

ANNUAL REPORT  
2019-20



# PRESIDENT'S REPORT



**2020 has undoubtedly been one of the most challenging years in the history of Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter.**

The emergence of the COVID-19 global health pandemic early this year has profoundly changed the lives of this current generation and its economic and social impacts will be felt for generations to come.

As a highly contagious and deadly virus, COVID-19 has transformed not only the way our Shelter operates, but every facet of fundraising and community engagement.

Despite the ever present threat to our staff and clients, our Shelter team and Management Committee have adapted admirably to our new circumstances.

## **Our amazing team**

Our staff, led by our Shelter Manager Hylette Evans, have been nothing short of incredible this year.

With the strong support of our operational hub, Women's Community Shelters, the Shelter team faced the daily challenges of supporting our clients through a global health pandemic.

Like so many in the healthcare sector, our staff put the well-being and safety of our vulnerable clients ahead of their own.

Throughout this period our team have helped countless vulnerable women find safety and new pathways in life.

The increased government financial and accommodation support during COVID-19, has also provided the Shelter with the opportunity to expand outreach services to women and children.

To date, our Shelter and Beecroft House remain COVID-19 free. With the expert guidance of Women's Community Shelters we have implemented some of the strongest COVID-19 safe practices in the sector. We have remained open and able to support all clients referred to our service.

## **Fundraising and community engagement**

Whilst the global pandemic profoundly impacted our Shelter team, it also significantly affected our Management Committee's typical avenues for fundraising and community engagement.

Despite lockdowns and the cancellation of all fundraising events, HKWS had a record year in fundraising and donations. Through the innovative and persistent efforts of our Management Committee and volunteers, we have been able to work with our community and local business to ensure both the longevity of HKWS operations, and sufficient funds to purchase a permanent home for the Shelter.

## **Thank you to our community**

I want to acknowledge all of our generous donors, community groups, local business, local members of parliament and our local mayors for their support this year.

This support was especially evident when together, we raised just over \$198,000 in June, through our Safe Place appeal.

With the incredible support of our housing partner, Turramurra and Lindfield branches of Bendigo Bank, we were able to raise sufficient funds to purchase a permanent home for our Shelter.

## **Looking ahead to 2021**

We are incredibly excited to have purchased a permanent safe home for our Shelter.

We are actively looking to work with local business and community groups to renovate our home to provide safe and dignified crisis accommodation for women and where circumstances allow, transitional support for women and children.

This will be a new era for our Shelter and one our staff and Management Committee are incredibly excited about.

Sadly, as family violence remains a growing threat within our community, our Shelter will continue to rely on our supporters to ensure we remain open. We look forward to working closely with all of our community in 2021 to ensure our Shelter remains a safe refuge for women in times of crisis.



**HKWS President,  
Louise McCann**

## VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT



**I echo the praise and the humble thanks to our staff and volunteers who have contributed so much to ensure our Shelter continues to provide vital services to women and children in need.**

The past year has been challenging, but there is much to look forward to, with our most exciting times ahead.

### **A secure, safe Shelter**

Our tireless efforts this year have focused on securing a property to ensure the sustainability of our operations into the future. With the community's support we have secured a permanent safe haven for women in need. Importantly, this will enable HKWS to create a facility that aligns to our needs and service priorities.

### **Fundraising and volunteering**

Our fundraising and volunteer efforts over the next year will be designed to deliver key projects to modify and personalise our new property to continue and improve the services we provide to the most vulnerable women in our community. Importantly, it enables HKWS to grow by expanding services to more women through our technology-enabled outreach platforms.

### **Planning for the future**

We will continue to think innovatively about the modes of service delivery, helping to stretch our valuable resources to assist as many women in need as we can. It is an exciting time in the history of HKWS and I am proud to stand amongst a most dedicated Management Committee and outstanding staff and volunteers to be a part of delivering this next stage of history.

HKWS Vice President,  
**Lucy Garnier**

## SHELTER MANAGER'S REPORT

Our Shelter team is strengths-based, We take an integrated approach to case management with the goal of achieving positive, measurable and sustainable outcomes for our clients.

We work hand in hand with women who seek our Shelter, with a comprehensive case plan that covers all aspects of a woman's health and well-being. This gives them a structured and holistic approach to help them recuperate and take positive action to build a happier future.

Our tailored case plans provide access to services including mental health, medical, education, employment and immigration. But most importantly we provide safe and affordable housing. Our staff do a full review of all case plans to ensure that we are getting the best possible outcome for all the women.

### **A team approach**

The staff continue to work as a strong team. We work hard to empower our clients to make positive changes that improve their safety and well-being. They actively listen to every client who walks through our door, they embrace diversity, work in a non-judgemental, transparent, ethical way. I wish to thank all of them for their hard work.

### **Operational impact of COVID-19**

COVID-19 has had a significant and challenging impact on the day-to-day operation of the Shelter. But the most important decision was to keep our doors open and continue working "hands on" for women and children in need.

COVID-19 added to the trauma and fear many women confront when leaving domestic violence. Many women felt it was not safe to leave their current living arrangements so we worked with them in an outreach capacity. The government's COVID-19 Allowance gave domestic and homeless victims more options. However, HKWS remains a critical ongoing specialist service meeting the complex needs of victims.

The Shelter was forced to divert some face-to-face services such as well-being classes and restrict volunteers from visiting. Technology gives us a means to provide services via phone video meetings.

I would like to thank Women's Community Shelters, the HKWS Management Committee, our amazing volunteers and our generous community who continue to support us.

HKWS Shelter Manager,  
**Hylette Evans**

# OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

HKWS's achievements have been significantly affected by COVID-19. Women and children confronted even greater risks and dangers in accessing help. Many were simply too scared to leave their sad and frightening environment. This led to an increase in outreach services.



## 60 WOMEN

**2019-20**

HKWS has assisted 60 women this year to start a new life free from the danger of domestic violence and homelessness.

## 23 WOMEN & 6 CHILDREN

### OUTREACH SERVICES

HKWS assisted a further 23 women and 6 children by providing comprehensive access to critical services through our outreach program.

## 22 WOMEN

### BEECROFT HOUSE


Now in its second year, Beecroft House provides safe and secure housing to women over 55 years, for up to two years. This year Beecroft House was at full capacity, housing 22 women.

## VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are vital to the operation of the Shelter and its fundraising activities and we have again been very well-supported by our generous volunteers this year.

From Christmas wrapping to activities in the Shelter itself we would like to thank everyone who has given their time and support. COVID-19 has impacted our ability to call on volunteers as planned events were cancelled. We have also had to restrict the number of volunteers at the Shelter with the exception of regular lawn and garden maintenance, ad hoc maintenance in the house and an art teacher who was able to attend very few weeks.

We have engaged with volunteers in other ways such as our Healing Hearts craft project asking volunteers to make hearts which can be donated to the Shelter. We have been keeping volunteers informed through social media and look forward to welcoming them back as activities and events resume.



Volunteers Subcommittee  
Chair Tracey Sigler

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the Community Engagement Subcommittee sought new approaches to engage with our community and supporters in a positive way. HKWS fundraising aims to support 1 ongoing operating costs; and 2 capital required for our newly purchased property. The Community Engagement Subcommittee has delivered some great initiatives this year raising much needed

funds for Shelter running costs and helping HKWS raise sufficient funds to enable the purchase of a permanent Shelter home.

### Safe Place Appeal

We launched an end of financial year campaign to raise \$200,000 in 2 weeks to enable the purchase of a permanent Shelter location. The campaign had 1097 donations and raised over \$198,000. There was great community support with many organisations and individuals donating to help us reach our goals.

### International Women's Day

Kiplings at Turramurra supported our sold out breakfast event on March 8. Guest Speaker Dr Vijay Roach and President Louise McCann both inspired the audience. A very successful networking and fundraising event.

### Pymble Players Fundraiser

During their season of Shoehorn Sonata Pymble Players raised awareness and funds for the shelter. Lou McCann spoke before the start of the play on 28 Feb, the night they designated as the HKWS night.

### Hornsby Westfield Christmas Wrapping 2019

Many local volunteers got behind this initiative, dressed in their Christmas attire, and wrapped gifts for a donation for festive shoppers. The money raised went towards Shelter running costs.

### Pymble Golf Club Melbourne Cup

A sold out event, the ladies of Pymble Golf Club hosted a wonderful fundraiser. Former HKWS President Sallianne McClelland spoke at the event.

## COVID-19


March 2020 saw the arrival of COVID with lockdowns and social distancing impacting our planned fundraising. A number of events were cancelled, including the Trek and the Bobbin Head Classic. Smaller fundraisers and initiatives were important for us to continue to engage with our community. These included April School Holiday Family Challenge, Healing Hearts Campaign and Return and Earn.

We receive ongoing support from the local community from individuals, service clubs, schools and churches whose events raise funds, awareness and provide material donations.

### Bendigo Bank

Bendigo Bank is our major partner, providing marketing support, cash donations (\$20,000 towards the Safe Place Appeal) and they have actively supported our capital campaign.

Their ongoing support has enabled us to purchase a suitable property to provide stable accommodation for the women who seek our services. Social media has played an important role keeping our community connected in these COVID times, assisting with fundraising, providing regular updates on activities and including well received regular video messages from our President, Louise McCann. Due to COVID-19 we were unable to get together with our volunteers during volunteer week, so sent out electronic thank yous.



Community Engagement  
Subcommittee  
Chair Catherine Knox

# CYNTHIA'S STORY

Cynthia, aged 61 years, arrived at the Shelter escaping a long-term domestic violence relationship, which involved physical, verbal and psychological abuse. She has a significant cognitive impairment, anxiety and post-traumatic stress.

Cynthia's mental health meant she could not attend appointments or travel any distance alone because of her inability to retain information.

Our caring case workers went straight to work, creating a holistic plan to ensure Cynthia was supported in every aspect of her day-to-day living. We have been in frequent contact with Cynthia's adult son to update him on her direction moving forward.

First and foremost was protecting Cynthia from further danger through liaison with police. Cynthia was given a range of medical care to help her recover from the terrible physical scars of domestic violence as well as a plan to help her cope better with mental illness.

Our Shelter staff also worked closely with the State Trustee Guardianship to ensure Cynthia's finances are managed appropriately into the future. Disability support was also engaged to ensure Cynthia has ongoing appropriate care and support.

Cynthia gained transitional accommodation at Beecroft House where she is now living a much happier life. *Picture: Not Cynthia's real image.*



## GRANTS

The Grants Subcommittee has been in overdrive for the latter part of this year trying to provide much needed income to counteract our reduction in fundraising income and to provide equipment and resources for our evolving service provision model.

We received grants from the Community Building Partnership 2019 (Family and Community Services, NSW Government) and the Stronger Communities Programme (Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources, Australian Government) to undertake capital repairs to the Shelter, including upgrades to the bathroom. We have recently been successful in transferring these funds to spend on our forever home.

Transurban provided \$5,000 to expand our outreach service, providing invaluable equipment and resources to allow our case workers to provide support to a wider range of clients while maintaining appropriate COVID-19 safe practices.

ClubGrants (Hornsby RSL Club, Magpies Waitara and West Pennant Hills Sports Club) continued their support for the Shelter providing over \$6,000 to purchase furniture items to ensure our Shelter remains homely and comfortable and to buy gardening equipment to replace outdated and heavy equipment and assist our volunteers.

Commonwealth Bank Staff Foundation also provided \$10,000 in funds to help us to provide safe beds and food for more women in need than we would otherwise have been able to.

To help us out with additional cleaning requirements through the pandemic the Department of Communities and

Justice provided \$20,000 from the NSW and Commonwealth Governments as part of the Domestic and Family Violence Stimulus packages.



Grants Subcommittee  
Chair Lucy Garnier

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

IT reliance is more prominent with the COVID-19 situation worldwide. Use of electronic and remote forms of communication is more necessary than ever. This has been a challenging time for the NFP sector that relies on relational and face-to-face engagement and communication. It has made it hard to engage with subscribers, supporters, donors and volunteers.

HKWS has worked hard to optimise their online presence and consolidate several frontend and backend platforms to enable the Management Committee, Subcommittees and the Shelter to do their work. The IT Subcommittee has completed a number of important projects this year:

- Engage more on all social media platforms including LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter;
- Used video to communicate Shelter messages and engage our community;
- Consolidation, simplification and centralisation of our IT environment, enabling us to assess effectiveness of our initiatives, share information between systems and remove silos of information and manual data entry;

- Reviewing our website to be more streamlined and engaging;
- Setting up platforms and systems supporting fundraising initiatives from other committees;
- Sourcing and formatting data from systems and platforms to enable informed decision making;
- General maintenance and IT support to enable the work of the Management Committee and the Shelter;
- Creating an IT Subcommittee to support the organisation.

With COVID-19 continuing into 2021, the IT Subcommittee will be further consolidating and optimising into the new year to enable the Management Committee and Shelter to increase in efficiency and effectiveness.



IT Subcommittee  
Chair Jenny Talbot

## PROPERTY

The Housing Subcommittee really stepped up activities in the second half of the year searching for a permanent home for the Shelter.

Following the very successful community fundraising campaign, in conjunction with the Bendigo Bank at Turrumurra, the HKWS Management Committee made the decision that we were in a firm financial position to commit to the purchase of a property.

The decision to purchase was taken after exhausting all known options for a site or property to be gifted to the Shelter. Several appropriate properties in the Hornsby area were inspected by the Housing Subcommittee, Shelter manager Hylette Evans and other Management Committee members.

Unfortunately some, while in our price range, were not appropriate for our operations. The new Shelter was decided upon due to its location, it lends itself to the operations of the Shelter and it has scope for extension and improvement.

There are some works to be undertaken in order for the Shelter to be granted approval for use by Hornsby Shire Council, however HKWS Management Committee discussions with Council prior to purchase indicated that this will be possible.

In the meantime the Shelter continues to operate in its current location, on a month to month basis. We hope to have the correct approvals and facilities in place so that we can move into the new home prior to Christmas.

The Housing Subcommittee is overwhelmed by the support from the community for the project and offers of help to make the house a home.



The significance of the property purchase cannot be understated, and neither can the work that has gone into raising the funds for it.

All Management Committee members past and present, HKWS team members, volunteers and supporters and WCS have all played a huge role in securing the organisation a permanent home. It is an asset of great value now and into the future.



Property Subcommittee  
**Chair Warren Waddell**



## A SAFE, SECURE, PERMANENT HOME FOR OUR SHELTER



## OUR COMMUNITY'S AMAZING ACHIEVEMENT

The Safe Place Appeal was an extremely successful social media and Chuffed campaign that was run over a two week period as an end of financial year campaign for the 2019-2020 financial year.

The aim of The Safe Place Appeal was to raise \$200,000 to enable the purchase of a permanent home for HKWS.

The support of the community and organisations was extraordinary with just under the target reached and 1097 donations made during the campaign.

The campaign was seen by approximately 135,000 people throughout the two week period. The HKWS subscriber mailing list grew considerably during the period as well, allowing us access to more people interested in Shelter activities and progress on an ongoing basis.

Supporting social media posts were run on LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. The posts that performed the best were those that featured video footage of Louise McCann (President) with launch, progress and closure messages. The majority of people found out about the campaign through Facebook.

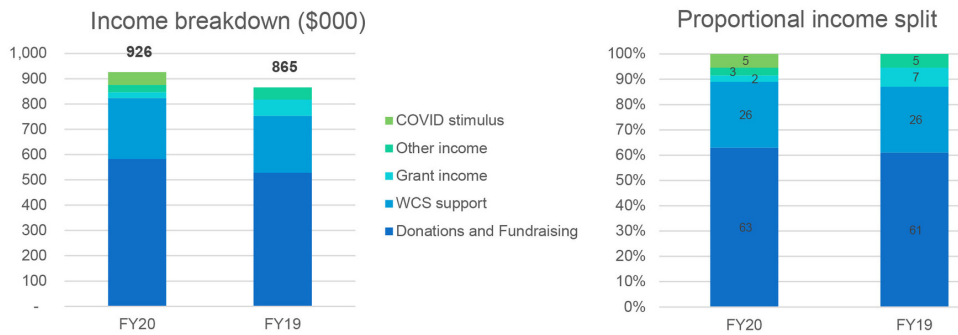


## Financial summary

The financial year ended 30 June 2020 was a strong year for the Shelter financially, safeguarding ongoing operations whilst building sufficient funds for the purchase of a property to secure the Shelter's long-term stability.

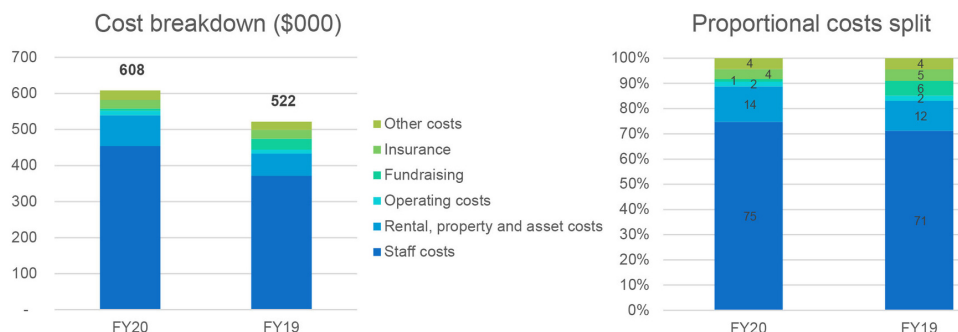
## Income

- Financial year 2020 income was 7% higher than the previous year, with increases in donations and fundraising offsetting a reduction in grant income. Of particular note was the Safe Places Appeal campaign in June 2020, with \$255,000 in donations received in this month;
- The Shelter also benefited from \$50,000 in COVID-19 stimulus funding through the Cash Boost and Job Keepers government initiatives;
- The Shelter continues to derive more than a quarter of its income from our umbrella organisation, Women's Community Shelters.



## Costs

- The Shelter experienced increasing costs to maintain safe operations, in particular with higher staff costs;
- The increase in asset costs is partially due to a change in accounting policy to recognise depreciation for the first time, resulting in a \$18,000 impact;
- Fundraising costs were nonetheless \$25,000 lower than the prior year.



Treasurer  
**Chania Rodwell**

## Financial position and property purchase

The past couple of years of fundraising activity left the Shelter in a strong financial position to pursue the purchase of its own property. After extensive property searches, the Members of the Management Committee identified a suitable premise, and on 25 September the Shelter exchanged on the purchase of a home for \$1.48 million.

The purchase is supported by subsidised debt facilities from Bendigo Bank and will be interest free for the first three years. The net impact on the Shelter will be:

- Similar monthly property outlays as the current rental costs. However this spending will instead go towards paying down debt principal and building equity in the Shelter's property and balance sheet;
- A reduction in the Shelter's cash reserves for the proportion of the purchase that is not debt funded. The amounts committed have been balanced with the objective of leaving the Shelter with sufficient funding to run operations for 12 months in the absence of other income.

## Governance changes

Over the financial year the governance functions of the Shelter have been augmented from a single Membership Committee to include a number of subcommittees:

- Finance, Audit, Risk, Compliance and Governance Subcommittee;
- Housing Subcommittee;
- Grants Subcommittee;
- People, Human Resources, Staff and Volunteers Subcommittee;
- Community Engagement and Fundraising Subcommittee;
- IT Subcommittee.

These Subcommittees each have their own charters and are run by Subcommittee Members. Some have recently welcomed additional volunteers. The Subcommittees have been reviewed for skill set coverage and succession.

The Subcommittees meet regularly and report back to the Management Committee at bi-monthly meetings in addition to informal communications between meetings.

The Finance, Audit, Risk, Compliance and Governance Committee is responsible for maintaining a risk register and compliance timetable to promote good governance practices across the Shelter.



Treasurer  
**Chania Rodwell**

# WOMEN'S COMMUNITY SHELTERS

Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter is part of the Women's Community Shelters network. Women's Community Shelters is an Australian Charity which partners with local communities to provide emergency accommodation for women experiencing domestic violence or homelessness in NSW.

## Vision and values

Women's Community Shelters is an Australian charity working directly with local communities to set up crisis accommodation shelters for women and children experiencing homelessness and domestic and family violence.

Women's Community Shelters' unique funding model brings together business and corporate support, philanthropic investment, Commonwealth and NSW State Government funding and vital local community fundraising to support our head office (Hub) and Shelters. The Hub is not funded by government.

## Purpose

Our core purpose is establishing crisis shelters for women and children at risk of homelessness and domestic and family violence, in partnership with local communities.

We are working to expand our network to at least nine Shelters across NSW, and have developed a host of complementary programs to support women and children after crisis, including transitional housing and outreach programs, child support, employment, education and training as well as our 'Walk the Talk' education program.

The programs we offer in each Shelter community continue to grow and evolve, reflecting local community needs and the dynamism of our partners to do more to assist our mission.

## SECURE FUNDING, SECURE PARTNERSHIPS



## FEEDBACK FROM THE WOMEN WE SUPPORT:



## We believe

Community engagement in local initiatives is key to resolving the pressing social issues of women's homelessness and domestic and family violence. We believe specialist women's shelters offering best practice support are a critical service for women and children.

## Our values

**Respect:** We value our staff, our volunteers and all our communities and recognise their value and worth;

**Kindness:** We are generous and considerate, non-judgemental and understanding of others' needs;

**Excellence:** We strive always to exceed expectations and deliver high standards;

**Courage:** We seek to drive positive change and challenge the status quo;

**Hope:** We provide hope and optimism to all our clients and communities. Hope for those most needing it and all our values can be achieved through collaboration and partnership.