

WOMEN'S
AND GIRLS'
EMERGENCY
CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT

2020
- 21



EMMA ISMAWI

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT **OF COUNTRY**

WAGEC acknowledges the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. WAGEC works on the lands of the Gadigal and Wangal people and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

WAGEC also recognises the inter-generational trauma and structural racism that colonial Australia has and continues to inflict on first nations people and our position within a system whose history is one of removal, oppression and racism.

We pay tribute to the generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who have led, and continue to lead, the way in creating safe futures for women and children and safe spaces for the community. We acknowledge their strength and resilience.

Australia was, is and always will and be Aboriginal land.



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-profits 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

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INTRODUCTION

‘Enough is enough’ and ‘herstory is the truth’ are the phrases that defined our collective fight for equality, justice and safety for women in Australia this past year. Joined by communities across Australia and empowered by survivors who were brave enough to tell their story, WAGEC, on the weekend before International Women’s Day 2021, marched the streets of Sydney, Gadigal Land, to call for the end of violence against women in all its forms. As we marched, strengthened by the generations of women who came before us, two questions permeated: was change finally coming? Should we feel overwhelmed or hopeful at the enormous task at hand?



For 44 years WAGEC has worked to support women and children impacted by domestic and family violence, homelessness, and systemic disadvantage. Community collaboration has always been important in creating the necessary networks to support this work.

This past year, we have focused our attention on these community networks to address the gendered drivers of violence and to stop violence happening in the first place. For WAGEC the enthusiasm of our community to join the movement to end gender-based violence in a generation keeps us hopeful. We know we are stronger together and this year’s 2020-21 Annual Report is a reflection of that.

We're creating

**SAFE FUTURES
FOR WOMEN
AND FAMILIES by
ENDING GENDER-
BASED VIOLENCE
IN A GENERATION**

MEET THE BOARD



Elizabeth Wilkins
Chair

Elizabeth has worked as a company director for 23 years as well as a board member of other NFP organisations. Her previous business career spans senior executive roles in both publicly listed and private companies, and as consultant to other NFP organisations in aged care, disability services, family services, and community services. She runs her own business providing executive coaching to senior people, business facilitation and leadership development, strategic advice, change management and corporate communications consulting. Elizabeth holds a Masters of Commerce (E-Commerce), an MBA and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. She has served on the WAGEC board since 2016.



David Allen
Vice Chair

David is Wesley Mission's Executive Manager, Community and Family Care. He currently manages a range of community programs including housing, child protection and family and youth targeted early intervention program, financial and gambling counselling and mental health. David has over 10 years of executive management experience with Wesley Mission and over 24 years of experience working in the community development sector. David was on the board of Homelessness NSW as Treasurer from 2007 until 2019.



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 2017 in the CBA's Not-For-Profit Treasurers' Awards Honour Roll.



Clare Gardiner Barnes
Ordinary Board Member

Clare was the Head of Strategy, Planning and Innovation at Infrastructure NSW. In her role, Clare supported the construction sector with the delivery of government projects and provided independent advice to the NSW government on strategic infrastructure planning priorities, issues and opportunities. Clare also held board positions at the NSW Telco Authority and Roads Australia. Before taking on infrastructure leadership roles, Clare worked in various government executive positions including Queensland Education and was the Chief Executive of the Department of Children and Families in the NT. Clare is an advocate for women in leadership and workforce flexibility.



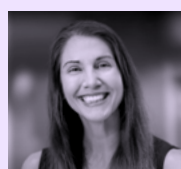
Claudine Lyons
Ordinary Board Member

Claudine is the CEO of Claudine Lyons Consulting. She is a public policy specialist with almost 20 years' experience in the public and NFP sectors of Australia and the United Kingdom. Claudine has worked in a range of sectors including health, education, housing, planning and industry regulation. Claudine is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. She has previously been on the board of two SHS and is a former Vice President of the NSW Branch of the Institute of Public Administration Australia. Some of Claudine's health sector work has been published in academic journals.



Caroline Stewart
Ordinary Board Member

Caroline is a philanthropic leader with over 25 years of corporate, legal, governance, diversity and not-for-profit experience. Caroline is the CEO of the Ecstra Foundation, a grant making organisation committed to building the financial resilience and capability of all Australians. She previously led the UBS Australia Foundation, a Corporate Private Ancillary Foundation. Caroline is also on the board of Philanthropy Australia, the peak body for giving in Australia and is a member of the Audit & Risk Management Committee.



Claire Beattie
Ordinary Board Member

Claire is a proud Yorta Yorta woman and prominent senior NSW Public Servant with over 21 years of experience in government across agencies such as Transport, Treasury and Education. Claire has been a three-time finalist in the Premier's Awards, a Finalist in the Australian of the Year, Young Australian of the Year Awards and Finalist in the Women's Agenda Awards. Claire is an advocate for young people and the community and embodies the spirit of inclusivity and diversity.



Helen Deas
Ordinary Board Member

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 also volunteers in a number of organisations. Outside of this, Helen is active in sport and exercise, is a surf lifesaver and proud mum of two gorgeous girls.



Vaughan Stibbard
Ordinary Board Member

Vaughan is strategic leader and entrepreneur, with a career spanning banking, insurance and management consulting, construction and business transformation who is currently consulting to public and private sector, specialising in developing the strategic case for businesses and leading the realisation of the objectives. Vaughan's interest in the NFP sector was formed through the values of his family which focused on the health, education and safety of women and children. Vaughan has a young family, an interest in travel and actively pursues ocean paddling and team sports.



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

ELIZABETH WILKINS

2021 has been a testing year for most of us, but particularly so for the most vulnerable in our communities. Even in the best of times, WAGEC's work - to combat and prevent the ravaging impacts of domestic and family violence, homelessness and gender inequality on women and children - is complex and fraught with uncertainty.

Yet against the complicated backdrop of a global COVID-19 pandemic driven by the virulent Delta strain, the management and staff of WAGEC have continued to demonstrate that fortitude, resilience, empathy, care, pragmatism and innovation are the very qualities that solve big problems in times of great crisis. As the situation for victim-survivors of domestic abuse has worsened during this difficult time, the relevance and importance of WAGEC's mission and work has exponentially grown. During the Board's strategic planning process earlier in the year, 8 key strategic objectives were earmarked for the next 3 years which aim to focus the organisation's efforts on broadening our reach and deepening WAGEC's impact in the communities we currently serve or seek to serve. Further, our aim is to provide the broader sector with evidence and examples of service models

and facilities that provide long-lasting change and that are models of global best practice.

In my first year as Chair of WAGEC I wish to extend the Board's deep and sincere gratitude to our CEO, Helen Silvia, and her amazing team of leaders and staff. We thank them all for their individual and combined efforts and the commitment shown every day to WAGEC's work. Most importantly we acknowledge their immense care and attention to our clients, those women and children who are WAGEC's reason for being.

Despite the challenges of 2021, it has been a truly exciting and rewarding year for the organisation, as WAGEC's management and staff have continued to find innovative and positive ways to respond to our clients in COVID-19 lockdown. WAGEC has seamlessly offered frame-breaking services to hundreds of clients, profoundly changing lives, while developing and rolling out advocacy strategies which provide a voice for those who need it most.

Incredible progress has been made in 2021 to extend WAGEC's client reach and to source and improve more crisis accommodation facilities throughout Sydney and beyond, ensuring shelter and safety to more women and children. During the year, I had the privilege of taking a sneak preview of the beautiful refurbishment of one of WAGEC's transitional homes, just before our clients returned to their residence. I feel sure they were as impressed as I was. This upgrade was generously undertaken by Multiplex, who donated time, effort and materials to house these 10 clients.

This year WAGEC has substantially expanded and further developed frontline client services. Included in this work is WAGEC's SEED Program, providing specific social, emotional, educational and developmental support to children, young people, mums and carers who have experienced trauma. The program is gathering positive acceleration and momentum and is achieving measurable and sustained results for young people who may otherwise fall through the cracks. The successful ACCESS Program continues to go from strength to strength, with trained mentors working with clients so they can find work, get trained or receive practical coaching or advice on managing their finances. None of these programs would be possible without the assistance of our generous, loyal corporate and group donors.

Although there has been renewed focus in 2021 on the plight of victims of domestic and family violence, quite simply there is not enough government funding available to respond to the growing demand and need for services for women and children in crisis.

WAGEC's outstanding fundraising efforts this year have provided a springboard for the planned strategic growth and this can be further capitalised on in the coming year. Funds derived from the highly successful Walk For WAGEC have been a case in point. This year's event held in May raised three times more than the previous event held in 2019 stemming from hundreds of WAGEC supporters. Along with a focussed approach to donations from philanthropic groups, WAGEC will continue to ensure a sustainable financial future, no matter the political landscape.

The Board's role at WAGEC is straightforward. It is to continue to provide strong governance, identify opportunities, risks and challenges early, and to support and add meaningful value to WAGEC management's efforts to grow the organisation. When we all play our part, WAGEC has the best chance to help create a safe future for all women and families.



CEO REPORT

HELEN SILVIA

It is with immense pride and gratitude that I provide this report on WAGEC's 2020-21 activities with our organisation in a position of strength and good health, despite the challenges of a second year of living and working through COVID-19.

We have thrived through these uncertain times by drawing on some of our enduring strengths; the generosity of our community of donors, volunteers and supporters, our staff team remaining steadfastly committed to client outcomes, our partners recognising the need to do more and all of us rallying around the desire to create safer futures for women and children. Our principal funding partner, Department of Communities and Justice has also provided WAGEC and the sector ongoing support, and resources in recognition of the unprecedented nature of COVID-19.

WAGEC's client services and programs have continued to operate throughout the year with COVID-19 risk management strategies integrated into our daily practice. Some of our services are located within areas that became designated as 'areas of concern', and some staff reside in these areas too, which added an extra layer of complexity to our work that our staff, clients, and volunteers were all quick to adapt to.

Despite these challenges, I am pleased to report on some key achievements that will provide new and improved client services for years to come.

- WAGEC's ACCESS Mentoring Program will expand to serve more women across the next two years through grants from the NSW Government, Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and corporate and philanthropic support.
- We will increase our focus on the recovery from trauma through our clinical psychology services funded by a generous philanthropic grant, and various small grants and private donations that ensure our specialist program for children and young people, SEED, can continue.
- Our commitment to providing the highest quality of care to our clients is reflected in the development of a bespoke model of therapeutic care, WAGEC's CARE Model. This approach will strengthen our impact and outcomes, support a strong and resilient workforce, and ultimately benefit the women and children we support. This project has been made possible by a generous philanthropic gift.
- Walk for WAGEC tripled in size and we will continue to grow this as a flagship event that not only brings our communities together to help end gender-based violence but raises much needed funds that support our unfunded programs.
- We are now growing and refining our work in primary prevention of gender-based violence through our corporate, philanthropic and government partners.
- We have outgrown our head office and moved to a new office on George Street, Redfern. This is a transformational move for WAGEC providing space for growth, expansion in our work with communities and most importantly increased safety, and trauma-informed services to clients.
- Finally, throughout the year WAGEC has developed our next strategic plan which will guide our work through to 2025.

None of these achievements would be possible without the unwavering belief of the WAGEC volunteer board with our new Chair Elizabeth Wilkins, and our leadership team aligning our hopes with action, the staff team's commitment to clients and the trust and investment of our community. Every day I am honoured and humbled to lead and work for such a brave and committed organisation.

For all our achievements and change amid the pandemic, we must not overlook the things that have remained the same. A lack of affordable and long-term housing options remains one of the biggest barriers to our work and to achieving secure, safe futures for women. We have continued to support our sector colleagues in advocating for more social housing and continue to call for the need to apply an intersectional gendered analysis to State's social, community and private housing policy. Without access to safe and affordable housing, women remain trapped in temporary supported accommodation and are unable to rebuild their lives from trauma, provide security for their children, break cycles of disadvantage and live safe and independent lives. This is compounded by the low rates of income support payments, limited access to mental health services and affordable childcare, and the difficulties in navigating a complex service system under constant pressure.

It has been a challenging few years for us all. Despite this, I cannot be anything but filled with hope and optimism for the work of WAGEC, the generosity of our supporters, and the enduring strength that comes from women helping women and our community recognising that we are in this and stronger together.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank you for your commitment to WAGEC.



TREASURER'S REPORT

MEERA IYER

It's a pleasure to present my Treasurer's Report for the year ended 30 June 2021.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the appropriate accounting standards and other mandatory professional standards and have been independently audited by Alison Swansborough, Associate Partner – Audit & Assurance, Crowe Australasia. WAGEC has elected to early adopt certain Accounting Standards and Interpretations as detailed in the notes to the financial statements, however this has not had a material impact on the financial statements.

Despite the continuing uncertain economic times and the impacts of COVID-19 WAGEC has had another very successful financial year. Our gross revenue for the year was \$6,491,431, an increase of 27.4% from the preceding year. Overall government funding increased by 19.3% as a result of our applications for grants to fund specific projects and in response to COVID-19, although core government funding only increased by 1.8%. Again, the efforts of our amazing fundraising team resulted in significant growth in our grant and donation revenue.

Donations and non-government grants amounted to \$1,638,348 – an increase of approx. 58% over the prior year. The generous support we have received has enabled us to continue to deliver programs designed to help empower our clients to make change, fund an in-house psychologist, fund educational scholarships, and provide short-term courses, with no impact on our operations budget. We have continued our focus on being a strong and sustainable organisation and the generous ongoing and recurring support of our donors is fundamental to what we do.

There was no major capital expenditure during the financial year – spending was closely monitored during the year and we came in within budget. As from 30 September 2020 WAGEC terminated another two of its financial agreements with our alliance member partners to achieve greater efficiencies and savings on duplicated overhead expenses, allowing more funds for front line services. We continued to subcontract with Stepping Out to provide specialist services to survivors of childhood sexual assault. As always, we work closely with other organisations to ensure the best outcomes for our clients.

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

- Including as income grants received for client programs for which the expenditure had not been incurred at 30 June 2021, and
- Including as expenses amounts relating to grants for client programs where the income relating to these grants was brought to account in the prior financial year.

I'd like to thank all WAGEC staff and supporters for their ongoing dedication and commitment, especially during the difficult times created by the COVID-19 pandemic. I'd also like to thank my fellow board members for their generosity of time ensuring the continued growth and success of our wonderful organisation.





CLIENT SERVICES REPORT

KAI NOONAN

The role of Client Services Manager was replaced with a Director of Client Operations, who is now responsible for leading the delivery of WAGEC's programs and contributing to the overall leadership and strategy of WAGEC.

Our client services teams were as busy as ever this year, with the numbers of people we supported continuing to grow from previous years. Our teams diligently worked through increasingly complex situations such as: COVID-19 and associated restrictions and lockdowns; increasing numbers of women on precarious visas with limited working rights and benefits; and no clear reduction in domestic and family violence, with 55% of our families and 37% of our single women citing domestic and family violence as the main reason for seeking support.

Despite the hardest aspects of the work we do, we manage to make time for health, wellbeing and fun.



In our Families Program, we held a series of community events and family fun days that brought together families from both WAGEC's crisis and transitional accommodation sites. In October, we held a kid's event at one of our refuges for all families in our crisis accommodation, which included a petting zoo from Kindi farm and a Mr Whippy ice-cream van. This gave kids of all ages a chance to have a cuddle with a chicken, guinea pig or a duck AND feed a lamb!

Towards the end of 2020, we had an end of year gathering for our families where each site held their own event, staff dressed up, food was abundant, and presents were shared. We'd like to thank Burwood Council and Mayor John Faker who donated \$2,000 to WAGEC to help support families over the Christmas period.

In April we held a 'family day' in Burwood Park which was a chance for all our families at WAGEC to come together for a day of fun. We had a BBQ, a fire truck, face painting, dancing and games. Also in April, we had boxing instructor and wellness coach Ash Ruscoe host a boxing session for the women in our crisis accommodations. We'd like to thank Ash for the ongoing weekly boxing sessions she held for our staff too!

In celebration of Mother's Day, we held a 'pamper day' for mothers and carers in our Families' Program. We were joined



by a hairdresser, a nail artist and two massage therapists who generously gave their time and skills to the women in both our crisis refuges. Our clients were able to kick-back and relax while they had their hair and nails done and a massage. As one mother said, "That was the best day after having a baby!"

In our Women's Program, we have had several new initiatives and community partnerships which have contributed to our client's health, wellbeing, and housing outcomes.

In November 2020 we began a yoga program in partnership with WEAVE Youth and Community Services for the women in our single women's refuges, with two 8-week programs attracting 20 clients. City Fitness donated all the yoga mats and Aesop donated additional care packs for our participants. We'd like to thank Chloe Chow, our volunteer yoga teacher, who helped develop the program and taught the yoga classes for us.

Our clinical team also started an 8-week art therapy program at our women's refuge which was so impactful for our clients that many of them have continued with online art therapy – which has been particularly healing through the COVID-19 lockdowns.

Thanks to our partnership with DVNSW for the Safer Homes Pilot Program which first started in November 2020, we now have a relationship with Ray White Newtown and Richardson & Wrench in Parramatta. The program aims to help our clients find affordable private rentals.

Thanks to our generous partners, our women and families can feel more comfortable when they stay with us, with some of our properties getting make-overs this year. Thanks to Built and Cre8 Carpentry, our largest refuge, which houses 15 families, had five rooms refurbished this year. At one of our families' properties, we were lucky enough to have local artist Lotti Alexis Smith, paint a mural on the outside of our playroom. The children and mums love it!



For International Women's Day, staff from JLL Australia volunteered their time redecorating the case management room, overhauling the playroom and giving the garden some much needed TLC at our smaller families property. There's always so much rubbish after these volunteer working bees, so we had a huge skip bin donated by Aussie Skips.

Without donations of food, toiletries and other essential items our services would struggle to meet our families' needs. Weekly food donations from Two Good and Oz Harvest have continued to make a massive difference to our families this year, especially through COVID-19 lockdowns. We also receive regular fresh and cooked food from our newer partnerships with the St Paul's Church in Burwood, the Addison Road Food Pantry and the Cathedral of The Annunciation of Our Lady in Redfern.

A special thank you to The Run For Good Project who, through the sourcing and distribution of new and used quality furniture, filled 170 homes of women and their children. What started with a one-off project with the goal of filling 5 homes has transformed into one of WAGEC's strongest community partnerships.

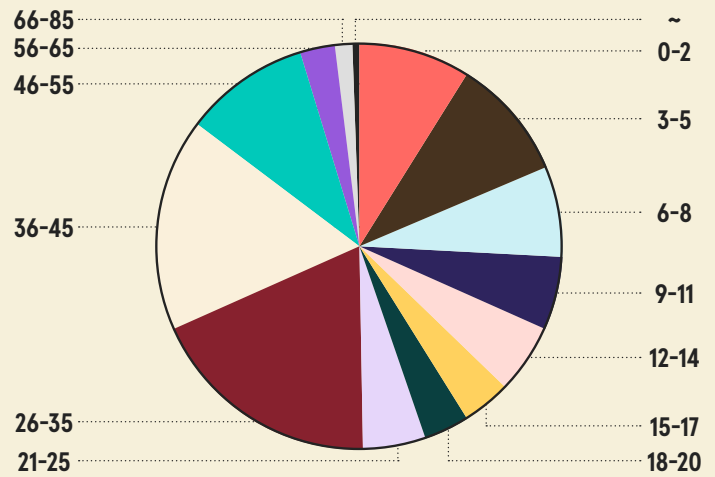
I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the four Practice Managers and twenty staff working in our client services. This year we also had the support of three social work students, who were an asset to our service. Each day that our staff come to work is different, it is always busy, often challenging, sometimes exhausting and endlessly rewarding. To do this work, our staff need to constantly learn and challenge themselves, practicing enormous amounts of critical reflection, and emotional regulation. I thank them all for continuing to strive for a better future for WAGEC and the women, children and young people that we work for.

And finally, I would like to thank the hundreds of women and children a year who bravely reach out to us for help. I thank them for their trust, their resilience, their hope and their joy and inviting us into their lives.



1734

women and
children supported



Ages of women
and children



7

babies born during their mums stay

24.5%

of clients identify
as Aboriginal and/or
Torres Strait Islander

70

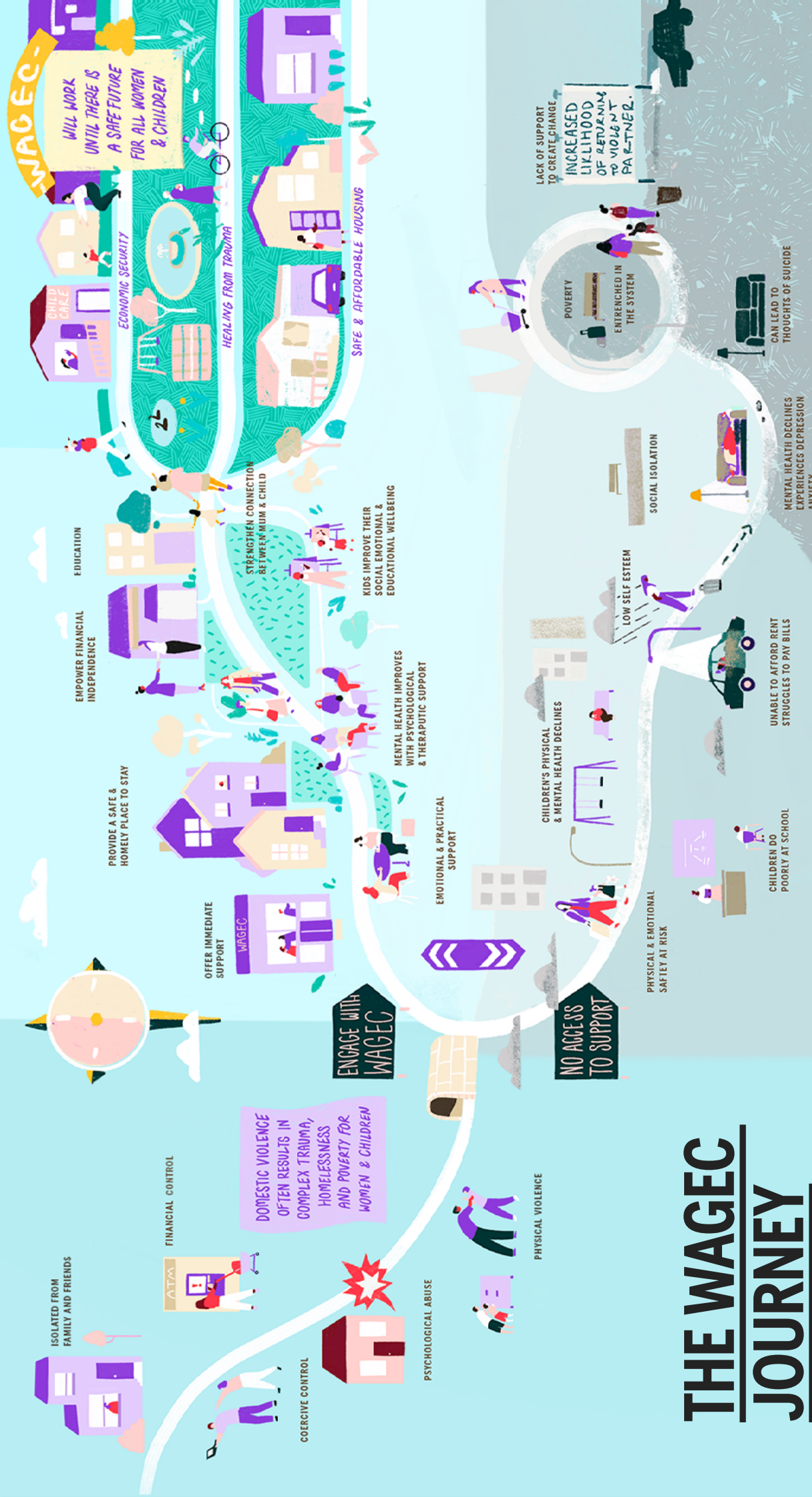
different nationalities
are represented across
WAGEC's client group



Clients' countries
of birth included: Thailand,
New Zealand, China, Vietnam,
Fiji, Russia, and the Philippines



After English, the languages
most frequently spoken by
clients are: Mandarin, Thai,
Vietnamese, and Arabic



This illustration is a simplified, linear depiction, it cannot represent the full range of complex individual and structural circumstances that are reflected in our clients' experiences, leading into and out of crisis.



Client Quote #01

“During that time I wasn’t working, I was studying, I have two children and had nowhere to go. I have no family around and was hesitating thinking like I can’t do this... from the start to the end they (WAGEC) never let me go...

She supported me with housing, everything, because my financial situation wasn’t very good. I was so grateful for WAGEC and so happy that I was put in touch. With WAGEC, I feel like my self-esteem was boosted. The WAGEC team, from the start, gave me so much advice and made me more comfortable and a stronger woman.”

–Maribel

Client Quote #02

“I am not Australian and was on the verge of homelessness in a foreign county during lockdown. I was so scared and beginning to lose hope because I didn’t have any income at that time... WAGEC gave me support of a family that I didn’t have at that time.

Their support gave me the strength to go through the process of separation from an abusive partner. Without this support, I probably would never have had the courage to leave a controlling relationship.”

–Sophie

Client Quote #03

“I had nothing but two weeks of clothing for me and my children. I was tired, angry and resistant.

Despite what had happened, I was still in denial that my children and I were homeless. Jess my Case Manager helped me work through it. I took part in the parenting program and my kids joined the supported playgroups. My kids were also childminded by volunteers, so I had the time and space to work through my own needs with Jess. Right away, I was given access to food, clothing and toiletries. It was just after lockdown, so things were tight but when you’re in that position, everything counts...it was just wonderful to know that there were kind people out there donating and volunteering. It got me very overwhelmed, it is very touching to know people care.”

–Leah

SEED PROGRAM: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICE

KERI HOLLOWAY

The Children and Young People's (CYP) services and the SEED Program have continued to grow, strengthen and thrive throughout 2020 and 2021. The team has expanded to include and focus on an integrated therapeutic approach to all programs. Some highlights of the year include parent support and programming, after school club, occupational therapy, art therapy and the further reach and support we have been able to give to children and young people.

SEED draws on evidence-based research. One of the elements of SEED is to provide holistic parenting support. We do this through a coordinated multidisciplinary team approach that aims to increase confidence, attachment and connection to mums, parents and carers. This includes running parent super groups, Circle of Security Parenting Program, case reviews with the refuge teams and individual support.

After School Club has continued to be an enormous success thanks to the support of our regular SEED volunteers. The kids have been involved in projects like creating a herb garden from recycled milk containers and making Easter bonnets for Easter parades. After School Club has also turned into a time to celebrate important events like Harmony Day

and host birthday parties for the children living at the refuge. For our school aged kids, our online tutoring program has expanded to support 22 children and young people with their learning. An especially important service with continued at home learning.

Throughout the 2020–2021-year, occupational therapy was integrated into WAGEC playgroups, taking a developmental lens through the motor, cognitive, social, emotional and language domains. This integrated approach has expanded the overall perspective on how to support and empower the children in a play based, holistic manner. It has allowed for incidental training and education for staff and families to expand their own learning and perspectives. In addition, SEED developed over 32 interagency community partnerships with local schools, day carers, paediatricians, and youth services. Individual support has allowed staff to take a more targeted approach where client centred intervention can occur and families are supported to reach their goals through functional and targeted goals.



176

children supported

26

parents supported
through parenting
program

47

SEED volunteers inducted

32

interagency community
partnerships

In March, WAGEC welcomed our first art therapy student, who has integrated visual art and creative therapy into existing programs within SEED. Children have been encouraged to use creative arts for sensory, social and emotional exploration and carers have been supported to use art to reflect more deeply on their experiences of parenthood. Open art making studio sessions were run throughout the first half of 2021 for carers to connect with one another, express themselves creatively and use art as a self-soothing tool.

This year the SEED Program has adapted to suit the changing needs of WAGEC families, particularly when being heavily impacted by COVID-19. In response to the individual developmental and attachment needs of women and children, SEED created and distributed activity packs for families in crisis, transitional and outreach accommodation sites. The SEED team have more recently created online programs for women and children, including 10 online sessions hosted by WAGEC staff, our occupational therapist and WAGEC's art therapy student. This model will continue to be provided during school holidays to support families living in outreach and transitional accommodations.

Thank you to our funders who supported SEED in 2020/21: Pepper Money and the WeirAnderson Foundation.

LEARNING TO THRIVE: **LILY'S STORY**



Last year, after experiencing a family breakdown due to domestic and family violence, 9-year-old Lily* and her mum moved into one of WAGEC's crisis refuges. From the first week, there were concerns among staff about Lily's behaviour and ability to socialise and communicate with other kids in the refuge. Lily's schoolteachers also noticed a change, saying that instead of playing with the other children during lunchtime, Lily was increasingly isolating herself in the playground.

At the refuge, there were worries about Lily's fractured relationship with her mum and extended family. Lily's mum felt overwhelmed by her own experiences of violence and trauma, along with her daughter's changing behaviour and Lily's aunties, whose home was an option for respite and support, had expressed that Lily's behaviour was "too difficult to care for." Further isolated due to the impacts of violence, the family turned to WAGEC for support.

In the first few weeks of the family being at the refuge, Lily was supported, through WAGEC's community partnerships, to access a paediatrician who was able to evaluate the extent to which she had been impacted by the experience of family violence. Lily was enrolled in WAGEC's SEED Program where she took part in activities

like supported after school club, tutoring and homework hub and holiday programs; activities that create safe spaces for children to express their experiences. Through collaboration between WAGEC staff and Lily's schoolteachers, Lily was also supported to develop and build relationship skills with friends, teachers, and her mum.

Throughout the year, Lily's mum also took part in SEED's Parenting Program and family therapy to work through trauma and develop practical skills in responding to Lily's behaviour. Where previously, Lily's mum had trouble reading and responding to Lily's needs (emotional detachment being a common copy strategy for survivors of violence), the parenting program gave Lily's mum the skills to be more attuned to her child. A year later, there is a renewed sense of closeness, attachment and connection between Lily and her mum. This attachment and ability to respond to Lily's behaviour has given Lily's mum the confidence to invite her extended family, Lily's aunties, back into the fold. They now come together in support of Lily every week to watch her netball games. Lily's schoolteachers told WAGEC that, Lily social engagement has transformed, and she now has lots of friends.

When domestic and family violence happens, it affects everyone. A child doesn't have to experience violence, they don't even have to hear or see it, for it to have long lasting impacts. WAGEC's Children and Young People Service, SEED Program and community partnerships have been developed to directly and holistically ensure every child, in every community, can learn and thrive. And although there is still recovery work to be done, Lily and her mum now feel safe, supported and connected. They also now have a community of people supporting them every step of the way.

*name and age of child has been changed for confidentiality.



ACCESS PROGRAM

CARLY HUSSEY

Building on a successful pilot in 2019/20, the ACCESS Program continued to provide uniquely tailored and responsive support for women's work, study, and training goals.

50 mentees participated in the program throughout 2020/21 with 22 mentees completing six-months of mentoring during the year with the remainder of mentoring relationships continuing into 2021/22.

We received 87 volunteer mentor applications, demonstrating overwhelming interest from women in the community wanting to contribute and grow their own knowledge and skills as mentors. We partnered with Good Shepherd to deliver 12 hours of best-practice mentor training online. We provided training to 62 volunteer mentors on areas including financial coaching, mentoring fundamentals, domestic violence, gender inequality, and homelessness. Mentors learnt about supporting mentee's using a strengths-based, trauma-informed and client-centred approach. Mentors from the pilot round shared their experiences and advice for new mentors, contributing to our ongoing process of reflecting on and improving the program.

During COVID-19 restrictions, ACCESS provided much needed support at a time of increased social isolation. Mentors and mentees built trusted relationships in virtual mentoring environments, collaborating to achieve mentee goals via text, email, video and phone. To support women to access technology we launched WAGEConnect, a WAGEC community initiative to source donated laptops, tablets and phones. Through WAGEConnect, we provided over 20 donated devices to women and children.

Mentors provided responsive and tailored support to mentees, assisting with activities including preparing resumes, applying for jobs, increasing IT skills, and strengthening confidence. Mentors supported mentees to achieve their study and training goals, with the percentage of mentees enrolled in study or training at program commencement increasing from 23% (5 of 22), to 60% (13 of 22) at program conclusion. Mentees were supported by their mentors to apply for jobs, with many mentees obtaining new jobs, increasing hours in existing work, or seeking work in a new industry. Rates of full-time employment among mentees increased from 0% at the start of the program to 25% (5/20) by program conclusion[^].



[^]2 of 22 mentees were not in the paid labour force

Key learnings from the pilot

Through the pilot we identified that although the program was designed to support women with their work, study and training goals, the most common goal of mentees was building confidence. This highlighted the importance of confidence and positive self-regard as necessary pre-conditions to engaging in work and study. Feeling increased positivity about themselves, their capacity, and their future was a key outcome of the program for many mentees. As a result, we focussed on promoting the capacity of the program to support women throughout all stages of their journey towards economic safety. As one mentee described, ACCESS facilitates 'access to the next step, not just to the workplace'. We also identified the importance of providing flexibility to women to engage with the program, implementing an ongoing referral period for mentees, enabling them to apply for the program at a time that suits them.

50

women directly supported through mentoring and tailored programs

22

mentees completed the program

90

women supported through workshops and referrals

62

volunteer mentors trained



Thank you to our community

Throughout the year, we partnered with community organisations who share our goal of supporting women. Some of the partnerships included:

- Thread Together, who provided a welcoming and dignified service for more than 60 women to choose new clothing in person, online, and through personal styling events.
- OzHarvest, who delivered their 'NEST' 6-week workshop which provided practical information and skills training to support healthy eating and cooking on a budget. At the end of each session, the group prepared and shared a meal together, which provided a welcome opportunity to be together in-person.
- DVNSW, who ran a public speaking program called 'Voices for Change' that supported women to strengthen their public speaking skills and use their voice to create change.
- TAFE NSW, who delivered a 6-week online course 'Workplace Skills for Women' which helped women in identifying practical steps to achieve their study and work goals.
- Lou's Place who provided case management to women, supporting them to participate in ACCESS.

Thank you to our funders who supported ACCESS in 2020/21:

Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Perpetual Trust, NSW Government, Tides Foundation, Sydney Community Foundation's Sydney Women's Fund and Be Kind Sydney, Westpac Foundation, The Rotary Club of Sydney Darling Harbour.

Creating an evidence base

Through ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the program, we have strengthened our understanding of the multiple and often complex challenges experienced by women in seeking to increase their workforce and study participation. The most common barriers experienced by mentees participating in the program were:

1. Lacking the necessary training, qualifications and experience required for work, specifically - limited IT skills or access to technology, low confidence in English language skills, limited or no Australian workplace experience, and low self-confidence.
2. Impacts of long-term physical or mental health conditions, the impacts of domestic and family violence, and recovery from alcohol and other drugs.
3. Caring for children - lack of affordable childcare and being a sole carer with little or no formal or informal childcare support.

Nearly a third of mentees were non-Australian citizens or permanent residents (27%) experienced additional barriers to workforce and study participation, including being unable to access subsidised course fees and childcare, and ineligibility for income support and other government support.

Following the success of the pilot program, ACCESS secured two years of funding through the Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. We are so grateful for our generous and committed volunteer mentors and to all our ACCESS partners for supporting women on their pathways to economic safety.

Quote #01

**TAFE Workplace Skills
for Women participant**



“The TAFE teachers understood our backgrounds, they were really respectful and non-judgmental. They helped me and the other women to build up the confidence to speak up more.”

Quote #02

**Thread Together styling
event participant**



“Today was the best day I’ve had all year. Thank you for making me feel important and treating me with such dignity. I left feeling so inspired by the women there.”

Quote #03

Mentee



“Having an ACCESS mentor has been a safety net – a bit of a buffer – during COVID. The message of the whole program is ‘caring’ – a feeling that the community still cares”

Quote #04

Mentor



“My mentee is a strong, capable and kind woman. She approached mentoring with an open mind and has achieved many milestones throughout the process.”

Quote #05

Mentee



“Mentoring has been helpful having someone I am connected to with similar interests. I look at her as myself in a mirror, like one day I could be her – she’s helping women. She gives me things to read.... I wouldn’t change anything about the program.”



CLINICAL AND GOVERNANCE REPORT

KATIE YOUNG

Domestic and family violence (DFV) or intimate partner violence (IPV) continues to be a leading cause of homelessness for women and children. It can be deeply traumatic, breakdown significant relationships, isolating people from community, impacting one's sense of self and damage the health and wellbeing of women and children. At WAGEC we recognise the important role we can play in offering a holistic service that aims to nurture women, children and young people in their long-term recovery from trauma, working toward increased mental health and well-being.

Over the last year it has been wonderful for WAGEC to have the opportunity to enhance our holistic support to clients by way of opening accessible therapeutic support. Since late November 2020 we have set up an in-house psychological service to strengthen an integrated model of care for the clients (individuals/families) that we support. The in-house psychological services are offered to the women, children, and young people at the WAGEC family services, residing in both our crisis refuges and living in community. The counselling services offered are both family therapy and individual therapy.



As therapeutic relationships take time to develop, a key part of the program relies on the consistent, accessible, and ongoing support from our dedicated psychologists.

Furthermore, refuges are a unique environment for offering therapeutic services, as it removes many of the barriers (financial, transport, waiting times) our clients currently face regarding accessing external psychological services and provides a unique opportunity to work with women, as well as their children, in a dynamic and holistic way alongside the family's case manager and whole of WAGEC support. The in-house psychological services have allowed WAGEC to support women and their children to ensure they are not held back when they leave WAGEC's accommodation and that they have improved futures ahead of them, improvements that are psychologically and emotionally safe.

A further opportunity we created to offer the women at both our families and women's services to support them in breaking the cycle of homelessness and violence was group work therapy. Made possible by the Hare Family, our All of You Program is an eight-week program offered to women who want to learn about healthy relationships and complex trauma. We wanted to create an environment where the women could gather to share and learn alongside each other in a safe, confidential, and supportive space. Our hope is to offer women the opportunity to embrace their strengths, learn new skills and tools to allow them a safe and recovery-focused future that nurtures their healing experience. It was a very special and unique program where women grew their strengths, reclaimed their confidence and were working towards a future with healthy relationships and safety.

Throughout the year all our teams have been continuously and actively engaged in monthly clinical supervision where they have been supported and supporting each other in unpacking the systemic and individual complexities of supporting women and children and growing their case management practice and skills. The supervision aims to empower and guide the case management teams to promote client well-being, ensure quality service delivery, and encourage collaborative and collective care within the teams.

Earlier in the year, WAGEC engaged and commissioned ANROWS to conduct an evaluation of the in-house counselling service project. The evaluation criteria cover the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, governance and management of the counselling service. This ongoing piece of work is an important step towards strengthening our integrated model of care.

A big thank you to Macdoch Foundation who continue to fund and support WAGEC's therapeutic services and education. We look forward to continuing to offer a holistic framework of support to the women, children and young people we support.

All of You Program
participant

Client Quote #01



“I found the exercise where we talked about what healthy relationships look like, and our personal expectations of healthy relationships really helpful. It allowed me to look at different relationships from my past and see them in a new light.”

All of You Program
participant

Client Quote #02



“I have had some obstacles and setback that would normally send me in a tailspin, I remembered my learning with mindfulness and after partaking in some breathing, I was able to listen better and reframe the issues.”

Therapeutic client

Client Quote #03



“When it was first suggested to me that I do some counseling sessions, I thought “Oh not another service,” you know, “not another person who I’ve got to explain the situation to,” and hands down she has been the best support that I have ever been linked with.”

Therapeutic client

Client Quote #04



“The last couple of years have been rough. And I just feel good mentally, physical, you know, just letting everything out talking about everything that I’ve bottled in over the years.”



PRIMARY PREVENTION REPORT

MOO BAULCH

This year has been packed with primary prevention activities at WAGEC; we've been so encouraged by the enthusiastic individual and collective appetite to be part of meaningful positive change in our community settings, with private sector supporters and government partners.

Most of our prevention activities have had to be delivered online and whilst there's nothing that quite replaces the joy of being in a room and bouncing ideas off one another, it's given us an opportunity to be genuinely ambitious in terms of the reach and impact of our prevention work.

Primary prevention of gender-based violence is all about stopping violence before it starts and WAGEC places an equal emphasis on our responsibility to provide tertiary crisis responses to women and families impacted by abuse and homelessness whilst also ensuring that we're supporting others to be part of the longer-term solutions too. Our ambitious goal is to end gender-based violence in a generation and we're working across a range of settings to influence the change that needs to happen.

Some of the 2020-2021 primary prevention highlights include:

Bras N Things

This year we were proud to embark on a partnership journey with Bras N Things (BNT) to empower women and children to build safe futures. Together we are working to end gender-based violence and create communities where women and families are safe to confidently be themselves. Our partnership with BNT has given us the opportunity to train thousands of BNT and Hanes Australasia staff across Australia, New Zealand and beyond in some of the basics of gender-based violence and prevention approaches. We've supported HAA in their development of domestic violence policies and structures and we're continuing to help them build strong internal pathways to support their staff along with ongoing training. We continue to work with private sector partners to build strong approaches to prevention across a range of local workplaces and businesses.

Early in our relationship, we came to realise that although our work might appear to be different, we shared values and goals of empowering all women and families in our communities, which lays the foundation of our work together. Thank you to everyone who has been involved so far for the positive impact you are having on families in crisis, staff at Bras N Things and our shared community of customers and supporters.



Community

In November 2020, City of Sydney supported WAGEC to run a series of online bystander workshops running over 4 weeks during 16 Days of Activism. The workshop was open to community members who live, work, study or volunteer in the City of Sydney LGA and participants developed skills and knowledge on safe bystander and ally actions.

In December, in collaboration with Meredith Turnbull Coaching and Consulting we also ran the very first Redfern Young Women Lead – a series of discussions about feminist leadership, activism and empowerment with young women connected to the Redfern area. Thanks to the City of Sydney for supporting this important project.

Resources

WAGEC's engaged community of supporters have been asking us to share prevention tools to help individuals and businesses to take practical actions to respond to and prevent violence. We took on the challenge and have spent several months creating a series of explainer animations that we launched as part of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence and our #AskTheQuestion campaign. A shout out to Mike Mascarenas and the team at Sonar Music who gave us immense amounts of time, love and expertise to deliver what we hope will help spark new prevention conversations. You can watch the videos, download our resources and get involved in the movement towards ending gender-based violence in a generation here:

endgbv.org.au



Education

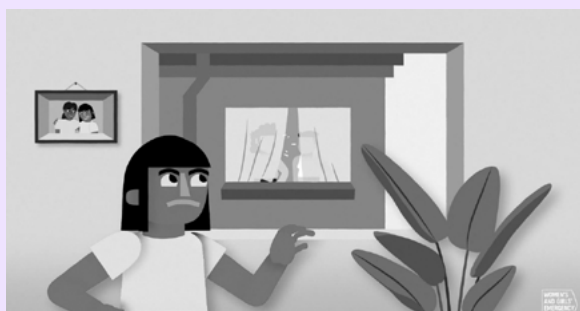
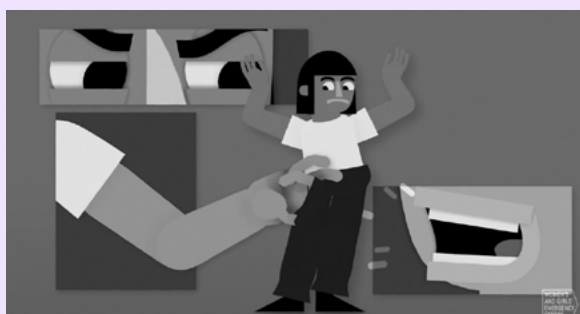
One of the projects closest to our hearts in 2021 has been a beautiful partnership with the team of educators and management at Moore Park Gardens Childcare Centre as part of our All In Program. All In aims to equip early childhood centre leaders, educators parents and kids with the tools they need to build confidence, equality and respect in little people at the very beginning of their interactions with the education system. A huge thank you to the brilliant Monique Dam who joined us temporarily to help bring it all to life. We've also worked with Rainbow Families/Prosper to support their development of prevention approaches for LGBTQ+ families.

Systems Advocacy

In early 2021 we made a written submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Coercive Control and appeared before the Committee to give evidence. WAGEC has also had extensive input through several consultation mechanisms with the Commonwealth Department of Social Services and Monash University on the development of the next National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. We shared the de-identified experiences of our families and staff to help shape better systems, structures and legal frameworks.

Cultural Safety

A major ongoing focus began in the first half of 2021 to review and reflect on WAGEC's Reconciliation Action Plan and the activities that we need to undertake as an organisation working in and with Aboriginal communities in the inner city and inner west of Sydney. WAGEC's Journey to Cultural Safety will continue to be an important priority this year as we consider how we can include Gadigal voices, local Elders, partner with local Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations and support Aboriginal staff and clients in ways that enhance their safety and wellbeing.





FUNDRAISING AND COMMUNITIES REPORT

CHLOE SARAPAS

The WAGEC Community continues to grow while rallying behind the movement to end gender-based violence in a generation. Our most successful year to date, we received \$1.6 million in non-government fundraising revenue thanks to generosity and funding from trusts and foundations, corporate support, community grants, individual donors, and community fundraisers, all of whom have channelled their passion for creating social change into support for women and children in crisis due to homelessness and domestic violence. This revenue will fund specific programs in the 2022 financial year and beyond, so that women and children get what they need to build safe futures.

We received \$522,000 in material aid to address the immediate needs of women and children, and our volunteers gave \$179,000 in their time. 42 groups and individuals held fundraising initiatives in our community and 117 businesses and workplaces supported WAGEC this year. These brilliant outcomes reflect the generosity of our supporters, the determination of our community to build gender equality and the dedication of

WAGEC's small but mighty Fundraising and Communities Team.

A highlight of the year was Walk for WAGEC, where we were lucky to gather in person in May, not long before Sydney went into 4 months of lockdown. After cancelling Walk for WAGEC in 2020 due to COVID-19, the joy and impact of holding our annual fundraiser was palpable, with 663 walkers and runners raising \$263,434. Since we first held the event in 2019, Walk for WAGEC has tripled in the number of participants and fundraising revenue – thank you to everyone who has been a part of growing this event and its impact.

In other events, our community turned up to support women and families during the 2020 Festive Season, giving hampers, material aid and over \$20,000 in gift vouchers so that women could purchase gifts for their families. During International Women's Day nearly a dozen community fundraising initiatives were held. In the midst of Sydney's lockdown, our community supported us through virtual fundraisers and donations drives for essential items like food, toiletries and PPE.

Throughout the year we continued to put our feminist values in action in our fundraising and partnerships, striving for a relational approach that goes beyond a single transaction. This has included embarking on a multi-faceted partnership journey with Bras N Things, who in addition to engaging their staff in WAGEC's primary prevention training, are addressing the immediate needs of our clients by fundraising in-store and providing comfort packs to women. We have also continued working with Pepper Money, who made our SEED Program for children and young people possible this year and have had over 260 of their staff engage with WAGEC during our 3 years of partnership so far.

A special thank you to the Siddie Family Foundation, Macdoch Foundation, Perpetual Trust, Oranges & Sardines Foundation, BlackRock, the Hare Family, Coca-Cola Australia Foundation, WeirAnderson Foundation, Sydney Community Foundation's Sydney Women's Fund and Be Kind Sydney, The VGI Partners Foundation, and The Skrzynski Family Sky Foundation, all of whom donated generously to enable WAGEC's programs like ACCESS, SEED, our in-house psychological services and gender-based violence prevention work.

These critical programs could not have gone ahead without this philanthropic, community and corporate support and we can't say thank you enough to each one of our supporters, many of whom are not listed here and make a significant difference to WAGEC with their generosity. Despite the ever-changing times whose impacts we're all navigating, you have continued to turn up and play a critical role. Your support means that women and children can rebuild their own lives while we all work together to prevent violence from happening in the first place. To our community from WAGEC, our staff, our clients and the Fundraising and Communities Team – thank you for making positive social change happen.

\$1.6M

Non-government Fundraising
Revenue raised

42

Community Fundraising
Initiatives

\$522,445

Value Material Aid Donated

117

Businesses that supported
WAGEC through donations,
volunteering, fundraising
or pro-bono services.



Quote #01

WAGEC regular giver

“Being a WAGEC supporter means that I am supporting an organisation that stands firmly for women’s rights. I trust that WAGEC is doing everything they can to support women in need whilst advocating for social change.”



Quote #02

WAGEC community fundraiser

“Actively supporting WAGEC helps me feel like part of the solution. I am helping women and children in need on a fundamental level. This is an organisation run by women for all women. I am incredibly proud to be a supporter of the vital work they do.”



Quote #03

WAGEC donor

“Donating to WAGEC means breaking the cycle for myself and for other women and girls who have been oppressed by the patriarchy and its participants.”





WALK FOR WAGEC

\$263,434
raised

453
in person walkers and runners

210
virtual walkers and runners

69
volunteers on the day



On 2nd May, 2021, the WAGEC community came together to walk so that women and children could walk away from violence. This year's annual fundraising event was an incredible success, with 663 people walking, in person at Centennial Park and virtually across Australia, to raise funds for WAGEC's programs that enable women to build safe futures. Our community raised an exceptional \$263,434 during the 8-week campaign, more than double our original target of \$100,000. Our deepest gratitude goes out to each of you in the community who helped us surpass our goal and to Oranges & Sardines Foundation who matched nearly \$38,000 of the community's generosity during our 72-hour gift matching period.

Beyond the dollars raised, there was a palpable energy and passion for creating gender equality on the day. Special thanks to Yvonne Weldon for her beautiful Welcome to Country, the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP and Ms Jenny Leong MP for their impassioned speeches, to special guest Cr Jess Scully Deputy Lord Mayor of Sydney and to our event sponsors The Run for Good Project, Oranges & Sardines Foundation, Centennial Parklands, DMC, Print Locker, Signwave, MaCher, and the Safety Officer. The event would not have been possible without your support.

We feel so appreciative of the opportunity to gather as a community and shine a light on the need for systemic and structural change, particularly in a year that many in Australia spent a majority of their time in lockdown.

A huge thank you to each of you who walked, spread the word and raised funds that will build economic security, enrich children's development, nurture healing and well-being and prevent violence from happening in the first place.



"I enjoyed the whole experience for such a good cause... All my family loved the event and we're proud to have contributed."



"Thank you for such a well organised, positive and motivating event. The amount of work it took to create such a fantastic activity was obvious and appreciated."



"I had such a great time and I want to help by doing more. It felt like a community that was all there to support - and I felt like part of it even though it was my first time."



"Thank you for such a well organised, positive and motivating event. The amount of work it took to create such a fantastic activity was obvious and appreciated."

PARTNERSHIPS

WAGEC is lucky to have a multitude of meaningful corporate partnerships and relationships with workplaces. Dozens of these undertook fundraising, donations and other support initiatives for WAGEC this year. Huge thank you to MBM, Bloomberg, Clifford Chance, MaCher, Uturn Recycled Fashion, Trend Micro, Abacus Property, Accru Felsers, T. Rowe Price Australia Limited, Westpac Group, Allens, Lendlease, IntoWork, Built Construction, Canva, Choice, IKEA, Laing O'Rourke, MinterEllison, Dulux, Finch Production, DesignNation, Jadecross, Multiplex, The Styling Project and Smart Move.



Stella Insurance

Driving social change through support and empowerment is the foundation of WAGEC's work with Stella Insurance, another new partnership that launched this year. Together we are on the road to support women and families who have experienced homelessness and domestic violence, with Stella Insurance donating \$5 from every policy sold to WAGEC. Their support will help to ensure women and families receive the essential items they need following experiences of crisis. Thank you to the Stella Insurance team, whose passion for empowering and amplifying women's voices will be making meaningful change for WAGEC's clients and community.



The Run for Good Project

It has been another incredible year in partnership with The Run For Good Project (RFGP), whose small team has continued to support clients and staff at WAGEC with furniture and household items. What began as a community fundraising event that raised \$6,000 in May 2020, has grown to a long-term partnership in which the RFGP has donated over \$126,000 in material aid for WAGEC's clients this year. Over the last year, The Run for Good Project has continued to source and deliver quality furniture on a weekly basis to over 170 women and families at WAGEC so far. Along with weekly deliveries, RFGP was a key sponsor of Walk for WAGEC, helping to organise the event and providing 48 dedicated volunteers, many of whom were passionate and enthusiastic young people who all ensured the event ran smoothly and successfully.

We can't thank The Run For Good Project enough for their dedication and commitment to WAGEC and look forward to seeing what the next year has in store for us.

COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING

Fundraisers and local businesses in our community made a phenomenal effort for WAGEC this year. A special thank you to Same Cup, Fat Poppy Roasters, Vincent De Luca OAM, Primer, Zolo, Jonnie Vigar and team at Leif, Alexander & Co, Darling Harbour Rotary Club, University of Sydney (University Infrastructure) and Sydney Women's College for all that you did to enable safe spaces for women and families.



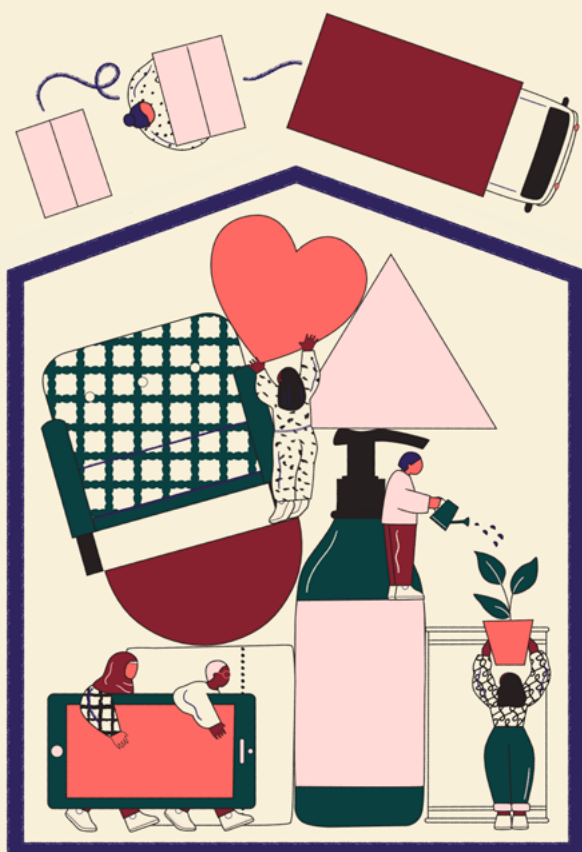
The Grifter Brewing Co

Fancy a Gold Dust? This year for International Women's Day and in recognition of how far the beer industry has come in breaking down 'the boys club' barrier, The Grifter Brewing Co alongside the team from Camp Cove Swim, who designed the label, created a Wattleseed Red Ale to raise a phenomenal \$9,000 for WAGEC!



Nicola Belton

A big thank you to community fundraiser Nicola Belton who completed a 270km long walk in the month of May along the Great North Walk trail to raise money for WAGEC! Known as 'Little boots on tour', Nicola raised a grand total of \$8,245 for WAGEC.



Primer

Long-time supporters of WAGEC, Primer supported women and families this year by fundraising, giving material aid, and participating in Walk for WAGEC, all of which brought their total donated during their time as a WAGEC supporter to over \$20,000.



Ramblin Rascals

To celebrate women in their industry and support women in crisis, Ramblin Rascals hosted a Golden Girls event for International Women's Day, raising over \$9,000 for WAGEC.



VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

NATALIE ZIOLKOWSKI

Volunteering at WAGEC has continued to grow and develop over the past year, with over 435 registering their interest and 358 engaged as active volunteers.

Along with donations sorting and deliveries, childminding, homework helpers, English conversation partners and gardening, we have been fortunate enough to have skilled volunteers assist with handywork, minor repairs, family law advice, dental work, stretch, meditation and yoga workshops.

A highlight of volunteering this past year was Walk for WAGEC, which was the first time many volunteers were able to meet each other in person since their online inductions.

The multiple lockdowns have taken their toll on everyone, and we had to temporarily reduce many of our volunteer opportunities in response to COVID-19. It has been inspirational to witness our volunteer community rally and offer support, with an uptake of donations deliveries and online homework help. We have also started a monthly WAGEC volunteer newsletter, written by one of our long-term volunteers, to help combat the disconnect that can result from working online.

In May, we celebrated National Volunteer Week, by spotlighting our volunteers on social media and the WAGEC blog, to show their brilliant achievements and the positive difference they make by so generously giving their time to WAGEC in support of women and families.

After an eventful year of volunteering at WAGEC, we are looking forward to continuing our relationship with our incredible community of WAGEC Volunteers!

"A highlight of volunteering at WAGEC is being part of a progressive, proudly feminist organisation and learning from the women and children who make it what it is!" –**Nick Richards with daughter Nia, WAGEC Volunteer**



"I had been getting increasingly frustrated at the news about domestic and family violence and wishing there was some way that I could practically help. That's when I came across WAGEC and am so glad that I did. From the first volunteer induction, I knew this is an organisation that I wanted to work for [and] I love getting to meet the various people who work and live at Jeannie's." –**Sonia, WAGEC Volunteer**



"Volunteering with WAGEC has been one of the best decisions I've made. As a SEED volunteer I help out with the After School Club and School Holiday Programs at WAGEC's Families Refuges. By contributing a little of my time each week to support children and young people at WAGEC, I continue to learn and gain so much, and I get to be a part of this incredible community." –**Ally Joseph**



\$179,000

in time volunteered

435

volunteers in WAGEC's volunteer pool

358

active volunteers

68

SEED volunteers focusing specifically on children and young people

3,735

hours volunteered

69

Walk for WAGEC volunteers

18

homework helper volunteers paired with children

10

volunteer English conversation partners paired with women



ADVOCACY REPORT

REBECCA CINI

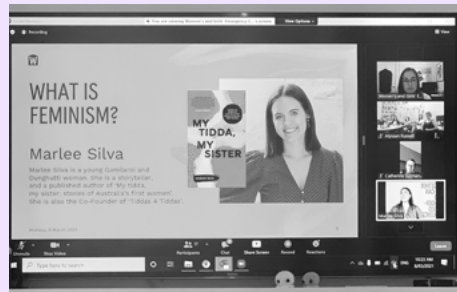
Over the past year, COVID-19 has covered most of our headlines. It has saturated our media, quietened our streets and occupied our homes. However, there have been moments globally when remarkable advocacy work has broken through and captured an audience. Whilst fluctuating restrictions have challenged our ability to meet in person, it has not dampened our spirits. Our advocacy work is needed more than ever and looking back on the past year, we see the many ways we have come together to fight for equality, justice and safety.

Our online community of over 4000 people participated in numerous events throughout the year. In August 2020, WAGEC joined the 'Everybody Needs a Home' campaign for Homelessness Week and used our online platforms to visually highlight the hidden nature of women's homelessness and the fact that gender-based violence (GBV) is one of its main drivers. Two months following, we pushed our digital advocacy further for 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. This campaign highlighted the connection between GBV and gender inequality, calling people to join the movement to end gender-based violence in a generation.

In March 2020, WAGEC joined our community in the March4Justice, walking

in solidarity with every woman and person who has lived experience of sexism, misogyny, and GBV, calling out for long overdue systemic change. On National Sorry Day, we joined Grandmothers Against Removals and the University of Sydney Women's Collective, rallying to stop the stolen generation. We continued our support by using our social platforms to share information and resources about these culturally significant days, recognising the experiences and ongoing impacts colonialism has on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We know that we're stronger and more sustainable when we work together. So, throughout the year, we used our digital platform to connect our supporters and amplify their diverse voices. For International Women's Day, we addressed the theme of 'Choose to Challenge' by challenging the misconceptions around the term 'feminism'. At WAGEC we celebrated IWD with clients, volunteers and staff by hosting a morning tea where we held an online webinar discussion with guest speaker Marlee Silva. We also premiered our IWD video, 'What does feminism mean to me', made up of 38 video submissions from the community and viewed over 11,000 times.



106%

Increase in social media followers

157%

Increase in mailing list subscribers

137%

Increase in shop orders

27,000

Website visitors

Since our rebrand in 2019, we have used products and merchandise to challenge gender stereotypes, grow our WAGEC community, and ultimately provide another tool to advocate for change. This year we introduced new merch, including a tote bag quoting Audre Lorde, 'Without community, there is no liberation', and a sold-out tea towel promoting our cultural assumption that we are 'stronger together'. It has been incredible seeing these pieces out in the wild, and we hope that they prompt further conversation around the importance of community in ending GBV. In June, Canva profiled WAGEC's brand and vision in an episode of their exciting new series, Design Stories. The video explores how the WAGEC brand gives our internal team and extended WAGEC community the tools to amplify our collective voice. Canva is a global, mission driven organisation. We feel very humbled that Canva has given their platform to share our message.

Our advocacy work this year continued our intersectional approach to ending GBV. Despite the challenges we faced with COVID-19, our work with community has amplified our growing commitment to primary prevention and included our supporters in this journey.

CULTURE AT WAGEC

If the past year has confirmed anything, it is WAGEC's core assumptions that gender-based violence could happen to any of us, and that we are stronger and safer when we come together as a community. It was this collective understanding, along with our FRICHSSS of Feminism, Respect, Integrity, Collaboration, Hope, Strength, Structure and Social Change, that allowed the WAGEC team to be strategic yet adaptable, visionary yet realistic and grounded and steady during the unpredictable year that was 2020-2021.



Additionally, our Ethical Stance or collective ethics allowed us to understand the impacts of our work on us and our communities and acted as a tool for wayfinding as we traverse our complex work. As we moved from a staff head count of 33 to 50, our Ethical Stance helped us promote dignity in our work and to make intentional decisions as we continue to grow.

Throughout the year, we continued our New Growth Leadership Program, a WAGEC program targeting emerging leaders within WAGEC's current staff group with the aim of developing the leadership capacity amongst WAGEC's operational level staff. Five staff developed and implemented projects that contributed not only to the culture, strength and organisational structures of WAGEC but the individual confidence and leadership capabilities in themselves.

Along with our brilliant New Growth projects, staff also took part in a number of professional development training including PART training, CIMS training, PWDA training and a Managing Difficult Conversations Course. They were also encouraged to take part in webinars, trainings and courses depending on individual skills and professional development. A number of staff also lead leadership projects and initiatives outside of hours.

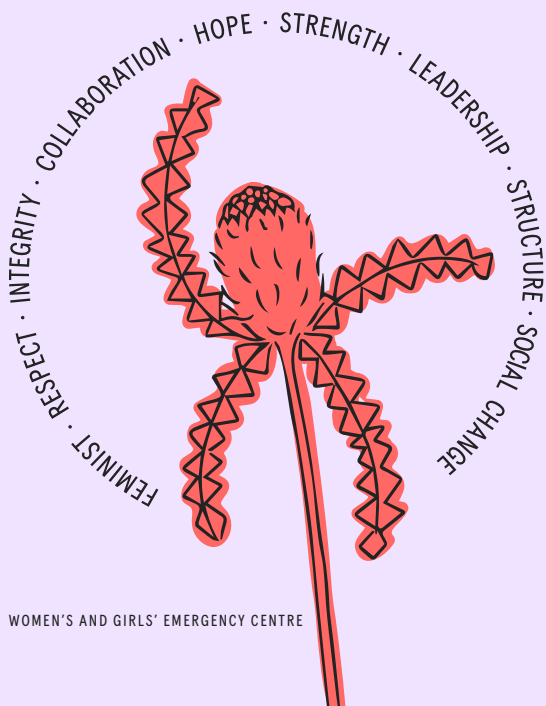




One particularly successful initiative this year was the Monthly FRICHN' Yarn which was organised and facilitated by Senior Case Manager Megan Ridgeway. Every month, Megs chose a topic and brought together staff on a Friday evening to read and discuss each person's chosen poem, song or text. Despite having to transition online, the evenings were a beautiful way for staff to come together, bring a part of themselves and discuss what the chosen topic meant to them through a reading. A big thank you to Megs, along with Natalie and Rebecca who helped organise the nights, and create a space for WAGEC staff to come together.

Another staff-led initiative was the FRICHN' Ferns, a weekly afternoon exercise session at NCIE, Redfern for all WAGEC staff. Led by Case Manager Jenny Ripton, the weekly afternoon sessions were a great way to bring together staff (and their children) from across WAGEC's different sites, have some fun while exercising and stay connected as a larger team. Thank you Jenny for taking the lead!

Finally, a big thank you to Natalie Ziolkowski, Volunteer and Events Lead, who has continued to lead The WAGEC Book Club throughout the 2020-2021 year. With over 8 regular members, the group has met monthly to discuss their chosen book and has had several authors make guest appearances including NSW Greens Senator Mereen Faruqi.



REDFERN MOVE

In November 2021, and after nearly a decade in our small terrace on Redfern Street, we officially moved in to our new space at 36-38 George Street, Redfern.



With demand for our crisis services growing by the day and our increased work in advocacy and gender-based violence prevention, WAGEC's new space on George Street marks beginning of a new chapter in our 44-year long history of creating safe futures for women and families.

After we saw the increased numbers that 1000 women moved through the Redfern space last year and the impacts of COVID-19, we knew it was time for a new and bigger space. In November 2020 we officially began what would be a year long, extensive search for a new space. It was with much excitement and relief that in October 2021 we were able to sign a commercial lease with the Metropolitan Aboriginal Lands Council to lease the George Street space.

Thanks to the generous support and commitment of our community we raised a total of \$31,287 and accepted over \$50,000 in material donations which went directly to fitting out the space. A special thank you to Built, Jadecross, Dulux, MinterEllison, Framecorp, IA Design, AWM, Modern Group, Finch Production and Design Nation for your contribution to the space, we couldn't have done this without you!

The space is nearly three times the size of our last location, equipped with client consultation rooms, meeting spaces for staff and programs and more workstations for our ever growing staff. Thanks to the work commitment of a dedicated projects team, which included staff, volunteers and pro bono support, the space feels safe, secure and trauma informed. We look forward to welcoming you in!



TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

One very exciting highlight of the year was Multiplex's renovation of one of our transitional properties which is home to 10 single women who are transitioning out of crisis accommodation and into more permanent housing. In early 2021 WAGEC worked with Multiplex to conduct a scope of works - brand new kitchen, new bathrooms, new lights, updated carpet and fresh paint throughout - improving the overall appearance and experience of the space. These works began on 2nd August 2021 and the renovations were completed in 6 weeks, with the residents returning on 14th September 2021.



On the move back day, some of the women shared that the new space has given them a sense of pride and dignity. One young woman had her mum on a video call and was giving her a tour. You could feel the excitement and pride.

We commend Multiplex and their subcontractors for all their efforts. The team transformed the space and knew how important it was to have a fast turnaround so that the women could be back in their home. Not only were all the scope of works completed to the highest quality by Multiplex and their team of subcontractors, a team of interior designers also styled and donated beautiful new furniture that made the space feel fresh, uplifting and dignified.

A big thank you to everyone involved in the project. Your contribution will continue to be felt by all the women that move through that space.

THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Our primary funder



Communities
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Our donors and supporters

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- The Palmdale Trust
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- The Rotary Club of Sydney Darling Harbour
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