



Women's & Girls'
EMERGENCY CENTRE

Women's & Girls' Emergency Centre

RESPECT | SUPPORT | PARTNERSHIP

ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18



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Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre (WAGEC) is a public benevolent institution and an incorporated entity, and is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC). It is endorsed to access the following tax concessions: GST Concession, FBT Exemption, Income tax Exemption and is endorsed as a Deductible Gift Recipient.

The activities of the organisation are regulated by relevant State and Commonwealth Laws, and the Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre Constitution and it is governed by an elected voluntary Board of Management.

Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre (WAGEC)
ABN 92622900342

RESPECT SUPPORT PARTNERSHIP

RESPECT encompasses acceptance, a non-judgmental attitude, understanding and sensitivity to the needs of the clients.

SUPPORT covers all the practical aspects of what the client would expect – knowledge, expertise, pathways, information, better outcomes and confidentiality.

PARTNERSHIP is key to our relationship with clients, partners, donors, supporters and the sector as we all work in collaboration across different levels to deliver positive outcomes and develop best practices.

Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognises continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders past, present and emerging.

What we do

Every night we accommodate **200 women** and children in crisis refuges and medium-term support housing. We provide **safety and support to women and children** when they need it most.

We provide enriching activities for children and young people. This includes **school holiday activities, family picnic days, school and homework support** and social support, all of which helps address the impact of adverse childhood experiences.

We support **mothers to be the best they can be** by providing parenting groups and programs and supported playgroups, which encourage people to connect with others.

We help women through their own **journey of recovery** by acknowledging their resilience, encouraging them to use their voice and providing a range of **therapeutic programs and activities**, such as art and music therapy.

We provide information and advice and rapid response to women and children in immediate need.

We encourage **financial growth and independence** by providing opportunities to engage in study and training, which enables women to upskill and re-enter the workforce.

We provide case management services. This involves the provision of **holistic emotional and practical support, goal setting, advocacy, service referral and co-ordination.**

We operate a **specialist domestic and family violence after hours service** to provide intensive and targeted support when **women are leaving violent situations.**

We work with women and their children to find housing. **We set them up with furniture and help them get settled into their new community.**

We work with our community to **provide training, capacity building and community development activities** and advocate for the rights of women and their children.



How we do it

Our client practice is based on a strengths-based, trauma informed model of care that places the people we work with at the centre of their own lives and decision making.

We acknowledge the strength and resilience our clients possess and **encourage them to be empowered** and build safe and thriving futures.

We are a **diverse and inclusive organisation** that celebrates and is **committed to being culturally safe** and appropriate in our practice.

We are **flexible, proactive, creative and professional** in all our work and we act with integrity in all that we do.

We are **transparent and accountable in the way we work** and govern our organisation. We care about our staff and volunteers. **We are always looking at ways to grow and do things better.**

As a grassroots organisation **we are committed to finding new and innovative ways to meet the emerging needs of our community.** We always place our clients at the centre of what we do and strive to support women and families to make transformational change in their lives.

We believe strongly in the **power of partnership and collaboration** and that the most significant social impact is created when we work together. With that in mind we work with a diverse range of organisations, businesses, community groups and individuals to achieve great things.



Why we do what we do

At WAGEC we believe violence against women and children is serious, prevalent and driven by gender inequality, but we also think it's preventable if we all work together.

Because **we believe that an Australia free of violence against women and their children** is an Australia where women are not only safe, but **respected, valued and treated as equals** in private and public life.

Because **we care about our community** and we care about the individuals in it.

Because **we believe housing is a human right** and that everyone deserves a safe and affordable place to live.

Because **we believe no one should have to experience homelessness**, especially not children and young people.

The Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre at a Glance



40 homes in the Inner West and surrounding areas for women and families.



10 single women in medium-term housing.

Medium-Term Supported Housing



WAGEC

Crisis Accommodation

This is short-term accommodation aimed at providing a safe refuge with high levels of holistic support to women and children who are homeless and or experiencing domestic violence.



Jeannie's
18 families



Holly Lodge
6 families



Malachite House
15 single women

Tailored Support Programs and Services

ACCESS

ACCESS is designed to empower women by providing them with pathways to education, training and employment opportunities.

THE WHOLE SELF

Therapeutic and creative support to strengthen and nurture recovery from trauma using a range of programs. These include yoga and meditation courses, art therapy, legal and immigration advice, along with parenting and child attachment programs.

SEED

SEED is a targeted program of support, aimed at meeting the social, emotional, educational and developmental needs of children and young people whose lives are impacted by homelessness and domestic and family violence.



After Hours Domestic Violence Service

After hours phone support is for women and children escaping domestic and family violence. We also have specialist domestic violence case managers to work with clients during business hours.

Redfern Shopfront

Our central support office in Redfern is often the first place women come when accessing our services and programs. We provide:

- Information and referral services
- Case managers and intake services
- Rapid response workers
- Emergency support
- A friendly face
- Outreach services.





PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Gabrielle
Martinovich

The Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre (WAGEC) continues to grow stronger through collaboration and partnerships. With our partners – St Vincent de Paul, Wesley Mission, Jewish House and Stepping Out – we continue to support women and families to find a safer and more certain future. Delivery of crisis and early intervention accommodation and support services to women and families who are experiencing, or are at risk of homelessness and/or domestic and family violence remains core to our work.

To strengthen our work, this year we launched our Reconciliation Action Plan in recognition of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders clients (see page 12). This plan is a starting point for our support of constitutional recognition, as expressed in the Uluru Statement from the Heart, and it considers the need to engage respectfully.

However, affordable housing remains a perennial problem for our clients. To date there has been no meaningful relief for our clients or people on low incomes looking for affordable and suitable homes in our major cities. Sydney stands out for its extraordinary crisis in affordability, and the increasing number of people who are homeless. It's a stark illustration of the need to act urgently to address the causes of homelessness, and the need to immediately provide more homes for people who are without one now.

A housing first approach to addressing homelessness ensures anyone who finds themselves without can have a home and the support to maintain it. The security of a home underpins the key drivers of homelessness, which include poverty, entrenched disadvantage, cultural exclusion, domestic violence and mental illness.

Changing the system to put people first, starting with those who are most disadvantaged, will increase the number of homes available to rent and will help re-shape the market. With this in mind, we joined the Everybody's Home campaign, which identifies the steps needed to be taken to end homelessness, so we can provide affordable homes to rent and buy for people on low incomes over the next 10 years.

Thanks to the dedication of our board, WAGEC is well placed for growth and a sustainable future. Our CEO, Helen Silvia, continues to progress our partnerships with government, business and housing providers to deliver positive outcomes and housing solutions. And our team continues to show compassion, enthusiasm and determination in finding solutions for our clients.

As we look ahead, we'll continue to build on these solid foundations by working in collaboration with business and state and federal governments to ensure every woman and family has a home. I thank you all for your continued support.



CEO'S REPORT

Helen Silvia

At the time of writing this report 63 women have been violently killed by male perpetrators in Australia. In many cases the murderer was the victim's partner, former partner or a man known to her.

Approximately one quarter of women in Australia have experienced at least one incident of violence by an intimate partner. While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women report experiencing over three times the rate of violence in the past 12 months than their non-Indigenous sisters. The 2016 census also revealed that there has been a 37% increase in homelessness across the state of NSW.

These bleak stats aren't just numbers, they have a human face and an adverse social impact that reverberates through to every corner of our community. And in the spirit of our founder, Jeannie Devine, WAGEC continues to advocate for the needs of the women, children and young people impacted by homelessness and violence.

This year we have focused our efforts on continuing to strengthen our client services along with developing our internal programs. I am particularly proud of the evolution of SEED, a unique program for children and young people that aims to ensure their social, emotional, educational and developmental needs are met. We've also been strengthening our capacity to be a culturally safe and appropriate organisation. Key areas of this work have included our enhanced response to the LGBTIQ communities and the development of our Reconciliation Action Plan.

Our client numbers continue to grow each year, which means more women, children and young people are receiving the assistance they need. None of this would be possible without the generous support we receive through fundraising, donations, in-kind support and volunteering. The myriad of amazing individuals, community groups and businesses that get involved and show their support is humbling, and we thank you.

I express my deepest gratitude to the WAGEC staff and the staff of our Alliance members. They're all incredibly creative, committed and willing to go that extra mile. WAGEC's culture, credibility and client outcomes rests on the shoulders of their hard work and dedication.

Of course, none of the work we do would be possible without the guidance, direction and support of our board. I'd like to give my sincere thanks to each board member for their leadership and valuable insights, and for so generously sharing their experience and skills in an effort to make WAGEC a stronger and more resilient organisation.

Finally, I would like to extend my deepest respect to the women, children and young people whose courage leads them through the doors of WAGEC. Their resilience and determination inevitably shines through as they move forward in the process of healing and recovery and beginning a new chapter in their lives.



TREASURER'S REPORT

Meera Iyer

I'm pleased to present my Treasurer's Report for the year ended 30 June, 2018. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the appropriate accounting standards and other mandatory professional standards and have been independently audited by Leah Russell, Senior Partner – Audit & Assurance, Crowe Horwath.

WAGEC has had another successful financial year of delivering services to clients. Following on from 2017, we have continued our focus on increased proportionate spending on client services, programs and activities to provide safe places for women and families impacted by the effects of domestic and family violence, homelessness and systematic disadvantage.

Our gross revenue for the year was \$4,075,932, an increase of 12% from the preceding year. In addition to the normal increase in government funding, we were successful in our applications for several infrastructure grants, which allowed us to complete a long-overdue upgrade of the kitchen facilities at one of our crisis refuge properties, along with a much needed upgrade of our Redfern office.

Donations received during the year amounted to \$78,518 – almost double our budget forecast – as a result of our team's great efforts. Generous grants from corporations and clubs enabled us to provide additional expenditure on clients to help empower them to make change. This included funding education scholarships, short-term courses and school holiday

programs, with no impact on our operations budget. Additional work will be undertaken in the coming year to expand our list of supporters as part of our strategic plan to be a strong, sustainable and trusted organisation. WAGEC has continued its collegiate approach to providing services, and we worked closely with our alliance member partners to continue developing greater efficiencies. The new alliance member agreements came into effect from 1 October 2017. Spending was closely monitored throughout the year and we came in within budget.

Our operating results for the year were affected by the following significant timing differences:

- Including expenditure relating to the grants received for property upgrade and school holiday programs brought to account as income in the 2017 financial year, as required under the accounting standards;
- Including as income grants received for client programs – the expenditure relating to these grants had not been incurred at 30 June 2018;
- Including as expenses amounts relating to client programs and consultants, where the expenditure was capitalised in 2017 and brought to account in 2018 Statement of Profit or Loss.

I'd like to thank all WAGEC staff for their compassion, inspiration and commitment. I'd also like to thank my fellow board members for their generosity and commitment to the ongoing success of our great organisation.



MEET THE BOARD



Gabrielle Martinovich
President

Gabrielle is the Director of Definitude Consulting. She's a facilitator and strategic advisor to senior executives in the government, infrastructure, utilities and not-for-profit sectors on innovation, strategy and service delivery transformation. She has worked at executive levels across corporate affairs, media, change and stakeholder engagement in the areas of social impact and environmental sustainability and is an alumnus of Social Leadership Australia.



Karen Elliff
Secretary

Karen is the Director of Fundraising and Development at the Black Dog Institute and Company Secretary of the Black Dog Institute Foundation. She began her career in the corporate sector and previously had sales, marketing and strategic roles at IBM and Canon. Broad marketing, communications and management skills, combined with a passion for community has seen her transition to the not-for-profit sector. Karen has worked in international aid with a particular focus on women's rights and medical research.



Elizabeth Wilkins

Elizabeth is the Director of Communications for Commerce. She's a C-Suite executive coach, business facilitator, strategic advisor, change management consultant and a corporate communications consultant. She is a pro-bono coach and facilitator for the Cerebral Palsy Alliance, and until recently was a board member for Children Out of Immigration Detention. She has subject matter expertise in the aged care, advertising and media industries and is a firm believer of lifelong learning.



David Allen
Vice-President

David is Wesley Mission's Executive Manager, Community and Family Care. He manages a range of programs that assist adults, families and young people under various government funding models, including Specialist Homelessness Services. His role also involves managing Child Protection Services, Disabilities Accommodation and Respite, Early Intervention and Prevention Programs for Children, Youth and Families, Financial and Gambling Counselling, Mental Health programs and Community Housing. He is acts as Treasurer on the board of Homelessness NSW.



Helen Deas

Helen currently operates a consulting business and has extensive experience across a diverse range of law enforcement areas, including the management of major crime, local policing, policy development, program implementation and evaluation. Key areas of her work have included sexual assault, child abuse, domestic violence and work with vulnerable populations. She is experienced in dealing with government departments and stakeholder groups, and she also volunteers on a number of boards.



Jacinta O'Connell
Finance & Risk Committee

Jacinta is a JP and Registered Tax Agent with more than 20 years' experience in the accounting profession. She consults to small and medium businesses and is well respected for providing recognised music, entertainment and sporting clients with strategic taxation, business and finance solutions. She spent three years as Finance Director on the board of the Sydney Kings and recently extended her business model to encompass working with businesses in the rapidly growing health and wellness industries.



Meera Iyer
Treasurer

Meera is a Senior Financial Services Executive and has broad experience in finance, operations and strategy with Citi, Westpac and CBA. Meera is passionate about her involvement in the not-for-profit sector assisting women. Meera's outstanding contribution to the financial governance of WAGEC was recognised in the 2017 Commonwealth Bank Not-For-Profit Treasurers' Awards Honour Roll.



Caroline Stewart

Caroline is a philanthropic leader with more than 25 years of corporate, legal, governance and not-for-profit experience. Caroline is CEO of the Ecstra Foundation and previously led the UBS Australia Foundation, a corporate private ancillary foundation. She is also a Council Member of Philanthropy Australia and Deputy Chair of Lenity Australia. Caroline holds a BA and is admitted as a Solicitor in NSW and the ACT. She has also completed the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) Company Directors Course.



Frances Atkins

Frances has a significant amount of experience in banking and finance, which has included advising senior management, boards and committees on a range of corporate and strategic matters. Frances also serves on the board of a specialist domestic violence service for women and families. Frances has participated in creating a range of programs aimed at supporting women and children over the past 14 years.



Client Services Report Katie Young

At the end of my 10th financial year at WAGEC I'm delighted to be able to report that it has been a creative and productive year. We have developed and implemented exciting new projects, programs, policies, practice guidelines and system support initiatives for our staff and the clients WAGEC walks alongside in their journey of homelessness and/or escaping domestic and family violence.

This year we've been able to focus more deeply on enhancing our services by reviewing our policies and procedures and ensuring they're more beneficial for everyone. We've also looked at how we can provide a more enriching and holistic approach to all of our clients. It has been a great chance to concentrate our efforts on the diverse communities we support and to remind ourselves of the importance of organisational culture, attitudes, values and beliefs. All of which mean WAGEC is an inclusive, safe and appropriate mainstream service. This process involved reviewing and updating WAGEC's organisational frameworks, systems and policies, right down to frontline practice.

Following are just a few of the highlights that WAGEC continued with, developed and initiated during the 2017/2018 financial year.

WOW Education

Through our ACCESS program, WAGEC and TAFE Outreach worked together to provide a great learning opportunity through the Working Opportunities for Women (WOW) program. WOW gave 14 women the chance to have a soft entry into either further education or career pathways. The program was run by an experienced and incredibly knowledgeable TAFE Outreach teacher, who was committed to understanding the unique needs of all the women we were supporting. She did an outstanding job of building the women's confidence while encouraging them to generate their own ideas of what is possible for them beyond their homelessness journey and/or experience of DFV. Childcare was provided and all the women who participated said they felt the program was a huge success.



Self-Care

A one-day Self-Care Workshop was delivered to our frontline service staff. The focus of the workshop was trauma-informed self-care, and it gave staff valuable information on how to best protect their own health and well-being. The training resonated strongly with the team, and many conversations were started about how to best implement a self-care attitude in their practice moving forward.





Proud Partnerships

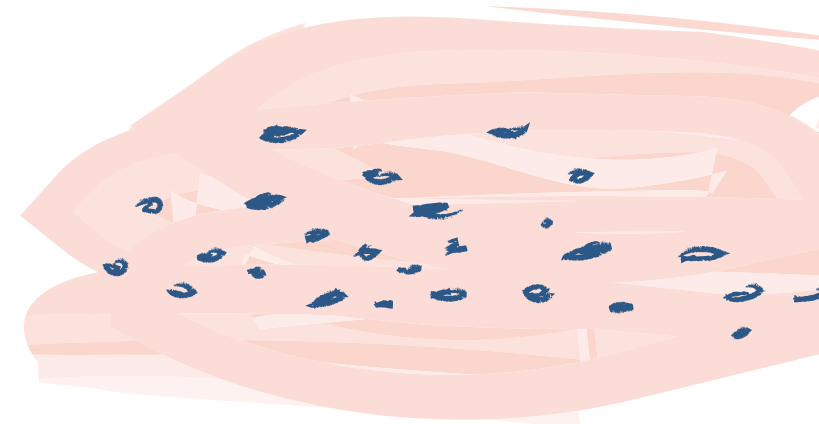
A formal working partnership with ACON was initiated thanks to a grant from The Aurora Group. This partnership has provided WAGEC with an opportunity to create and promote environments in our services that are visibly welcoming and inclusive of LGBTIQ people. Visible, welcomed LGBTIQ communities mean safer communities, and we're continuing to work towards creating positive, inclusive and much needed social change.

Child Safe

One of the priority areas for WAGEC over the coming years is to become a Child Safe Organisation. This will ensure we are not only child safe but also child friendly, as it's essential that we listen to and include the voices of the children and young people who access our services. WAGEC's Child Safe project has started and we are following the guidance of the Office of the Children's Guardian to develop practice guidelines to support what it means to be a Child Safe Organisation. The first step we took was identifying risks within all our services, which led to the development of our Child Safe Risk Management Strategy (CSRMS). The CSRMS ensures we create and maintain safer environments for all the children and young people we support.

Reconciliation Action Plan

This year WAGEC began its journey on the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) process. WAGEC's vision for reconciliation is deeply connected to our work in the space of women's homelessness and domestic violence. We recognise that there is an over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who access our service, and other homelessness and domestic violence services.

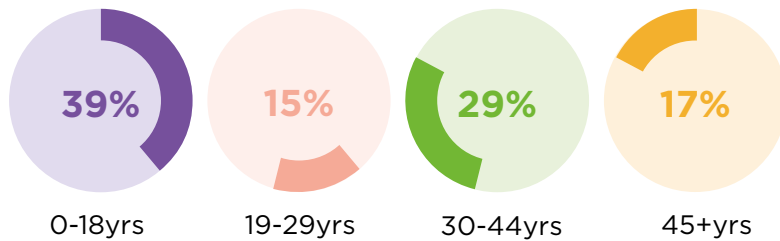


Leadership Development

This year we created a unique Leadership Residential Program for our management team. It was a way for WAGEC to continue to encourage staff to deliver on the great work we have been developing and implementing throughout the financial year. The ideas and discussions it generated continue to flow into our work.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Age breakdown of clients supported



1625
Total number of clients supported.

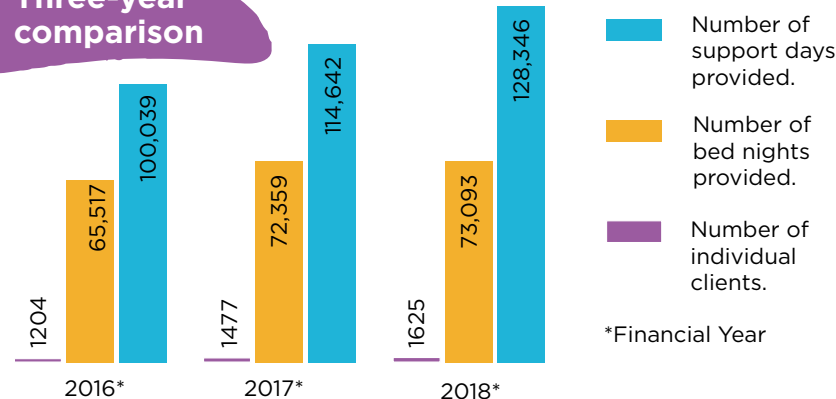
73,093
Total number of bed nights provided.



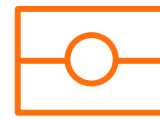
128,346

Total number of support days provided to clients in our services for 2017-2018.

Three-year comparison



Spotlight on our Inner City Women's Services



26%
Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.



14%
Percentage of clients who were rough sleepers prior to coming to our service.



35%
Percentage of single women accessing this service over the age of 45.

94 nights

Average number of nights women stayed in our crisis refuge.



23 weeks

Average length of stay in medium-term transitional housing for single women.



2959 hours

Number of hours volunteers committed to our service.



104 nights

Average length of stay in crisis accommodation for families.



74%

Clients who have maintained safe and secure housing since leaving WAGEC.



96%

Clients who reported they felt WAGEC staff were respectful and understanding of their cultural needs.



250%

Increase in referrals to our after-hours DV service since last financial year.

\$320,000

Total value of goods received.

\$209,895

Money provided for goods and services to clients to help them maintain tenancies or end their homelessness.

Because of Her, We Can

"Reconciliation is a vision for just and equitable Australia. This is achieved by improved race relations, equality and equity of opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, unity, institutional integrity and historical acceptance."

- Reconciliation Australia 2018

Over the past year we started the process of creating a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The theme for NAIDOC 2018 "Because of her, we can" resonated strongly with us as our vision for reconciliation is deeply connected to our work in the space of women's homelessness and domestic violence.

We recognise there is an over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who access our service and other homelessness and domestic violence services. There are also many more women, children and families who are affected by these issues. We view this over-representation as a symptom of the structural disadvantage and discrimination that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women face.

This year we were one of the 40 organisations that pledged our support

to address Aboriginal Homelessness by signing the Redressing Aboriginal Homelessness Accord, which was developed by the NSW SHS Aboriginal Reference Group. And we proudly support the Warawarni-gu Guma Statement on violence against women, which was delivered at the ANROWS (Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety) Conference in May 2018. We also support the Redfern Statement and constitutional reform for First Nations People as expressed in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

WAGEC recognises that Redfern is a place of significance to the Aboriginal community, as a site of civil rights and political action, as a strong, resilient and dynamic community and as a home to many families. As a mainstream service we believe it's our responsibility to learn and grow in our knowledge and connection to

Redfern. It's also our responsibility to learn about and share the history of all the areas that WAGEC operate in. We will do this by reaching out to the community to build awareness about how we can continue to make our services culturally appropriate and inclusive.

We are proud that WAGEC has always been a place where the Aboriginal community, especially women and their children, have felt safe. We're also proud of the fact that those within the Aboriginal community continue to recommend WAGEC to their friends and family when they need support.

We also acknowledge the distrust of social services that may exist within the Aboriginal community because of historical practices and injustices, and the contribution of this to the over-representation of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care today. As a community service it is our responsibility to be aware of the trauma that can be caused by organisations and systems and to continue to reflect on our current practice.

WAGEC can contribute to the process of Reconciliation by working to reduce homelessness and domestic violence in the lives of Aboriginal women, children and families.

Our vision is for this impact to be felt in the broader community by reducing intergenerational disadvantage and increasing opportunities. We will achieve this through listening to our local communities, our staff, and all the people we are privileged enough to work alongside.



Our Community

People, places and partnerships play an important role in our work. By reaching out to different communities and collaborating with others we are able to offer a wider range of services to create more meaningful opportunities for all of our clients. Here are a few of the projects we were involved with.



A visit from the Governor General

In November, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd) Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and Her Excellency Lady Cosgrove visited Jeannie's, one of our crisis refuges. Their Excellencies received a tour of the refuge, followed by an afternoon tea and a visit with some of our clients, staff, and board members. His Excellency commented on the warmth he felt at Jeannie's and acknowledged how thankful he is for services like ours.

One of the women who was staying at Jeannie's at the time with her young son told His Excellency: "When I came here I was hopeless and now I'm hopeful, and it's so nice to have someone like you visiting. I really hope to see you again".



Milk Create Theatre

Milk Crate Theatres uses performing arts to change the story of homelessness and we worked with them on a number of projects both in their studio and on WAGEC premises. A school holiday workshop enabled older children and teens to get involved and an onsite project with mums and younger children was also a great success. Expressing yourself through a creative arts projects is a powerful way to feel heard, and everyone involved in the various projects said they enjoyed having a creative outlet.

Kitchen Creators

With a grant from the Australian Government Stronger Communities Programme (Round 3), through the office of Craig Laundry MP, one of our crisis refuges now has a brand new kitchen. This means the mums who are staying at the property and caring for their children now have access to better storage and equipment, which is making meal times in this busy kitchen a much happier and smoother process. It took a huge group effort to get the kitchen finished, and WAGEC hosted a morning tea for Craig Laundry MP, Evolve Housing, Family and Community Services (FACS) and Willowdene staff as a celebration of the kitchen upgrade. The results will be enjoyed by families for years to come.



Images by Georgia Blackie.

The Social Outfit

The Social Outfit is more than just another fashion label. From their retail store and workshop in Newtown they provide employment and training in the fashion industry to people from refugee and new migrant communities. And like WAGEC, they believe that tapping into women's creativity can lead to empowerment and social inclusion, which is what led us to collaborating on the Fashion Pathways project. Over a 10-week period, WAGEC clients learnt industrial sewing and micro-enterprise skills, exploring patchwork techniques and learning from Australian fashion icons like Linda Jackson. All of the women who participated created their own unique pieces, which were sold at The Social Outfit's retail store. The proceeds from the sale of each item were given back to the women themselves.



Before



After

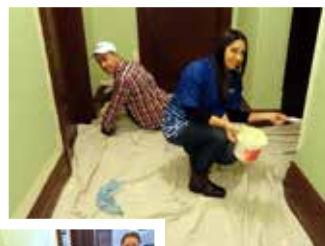
Our Community



Multiplex's extreme makeover

Having a roof over your head is one thing, but having a roof over your head that actually makes you feel like you're valued and that you're truly part of the community is a completely different story, and it's one we wanted to create. Thanks to a collaboration with Multiplex WAGEC has managed to turn a dated space into a much more welcoming refuge.

Over a six month period, Multiplex's Block 11 team worked with WAGEC staff to put together a plan to create a more welcoming space for everyone. The tired kitchen got a makeover, dark hallways and rooms were turned into bright welcoming spaces and the staircase was transformed. The work has been valued at more than \$50,000, and we'd just like to say a huge thanks for all the hours and hard work the team put in to the project.



Habitat For Humanity

Habitat for Humanity NSW visited with a group of volunteers to help us create an even more inviting environment in one of our refuges. In just one afternoon Habitat for Humanity and the ITW Group worked non-stop and made an amazing difference to the property - they even persevered and worked through the rain.



Lendlease Community Day

More than 40 staff from Lendlease came to our biggest crisis refuge to help clean up the property. The Lendlease employees built play equipment, landscaped the garden, organised storage and performed general maintenance, all of which helped make it an even safer and more welcoming space.



Two Good Co

Two Good Co provides food and lifestyle products to domestic violence refuges around Australia. And this year we partnered with Two Good on a number of projects including the LoveAnotherMother Mother's Day campaign. Throughout the campaign, each time a Two Good care pack filled with Australian made toiletries was purchased, a pack of equal value was donated to WAGEC, and we also received the profits on each sale. More than 30 women staying in our crisis accommodation services received a luxury pack, and more than \$700 was raised. We were also involved in the EquiTABLE dinners. When you purchase a ticket to one of these fine-dining events you're also buying a place at the table for someone who might not otherwise be able to afford such a memorable food experience.

Case Studies

There is no typical person or family that accesses WAGEC's services, but we hope the following stories can provide a snapshot of the complex nature of homelessness and some of the events that can lead people to contact us. We also hope they give an insight into the amazing women and families we work with.

Mariam

When Mariam first came in contact with WAGEC she was escaping a horrific home environment. Mariam and her three daughters, ranging in age from a toddler to a teenager, had been isolated and violently abused by their husband and father.

An initial rapid response was needed to get them to safety, so Mariam and her daughters were provided with temporary accommodation in a motel, which was not ideal, but it at least enabled them to get away from the violence they were facing.

Safety is always a priority and WAGEC case managers worked with Mariam to clarify her AVO and walked her through the complicated court processes. We also provided the family with support and basics, such as food, and as soon as a vacancy become available they were welcomed into our crisis refuge, Holly Lodge.

Mariam was forced to manage the care of her three daughters with no income due to her visa status. She wasn't entitled to basics like Medicare and education and had no rights to work. One of the most challenging things WAGEC and Mariam had to deal with was getting the girls into school. We worked for months with Mariam and the Department of Education to get the girls enrolled in school.

During this time the girls were searching for things to do, which is when the creativity of the case managers came into play. They used workbooks to help keep the girls up to date and suggested documentaries they could watch and generally tried to keep them motivated. The families social and

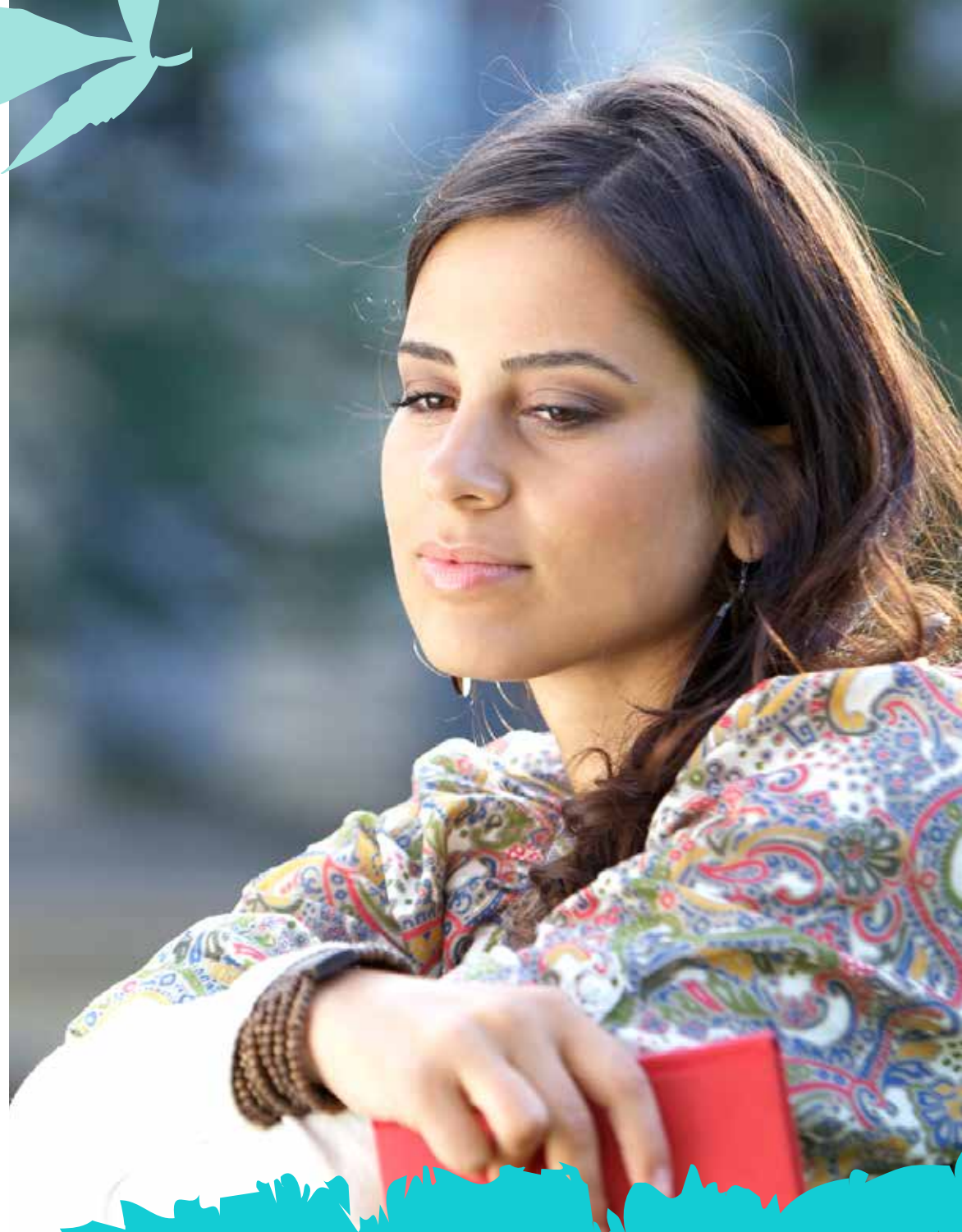
living skills had been severely impacted by the isolation and trauma they'd experienced, so WAGEC staff supplied them with Opal cards and encouraged them to find fun, cheap activities to help ease the tension.

WAGEC always works using a trauma-informed care model. So referrals for counselling, play therapy and intensive work with the Child and Young Person Case Manager have all been part of our time with the family. Mariam and her daughters have each had the chance to connect with staff according to their own needs – a teenager has very different priorities from a young child.

Mariam has suffered extreme trauma, which impacted on her mental health and her parenting skills, so she attended a Circle of Security course (which was funded by Frostbland). Mariam enjoyed learning about how to strengthen her attachment to all three girls, along with learning better coping skills.

The older girls are both now in school and are loving the chance to be just like other kids their age. They have also been regular participants of our school holiday program (which was funded by the Westpac Community Grant), and important foundations are being laid that will help the girls cope when they move on from WAGEC. Mariam's youngest daughter is attending our weekly playgroup and is working with a speech therapist and a play therapist.

The whole family is feeling more settled and more able to cope with the every day, which is something none of them imagined when they first came through our doors.



Case Studies

Josie

Josie, who's in her early 20s, was pregnant and couch surfing when she walked through our doors. She was escaping her partner's violent outbursts and had been forced to sleep at friend's houses to ensure her and her unborn baby's safety.

Josie's pregnancy wasn't easy, the threat of violence hung over her and she was undecided about what to do when her baby was born. Family and Community Services (FACS) were also involved due to concerns about her home situation and the impacts it might have on her unborn child.

When Josie first came into our crisis refuge Jeannie's she was wasn't sure if she wanted to keep her baby once it was born. Josie was traumatised and we worked with her in a holistic and supportive way encouraging her to make her own decisions. Josie decided she really wanted to keep her baby and was linked in with a perinatal parental social worker and a psychologist from the local hospital. WAGEC worked closely with the team at the hospital and supported Josie as her pregnancy progressed.

When her healthy baby girl was born they both returned to live at Jeannie's, where WAGEC staff provided support. She was also linked in with the nurse-led Home Visiting Program, which is run by the Sydney Local Health District. This meant a nurse was able to visit her regularly and she was taught basic parenting skills, such as bathing, sleeping routines, feeding and the

importance of attachment, all of which can be overwhelming for any new mum, let alone a young mum like Josie who's experienced extreme violence and trauma. But with lots of support Josie flourished, and a happy mum led to a very happy baby.

Josie's confidence in her own skills meant there was a point when she felt ready to attend a TAFE Outreach program, which is aimed at giving women career and study skills. This is part of our ACCESS program and is designed to give women the opportunity to take control of their own lives and to give them the chance to see they really are capable of doing anything.

Throughout this time Josie remained drug free and there has been no risk of harm to her baby. WAGEC staff loved watching her grow as a person as her confidence and enthusiasm for life returned. Free from violence and learning to cope with her traumatic past meant she was ready to step away from crisis accommodation.

With WAGEC's support, Josie accessed the government's Start Safely scheme, which provides short to medium-term financial support for people escaping domestic or family violence. And with that assistance in place, Josie and her daughter moved into private rental accommodation. WAGEC continued to work with Josie while she settled in to ensure she was linked to all the services she needed. And since starting over on her own Josie has continued to thrive, as has her baby girl.



Anne

Anne is 67 and had never imagined she would end up needing the services of an organisation like WAGEC. When she buzzed on the door of our Redfern office, she headed inside with her suitcase in her hand and tears in her eyes. Anne had been living at a friend's house since being evicted a few months earlier. She had been unable to keep up with the rental increases in the apartment she had lived in for almost 10 years.

Anne is single and doesn't have any children and has always managed on her own while working as a teacher's aide, a job she truly loved. Since retiring without a huge superannuation fund behind her, life in Sydney had become increasingly difficult.

Living in her friend's house was only ever a temporary reprieve from homelessness, so here she was at WAGEC's office - hungry, tired and filled with shame. She had never thought she would need to access a service like ours, especially after more than 40 years of work and dedicating her life to helping others.

She was thankful for her good health, but also terrified of a time in the future when things

might become more difficult. The fear and shame were having a huge impact on her mental health and she knew she had to turn to someone for advice, assistance and a safe space to sleep for the night.

Anne was provided a room at our single women's refuge. She initially found it hard to settle in as it was a situation she had never imagined she would be in. Living in crisis accommodation had not been high on her list of retirement dreams. However, after a short time, Anne soon found she enjoyed talking with the onsite case managers and worked at making her room a space that she felt more comfortable in.

Anne is still in the refuge while WAGEC works with her on the process of applying for housing, as moving into an affordable private rental isn't a particularly easy task for a 67-year-old woman in Sydney. She says she would love to work, but at 67 that's not really an option. She is hoping to access some suitable housing in the future, but for the moment she is just enjoying not having to think about where she will lay her head each night. Anne's story really highlights the need for more affordable housing options for older women.

*Names have been changed to protect privacy.

Fundraising Partners

WAGEC works with individuals, community groups and a range of diverse organisations to raise money to help us create better opportunities for everyone who accesses our services. These partnerships not only assist with financial needs, they also help raise awareness and bring much needed attention to the issues of homelessness and domestic and family violence. The creativity and generosity of the people we work with continues to inspire us and we look forward to working on future initiatives.



Top CHOICE

The brilliant team at CHOICE (Australia's leading consumer advocacy group) partners with WAGEC regularly to donate test goods such as washing machines, fridges or toasters to our clients. Setting up a household is an expensive business, but this initiative continues to help ease this burden for many of our clients. CHOICE staff also personally donate a lot of time and money to WAGEC. Each year CHOICE holds an Annual Market Day, which involves staff making and selling items they have created themselves. This year's market day goods included everything from jewellery and pottery to pickles along with many other delights.

There was an incredible amount of talent on show as staff bought and sold from each other with all the proceeds making their way to WAGEC. The hard work and thought put into this day is impressive, but it's not all that CHOICE staff do for us. They also donate money from a monthly morning tea coin collection and have a workplace giving initiative in place. All of which make a massive difference to the lives of the women and children we work alongside.



Stevie Rodgers and his cast and crew

Creating community awareness around domestic and family violence and the devastating impacts it has on our society is a part of our everyday work at WAGEC, but when people from outside the organisation step up and create different ways for the message to get out we are always very grateful. One person who continues to do amazing work in bringing awareness to the community is Actor/Playwright Stevie Rodgers. His play *King of Pigs* debuted at the Old Fitz Theatre in Darlinghurst to rave reviews earlier this year.

At the end of each performance the cast collected donations from the audience, which also led to important discussions about how to end domestic and family violence. During the play's one month run, the cast, Stevie and Red Line Productions raised an incredible \$9610, all of which will be used to create opportunities for the women and families impacted by DFV. The show was a great success and WAGEC is proud to have Stevie and the cast and crew as supporters of our work.

We think the *Sydney Morning Herald's* John Shand said it best when talking about domestic violence in his review of *King of Pigs*, "Were road rage this bad, we'd have stamped it out. Somehow."





The Dynamic Duo

When Rory and Gina were planning their wedding they decided it was better to give than to receive. So instead of guests bringing them presents they probably didn't need they asked their friends and family to donate to WAGEC instead, and donate they did! Rory and Gina set up a fundraising page and along with sharing the love on their glorious wedding day they also shared \$5000 with WAGEC. We wish them a long and happy life together, as do all the women and children who will benefit from their thoughtful gesture.



The Darlings

The Rotary Club of Darling Harbour (The Darlings) put on a fabulous fundraising event, "A Night in Cuba", which was a huge success. The money raised went towards TAFE scholarships for two clients. One of the women enrolled in a Diploma of Community Services and the other is working on her Diploma of Software Development.



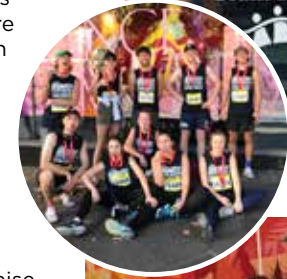
Beauty Bonus

Frostbland markets and distributes a range of beauty products, and thanks to its generosity, we've been able to fund an intensive 10-week parenting programs for mothers who have left situations of domestic and family violence. Frostbland also gifted us with Sebamed skin and baby care products.



Born To Run

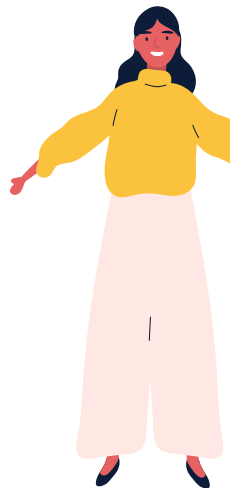
The Australian Heritage Hotel in The Rocks is more than just a nice place to drink, eat and stay, it's also a hotbed of fundraising activity. The Hotel's team donated more than \$13,000 when they ran the SMH Half Marathon. In the lead up to the race hotel staff held meat raffles, charity keg nights and a host of other activities all in an effort to raise as much money as possible to help women and families affected by domestic violence and homelessness. They're true heroes in our eyes and we were honoured to have them support our work.



Giving Hope

Mother's Day can be a tough time when you're living in a crisis refuge with your children, but the incredible team at Westpac pulled together and donated \$1000 in gift cards to our mums. We had 60 mums living in our crisis and medium-term accommodation during Mother's Day and they were able to spoil themselves a little with this generous donation.

Westpac also gave us a \$10,000 community grant, which was put towards our SEED program to help support children and young people in our school holiday programs.



OUR SUPPORTERS

OUR FUNDERS



OUR ALLIANCE PARTNERS



OUR DONORS

- Aesop
- Airbnb
- Amelie Housing
- Australian Heritage Hotel
- Balmain Barn Dance
- Balmain Girls Club
- Big W, Top Ryde
- Bingo Industries
- Bondi Icebergs Club
- Bonds
- Botany View Hotel
- Bridge Community Housing
- Bunnings
- Burwood Council
- CBA Graduate Team
- Chippo Film Festival
- CHOICE
- Cirkus Quirkus
- City of Sydney Club Grants
- City Tatterstalls Club
- Club Burwood
- Commonwealth Bank Australia
- Concord Hospital
- Crabtree & Evelyn
- Craig Laundry MP
- Darling Harbour Rotary Club (The Darlings)
- Domestic Violence NSW
- Dr Roebuck's Cosmetics
- Ecclesia Housing
- Event Cinemas
- Every Little Bit Helps
- Evolve Housing
- Eziway Payroll
- For The People
- Frostbland
- Grace and Taylor
- Habitat for Humanity
- Hassos & Associates
- Hidden Door
- Hillsong City Care
- Homelessness NSW
- House of Quirky
- IKEA
- Jane Brown Interiors
- Jenny Leong MP
- Knit 4 Charities
- K&T Legal
- Lendlease
- Lady Hampshire
- M Legal
- M.A.D. Woman Foundation
- McCullough Robertson Lawyers
- Metro Community Housing
- Minter Ellison
- Moskos
- Multiplex
- NADA
- Nature's Workshop
- NCIE
- Newscorp
- Oranges and Sardines Foundation
- Pacific Magazines
- Packforce
- Perpetual Blooms
- Phonographic Performance Company of Australia
- Pyrmont Community Centre
- Qantas
- Ralph Lauren
- Red Kite
- Red Line Productions
- Sacred Heart Church
- Salvation Army
- Share the Dignity
- Spotless
- St George Community Housing
- St. George
- Stevie Rodgers
- Sydney Period Project
- Sydney Story Factory
- Sydney University Women's College
- TAFE Outreach NSW
- Tanya Plibersek MP
- The Behavioural Architects
- The Social Outfit
- Tillman Park Early Learning Centre
- Two Good Co
- Unearthed Crystals
- Vibe Hotel Rushcutters Bay
- Vincent de Luca Cr
- We All Care
- Wesley Community Housing
- Westpac
- Westpac Foundation
- Willowdene
- Wrap With Love

