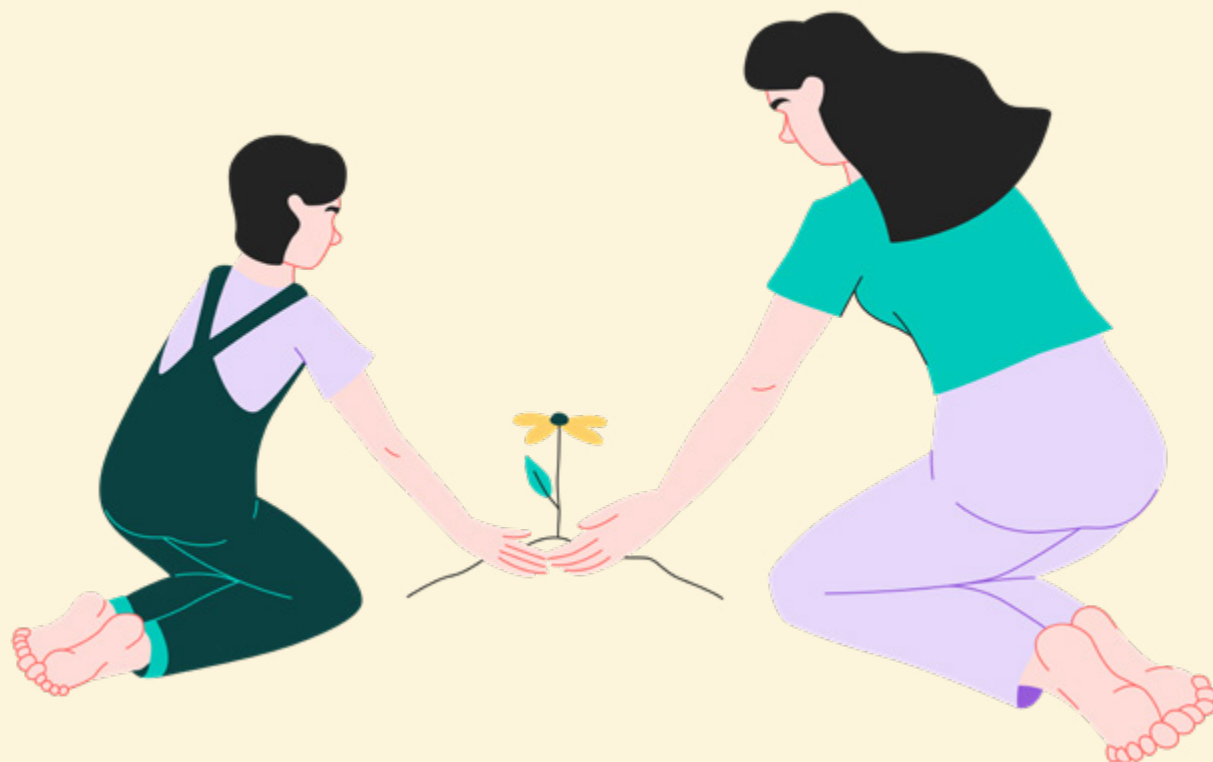
Throughout the process, **her courage and self-advocacy** were central to her progress. She engaged with multiple organisations, continued to support her children's education, and worked tirelessly to rebuild her family's sense of stability. With WAGEC's support, she was able to secure long-term social housing and a specialist school placement for one of her kids who is now thriving.

For the first time, Gabby also felt safe enough to make a police report about her experiences of violence. She also joined a women's domestic violence

support group where she continues to build **confidence and community**.

Gabby's story reflects the **strength and determination** of many women who come through WAGEC's outreach program. It also demonstrates the power of **flexible, trauma-informed case management** for women and families who are rebuilding their lives while remaining connected to their community.

By working collaboratively, Gabby did not have to retell her story time and again, avoiding re-traumatisation and further stress. Instead, we could meet her where she was with **care, respect, and practical support** to take the next steps toward safety, dignity, and independence, on her terms.



PROGRAM FEATURE

LOVE & HOPE BURWOOD HUB

BY MAHASTI ASKARI, HOLLY HOUSE

Born from a **long-standing partnership** between Burwood Council, Burwood Police, and local support services including WAGEC, the Love & Hope Hub was established to provide holistic support for individuals and families experiencing domestic and family violence.

Officially launched in December 2024, we have been actively involved in the Hub's fortnightly Support Services sessions — creating a **coordinated, compassionate network of care** for those impacted by violence.

The Hub operates as a **safe, inclusive space** where people can seek help, receive guidance, or simply have a non-judgemental conversation with someone who will listen. Together, multiple

service providers deliver **integrated support** across case management, legal assistance, housing, employment, Centrelink access, and family law advocacy, ensuring that no one has to navigate complex systems alone.

Quickly becoming a trusted community resource, since launching, the Hub has:

- Supported **65+ clients**
- Facilitated **inter-agency referrals** and coordinated care pathways
- Strengthened **collaboration** between government, legal, and community partners
- Created a safe, welcoming **environment** where people can access holistic healing and recovery support

Building on this success, the collaboration expanded in May 2025 with the establishment of the **Rhodes Hub – The Place**, which is attended monthly by Jeannie's team.

The Love & Hope Burwood Hub stands as a powerful example of what can be achieved through **genuine collaboration**. By uniting local government, police, legal, and community services, it has become a leading model for integrated, community-driven responses to domestic and family violence.



MOVING BEYOND CRISIS

BY CAROL COOREY, DIRECTOR OF CLIENT PROGRAMS

AT WAGEC, OUR PROGRAMS ARE WHERE GROUNDWORK BECOMES GROWTH. WHETHER IT IS SUPPORT FOR WOMEN EXITING PRISON, HELPING CHILDREN HEAL FROM TRAUMA, OR RECLAIMING SAFETY IN THE DIGITAL WORLD, EACH PROGRAM HAS A **COMMON GOAL**: TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE, INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA, AND SOCIAL DISADVANTAGE.

Over the past year, our Client Programs have expanded their reach and refined their impact, responding to **emerging needs** while staying firmly planted in what works.

Together, they reflect WAGEC's belief that when women and families have access to safety, stability, and support, they can finally **live freely**, without violence and with hope for the future.

STAYING HOME LEAVING VIOLENCE

During 2024–25, the Staying Home Leaving Violence (SHLV) team continued to provide comprehensive case management and safety support to women and children experiencing domestic and family violence.

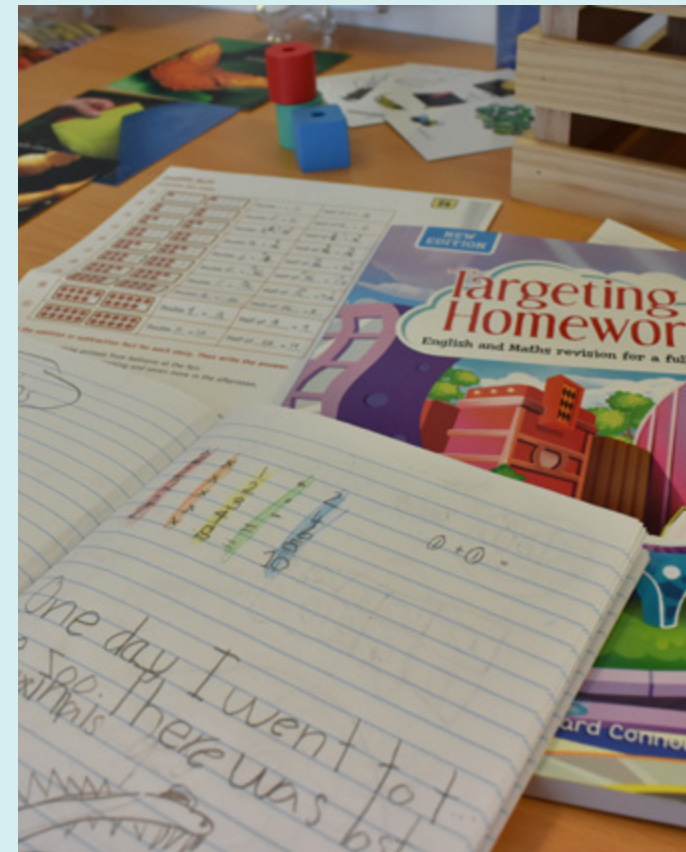
The program enables women to **remain safely in their homes** after leaving violent relationships through tailored safety planning, risk assessments, and coordinated security upgrades such as cameras, locks, and security screens.

Working collaboratively with NSW Police, Legal Aid, Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services (WDVCAS), Homes NSW, and local health and counselling services, the SHLV team delivers a **holistic response** to each client's emotional, legal, housing, and safety needs.

Alongside crisis response, the program prioritises **long-term empowerment** through education on technology safety, post-separation risk management, and navigating complex systems with confidence.

A key achievement this year was the team's successful advocacy for Rent Choice Start Safely, a vital initiative that supports women to rebuild their lives with greater **financial independence and stability**.

Despite increasing demand, the team continues to uphold a strong commitment to client-centred practice, cultural safety, and trauma-informed care. Every woman supported through this program is equipped with the tools, networks, and confidence to **move beyond crisis** toward lasting safety and independence.



HELPING CHILDREN HEAL

This year, Helping Children Heal moved into a beautiful **new Community Hub** in Burwood, creating a safe, welcoming space for families to connect, play, and heal together.

This program provides **specialist support** for children and their families who have experienced domestic and family violence. Formally launching in October 2024, we were honoured to host a visit from the Minister for Social Services, The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP, who met with families and staff to see the program in action.

"THE CONNECTION I HAVE DEVELOPED WITH MY CHILD DURING THE CHANGES HAS BEEN SO HELPFUL FOR ME. MY APPROACH HAS CHANGED. BEFORE, I COULDN'T DEAL WITH EVERYDAY SITUATIONS. NOW I HAVE MORE IDEAS FOR HOW TO ADDRESS THEM. SO FAR, EVERYTHING HAS BEEN FANTASTIC. I'M VERY SATISFIED WITH THE PROGRAM AND I WOULD LOVE TO CONTINUE."

— **Helping Children Heal Parent Participant**

To illustrate the **transformative outcomes** of the program, their nine-year-old child created a drawing of the 'Candy Cane Man,' describing the playroom as "the world's greatest place." A joyful reminder of what **Helping Children Heal** is all about: rebuilding safety, trust, and connection through creativity, play, and care.



BUILDING TECH SAFETY

Over the last 12 months, WAGEC's Building Tech Safety team has focused on **laying strong foundations** through research, project planning, workshops, and sector engagement.

With the appointment of a Program Lead, and recruitment underway for a second educator, our goal was to **drive positive change** in how we understand and respond to technology-facilitated abuse, and to empower frontline staff, clients, and the wider WAGEC community to **reclaim tech safety and confidence**.

Throughout the year, the team conducted consultations across our various Client Services, introducing the program and **mapping opportunities** for collaboration. We further clarified the program's purpose and messaging and explored the legal and ethical dimensions of working with clients' devices, including privacy, consent, and court processes.

The team also began **formalising partnerships** with organisations specialising in digital safety and surveillance audits, including Nansen, U Right Sis, WorkVentures, and the Hunter DFV Consortium's Tech-Facilitated Abuse program. These system-wide collaborations enable us to provide more specialist

client support, education and prevention workshops, digital audits, staff training, and the development of safe practice protocols.

Looking ahead, we will focus on developing a coordinated, survivor-centred response to technology-facilitated abuse so that **safety and freedom** extend well beyond the physical world into the digital sphere too.

FROM NOW

Women are the fastest growing prison population in Australia (Law Society Journal, 2023). Yet, services have not evolved to meet their needs.

WAGEC's *From Now* program is the only one of its kind in NSW. Delivered in partnership with the Judith Neilson Foundation, the program provides women exiting prison with safe accommodation, trauma-informed support, and the tools to keep their families together.

"WOMEN ARE SO OFTEN THE HEART OF THE FAMILY – THE ONES WHO HOLD IT ALL TOGETHER. BUT WHEN A WOMAN GOES TO PRISON, IT DOESN'T JUST AFFECT HER. IT FRACTURES THE ENTIRE FAMILY UNIT. THIS PROGRAM GIVES KIDS THE CHANCE TO GROW UP IN A SAFE AND SUPPORTED ENVIRONMENT, AND IT GIVES WOMEN THE CHANCE TO BECOME THE MOTHERS THEY'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO BE."

**Jenny Holmes (Dharawal, Darug),
From Now Program Lead**

Each woman's pathway is guided by her goals and strengths, with WAGEC walking beside her to navigate housing, employment, legal systems, and family reunification. Because exiting prison should mean **a fresh start for women**, not a return to homelessness, violence, and cycles of abuse.

About to enter its second year, this unique program is **laying critical groundwork** for change, not only in the lives of the families it supports, but in the wider justice system. A new report, **This Keeps Women Out of Prison**, will be released in late 2025, sharing findings from the program's first 18 months.

Until then, we wanted to share something that brings this program's impact to life. This is a letter from one of our participants, whose words remind us what's possible when women are met with safety, dignity, and belief in their capacity to begin again.



MY JOURNEY AFTER PRISON

BY A FROM NOW PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

I WANT TO BEGIN THIS STORY WITH THE DEEPEST GRATITUDE FOR THE FROM NOW PROGRAM, WHICH TOOK ME IN, SHOWED ME KINDNESS WHEN I HAD NONE LEFT, AND HELPED ME BUILD A NEW LIFE FOR MYSELF AND MY DAUGHTER.

There was a time when I didn't believe I was worthy of help, when I felt lost, broken, and stuck in a cycle that seemed impossible to break. But everything changed when I walked through [your] doors. A place that has not only given me a roof over my head but also the strength, support, and encouragement to rediscover my worth.

Before I came here, life was a daily struggle. I had just gotten out of jail and was trying to figure out how to be the kind of mother I always wanted to be. I felt like I was carrying so much shame, regret, and fear of failure that I didn't know how to make it all work. But from the very first moment I arrived, I was met with warmth, understanding, and a deep belief that I could do better — not just for myself, but for my daughter.

This program gave me more than just a place to stay. It gave me a chance. And not just any chance, but the chance to heal, grow, and become the woman I was always meant to be. For the first time in my life, I was living in a normal household, surrounded by people who genuinely cared about me

and my child. I wasn't just another case number; I was treated like a person. They saw my potential, and they helped me see it too.

This refuge isn't just a building; it's a lifeline. It's a place where women and children are empowered to build new beginnings, one day at a time. The programs they offer have given me tools to work through my past, develop new skills, and become self-sufficient. I was able to transition into housing, something I never thought would be possible, and I've been able to put my life back together, piece by piece.

The people here, especially Jenny Holmes who created this pilot program, have poured their hearts and souls into making it something truly special. Jenny and the entire team have made sure that this program is tailored to women like me, who need more than just shelter — they need understanding, they need patience, and they need someone who believes in them even when they don't believe in themselves. Jenny's vision for this place is something so much more than just providing for basic needs. It's about empowerment. It's about showing women and children that they are worthy of a good life, that they are not defined by their past, and that they have the strength to create the future they want.

I am here today, standing on my own feet, with a heart full of hope and gratitude. I've been given the tools to succeed, and I'm living proof that it's possible

to turn your life around, no matter how hard things seem.

I want my story to be an inspiration to other women who may feel like they have no way out. If I can do it, so can you. If I can build a better life for myself and my daughter, so can you. This place has given me that belief.

To every woman out there who is struggling, who feels like they've made too many mistakes or that they are too broken to have a better life, I want you to know that it's never too late. There are places like this, with people who genuinely care and will support you every step of the way. You don't have to do it alone. You deserve a life full of love, happiness, and stability, and some people want to help you get there.

I'm living proof of what's possible when you're given a chance, and I'm proud to be a success story of the program. Thank you for believing in me, for lifting me, and for helping me build a brighter future for my daughter and me. You've not only changed our lives — you've shown us that we are capable of achieving greatness, and that we are worthy of love and respect.

I will forever be grateful to this incredible program and to everyone who has been a part of my journey. Thank you for making my dreams of a better life a reality. And to all the women out there, remember: you are not alone. There's a way forward, and with the right support, you can create the life you deserve.





LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR EQUALITY

BY MOO BAULCH, DIRECTOR OF PRIMARY PREVENTION PROGRAMS

PRIMARY PREVENTION IS ABOUT STOPPING VIOLENCE BEFORE IT STARTS; WORK WE CANNOT DO ALONE. NOW IN OUR FIFTH YEAR, THIS WORK IS POWERED BY STRONG PARTNERSHIPS DESIGNED TO SHIFT THE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS THAT DRIVE GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE.

Our goal in every prevention activity is to equip people with practical tools, insights, and the **confidence to take action** in challenging the gendered drivers of violence — from rigid gender stereotypes to power imbalances, disrespect, and everyday sexism.

Our small but mighty Prevention Team has expanded its reach this year across community, corporate, and public sector settings, spending countless hours engaging people across Australia. From online ‘lunch-and-learns’ to full-day **Bystander and Allyship workshops**, we create spaces where learning leads to action.

Through partnerships with the City of Sydney and Inner West Council, we delivered 10 in-person community events and reached more than 300 participants. Each audience brought new questions, perspectives, and experiences. And perhaps most pleasingly, we really **started to see a shift**.

ENGAGEMENT FROM MEN CONTINUES TO GROW, AND CONVERSATIONS ARE BECOMING MORE NUANCED. THERE’S NOW A STRONGER RECOGNITION THAT EVERYONE HAS A ROLE TO PLAY IN ENDING VIOLENCE, REGARDLESS OF GENDER, BACKGROUND, OR WORKPLACE.

Our **We Need To Talk** initiative continues to thrive, supporting hundreds of people to have non-judgemental conversations about gender and stereotypes across a variety of settings. In a particular workshop with more than 50 public sector staff, over 90 per cent of participants reported **improved understanding** of gender-based violence and **increased confidence** to take practical action. Change does not happen overnight, and it is vital that we pause, acknowledge and celebrate wins like this along the way.

This year, we have also **strengthened partnerships** with the private sector to better embed prevention in workplace culture. We collaborated with Lockton Australia, as well as furthered our work with long-term partners Bras N Things and the Hanes Australasia Group. We also joined forces with Two Good Co., cooking up a toolkit for businesses wanting to take action on gender-based violence for International Women’s Day.

New forms of collaboration are emerging too. WAGEC’s case managers joined focus groups led by Catherine Fitzpatrick from Flequity Ventures to share insights into how systems can be **weaponised against victim-survivors**, and how to design safer, more responsive public services.

We also spread prevention messages to new audiences through keynote addresses during the **16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence**, including sessions with ClubsNSW, the ANZ Women in Leadership Summit, students at Marrickville High School, and the Rotary International Mega Meeting, where hundreds of attendees joined from around the world.

Sector engagement highlights also included presenting at three major conferences: Connexions on the Central Coast (Darkinjung Country), the Hunter New England Collaboration, and the No To Violence National Conference in Melbourne/Naarm (Wurundjeri Country).

EACH OF THESE MOMENTS REPRESENTS GROUNDWORK IN ACTION: PRACTICAL, PEOPLE-POWERED STEPS TOWARDS A FUTURE WHERE SAFETY, DIGNITY AND EQUITY ARE NOT THE EXCEPTION, BUT THE EXPECTATION.

ALL IN

The pilot for our unique early childhood education prevention program, **All In**, concluded in late 2024 after three years. Designed to test **new ways of building gender equality** from the ground up, over the life of the pilot, we partnered with 16 early childhood centres across metro and rural NSW and trained 135 educators who collectively cared for 717 children.

Culminating in an independent evaluation conducted by the team led by Professor Jan Breckenridge and Mailin Suchtin’s Gendered Violence Research Network (GVRN) at UNSW, research found that participating educators’ confidence, knowledge, and practical skills to **challenge gender stereotypes** in early learning settings all grew significantly.

Particularly for newer staff, the program expanded their understanding of gender, equality, and inclusion, strengthening the role early childhood educators can play in prevention.

“BEFORE, I THOUGHT SEX AND GENDER WERE SIMILAR, NOT MUCH DIFFERENT. AFTER THE WORKSHOP, I GAINED MORE INSIGHT INTO IDEAS LIKE GENDER IDENTITY AND GENDER EXPRESSION AND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THESE TWO CONCEPTS.”

Early Childhood Educator

One of the key aims of **All In** was to strengthen understanding of how gender inequality and rigid stereotypes drive gender-based violence. While the program did not directly observe children, educators reported **encouraging signs** of change in play behaviours.

“BEFORE THE WORKSHOP, SOME CHILDREN WOULD SAY, ‘YOU CAN’T COME INTO THIS PLAYGROUND AREA BECAUSE YOU’RE NOT A GIRL.’ AFTER WE TALKED ABOUT IT, WE NOTICED THAT KIND OF TALK STOPPED.”

Early Childhood Educator



Survey data also showed that the number of educators who felt **supported to challenge gender stereotypes** and inequality rose from 51 per cent to 78 per cent — a remarkable outcome.

As the pilot wrapped up, we launched a series of **animated explainers, online resources, and practical tools**, including activity guides, conversation starters, and creative resources to help educators and families talk about gender equality in everyday ways.

IT HAS BROUGHT AWARENESS TO ALL STAFF, AND FOR ME PERSONALLY, IT HAS GIVEN ME CONFIDENCE TO CHALLENGE STEREOTYPES AND HAVE MORE OPEN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CHILDREN, AND ALSO OUTSIDE OF MY WORK WITH FRIEND, AND FAMILY.”

Early Childhood Educator

In late 2024, the NSW Government also released **Pathways to Prevention**, the state’s first Primary Prevention Strategy. This represents a significant milestone, and one WAGEC is proud to have contributed through our advocacy and sector partnerships. And we were also successful in **securing a three-year expansion** of our **All In** program, enabling us to grow our reach and impact across the early childhood education and care sector.

As **All In** enters its next chapter, we look forward to continuing to learn, grow, and work alongside early childhood educators and communities to lay the groundwork for a future where every child learns that equality, respect, and care belong to everyone.

“SOME OF THE MOST POWERFUL PARTS OF THE WORKSHOPS WERE THE STATISTICS SHARED ABOUT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE. TO THEN DRAW THAT LINK TO EARLY CHILDHOOD [AND ASK], ‘SO WHERE DO WE FIT IN THIS? WHAT’S OUR ROLE?’ AND REFLECT ON WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE NORM IN THE PAST, THE WAY THAT WE TREATED BOYS AND GIRLS.”

Early Childhood Educator



THE GENEROSITY RIPPLE EFFECT

BY RACHAEL PHILLIPS, DIRECTOR OF FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNITY

AT WAGEC, CREATING CHANGE IS A COLLECTIVE EFFORT. IT IS THE COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO GIVE, WALK, ACT, AND VOLUNTEER. IT IS OUR CORPORATE PARTNERS WHO CHAMPION GENDER EQUALITY IN THEIR WORKPLACES. IT IS OUR PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS WHO FUND INNOVATION AND FILL THE FINANCIAL GAPS IN OUR SERVICE SYSTEM.

Together, we are creating the kind of change that reshapes how communities, workplaces, and institutions understand and respond to gender-based violence.

In 2024–25, this collective effort saw us raise **\$3.04 million**, with a further **\$1.25 million donated in-kind**, and more than **1,600 volunteer hours contributed**. Of course, impact is not only measured in numbers. However, they do help to tell the story of how far we have come, and the growth we have achieved together this year.

EACH ACT OF GENEROSITY RIPPLED OUTWARD — CREATING SAFETY, BUILDING INDEPENDENCE, AND RESHAPING THE SYSTEMS THAT SURROUND WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

This year, every volunteer, every donor, every community member, and every corporate partner has helped **strengthen the roots** that hold WAGEC steady, and enable us to build a safer, fairer future. This matters more than ever, because social change rarely starts from the treetops; it grows from the grassroots we plant and nurture together.

WHAT YOUR SUPPORT HAS MADE POSSIBLE

- **Safety and essentials**
Thousands of nights of crisis accommodation, essential goods, and counselling sessions for women and children fleeing violence.
- **Community mobilisation**
Thousands came together to break fundraising records during the Walk for WAGEC, helping keep our family programs and refuges open and safe.
- **National awareness**
Media amplified WAGEC's message to millions, raising the profile and awareness of gender-based violence.
- **Innovation through philanthropy**
New teams and programs are helping drive sector-wide reform and enable WAGEC to go where others won't.
- **Economic independence**
Programs helping women rebuild financial stability and confidence across the state.
- **Community connection**
Volunteers contributed time, skills, and expertise to ensuring every refuge and event has the people power to make it possible.
- **Corporate influence**
Partners embedding gender equality into workplace culture and accelerating public dialogue on gender-based violence.

WAGEC COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

24K

newsletter subscribers

34K

unique website visitors

16K

followers across
Instagram and Facebook

6K

followers
on LinkedIn

122

people volunteered
time and skills

46

community fundraisers raised
money to support our work

64

individual donors

163

corporate donors
or supporters

18

media mentions



COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING

FUNDRAISERS ARE A VITAL PART OF THE WORK OF ANY NOT-FOR-PROFIT, NOT ONLY FOR THE MONEY THEY RAISE, BUT FOR HOW THEY HELP SHAPE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF AN ISSUE OR CAUSE. FROM ART GALLERIES TO SPORTING FIELDS, EACH ONE SPARKS A POTENTIALLY LIFE-SAVING CONVERSATION ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY, RESPECT, AND SAFETY.

This year, we were thrilled to see grassroots generosity **doubled** with supporters **raising \$187,440** across **46 community-led events** — a **109% increase** on last year.

Every year, incredible individuals and communities turn their **creativity, compassion, and conviction** into action for WAGEC, and the women and families we support. We want to shout some of them out — people whose monumental fundraising efforts remind us that change is made possible when we come together, act with care, and believe in something bigger than ourselves.



EMILY BREX – IN MEMORY OF HER SISTER

Emily raised a phenomenal **\$40,000** in memory of her sister, Rachel Arrowsmith, who passed away suddenly at age 36. Rachel was a mother, student social worker, and fierce advocate for women’s equality. Emily and her family channelled their grief into purpose, with their act of remembrance serving as a beacon of hope for women and children rebuilding their lives.

BRYCE LEVIDO – HONOURING A FRIEND

After a friend was supported by WAGEC in their time of need, Bryce created Shelectric — an all-women DJ event celebrating equality. Inviting WAGEC onto 2SER Radio, he rallied his workplace to match donations and raised **\$16,408.92**. A powerful reminder of what allyship looks like in practice: inclusive, joyful, and deeply impactful.

UNSEEN GESTURES – INSPIRED BY THE CAUSE

Artists Emily Besser, Alina Camiller, Pam Jolly, Amanda Mason, and Lynsey McGee curated Unseen Gestures, a pop-up art exhibition that raised **\$9,540.62** to support women rebuilding after violence. The exhibition transformed creativity into connection in a bold reminder that art and advocacy often grow from the same place: hope.

SHAW AND PARTNERS – INSPIRED BY COMMUNITY

A 40-strong Shaw and Partners team ran for WAGEC in City2Surf 2024, raising **\$51,950** and sparking conversations about violence prevention among thousands of participants and supporters. A powerful example of what community action can achieve, and the importance of not shying away from difficult conversations in the workplace.



FOLLOWING THE PRIME MINISTER’S DECLARATION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AS A NATIONAL CRISIS, AND THE RECORD SUCCESS OF LAST YEAR’S WALK FOR WAGEC — WE SET AN AMBITIOUS GOAL FOR 2025: RAISE HALF A MILLION DOLLARS FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

Not long after launch, the federal election was called for Saturday 3 May; the day before the walk was scheduled at Centennial Park in Sydney’s inner west. This meant our campaign had to compete for airtime with an intense five-week news cycle dominated by discussions on domestic violence, cost of living, and housing.

In the lead up to the walk, we also saw the devastating murders of two women from our community. This brought the reality of the domestic violence crisis painfully close to home and underscored why this work matters so much.

Our community rallied, and the **results were extraordinary**, far surpassing our most hopeful fundraising targets. And with the election officially called the night before, major news outlets **Channel 7** and **Channel 10** were able to attend, covering the event through an election-weekend lens and sharing the voices of friends and family of women impacted by violence.





WALK FOR WAGEC

Thankfully, the rain stayed away this year, and we enjoyed a record-breaking year of fun, face-painting, and fundraising, with live music and high vibes all round as thousands literally walked the walk for women's safety and gender equality.

The Walk for WAGEC was powered by an incredible network of sponsors and partners who made it all possible, including **ARC Capital Group** who led the match-giving initiative with a **\$50,000 donation**, inspiring others to contribute an additional **\$75,000**.

Long-standing partner **MBM** hosted the first-ever Hydration Station, while **Two Good Co.** kept participants fed, fuelled, and caffeinated. Thank you also to: **Wavemaker, Pepper Money, Centennial Parklands, Macher, Primer, Sydney Water, The Safety Officer, Sydney Event Services, Ei Media, and Weld Stories**, proving once again that every step helps create safer futures for women and children.

MARCHING ORDERS

At this year's Walk for WAGEC, our dedicated **Volunteer Collective** invited supporters to take their action one step further by writing postcards to the new Prime Minister, **calling for urgent national action** to end gender-based violence.

By the end of the day, **268 postcards** were delivered — a grassroots action and heartfelt reminder that advocacy is not only confined to policy papers and parliaments, but it happens in moments like these, when community voices rise together.

"YOU SHOWED UP, MADE YOUR VOICES HEARD, AND ENSURED OUR MESSAGE WAS LOUD AND CLEAR: THIS IS A NATIONAL CRISIS — BUT TOGETHER, WE CAN CHANGE IT."

Walk for WAGEC Volunteer



CORPORATE PARTNERS

USING THEIR NETWORKS, PLATFORMS, AND WORKPLACES TO CHALLENGE INEQUALITY, AMPLIFY WOMEN'S VOICES, AND INVEST IN SOLUTIONS THAT LAST – WAGEC'S CORPORATE PARTNERS ARE CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE.



BRAS N THINGS

Since 2020, Bras N Things has partnered with WAGEC to help prevent gender-based violence and create safer futures for women and children. Their sustained financial investment strengthens WAGEC's prevention work, tackling the drivers of violence before it starts, particularly for younger generations. By engaging staff and customers through campaigns and community initiatives, Bras N Things uses its platform to shift attitudes and support long-term change.



EPOCH CAPITAL GROUP

Epoch Capital partnered with WAGEC in 2023 and leads our largest individual workplace giving program, providing consistent, largely unrestricted funding to support women and children in crisis. Alongside workplace giving, Epoch's fundraising initiatives, festive season contributions, and involvement in Walk for WAGEC help direct vital resources where they are needed most.



STELLA INSURANCE

Stella Insurance and WAGEC have partnered since 2021, united by a shared commitment to empowering women and ending gender-based violence. By donating \$5 from every car insurance policy sold, Stella provides a dependable funding stream for WAGEC's Material Donations Collective. This support meets urgent needs for women and children in crisis, while also backing broader awareness efforts such as Equal Pay Day.



ARC CAPITAL GROUP

Arc Capital Group joined WAGEC as a corporate partner in 2025, backing a Pay What It Takes approach to funding services for women and children escaping violence. Their investment supports crisis accommodation, pathways to financial independence through the ACCESS Mentoring Program, and matched funding for Walk for WAGEC—strengthening both immediate response and long-term recovery. both corporate participation and grassroots giving.

CORPORATE SUPPORTERS

Alongside our corporate partners, we are proud to have had more than **150 corporate supporters** stand with WAGEC this year, providing critical support through financial donations, workplace giving, volunteering, in-kind contributions, and by leading conversations on gender equality within their own organisations.

From matched giving and fundraising to pro-bono expertise, these businesses helped us fund crisis accommodation, strengthen recovery programs, and extend our prevention work into new spaces.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- **Health Services Union, Westpac Group, Earl Evans (Shaw & Partners), Bloomberg, ERAN Pty Ltd, Pepper Money, MBM, Brie Leon, Hella Heels, The Mind Clinic, CNG Property Group, Bespoke Financial Advisory, Beverly (Melbourne), Aesop, and CHOICE** who each demonstrated outstanding commitment through regular giving, fundraising, and advocacy.
- **Wavemaker's** national media campaign reached millions of Australians, amplifying WAGEC's message and elevating the national conversation on gender-based violence.
- **Aesop, CHOICE, UTS, Two Good Co., Ray White, Pepper Money, and Nespresso** provided essential items, meals, and skilled volunteer support to improve comfort and stability for women and children in refuge.
- **Pro-bono partners** including **Bartier Perry, Dentons, Lander & Rogers, Maddocks, Clifford Chance,** and **The Mind Clinic** offered expert legal, corporate, and wellbeing support, which helped to strengthen WAGEC's internal systems and enable women to access justice and professional advice.
- Supporters across a wide variety of industries from finance and retail to media and education also used their platforms to **promote equality and inclusion**, helping shift workplace cultures and public attitudes.

Together, these corporate supporters not only raised vital funds but also used their influence to challenge inequality and drive systemic change — proving that business can be a powerful force for social good.



PHILANTHROPY AND MAJOR GIVING

OUR PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS ARE THE BACKBONE OF INNOVATION AT WAGEC. THEIR TRUST AND FLEXIBILITY ALLOW US TO BUILD WHAT OTHERS CANNOT FUND — FROM CRISIS RESPONSE AND PREVENTION TO RECOVERY AND LONG-TERM CHANGE. THESE PARTNERSHIPS ENABLE US TO DESIGN PROGRAMS THAT RESPOND TO EMERGING NEEDS, TEST INNOVATIVE IDEAS, AND SCALE WHAT WORKS.

This year, the generosity of our philanthropy and major giving partners made it possible to:

- **Grow the Helping Children Heal** program and launch **WAGEC’s Kids Council**, thanks to the **Hare Family Foundation**. Together, these initiatives deepen WAGEC’s child-centred practice by providing therapeutic play, counselling, and creative recovery spaces for children, while embedding their voices in service design and advocacy.
- **Sustain the Access program**, which continues to empower women through mentoring, scholarships, and job-readiness training. Supported by multiple funders, this program is vital in helping women build confidence, independence, and financial security, sometimes for the first time.
- **Establish the Building Tech Safety team** to strengthen sector capability and protect women and children from technology-facilitated abuse, funded by a generous donor.
- **Transition From Now program** from pilot to fully-funded status, with support from the **Judith Neilson Foundation** — helping women exiting prison to stay safely connected with their children and rebuild their lives.
- Alongside these major givers, we are deeply grateful to the **Siddle Family Foundation, Oranges & Sardines Foundation, WeirAnderson Foundation, The Palmdale Trust, The Sesgo Foundation, MESHKI, CommBank Foundation, and Westpac Foundation**, whose belief in our mission continues to make the impossible possible by filling service gaps, shifting narratives, and ensuring women and children can heal, rebuild, and thrive long after crisis.



VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

WHERE CARE TAKES ROOT



LIKE MOST GRASSROOTS FEMINIST ORGANISATIONS, VOLUNTEERS ARE THE BEATING HEART OF WAGEC’S COMMUNITY.

Across our programs, offices, events, and refuges, volunteers bring **warmth and dedication** to everything they do, ensuring that the 200 women and children we support every night, and the many more in our programs, **feel seen and cared for**.

“I LOVE THE PEOPLE AT WAGEC. EVERYONE IS SO THOUGHTFUL AND DEDICATED TO THEIR ROLE AND TEAM. THE WORLD IS EXTRA TOUGH RIGHT NOW SO HAVING TANGIBLE REMINDERS THAT THERE ARE STILL AMAZING PEOPLE IN IT HELPS ME TRUST THAT EVERYTHING WILL BE OK.”

Sami, WAGEC Volunteer

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: MEET LOTTE

Having volunteered regularly in the gardens at one of our family refuges, Lotte has become an **integral part of the team** and wider WAGEC community. Showing up rain or shine, she tends to the gardens with care, listening to families’ cultural needs, and planting species that make the outdoor spaces feel more welcoming and restorative.

Bringing immense joy to both staff and clients alike, we were thrilled to see Lotte recognised this year as **Burwood Council’s Adult Volunteer of the Year**. The artist behind our new Volunteer Collective, Lotte’s story is a beautiful example of how volunteers can shape healing environments and strengthen community from the ground up.

“HAVING VOLUNTEERED FOR A WHILE NOW, YOU GET TO SEE THE CHANGES THAT COME FROM VOLUNTEERING — PEOPLE HELPING IN WHATEVER WAY THEY CAN TO MAKE THE SHELTERS RUN WITH MORE EASE AND FEEL MORE HOMELY. ALL THE STAFF ARE SO LOVELY AND SUPPORTIVE. I FEEL I HAVE AGENCY BECAUSE THEY ENCOURAGE ME TO PUT FORWARD THE IDEAS I HAVE FOR THE GARDEN (EVEN THOUGH SOMETIMES THEY’RE A BIT HIT AND MISS!).”

Lotte, WAGEC Volunteer

LAUNCHING THE VOLUNTEER COLLECTIVE

To better bring our volunteers together and provide clearer pathways for community members to contribute based on their time, interests, and skills, this year, WAGEC launched the Volunteer Collective. An evolution of our long-standing volunteer program, The Collective is designed to reflect how people want to engage, learn, and act, creating a connected network of advocates who embody WAGEC’s mission.

THE VOLUNTEER COLLECTIVE’S SIX PILLARS:

- SKILLED VOLUNTEERS**
Share professional expertise to deliver wellbeing, education, and operational projects.
- CORE VOLUNTEERS**
Commit to regular roles across WAGEC sites and programs, providing consistency and hands-on support.
- WORKPLACE VOLUNTEERS**
Participate through group working bees or off-site activations, building community and corporate connections.
- PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS**
Support volunteer-led initiatives across WAGEC programs, including All In, Helping Children Heal, and Access.
- CASUAL VOLUNTEERS**
Provide flexible support across events and projects, ensuring adaptability for both volunteers and teams.
- VOLUNTEER AMBASSADORS**
Act as advocates and educators in their own communities, driving awareness and change.

“WAGEC HAS SO MANY DIFFERENT OPPORTUNITIES AND PROJECTS AND LOTS OF FLEXIBILITY IN HOW YOU CAN VOLUNTEER, SO THERE’S REALLY SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE. THE PEOPLE — BOTH THOSE WHO WORK AT WAGEC AND THOSE WHO VISIT — ARE INCREDIBLY INSPIRING. IT’S A TRULY REWARDING EXPERIENCE AND I FEEL SO LUCKY TO BE PART OF IT.”

Amy, WAGEC Volunteer



WAGEC Vice Chair with WAGEC Volunteer

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: MEET EV

"After finishing full-time work, I wanted to contribute to a cause that supports women and children impacted by domestic violence and homelessness. WAGEC’s mission really resonated with me, and volunteering felt like a meaningful way to give back.

I started volunteering with WAGEC in 2021, helping deliver groceries to refuge sites and providing site and office support at the Redfern drop-in centre. From the very beginning, I felt welcome and part of something special. Over time, I began participating in Walk for WAGEC each year and encouraged friends from my network to get involved — a few of whom are now regular volunteers themselves!

In 2023, I moved into a more regular role, providing administrative support to the team at Redfern. By 2024, I started helping each week across the Fundraising, Communications, Events, and program teams, by which time I developed a strong understanding of WAGEC’s services and ways of working.

Keen to take on more responsibility, in January 2024, I became the **Community Engagement Volunteer**, a new role that helps develop and facilitate the Volunteer Collective. I especially enjoy making screening calls with new volunteers. I love hearing what motivates people to get involved with WAGEC and discovering their unique skills and interests.

THE VOLUNTEER COLLECTIVE IS SUCH A THOUGHTFUL PROGRAM; IT OFFERS FLEXIBILITY AND A VARIETY OF OPPORTUNITIES, SO THERE’S TRULY SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE.

Over the past four years, my role has evolved so much, but what hasn’t changed is how much I love the enthusiasm and energy of the staff and their unwavering commitment to supporting women and children. It really is at the heart of everything they do. Their passion inspires me to show up each week and help however I can.

Volunteering with WAGEC is always a highlight of my week.”

The kind of leadership, generosity, and consistency of volunteers like Lotte and Ev have strengthened the systems that will sustain the Volunteer Collective for years to come. They each embody the spirit of WAGEC’s community: grounded, warm, and always ready to help build something better.

FEELING INSPIRED? FIND OUT MORE ABOUT VOLUNTEERING WITH WAGEC: WAGEC.ORG.AU/VOLUNTEER





GOING FOR A JOYRIDE

There are few things more precious than kids having the freedom and space to play and have fun in safe outdoor spaces. For the children living in WAGEC's refuges, those moments can be even more vital, which is why **CommBank's Group Investigations team** spent an afternoon quite literally building them.

As part of their Pedals & Smiles workplace volunteering initiative, **30 volunteers** came together to assemble **five brand-new bikes and ride-on toys**, valued at almost **\$3,000**, for children rebuilding their lives after violence.

"THE GROUP CAME TOGETHER FOR AN AFTERNOON OF TEAM BUILDING FOR GOOD. AFTER LEARNING ABOUT WAGEC'S WORK, THEY ROLLED UP THEIR SLEEVES TO CREATE SOMETHING THAT WOULD BRING JOY AND FREEDOM TO THE KIDS IN OUR REFUGES."

WAGEC Team Member

These acts of solidarity bring care to life in tangible ways and give teams the chance to connect with a social cause or mission, build morale, and contribute directly to healing and hope. As our Volunteer Collective continues to grow, moments like these remind us what groundwork looks like in action: a community of people, using their time and skills to build safer, brighter futures for women and children. One generous act, one joyful ride, at a time.



VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

ACCESS PROGRAM

SHOWING UP FOR EACH OTHER

NOW IN ITS FIFTH YEAR, ACCESS PROVIDES ONE-ON-ONE MENTORING, PRACTICAL LEARNING, AND EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS FOR WOMEN AND NON-BINARY PEOPLE FACING COMPLEX BARRIERS TO WORK AND FINANCIAL SECURITY.

At its heart, **Access** is about cultivating possibility. With economic independence a key cornerstone of safety, **Access** helps women rebuild confidence, grow networks, and pursue education and employment opportunities that **break cycles** of violence and poverty.

While it is easy to gloss over those numbers, it is important to remember that behind every one of them is someone rewriting their story.

The **132 mentoring relationships** represent 132 examples of solidarity and community care in action. More than **\$112,000 in volunteer hours** means mentors stepping up for participants as they build confidence, skills, and independence. 10 participants in a job-readiness course means 10 chances to build life-altering education and employment skills. **22 women** receiving grants of up to **\$2,000** means 22 women with support to cover tuition, materials, and travel costs, thanks to the generosity of the **Rotary Club of Darling Harbour, Jessie Street Trust, Qantas, and CommBank**.

Five mentees also participated in the pilot of a new **job-readiness program** for temporary visa holders, further broadening access to practical, skills-based training.

Community partnerships remained essential, with organisations such as **Good Shepherd, TAFE, ACON, Dress for Success, Refettorio OzHarvest, and Success Works** continuing to support mentees, while new partners including **FoodLab, Neami Employment Support Service, Global Sisters**, and the **Central Migrant Resource Centre** helped expand the program's reach. Corporate partners **Hanes Group, Two Good Co., and Banksia Academy** also continued to open vital employment pathways for participants. And while this year brought many achievements, it also surfaced challenges, particularly the ongoing challenge of funding insecurity and competition for grants.

While **Access** is a **tested, successful model** that continues to transform lives, the size and complexity of delivering the program has highlighted the need to refresh our approach to better ensure meaningful, high-quality support for participants. This year reinforced the importance of staying agile and deeply connected to the community we serve — ensuring that as the program evolves, it continues to be shaped by the voices and experiences of participants.

132

MENTORING
RELATIONSHIPS
SUPPORTED

78

MENTORS TRAINED
IN TRAUMA-INFORMED
PRACTICE

22

SCHOLARSHIPS
AWARDED, TOTTALLING
\$48,000

10

PARTICIPANTS COMPLETED
SIX-WEEK TAFE JOB-
READINESS PROGRAM

14

WORKSHOPS DELIVERED ON
DIGITAL SKILLS, EMPLOYMENT
RIGHTS, AND SMALL BUSINESS

32

LAPTOPS AND ONE PHONE
DISTRIBUTED THROUGH
WAGECONNECT

MENTOR SPOTLIGHT: MEET SUSAN

"I ORIGINALLY CAME ACROSS WAGEC WHEN I WAS LOOKING TO DONATE TO SUPPORT WOMEN IN CRISIS. AFTER LEARNING ABOUT THE ACCESS PROGRAM, I BECAME A MENTOR AND IT'S BEEN THE PERFECT FIT FOR ME. I HAD EXPERIENCE SUPPORTING MIGRANT WOMEN RETURNING TO WORK, AND THE ONE-ON-ONE MENTORING ALLOWS ME TO HAVE A REAL, LASTING IMPACT."

Now mentoring her third mentee, Susan describes the journey as one of patience, trust, and connection:

"IN-PERSON MEETINGS DEEPEN THE RELATIONSHIP AND BUILD TRUST, BUT EACH MENTORING RELATIONSHIP IS UNIQUE. THERE REALLY ARE SOME UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS, LIKE SEEING A MENTEE GAIN WORK AND THEIR CONFIDENCE GROW."

For Susan, the mentoring experience has been profoundly rewarding. It's also helped her grow both personally and professionally, developing greater cultural awareness, empathy, and stronger communication skills. Reflecting on her journey, she had this to say to others thinking of taking the leap:

"YOU ARE MORE READY THAN YOU THINK. MENTORING IS SUCH A POWERFUL WAY TO SUPPORT OTHERS — NEVER UNDERESTIMATE YOUR ABILITY TO HELP."



MENTEE SPOTLIGHT: MEET LINA

"I WAS MADE REDUNDANT A FEW YEARS AGO AND FELT COMPLETELY LOST. FOR A COUPLE OF MONTHS, I BARELY LEFT MY ROOM, AND MY MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH SUFFERED. ONE DAY, I DECIDED I NEEDED A CHANGE AND SEARCHED ONLINE FOR SUPPORT FOR WOMEN IN SYDNEY. THAT'S WHEN I FOUND WAGEC AND THE ACCESS MENTORING PROGRAM. I APPLIED AND WAS SOON MATCHED WITH A MENTOR, AND I STILL REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME WE MET."

Lina describes her mentoring relationship as warm and supportive. "We met in a small café, and my mentor didn't start by asking questions. She just listened as I poured out my fears and worries. Then she said, 'Be strong, things will get better. Now tell me what you will cook for your parents tonight?' That simple, human connection gave me strength."

Over six months, her mentor helped her rebuild confidence, prepare for interviews, and reengage with life. Lina says, "She gave me her energy selflessly. Just having her listen to my efforts each week was enough to keep me going."

Now onto her second mentoring relationship, Lina is studying floristry, supported by an Access scholarship to contribute to her study expenses, and encouraging anyone who finds themselves in a similar situation to reach out for help:

"LOOKING BACK, I'M A MUCH HAPPIER AND MORE CONFIDENT PERSON NOW. I FEEL GRATEFUL TO EVERYONE WHO SUPPORTED ME IN MY DARK DAYS AND HOPE TO GIVE BACK THAT CARE AND LOVE WHEN I CAN. DON'T HESITATE FOR A SECOND TO JOIN. YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE FINANCIALLY BUT EVERYTHING TO GAIN TO SAVE YOUR SOUL."



QUALITY & IMPACT: DRIVING EXCELLENCE AND IMPACT

BY KELSIE HEDGE, DIRECTOR OF QUALITY & IMPACT

THIS YEAR WAS ONE OF CONSOLIDATION, REFINEMENT, AND CONTINUED GROWTH FOR THE QUALITY AND IMPACT (QI) TEAM — BUILDING ON THE STRONG FOUNDATIONS LAID IN RECENT YEARS. IT WAS ALSO A YEAR OF CHANGE AND TRANSITION, WITH MYSELF LEAVING AND RETURNING FROM PARENTAL LEAVE, FAREWELLING LONG-STANDING TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDING GEORGE, TAMSIN, AND RIDA, AND WELCOMING THE FRESH EXPERTISE OF NAZ AND SHANNAY, AND THE STEADY AND ADAPTIVE WORK OF DIANNE AND NATALIE, WHO ARE ALWAYS HAPPY TO HELP WHERE IT'S NEEDED.

STRONGER FOUNDATIONS

Following our **successful accreditation** by the Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES) in February 2024, improving how we manage information became a major focus this year.

The team developed new internal processes for tracking, storing, and managing documents to enhance collaboration, accountability, and transparency. These systems lay the groundwork for **consistent, centralised management** of business-critical information such as contracts, policies, and confidential documents.

Working closely with other teams, we reviewed and updated almost **30 policies and procedures** to ensure they reflect current best practice and the organisation's needs. These efforts are helping us build a more robust, efficient, and future-ready WAGEC.

CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Embedding quality and evidence-informed practice across WAGEC remains at the heart of our work. To maintain the highest standards of care, we continued to conduct **internal audits** to assess consistency, reinforce good practice, and support compliance.

Throughout the year, we collaborated with Client Services to support the coordination of regular **Communities of Practice** and **Peer Review** sessions, providing case workers with opportunities to reflect, share learning, and strengthen client practice.

In 2024-25, WAGEC was also proud to participate in **DVNSW's CHRISTIE project**, a cross-agency research initiative focused on embedding violence-informed, family-centred practice through the globally-renowned Safe and Together model. And in partnership with **Lifestart**, we participated in **specialist training on working with children and families**, covering developmental milestones, the impacts of trauma, and the importance of play.

EXPANDING REACH

This year, the QI team supported operations across **eight locations**, including the addition of two new sites: **Riverwood Office** and **Burwood Hub**. Expanding our geographic reach and program delivery, these new sites represent an exciting step forward in meeting the needs of communities across various locations. Each new site also strengthens our ability to respond locally, creating more spaces where women and children can **access safety, support, and community** closer to home.

IMPROVING SAFETY

We worked closely with external partners to coordinate much-needed repairs and renovations across **five supported accommodation sites**. These improvements have already made meaningful differences to the safety, comfort, and dignity of the spaces women and children call home.

The team also led a coordinated response to water ingress issues at our **Redfern Head Office**. Taking a methodical and safety-first approach, we liaised with staff, clients, and external partners to manage the process and enable a smooth relocation.

While saying goodbye to our beloved George Street building was difficult, we are excited about the opportunities a new space will bring for WAGEC's future.



DEEPENING IMPACT

This year, we also began work developing the **All In** program's Outcomes Framework — laying the foundation for consistent impact measurement ahead of the program's comprehensive outcomes report and potential statewide expansion.

The broader team also continued to build on our internal **Impact Framework**, refining how we define, measure, and understand our outcomes at the client, program, and systems level. This ongoing work is helping us mature our approach to impact measurement and strengthening the link between practice, data, and advocacy for systemic change.

CHILD SAFETY CORNER

WAGEC remains deeply committed to creating environments where children feel **safe, supported, and heard**, and we continue to build the culture and infrastructure to enable this.

This year, we were proud to have made a strong investment in our safeguarding function, which plays a vital role in overseeing the quality of our child protection responses and leading the work of our **Child Safe Committee**.

The Safeguarding function provides an essential layer of guidance and support to our workforce, offering specialist advice in what are often **complex and deeply sensitive** child safety matters.

DURING 2024-25, WAGEC RECORDED 113 INTERNAL CHILD PROTECTION REPORTS, DOWN FROM 125 THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

These internal reports indicate that WAGEC has been working hard to improve our processes, intervene earlier, and provide targeted support to children, young people, and their families, to reduce the need to make external reports. Drawing on internal data and reflective practice, this work also strengthens our service capacity and helps teams **prioritise child safety** through culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and whole-of-family approaches.

Other key achievements under our **2024-25 Child Safe Action Plan** included:

- Reaching a **'Proactive' rating** (Stage 3 of 4) under the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian Child Safe Standards assessment.
- Strengthening policies for **child protection reporting**, and children and young person consent processes.
- Embedding **child safe practices** across all areas of the organisation from client services to events, volunteer inductions, and mentoring programs.



NURTURING AN ALL-STAR TEAM

BY ANDREA WATKINS, DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE & CULTURE

WAGEC'S PEOPLE AND CULTURE (P&C) TEAM CONTINUES TO STRENGTHEN THE FOUNDATIONS OF AN INCLUSIVE, DIVERSE, AND VALUES-DRIVEN WORKFORCE. ONLY ESTABLISHED IN 2023, THIS YEAR THE TEAM FOCUSED ON EMBEDDING SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES TO SUPPORT OUR GROWING ORGANISATION AND NURTURE A WORKPLACE WHERE EVERY PERSON CAN THRIVE.

PRIORITIES

- 1 Recruitment and onboarding:** Bringing recruitment in-house, we developed and implemented processes grounded in relational recruitment and inclusive practice — getting to know candidates, recognising transferable skills, and diversifying our workforce.
- 2 Human Resources Information System (HRIS):** Implementing a centralised system for people and data management with the capacity to expand into training, development, and safety initiatives.
- 3 Role design:** Reviewing position descriptions and working with managers to refine functions, clarify responsibilities, and identify opportunities for growth.
- 4 Professional development:** Expanding training, supervision, and peer learning opportunities with a view to developing a tailored Capability Framework and Leadership Program, alongside a yearly events and training calendar.
- 5 Feedback and engagement:** Launching regular 'Pulse Surveys' to hear from staff, understand their experiences, and respond with tangible actions.
- 6 Employee wellbeing:** Enhancing our Employee Value Proposition through feedback-driven initiatives, with continued high engagement in Sonder, our holistic Employee Assistance Program app.

GROWTH

This year, our team grew by **8 per cent** welcoming our **70th staff member** in June 2025. On track to grow to a staff of **100 people** within the next year, we are building capacity while staying connected to our culture and purpose. Internal hiring remains a key focus, with **17 per cent** of all roles filled by promoting or reallocating existing staff.

To support this growth, in August 2024 we launched WAGEC's **new HRIS, Mabel**. Named after the many remarkable feminist 'Mabels' in herstory, this new system has already streamlined administration and compliance processes. Next year, it will expand to include performance development, workplace health and safety, and people analytics to help us better understand and support our team.



BELONGING

Building a workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities we work with remains central to WAGEC's vision. In October 2024, we were honoured to receive an **Inclusive Employer Award** from the Diversity Council of Australia (DCA) in recognition of our genuine commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

To be named an Inclusive Employer, organisations must exceed key national benchmarks in inclusion and employee experience. WAGEC's results **surpassed national averages** across team, leadership, and organisational levels, reflecting the culture we continue to build together.

CONNECTION

Our people are our most valuable resource. So as WAGEC grows, nurturing our culture and staying connected is a core priority.

In October 2024, the entire WAGEC team came together for a 'cultural cruise' with organisation **Tribal Warrior**, to connect with **First Nations history, storytelling, and Country** aboard the Mari Nawi. Guided by Aboriginal Elders and knowledge holders, the team explored Me Mel (Goat Island) and heard stories of the great spirit eel that created the harbour waterways.

WELLBEING

Feedback surveys throughout the year highlighted **the importance of flexible work** and initiatives to reduce stress and burnout. In response, P&C has begun exploring a **4 Day Week** model to reduce working hours to 80 per cent while maintaining full pay. This evidence-based approach has been proven worldwide to improve wellbeing, productivity, and retention.

In February 2025, we joined 4 Day Week Global in a 10-week training and research project to explore how **smarter work practices** can improve work-life balance. An internal working group was established to identify efficiencies and pilot changes that could pave the way for a more **sustainable, human-centred approach** to our work.

This is just the beginning. As we continue to grow, we remain focused on creating a workplace that is **inclusive, equitable, and caring** — one where every person feels connected to our vision, grounded in purpose, and supported to thrive.



WAGEC IS PROUD TO HAVE A HIGHLY ADAPTABLE AND VIBRANT WORKFORCE



INCLUSION DIRECTLY IMPACTS TEAM WELLBEING AND THE OUTCOMES WE DELIVER. DCA RESEARCH SHOWS THAT **EMPLOYEES IN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACES ARE 10 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE HIGHLY SATISFIED AND FOUR TIMES MORE LIKELY TO DELIVER EXCELLENT CLIENT SERVICE**. INCLUSION IS NOT JUST GOOD PRACTICE, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO THE SAFETY, DIGNITY, AND RECOVERY OF THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN WE SUPPORT.

Source: DCA Inclusion@Work Survey



OUR DONORS AND SUPPORTERS



Abacus Funds Management	Darling Harbour Rotary Club	MaCher Australia	Sana Jesudason
Adam Liberman	David Tanner	Macquarie University	Sandip Ganguly
Aesop	Dean Marjanovic	Marist Fathers Australia	Santalum Foundation
Alchin Long Group	Edward McCarthy	Maritime Union of Australia	Sara Wilson
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Connie Wong	Lorica Partners	Robyn Bore	
CWA Sydney City	Lorna Jane Pty Ltd		
	Lowenden Foundation		

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOW

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

CASHFLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	2025 \$	2024 \$
Receipts from grants, donations, contracts and rental	13,206,059	9,208,011
Payments to suppliers and employees	(10,828,432)	(9,243,900)
Interest received	61,880	164,659
Interest paid on leases	(13,566)	(8,648)
NET CASH FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	2,425,941	120,122
CASHFLOW FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES	2025 \$	2024 \$
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(58,174)	(126,859)
Increase in other financial assets	(4,803,891)	(939,195)
NET CASH USED IN INVESTING ACTIVITIES	(4,862,065)	(1,066,054)
CASHFLOW FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES	2025 \$	2024 \$
Repayments of lease liabilities	(183,758)	(224,064)
NET CASH USED IN FINANCING ACTIVITIES	(183,758)	(224,064)
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	(2,619,882)	(1,169,996)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year	6,026,395	7,196,391
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE END OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR	3,406,513	6,026,395
NON-CASH INVESTING AND FINANCING ACTIVITIES	2025 \$	2024 \$
Additions to the right-of-use assets	296,606	70,745

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	RESERVE FUNDS \$	ACCUMULATED SURPLUS \$	TOTAL \$
Opening Balance as at 1 July 2023	2,272,125	3,194,233	5,466,358
Surplus for the year*	–	526,494	526,494
Transfers between reserves and accumulated surplus*	214,345	(214,345)	–
Balance as at 30 June 2024*	2,486,470	3,506,382	5,992,852
Deficit for the year	-	(48,598)	(48,598)
Transfers between reserves and accumulated surplus	(730,256)	730,256	-
BALANCE AS AT 30 JUNE 2025	1,756,214	4,188,040	5,944,254

* Restated

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

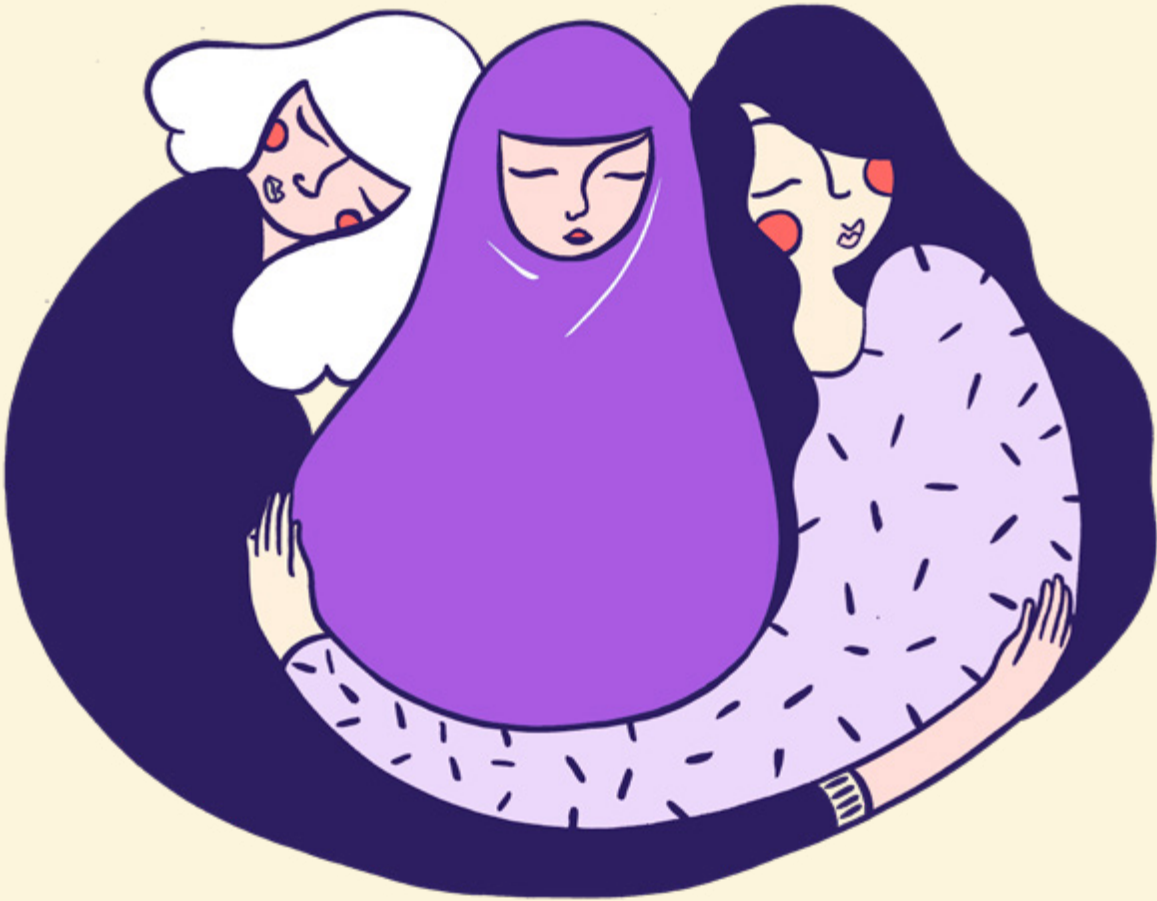
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

CURRENT ASSETS	2025 \$	2024 \$
Cash	3,406,513	6,026,395
Other financial assets	5,743,086	939,195
Trade and other receivables	170,198	50,788
Other assets	2,561	43,731
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	9,322,358	7,060,109
NON-CURRENT ASSETS	2025 \$	2024 \$
Other assets	12,703	9,075
Property, plant and equipment	221,644	295,366
Right-of-use assets	187,493	79,710
Total non-current assets	421,840	384,151
TOTAL ASSETS	9,744,198	7,444,260
CURRENT LIABILITIES	2025 \$	2024 \$
Trade and other payables	575,095	246,950
Contract liabilities	2,532,827	729,749
Lease liabilities	146,236	82,037
Employee provisions	424,611	328,929
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	3,678,769	1,387,655
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	2025 \$	2024 \$
Lease liabilities	48,648	–
Employee provisions	72,527	63,743
Total non-current liabilities	121,175	63,743
Total liabilities	3,799,944	1,451,408
NET ASSETS	5,944,254	5,992,852
EQUITY	2025 \$	2024 \$
Reserve funds	1,756,214	2,486,470
Accumulated surplus	4,188,040	3,506,382
TOTAL EQUITY	5,944,254	5,992,852

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2025

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Revenue	10,335,750	9,088,720
Other income	385,578	341,950
Employment costs	(7,512,700)	(6,500,983)
Property costs	(534,527)	(419,485)
Client costs	(456,123)	(368,195)
Community Engagement and Advocacy	(287,751)	(84,532)
Consultants	(306,432)	(89,370)
Insurance	(387,041)	(299,946)
Depreciation and amortisation	(8,648)	(344,269)
Other expenses	(8,648)	(797,396)
(Deficit)/Surplus before income tax expense	(8,648)	526,494
Income tax expense	–	–
(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	(48,598)	526,494
Other comprehensive income for the year	–	–
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	(48,598)	526,494



THANK YOU

We are so grateful to everyone who makes our work possible. Every conversation, contribution, and act of solidarity helps lay the groundwork for safer futures, because ending gender-based violence takes all of us.

[JOIN THE MOVEMENT AT WAGEC.ORG.AU](https://www.wagec.org.au) →



