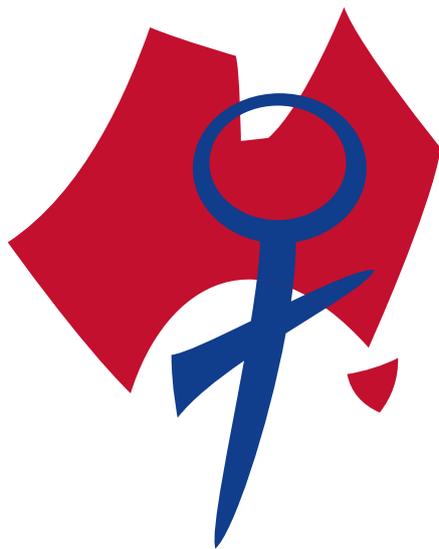


# Women's Services Network **WESNET**

Australia's peak women's organisation working  
to eliminate domestic and family violence



## ANNUAL REPORT 2007 - 2008



**W E S N E T**  

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**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2007 - 2008**

**CONTENTS**

**Committee Reports**

<b>Chairperson.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>ACT.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>NSW.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>NT.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>QLD.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>SA.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>TAS.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>VIC.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>WA.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Indigenous.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Non-English Speaking background... </b>	<b>35</b>

<b>Financial Reports.....</b>	<b>38</b>
-------------------------------	-----------

Audited Financial Statements

<b>Membership.....</b>	<b>42</b>
------------------------	-----------

Financial Members

## **CHAIRPERSON**

### **PAULINE WOODBRIDGE**

North Queensland Combined Women's Services

Welcome to the 2007/08 Annual Report. This report is being delivered at what seems to be a time of change and opportunity. You will read about the scope of some of the changes in each of the Indigenous and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse representative's reports as well as the State and Territory representative reports. There is a feeling of optimism in the domestic and family violence and sexual assault sectors. The interest and commitment demonstrated by the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd and the Minister for Housing and the Status of Women Tanya Plibersek, gives new heart to our sector. Both the Prime Minister and the Minister have really put domestic and family violence and homelessness on the national stage.

Along with Homelessness Australia and many others, including WESNET'S member services, WESNET prepared a submission to the Homeless Green Paper and currently we await the release of the White Paper. The new federal government is transforming its funding relationships with the States and we are facing the end of the familiar SAAP arrangements after nearly 25 years as Australia's safety net for the homeless. Many of WESNET'S member services and workers have been proud of their contribution to SAAP and are sad to see it go. Workers say SAAP was a very successful program, despite poor funding commitment and the unfair reputation it experienced from various quarters. The development of the new NAHA arrangements is cause of concern for the sector. We all await the outcomes from COAG. Unfortunately we expect any announcements will be tempered by the current economic bad news

The change of government has also brought new opportunities for WESNET. Earlier this year the Office for Women approached both WESNET and NASASV with an offer of funding to support our respective sectors. WESNET decided to use the \$500,000 funding to set up a grants process for our sector that would enable domestic and family violence services to apply for small grants to enhance their service delivery, provide an opportunity to develop small projects or to carry out some locally based research. We were lucky to employ consultant Karen Bentley as a project manager and the WESNET representatives act in a variety of roles to support the project. WESNET invited applications from services around Australia and received 156 submissions requesting more than four million dollars. The selection panel of WESNET reps undertook the huge task to read every application and to develop a shortlist. It was evident that services put an enormous amount of work into their submissions and the interview panel were impressed by the breadth and range of ideas in the submissions. Sadly not every application could be successful. It is clear that the high rate of submissions reflect the general lack of funding in the sector over the last few years and it also reflects the creativity of the services in the sector.

WESNET also applied for an Office for Women Capacity Building Grant and were successful in receiving funds to develop VIRTUAL WESNET. Work on this project will culminate in the launch of a new interactive website. Our thanks to Ann for maintaining our current website.

In May, many WESNET members attended the Homelessness Conference in Adelaide and participated in the WESNET round table and other WESNET lead events. As the chair of WESNET, I contributed to a panel discussion at the final event of this very successful conference.

Also In May, Minister Plibersek announced her National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children. WESNET is pleased to be represented on that council. The work of the council will culminate in a National Plan to be presented to the Minister on the 17<sup>th</sup> of December 2008.

During the year many of you will have participated in WESNET'S workplace survey, asking for the top 10 issues in your workplaces. The most mentioned issue was homelessness, emergency housing, and transitional housing and exit points. The second highest mentioned problem was recruiting and maintaining staff, and the third most prevalent answer are concerns about the impact of the family law reform on compromising women's safety. The results of this research will be collated and published with the help of a small grant from Homelessness Australia.

Once again thanks to the commitment of the WESNET member services who provide the jurisdictional, Indigenous and Non-English Speaking Background reps, WESNET has had another active and successful year, well supported by Lis in the Canberra office. Most all we appreciate the support of our services and we all appreciate the opportunity to support our sector wherever possible in these changing times.

## Representatives

Biljana Petrova, Canberra ACT	Kiki Korpinen, Canberra ACT
Cat Gander, Redfern NSW	
Kaz Philips, Darwin NT	Jo Theodoropolous, Katherine NT
Lindy Edwards, Townsville QLD	Jane Doyle, Cairns Qld
Vicki Lachlan, Adelaide SA	Desi Alexandridis, Adelaide SA
Sandra Nichols, Hobart TAS	Anne Hurd, Glenorchy TAS
Julie Oberin, Bendigo VIC	Fiona McCormick, Melbourne VIC
Kedy Kristal, Joondalup WA	Arina Aoina, Gosnells WA
INDIGENOUS:	
Shirley Slann, Mount Isa QLD	Marilyn Fogarty, Campbelltown NSW
NESB:	
Annabelle Allimant Brisbane Qld	
CHAIR:	SECRETARIAT:
Pauline Woodbridge	Lis Cameron

## **AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

Rep: **BILJANA PETROVA** (Heira Women's Refuge, Toora Women Inc.)

Proxy: **KIKI KORPINEN** (Women's Centre for Health Matters Inc.)

### **DV Legislative Changes**

The Domestic Violence Prevention Council (DVPC), the ACT Family Violence Intervention Program (FVIP), as well as women's legal and DV/sexual assault services have continued to monitor and provide input into legislative changes and law evaluation processes regarding domestic violence issues.

The ACT has seen considerable focus in 2007/08 on sexual assault reforms, the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre (CRCC) reports. In September 2007, the ACT Attorney General announced an injection of nearly \$4 million in funds to support reforms. This Included:

- three new positions to improve victim support and coordination (one each for Canberra Rape Crisis, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Victims of Crime Coordinator's Office) comprising \$1.2 million over 4 years;
- a multi-media victim information package (\$80,000) that provides victims with information about the investigation, prosecution and court process and sources of victim support.
- establishing an off-site remote witness facilities including fit-out for two court rooms with state-of-the-art technology to enable victims and witnesses to give best evidence without fear and intimidation (almost \$1 million);
- An additional police officer and expanded prosecution resources, totalling \$1 million;
- Funds for a law reform specialist to work with justice agencies to accelerate legislative reform in key areas such as pre-recorded victim statements (\$200,000); and,
- Development of accredited inter-agency training and evaluation of the reform initiative (over \$500,000)

The approach taken has been more victim focused and collaborative work has included the development of a wraparound model of victim support, which from CRCC's perspective has been a positive shift.

The ACT Attorney General has also tabled the sexual Assault and Violent Offences Amendment Bill. The reforms under this bill include:

- Paper or hand-up committal proceedings, meaning that the victim/witness does not need to appear
- Allowing audio visual recordings of police interviews to be admissible as Evidence in Chief for children and adults with intellectual impairment

- Introducing pre-trial hearings for children, adults with an intellectual impairment and victims of sexual assault in circumstances where they have a special vulnerability that will impact on their ability to give satisfactory evidence
- Admission of pre-recorded evidence in later proceedings including re hearings, appeals or related matters arising in the Family Court
- Using the presumption that CCTV technology will be available for use by all victim/witnesses of sexual assault, unless applications are received to the contrary
- This provision is also extended to similar act witnesses
- Restricting the view of the accused from the victim/witness, both when on CCTV and if in court
- Prohibition on cross examination by a self represented accused
- Children, adults with an intellectual or physical impairment and victims of sexual assault or a violent offence are entitled to having a support person of their choice
- A discretionary provision to close the court on application by the prosecution, with the exception of the media who will still have access.

These reforms are not expected to be applied until March/June 2009, to allow for court upgrades, training of all concerned and development of MOUs across the sector.

The evaluation of the Family Law Reforms promises that issues of particular concern, such as family violence and child safety, will be addressed in each component of the evaluation and its Legislation and Court Project would examine the impact of four key aspects of the reform:

1. The legislative provisions designed to ensure children have meaningful relationships with both their parents, including the introduction of a presumption in favour of equal shared parental responsibility.
2. The increased emphasis in the legislation on the need to protect children from exposure to family violence, abuse and neglect;
3. The introduction of compulsory family dispute resolution from July 2007, except in certain circumstances, including where there are concerns about family violence or child abuse, and
4. The implementation of less adversarial processes for court decision making in most children's matters.

This evaluation will explore the impact of reforms on the practices of parents, service system providers and legal system players.

In the ACT, the collaborative criminal justice and community response to family violence, including the safety needs of women and children who have lived with violence has seen the

formation of Victims Support ACT (VS ACT), a new agency bringing together the Victims Services Scheme (VSS) and the Office of the Victims of Crime Coordinator.

This allows for a more comprehensive response to all victims of crime.

### **ACT Budget Implications**

The ACT Budget announced in May 2008 contains some positive initiatives into funding community support and health projects. On the funding for women however, the ACT Council of Social Services (ACTCOSS) reports that while women make up over half the ACT population, new women specific initiatives appear to add up to little over \$4 million. Once again in 2008-09, there is a lack of gendered budget analysis or reference to our international obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women.

A number of initiatives are targeted at families and while these do impact on women, there is a need to develop sophistication around analysis of these issues.

It is also positive to see some initiatives in industries that are highly feminised (for example, investment in the nursing and midwifery program and portability of long service leave in the community sector).

For the second year in a row, the ACT Government failed to redress the significant funding cuts to the ACT homelessness sector in 2006-07. There is no provision to increase the supply of services, support or accommodation for homeless people. ACTCOSS continues to be concerned about the shortage of exit options for families accessing SAAP services and those in housing crisis. It is disappointing that this budget does not allocate funds for capital works related to Housing ACT, community housing or to provide adequate Indigenous housing.

The *Children in Public Housing* initiative appears to recognise that children have specific housing needs and will identify appropriate housing responses. Work also needs to be done to ensure that Housing ACT properties are appropriate for children so that their identified needs can be met.

### **Joint Pathways Group and SAAP Service Guarantee**

The *Pathways Project*, initiated through a consultation process involving ACT Women's SAAP Services, has grown into a sector wide framework including government and non government organisations in the Women's Sector, Families, Youth, Men's, Homelessness and some Drug and Alcohol Services, referred to as the *Joint Pathways Group*. Primarily aiming to provide a streamlined pathway through the system with minimal points of contact resolving crisis, homelessness and assisting with all other needs of clients, the group is now potentially looking at broader issues relating to:

- school-based interventions for children at risk of homelessness;
- access to health services for homeless people;
- rights of homeless people to access commercial goods and services;
- assistance provided to protect children and support families at risk of/during family breakdown;
- provision of AOD and mental health services to people at risk of homelessness;
- development of whole-of-government strategies to address housing supply and housing affordability;
- systemic strategies to address violence and crime prevention including domestic and family violence;
- access to justice, courts and legal assistance for homeless people;
- access to public transport and the needs of homeless people for good transport services.

In an effort to identify its role, status and scope of issues, the Joint Pathways Group has worked on its first Draft Terms of Reference with many questions arising around clarity of roles, establishing authority, accountability, issues of representation, decision-making, over-representation of SAAP services in the group and its current resource base.

In its work thus far, the Joint Pathways Group has put together several commonly used framework documents and forms relating to referral, assessment and feedback. Additionally, a **SAAP Service Guarantee** was officially launched on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2008. This document states the support of the ACT Homelessness Charter which affirms the human rights of homeless people and outlines their rights to inclusion, dignity, respect, non-discrimination, safety and freedom. The Joint Pathways group remains committed to putting DV issues at the forefront of its agenda.

### **ACT Women's Services Issues and Projects**

The Pathways process has provided some streamlining of services and a much better awareness of the capacities of women's services in the ACT. Still, a lack of crisis and long-term accommodation continues to be experienced. YWCA's Housing Programs have focused on working more closely together as the Housing Support Unit in order to provide a more consistent service across the ACT, pooling their resources, ideas and workloads together with the trialling of a joint intake service. Prolonged periods of staff shortage push services to come up with creative solutions in order to maximise efficiencies.

Staff recruitment and retention is a big issue for the community sector in Canberra; the cost of living, the housing affordability crisis and interest rate rises have impacted on services' ability to recruit and retain workers. Workers have had to make difficult decisions and at times prioritise their financial situation over their desire to work in the community sector. The time has come (and is long overdue) for a revamp or abolition of the SACS award and for the sector to lobby government to increase pay rates in the community sector.

The housing crisis has meant that all SAAP services have been extremely busy. Many women and families who would not normally approach the SAAP sector are now seeking support due to homelessness, housing and financial stress. Services are working within the sector and with Housing ACT to help formulate ideas and plans to assist people who do not meet SAAP criteria with their housing affordability issues.

Currently the community sector does not have an appropriate safety net in place for women with complex needs, such as dual diagnosis. This is greatly due to existing services being overstretched (lack of funding, resources or staffing), or not having the infrastructure to meet the identified needs. DV specific refuges in the ACT often end up supporting women in these situations due to inappropriate initial assessment of need or general lack of supported accommodation for women with dual diagnosis.

A number of initiatives by Family Support Services could address gaps in service provision to Indigenous families, women and children. However, more Indigenous specific services are needed to provide coordinated approaches and longer-term support. Proportionate to population size, Indigenous women are over-represented in homelessness services and in the criminal justice system. In 2006 0.6% of ACT Women identified as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. Despite the relatively low number this group continues in 2008 to be significantly over represented in statistics on drug and alcohol dependency, homelessness, domestic violence, poverty, incarceration, and also report notably poorer health than the population at large. Homelessness rates continue to be alarmingly high with Indigenous representation at nearly four times higher than the population at large.

The ACT Women's Services Network identified a need for better representation of its services to the wider community, as well as Indigenous and CALD communities. Furthermore, it was felt that women's issues are dropping off the ACT Government's agenda. To that end the network put forward a submission under the ACT Women's Grants and successfully secured funding for several promotional projects including Reclaim the Night Event, Anti-Poverty Week Exhibition titled Feminisation of Poverty, NAIDOC Week, Indigenous Women Speak Gathering, Canberra Multicultural Festival and International Women's Day.

The Women's Centre for Health Matters (WCHM) commissioned a report on Marginalised and Isolated Women in the ACT – risk, prevalence and service provision. The report presents a range of data aimed at exploring the nature of ACT women's marginalisation and isolation, and was written with the specific purpose of facilitating (and documenting) issues and working towards improved support for women within this target group (for a copy of the report visit [www.wchm.org.au](http://www.wchm.org.au)). Other reports and projects are underway to address barriers for women from CALD communities and women with disabilities experiencing domestic violence in accessing services in the ACT.

## **NEW SOUTH WALES**

**CAT GANDER** (NSW Women's Refuge Resource Centre (Sydney))

### **NSW Responses to National and State Inquiries**

The NSW WESTNET Delegate undertook broad consultation to respond through submissions to a number of state and national inquiries during the year including:

- NSW Commission of Inquiry into Child Protective Services
- Review of Coordinating NSW Government Action in responding to Domestic and Family Violence
- Commonwealth's Homelessness Green Paper/ White Paper
- Submission to the *Statutory Review of the Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993*
- Response to the Evaluation of the Review of the Temporary Accommodation Program and the Homeless Persons Brokerage Program
- Response to the Draft SAAP Costing Manual
- Response to report 'Assessing SAAP services responses to the Ombudsman 2004 Inquiry into Access and Exiting Issues Response to Planning for the Future: Community Housing Strategy 2007-2012

The submissions are available from the WRM RC website: [www.wrrc.org.au](http://www.wrrc.org.au)

### **SAAP Performance based Contracting (Performance Monitoring Framework, PMF)**

The Department of Community Service (DoCS) is the funding body for SAAP services in NSW. During the year DoCS has continued to trial a performance based contracting system with all SAAP services. The WRM RC consulted extensively with member services during 2007 – 08 in relation to the PMF and the effect this will have on service provision in women's refuges. As part of the consultations and research the WRM RC distributed two questionnaires, one which examined the different types of operating structures of refuges. The other examined the intensive level of support provided by on-call refuges. Regional consultations were also held with each of the WRM regions, of which the WRM RC attended and assisted.

The Women's Refuge Movement Resource Centre (WRM RC) has continued to work with DoCS to ensure the intensive work undertaken by women's refuges in responding to domestic violence and associated issues be acknowledged in the development of Performance Based Contracting. The WRM RC have assisted DoCS in the revision of service specifications and costings to more adequately capture the broad range of services that women's refuges provide.

### *Orana Far West Safe Houses (OFWSH) Project and the Organisational Mentoring Project*

The NSW WRM has auspiced the Orana Far West Safe Houses Project in 2007-08. The overall scope of both of these projects includes:

1. Improving the capacity of the OFW Safe Houses in Bourke, Brewarrina, Lightning Ridge, Walgett and Wilcannia to improve safety and wellbeing of women and children experiencing or at risk of family violence.
2. Establishing Child Focused workers in each of the 5 safe houses
3. Implementing key recommendations from the 2005 review of the Safe Houses by providing additional support and resources to enable each safe house to implement critical improvements in organizational governance, service delivery and service integration.
4. Developed and implementation of training in four broad areas including management and governance; client support and access; IT development and specialist training for domestic violence, alcohol and other drugs; sexual assault; and working with children

The Orana Safe Houses project has now been included in the NSW State Plan and this has had a significant impact on other government and non-government stakeholders working to support the Orana. Year 1 evaluation of the project and its progress has commenced. The project is on target and has met achievements in line with the project plan.

### **NSW Women's Family Law Support Service**

The WRM Resource Centre has had a key role in the establishment of the NSW WRM Women's Family Law Support Service (WFLSS), which opened on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2007 at the Sydney Family Court Registry. This was an attempt by NSW to redress the disadvantage that many women experience under the current reforms. This service provides non-legal support, information and referrals for women attending the Sydney Family Law Registry in relation to separation, with a particular focus on women and children who are separating from a partner who is violent and abusive. The service is a joint project of the WRM and the Sydney Family Law Registry (FLC). WRM RC continues to co-ordinate, develop and promote the service with the critical support of the WFLSS management committee and WRM workers and services who generously supply their time to the project. Special thanks also to the WRM's partners in this project the Sydney Family Law Court, the WFLSS management committee and support workers.

It is been a busy year for the WFLSS which culminated in the project receiving funding for two years through the new established Violence Prevention Coordination Unit located within the NSW Department of Premiers and Cabinet. The funding will be used to cover service operations and document the model for replication in other locations. The WFLSS is also being evaluated by Dr Lesley Laing who has many years of experience in domestic and family violence research.

During 07-08 the WFLSS provided support and assistance to 199 women. The median age range for women accessing the service was 36 – 40 years accounting for 29% of clients, followed by 31 – 35 years (18%) and 41 – 50 (17%). The majority of the women that accessed the service did so by self referral (65%), followed by referrals by court staff (16%), lawyer (8%) and refugees (8%).

From 180 women supported the majority disclosed that they had experienced domestic violence (74%: n= 133). From 128 women that disclosed domestic violence 59% did not have an Apprehended Violence in place. From 107 cases where domestic violence had been disclosed over half (51%) of the women had not previously accessed any other domestic violence service.

From the 167 cases where data was collected on whether the women had children, the vast majority did (n=153; 77%). In a 140 cases where the women had children the majority of women were attending court as a result of parenting matters (parenting = 101, parenting and property = 17). From 139 respondents 73% of women with children had disclosed domestic violence (n=101), the majority of these women were attending court in relation to parenting matters (parenting = 72%; parenting and property = 14%).

From 166 respondents over half of the women accessing the service were not entitled to Legal Aid (n=85), eligibility to legal aid had yet to be determined for a further 22% of women (n=36). Of the women that were not entitled to legal aid 75% (n=64) had disclosed domestic violence.

Entering Family Law Court processes can be complicated and traumatic where women are leaving a relationship where children are involved and violence or abuse has been a factor. The service provides much needed support and assistance in these circumstances.

### **V Day Sydney 2008**

For Sydney V Day 2008 Rosie Lalevich presented a Benefit Production of Eve Ensler's 'The Vagina Monologues' on June 29<sup>th</sup> at the Parade Theatre. The Benefit Production of Eve Ensler's 'The Vagina Monologues' was a huge success. The theatre was full and raised over \$15,000 to go to the WRM's Women's Family Law Support Service. Patrons for the event include; Eva Cox, Margaret Cunneen, Pru Goward MP, Dr Lesley Laing, Emily Maguire, Wendy McCarthy, Jillian Skinner MP and Anne Summers. Thanks to the women that supported the evening. It was a great opportunity to promote the work of refuge workers and raise the issues for women and children entering into Family law Court Processes.

### **NSW Violence Prevention Coordination Unit**

After a statewide consultation the Violence Against Women's Unit originally located in Attorney General and then controversially transferred to the Communities Division of DoCS has been established in the Department of Premiers and Cabinet. And renamed the Violence Prevention Coordination Unit located within the NSW

## **NSW Responses to National and State Inquiries**

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### **1. Media, Public Awareness & Advice to Government**

Media interviews have been undertaken by the NSW WESNET Delegate on issues including refuges, domestic violence and its effects on children, legislative changes and homelessness. The NSW WESNET Delegate has carried out the following media work:

- Interview with A Current Affair and an ACT radio station regarding Wayne Carey.
- Interview with Australian Associated Press (AAP) and ABC Radio regarding the Premiers announcements about the Violence Against Women strategy.
- Interview with Western NSW radio station about the rates of DV in the area and to discuss what the Government was doing regarding this.
- Several media commitments were undertaken to promote Sydney V Day 2008 which was raising funds for the WRM, this included a spot on Channel Seven's Sunrise Program.
- The WRM RC also contributed to the media campaign undertaken by New Idea to launch the results of their Stop Violence Against Women Survey
- Interview with the 7.30 Report in relation to children and AVO's

Press releases and letters to relevant ministers have also been written regarding current issues and concerns.

## **Staying Home Leaving Violence (SHLV) and DV Integrated Case Management Projects (DoCS)**

It is anticipated SHLV programs will be rolled out in 16 new locations in the new financial year. At this stage DoCS has not formed any opinion on what services would be best placed to run such services and they also acknowledged the need for there to be a coordinated approach by Police, Courts and other services for the program to be successful. Site selection for the program will be determined through regional data analysis and consultations. DoCS is also be working on the development of the implementation framework for the Integrated Case Management Projects that will ensure some consistency across program sites through the development of formal mechanisms, principles and objectives yet still allow for local needs to be addressed. At present there are three program sites; Nowra, Taree and the Central Coast, evaluation will be undertaken on all sites and a broader evaluation will also be undertaken

## NORTHERN TERRITORY

Rep: **KAZ PHILLIPS** (Dawn House Inc. Darwin)

Proxy: **JO THEODOROPOULOUS** (Katherine Women's Crisis Service)

The issues affecting our work in the domestic & family violence sector in the Northern Territory continue to be significant: high rates of all forms of violence (including assault and assault with a weapon), issues associated with geographic and cross cultural complexity, the lack of any coordinated government policy context and the serious lack of appropriately resourced services all create enormous challenges. Credit needs to be given to the dedication of all the workers in the field who struggle with this difficult context and continue to provide the best possible support to women and children survivors of violence.

Most of the changes that have been introduced in this past year have been informed primarily by Commonwealth and Northern Territory Government responses to the **Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse – *Little Children are Sacred Report*** and have consequently maintained a focus on remote Indigenous issues. The Commonwealth responded with the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) and the Northern Territory responded with the 'Closing the Gap of Indigenous Disadvantage: Generational Plan of Action' (\$286m over 5 years for initiatives that cover child protection, family violence, policing, justice, alcohol and drugs, health, housing, jobs and culture). There has been a frenzy of activity, much of it being rolled out within a policy vacuum, with unrealistic timelines and in a manner that does not appear to have adequately engaged with the relevant communities of interest. There is some concern being expressed that much of the work being done will not encourage sustainable outcomes. There is also concern that the significant increase in demand for urban services is partly due to increased urban drift directly related to some of the measures being introduced in communities.

Unfortunately, all this activity coincided with the expiry of the **NT Domestic and Aboriginal Family Violence Strategies in 2007**. An extensive evaluation report on these strategies presented to government in 2007 has not been made public and a significant departmental restructure has been implemented during this period of time. Responsibility for domestic & family violence and related policy and programs has now become part of a new Division, NT Families and Children, within the newly created Department of Health & Families. A new Branch (Family & Individual Services) is currently being established that will be responsible for domestic/family violence & sexual assault related issues. There is some hope that there will be allocation of resources to support the development and coordination of an appropriate policy framework.

Membership of the **Domestic & Family Violence Advisory Council**, due to expire in March 2008 was extended for another 6 month period, pending the implementation of some of the changes mentioned above. Current membership is very low (6 members) and not particularly representative. It has a strong legal & remote Indigenous focus and currently the only community based representation is from Attorney-General's funded Indigenous Family Violence Legal Services (Top End and Central Australian) where the client group is non gender specific domestic & family violence victims. At the time of writing this report there is still no information available in regard to the Council status.

There have been considerable legislative changes implemented this year with the intention of supporting a strengthened legal response to identified issues. The **Domestic & Family Violence Act 2007** came into effect in July 2008. Principle features of the new Act are:

- young persons aged over 15 and under 18 years of age can obtain domestic violence orders on their own behalf
- domestic violence orders can be made against young persons aged over 15 and under 18 years of age
- other persons in close relationships (carer's relationships, betrothals, promised wives, dating relationships) can obtain domestic violence orders
- economic abuse and intimidation are grounds for Orders
- child witnessing of family violence is now grounds for seeking a domestic violence order on the child's behalf by a Police officer or child protection worker
- there is a presumption in favour of the victim with children remaining in the family home
- the Court can make domestic violence orders mandating that an offender attend rehabilitation and treatment programs
- the Court is obliged to explain to the applicant and the offender, in an appropriate language or appropriate terms, the effect of the domestic violence order
- the vulnerable witness provisions akin to those in the *Evidence Act* apply to applicants and persons giving evidence when domestic violence orders are being sought
- the maximum penalty for breach is increased to two years imprisonment
- 'If harm is caused' from a breach of a domestic violence order, the Court is required to impose a term of actual imprisonment for a second or subsequent breach.

After some community concern was raised, the Northern Territory Government chose to not include **Mandatory reporting of domestic violence (for health professionals)** in this legislation, deciding instead to issue a discussion paper and seek submissions. This issue arose from a 2007 Coroner Report recommendation and was based on the experience of an aboriginal woman from a remote community who was killed by her ex partner after prolonged exposure to extreme physical violence and repeated presentations to health professionals. The irony of this situation was that the offender had been incarcerated for his violence and his parole was not being adequately supervised at the time of her death. The government received many submissions about this issue, most of which expressed major concern about

the implementation of this law. The result of this consultation was a government announcement that they intended to introduce the law and to expand the responsibility of reporting to all adults in the Northern Territory. An exposure draft Bill was introduced to parliament and further community feedback was sought on the wording of the Bill. We are yet to hear if there are any amendments to the proposed legislation.

All urban domestic & family violence crisis accommodation and support services continue to be stretched as a consequence of inadequate resources, difficulty attracting and keeping appropriately skilled staff, high turn away rates and no exit points due to the highest housing prices and lowest vacancy rates in the country. Except for a newly created part-time SAAP Children's Counselling Program based at Relationships Australia NT in Darwin, there have been few additional community sector resources allocated. There was one Northern Territory wide SAAP sector conference but there was little support for territory-wide networking (the only workshop for domestic & family violence services had a departmentally driven agenda). Domestic Violence Community Development & Training positions in Darwin and Alice Springs continue to facilitate local service provider training opportunities and strong local domestic & family violence networks. Unfortunately, there are few resources to support primary prevention and intervention strategies.

After many years of neglect, there have been some considerable resources allocated for **remote indigenous** domestic & family violence program development. Most of this has been administered by the Northern Territory Government and been developed with little input from our sector. There have been resources allocated for the expansion of:

- The safe house and men's cooling off space program with the setting up of 20 facilities in 16 remote communities (and 2 in urban settings). The government expects these facilities to be operational by the end of 2008
- Remote community family violence awareness programs (Department Health & Families)
- Mandated community based Aboriginal Family Violence Offender Group Work Program (administered by Community Corrections, Department of Justice)
- Reintroduced night patrol services
- Increased supervision of parolees

There has also been some focus on working with culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities during this year:

- On-going Domestic Violence awareness raising workshops held with newly emerging refugee background communities
- Domestic Violence training provided to Interpreting & Translating Service NT (ITSNT) and Aboriginal Interpreting Service interpreters
- Domestic Violence & Immigration Law Workshops held around the territory
- Development of CALD Family Law project by Northern Territory Legal Aid.

## **QUEENSLAND**

**LINDY EDWARDS** (Sera's Women's Shelter)

### **Current Management of SAAP/CAP**

The big issue of concern during the past 12 months in Queensland for SAAP and in particular women's services has been the review of the management arrangements for SAAP/CAP. This review was undertaken by private consultants KPMG, and although consultations were held all around the state, as always there was a feeling that our issues were not being heard, or that they had narrow guidelines for the consultations. Clearly a recommendation of the review was expected to be that both programs are administered under the one department and the sector has been very concerned that a possible outcome of this would be that the management of SAAP would be moved to the Department of Housing. This would have been particularly concerning for DV refuges. It has now officially been announced that from the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2009, CAP will come under the Department of Communities. We are still unsure how things will work with Dept. of Communities taking over the "bricks and mortar" aspect of CAP, but at least we are feeling more optimistic about the future.

### **SAAP Ministerial Advisory Mechanism**

In Queensland there is currently no Ministerial Advisory mechanism for SAAP, and has not been for several years, despite hard lobbying by the sector in this regard. For the last few years we have been involved in an annual Ministerial Roundtable which has really been our only mechanism to advise the Minister of current issues with SAAP, and because of limited invitations, has not been truly representative of all the regions in Queensland. Finally, The Minister announced funding to QCOSS and Q Shelter to implement a SAAP Networking Strategy, with the objective of improving co-ordination of SAAP funded services and to give service providers opportunities to inform government on program and organisational issues. Although not actually providing formal mechanism to advise the Minister, it is anticipated there will be positive outcomes for the SAAP Sector.

### **D&FV Ministerial Advisory Council**

The Ministerial Advisory Council has been established for a further term and once again Shirley has been appointed as the North Queensland representative. This is only a one year term as there is a review pending of all Qld. government advisory boards. This year has seen the appointment of people who are far more representative of the sector and aware of the current issues.

### **Whole of Government Strategy on Domestic and Family Violence**

The Department of Communities is the lead agency in the development of a whole of Government response to D&FV in Queensland. Consultations are being held around the state in the next few weeks, enabling input from the sector into the governments plan. Five areas for action have been identified:

- Prevention – focusing on healthy relationships
- Early identification
- Connected Support services
- Perpetrator Accountability
- System Planning and Co-ordination

Various initiatives have been proposed in the paper, some already happening and some that appear to require a lot of extra resources and funding for them to happen, for example expanding the counselling and support programs for children affected by DV, a very under resourced area. We will have to wait and see if there is further funding.

One possible option identified in the report is the examination of models to learn from D&FV homicides, such as death review boards, which is something the sector has been lobbying hard for, for some time.

In addition there is to be a review of the *Domestic & Family Violence Protection Act 1989*, commencing in early 2009. Hopefully some changes could come about as a result of this particularly in the area of ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable and the enforcement of orders with tougher sentencing for breaches.

### **Department of Child Safety**

A few years ago the Qld. Police developed a policy of automatic notification to the Department of Child Safety, if police attend a domestic violence incident and children are present or live in the house. This has raised concerns in the dv sector that women will be reluctant to contact the police for fear of the Department's involvement. This concern now appears to have reached other areas including within Legal Aid Queensland, and this has resulted in the Centre for Domestic & Family Violence being approached to develop a research proposal. It is hoped that there will be external research funding for this, and the Police and the Department of Child Safety have come on board.

### **Workforce Development**

Issues around attracting and retaining staff have continued and in fact increased, in Queensland, as no doubt they have in all the states. It is becoming increasingly difficult to attract skilled staff, resulting in the employment of more workers who are new graduates, have no formal qualifications or are from a different discipline and requiring a greater amount of supervision and support. This puts an added strain on Managers and Senior workers, and the whole staff team. QCOSS along with the ASU have been working on a Community Services wages campaign "Good Work – Decent Wages" which has really highlighted the disparity between wages in the sector and the public service. A lot of lobbying has been done by them and by organisations in the sector to bring the Department of Communities on board in some way as there needs to be a commitment from them to increase funding for wages, if anything is to improve. The three items specifically being pushed are increased funding for

wages, a strategy for enterprise bargaining to allow percentage based wage increases annually, and a portable long service scheme for community services workers.

In addition, the Qld. Services Union has recently been successful in having a new state award created called the “Community Services and Crisis Assistance Award – State 2008” The union is also pursuing significant increases in wages in the new state award through a pay equity case in the Qld. Industrial Relations Commission.

### **D&FV Prevention Month**

May is Domestic and Family Violence Prevention month in Queensland and there have been a lot of activities around the state raising awareness of the issue. A common event held around the state on the same day each year is the Candlelight Ceremony, to remember the women and children who have died as a result of domestic violence. This is always a very moving event, and particularly because around the state at exactly 6.00pm on the first Wednesday of May, candles are lit and a minutes silence held, to remember all the victims. In Townsville, there has been some focus this year on getting men in the community to stand up, speak out and take a pledge against the violence, with White Ribbon Ambassadors from within the Police, Army, local Government (the Mayor and his Deputy) and other high profile people in the community.

### **Affordable Housing Shortage**

Nothing has really changed across Queensland in this regard, with a chronic shortage of affordable rental properties. Women with children and animals are particularly disadvantaged. Refuges are finding that women are needing to stay much longer, because they are simply waiting to find independent housing. For a refuge such as ours this makes things very difficult when all we have is four units(the Shelter) covering a wide geographical area and we are constantly having to refuse women in crisis as a result of domestic violence, because the shelter is full with women who would happily move if they could find rental accommodation. The Queensland Domestic Violence Legislation does provide for “ouster orders’ so the respondent can be moved and the victims return home, but Magistrates are often reluctant to make these orders, and often the women are too frightened to return to the house even if he has been moved by the courts.

### **Qld DV Peak**

In March this year, a meeting was held in Brisbane, set up by Brian Sullivan from the University of Queensland and QDVSN as a result of concerns he had raised that the Qld government was not being very active around stopping domestic violence. The meeting brought together all the stakeholders in the DV Sector and representatives from the University. A lot of discussion was held about the need for a DV Peak and what it would look like, and how the University could contribute in some way, particular in the area of research. Like so many good ideas, it has been slow moving further on, but most of us in the Sector are keen for it to happen so that we have a much stronger voice.

## **SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

Rep: **VICKI LACHLAN** (Women's Housing Association)

Proxy: **DESI ALEXANDRIDIS** (Centacare Catholic Family Services)

**SA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LAWS:** We still await the outcome of the consultation held last year, apparently because of the massive changes made to our Rape and Sexual Assault Laws, the changes to the DV Laws had to be delayed. We continue to advocate for the carriage of any changes as soon as possible, our Attorney General assures us that there will be further consultation before that occurs.

**FAMILY SAFETY FRAMEWORK/STRATEGY:** The Framework is currently being evaluated, and a report will be written that will assist in the understanding of future processes, stakeholder's roles and work practices. Whilst the Domestic Violence Services continue monitoring, and playing a key role in the Framework – it is still a pilot project in two regions and is yet to be rolled out across the state. Nevertheless it will hopefully decrease the numbers of women and or children that lose their lives to domestic or family violence in SA. There are also a number of Working Groups within this structure to ensure the needs of different population groups are also met – IE, NESB and Indigenous and Disabled.

**RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL:** Whilst this was developed as part of the above process, the tool has actually been shared now across the sector, and will expedite the evaluation of a woman's (and her children's) safety should she attend one of the participating services. It is intended that it will make it easier for services to refer women to key government agencies, based on the level of risk to her or her children's lives.

**CANADIAN FIRST INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S SHELTER'S CONFERENCE:** The Coalition advocated for and won enough funding from State Government to assist three representatives of the Coalition, with some of our Membership Fees thrown in, to attend this momentous event. Our reps are now in speaker mode around the state informing us of their learnings, both from Canada and elsewhere.

**FUTURE FOR SAAP DV SERVICES IN SA:** It was announced at the National Homelessness Conference in May that SAAP would not exist in SA past December 2008. Because of the delays in the launch of the National White Paper on Homelessness, the SA D&FV sector is unsure of what happens to their funding, agreements, or services as of 30<sup>th</sup> December. The Coalition continues in its endeavours to get some answers from the government – however we are still unsure.

**INDIGENOUS FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICES:** The two specific indigenous services in SA are working together to ensure the best service possible to indigenous women, they cover two different regions, but one being a younger service it has been invaluable that they learn from each other.

**SERVICE EXCELLENCE ACCREDITATION:** Most services are working towards gaining this SA specific accreditation. Each service is at different stages, depending on how they chose to implement the work, and whether they already had written policies, procedures and frameworks. It is not yet in Service Agreements that the accreditation is mandatory, but the sense is that this will be so in any future agreements.

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN PEAK:** The Coalition has been meeting with a range of other South Australian women's services, including sexual assault services, for some time about establishing one peak in SA that will cover all service provision aspects of 'Violence Against Women'. The Coalition is unfunded, and we survive strictly on our annual membership fees from individual services. We believe that by combining ourselves (the services, as individual members) we stand a better chance of perhaps getting some funding from the state government to resource such a peak, and it may gain us a stronger and united voice in advocating for women who experience violence in their lives. We have yet to determine how this will be done, but services are keen to progress the idea.

**COALITION OF WOMEN'S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES OF SA HISTORY PROJECT:** Whilst the above idea may change the faces around the table, the Coalition is very keen to document our herstory, especially as we have been in operation for thirty years now – in different incarnations – but meeting for all of that time. Of course whilst time available to undertake such a project is always a deciding factor, the keenness is there!

The Coalition has participated in a number of events around the state, including making a presentation to the many senior and key bureaucrats across our Department of Families and Communities that we work with, on the ever increasing demand for our services and the unrelenting requirement for exit points from our services which are just not available. We provide speakers to events, ensure that women, who have experienced D&FV are represented in as many key areas as possible. We have initiated an Annual Networking Luncheon that is held late in the year to talk to as many key figures as possible about our work (and give them food).

Vicki Lachlan

## TASMANIA

Rep: **SANDRA NICHOLS** (Jireh House Assn. Inc)

Proxy: **ANNE HURD** (Annie Kenney Young Women's Refuge)

### **Review of the Family Violence Act began in March 2008 and it has been identified:**

*"The safety of adult victims of family violence has seen improvement, particularly at the first point of contact with police, as a result of the new police powers and changed practices. A view commonly raised, however, is that Safe at Home is yet to fulfill its potential, with concerns that the positive front end impact being delivered by police is being diminished through the course of the criminal justice process".*

### **Summary of findings**

The mechanisms provided within the Act were designed to deliver on each of the three objectives of Safe at Home. In summary, the review has drawn the following conclusions, each of which is detailed within this report:

- In relation to achieving a reduction in the level of family violence in the medium to long term, it is still early days. To determine when, and to what extent, family violence is decreasing will require particular research attention, tracking trends over time and undertaking meaningful assessment.

The data available to the review indicates that in the 2007-08 year to date, police are attending an average of 403 incidents of family conflict each month. This is down 3.5% from the 2006-07 average of 418 per month.

- Under the Children, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1997 (Tas) police are mandated to report all family violence incidents where children are present. According to the Department approximately 30% of such reports result in a child being allocated to a child protection caseload. It is beyond the scope of this review to evaluate whether such a response is improving the safety of child victims of family violence, or the impact of the Family Violence Counselling and Support Service. Of note is the lack of confidence amongst well-placed stakeholders that child victims are experiencing improved safety.
- The final objective of the Act is to change the offending behaviour of those responsible for violence. There are essentially two points of impact in relation to this objective. Firstly, Safe at Home was intended to have a deterrent impact, that is, a reduction in repeat offending. Without a base line this is not reliably measured, however, the Department advised the review that initial trends are indicating positive results.

The other mechanism within the Act is referral of convicted offenders to the Family Violence Offender Intervention Program (FVOIP). The data available in relation to the effectiveness of this measure in achieving the object of changing offending behaviour was anecdotal, and included concerns about the narrow eligibility and the restricted availability of the course, and in some areas, an absence of referrals to the course.

While it is early days for assessing progress toward each objective in full, two and a half years of formal operation under the Act has been adequate time for well placed participants in the community and the criminal justice systems to offer a well informed perspective on the operation of the Act.

For the most part, participants in the review have offered a holistic and measured critique, acknowledging that the history of spousal murders in Tasmania and findings of subsequent coronial inquiries have been significant and serious drivers for a new paradigm for responding to family violence. The point of most significant change identified by stakeholders has been within the culture and response of Tasmanian Police, driven primarily by requirements.

Phase 2 of the review will be an analysis of the effectiveness of the intergovernmental program response. Areas reviewed included police powers, mandatory reporting, adequacy of response to offenders (rehabilitation) and the adequacy of response to children. A copy of the review is available under the Safe at Home heading on the Tasmanian Justice website [www.justice.tas.gov.au](http://www.justice.tas.gov.au). The terms of reference for Phase 2 are available on the website too.

Recently at a Statewide Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee meeting, it was mentioned that **some** police were not really encouraging women to charge the perpetrator because it involved a lot of paper work. It was also reported that some women were not feeling safe in the family home and would prefer to leave because the perpetrator could be released within 24 hours.

Conversely, many service providers have mentioned that women have advised workers they are reluctant to report to police because they know that the offender will be arrested. Reasons given for not reporting are fear of retribution from the perpetrator or his family and/or they are not ready to end the relationship.

## **State/Territory policy Legislative Changes**

### **Proposed changes to Gun Laws**

Late last year, there was some media coverage regarding recommendations to change Tasmanian gun laws in order to allow children as young as 12 to apply for a gun license.

The Southern Tasmanian Domestic Violence Committee (and Statewide Committee) strongly opposed this proposed change to the legislation. Letters were sent to each Member of Parliament and 'The Mercury' voicing concerns and strongly advocating that Tasmania retain the gun laws in place to protect women and children.

## **Domestic/Family Violence Sector Issues**

The Southern Regional Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee is working together with the Family Violence Counselling Support Service to develop protocols for Interstate Transfers for women who are forced to relocate to another state.

### **Safe from the Start**

The year long Salvation Army Safe from the Start research project is funded through the Commonwealth Office for Women, Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Initiative 2007/8. It is an innovative statewide initiative derived from recommendations from the Tasmanian research study 'States of Mind' (Bell, 2006), which considered the specific needs of children up to five affected by family violence.

All Tasmanian women's shelters and several transitional support services have been involved in the project to date.

The Safe from the Start project aims include:

- Identify key elements of best practice for working with children aged up to six affected
- Identify effective assessment tools
- Identify and form a register of intervention activities and therapeutic play which children's workers and parents can use
- Train children's services workers to work with the resources researched and developed.

Currently, the findings of the pilot project are being evaluated by the Salvation Army and Dr Erica Bell from the University of Tasmania is evaluating the methodology. Recommendations regarding which resources should be included in the kit will be an element of the report. Following these recommendations, training will be offered to staff through out the State and a final research report will be completed and disseminated Australia wide.

### **BUBS On Board (Building Up BondS) = BUBS**

BUBS on Board is a program which has been developed in conjunction with The Salvation Army (Tas), (Safe from the Start Project), Barwon Southwest Region, Victoria's Royal Children's Hospital Integrated Mental Health Service and (proposing the involvement of Women's Health West).

This project is a brief intervention program for infants and their mothers accessing crisis/emergency accommodation in order to escape family violence. This new intervention was piloted in 5 shelters across Tasmania during August. The program was developed by Victorian workers, Wendy Bunston from Royal Children's Hospital Infant Mental Health Service and Karen Glennen (Barwon South West). The BUBS on Board program is a derivative of the RCH IMHS Peek a Boo Club which was developed by Wendy Bunston several years ago.

## VICTORIA

Rep: **JULIE OBERIN** (Annie North Inc. Women's Refuge and Domestic Violence Service, Bendigo)

Proxy: **FIONA MCCORMACK** (Domestic Violence Victoria)

Victoria has completed the third year of its Integrated Family Violence Strategy. The Intensive Case Management program has been evaluated and a report released. "Integration" strategies of varying degrees are being planned or implemented across the State. What has been clear is that there have been inadequate resources and a lack of leadership provided by the government to work effectively on this state-wide strategy. Half time Regional Integration Coordinators in the field attempting to develop and integrate system across large subregional geographical areas are fraught with problems. We hope that additional funds are provided in the next budget to undertake this important integration developmental work. DVVic, our sector peak body has worked hard to represent critical issues for us during the year with some about-turns by government on unit costing and requiring our crisis property managing services to become registered housing providers. Our domestic and family violence services are stressed from high demand on our services, lack of exit housing, inability to attain skilled staff, and high staff turnover

## STATE POLICY AND/OR LEGISLATIVE REFORMS OR CHANGES.

- **Family Violence Justice Reform – A New Family Violence Bill.**  
DVVic along with the Federation of Community Legal Centres coordinated 'The Victorian Family Violence Justice Reform Campaign' which submitted a detailed submission to the draft Family Violence Bill. The Bill has now been passed in the Lower and Upper Houses. Key elements of the new Bill are:
  - An expanded definition of family violence to include emotional abuse, economic abuse and other types of controlling behaviours. It also includes causing a child to witness, hear or otherwise be exposed to the effects of family violence.
  - A broader definition of family member to include family type relationships beyond intimate partners. It also encompasses the carer/person with a disability relationship.
  - A preamble which acknowledges the social realities of family violence and is explicit about gender and power.
  - Provisions to make it easier for victims to remain in the home and the perpetrator removed.
  - Provisions to prevent self-represented respondents from cross-examining the victims in Court.
  - Provision for police to issue safety notices when they attend an incident.

The campaign group continues to lobby the Attorney General for a **Death Review Committee for Victoria**.

- **Family Violence Round Table**

An 'inaugural' Round table on Family Violence was held during the year with a promised second one to be scheduled later in the year. To date the second was hasn't been scheduled and our sector has had no detailed feedback from the first roundtable.

- **Victorian domestic/family violence data collection**

The Benchmark Data Collection continues and is now collected on the NDCA Smart software in Victorian services.

- **Common Risk Assessment Framework (CRAF)** continues to be slowly rolling out across Victoria. This package is not only targeted at domestic/family violence specific services but to generalist services and staff who may be the first place a woman may present.

- **Local Area Service Networks (LASN's)** focusing on homelessness entry points are continuing their development across the State.

- **Accreditation.** Domestic and family violence services across the State have until Dec 09 to go through an external accreditation process on the Victorian Homelessness Assistance Service Standards (HASS). Some have successfully completed these and additional Quality Assurance standards. Many others are still preparing. Though the principles behind accreditation are generally welcomed by our sector, the government has provided no resources for services to undertake the onerous task of preparing for external audit of our practices and policies. Larger agencies have trouble enough but smaller agencies are finding it extremely difficult to work through the rigorous requirements without additional staffing or funds to bring in outside consultancy support. DVVic (Domestic Violence Victoria) and CHP (Council for Homeless Persons) Vic have attempted to support services as best as they can with limited government support, but this does not replace specific resourcing at the service level.

- **Registration.** We are pleased to say the Housing Minister Richard Wynn announced during the year that stand-alone refuges and other crisis service managers would be exempt from the housing providers' registration process. This was welcomed by the sector after much lobbying.

- The requirements were too onerous for crisis agencies and inappropriate to our service models which are geared towards timely safe responses. Standards around housing provision will be picked up through the accreditation process which is much more appropriate for our sector.

- **Unit Costing.** Minister Richard Wynn also announced that unit costing would not proceed with our services until workforce development was considered. Along with the Registration issue this also was a welcome turn around by government as a result of our strong lobbying.
- **Child First.** This is a major reform primarily focused on Child Protection and Children and Family Services in the first instance however will create a new service response regarding the children we support in our sector.
- VicHealth launched its **VicHealth's Framework for the Primary Prevention of Violence against Women in Victoria** during the year. An excellent report which can be found on VicHealth's website.
- **Men's Behaviour Change Programs.** These are running across the State in varying degrees. There is still a massive shortfall in staff qualified to meet the No To Violence Standards.

### **Domestic and Family Violence Services Staffing Crisis**

Along with other states and territories, Victoria's domestic and family violence sector is experiencing high levels of staff turnover. The accreditation process, higher levels of documented accountability required to meet standards; a lack of acknowledgement of the complex skills required to do this work; poor remuneration due to an inadequate Award system and pay and classification rates; and low levels of government funding all contribute to problems with attaining and retaining good staff. A lack of housing: crisis and exit points, along with a general lack of resources to bring in to support women and children contributes to the staffing crisis for our services across the State. An average domestic and family violence worker in Victoria earns approximately \$13,000 under the average wage. This is not good enough and the Victorian government must increase funding to our sector as a matter of urgency. The Australian Services Union, supported by our sector and the homelessness sector, is undertaking a campaign to improve our staff wages and conditions. The Victorian Government is considering workforce sustainability and development issues however this must be seen as a priority and it does not seem as if it is.

### **DVVic (Domestic Violence Victoria).**

DVVic our peak body continues to strengthen with a review of its governance structure, its Constitution, the development of a strategic and business planning framework for 2007-2010, website development, accreditation preparation of itself as an agency, annual membership surveys, representation, and staff role consolidation.

Along with No To Violence (NTV) DVVic received funding from VicHealth to allocate media awards to recognise excellence on reporting on issues of domestic or family violence in print, television, radio, photography/artwork and on line media within Victoria. The 'EVA's'

(Eliminating Violence Awards) was seen as a very successful and collaborative project with many other organisations. The organising group are seeking continued funding to hold this project on a regular basis.

### **Indigenous Family Violence.**

The Indigenous Family Violence Strategy remains underway. This includes:

- Healing and Time Out Services to respond in culturally appropriate ways to the high levels of family violence in Aboriginal communities.

It aims to deliver services to respond to the particular needs of Indigenous men, women and children to help prevent, reduce and respond to family violence in Indigenous communities.

In 2002, the Victorian Government released the Framework for the development of the Victorian Indigenous Family Violence Strategy: a partnership approach between Indigenous Communities and Government (the Framework). The Framework outlined a three stage process to develop and implement an Indigenous Family Violence Strategy in Victoria.

- Stage One involved establishing an Indigenous-led Task Force to provide the Government with advice about how to effectively address family violence within Indigenous Communities.
- Stage Two requires the Government to respond to the recommendations of the Task Force.
- Stage Three will see the development and implementation of the Indigenous Family Violence Plan.

Indigenous Family Violence action groups are set up across the state and a lot of good work is being undertaken. Some areas have newly funded Healing Centres which are aimed at particularly responding to the affects of physical and sexual abuse.

Thanks to Fiona McCormack and Alison Macdonald from DVVic for material included in this report.

## **WEST AUSTRALIA**

**KEDY KRISTAL** (Pat Giles Centre, Perth)

### **Current State/Territory Domestic/Family Violence issues.**

The 2007 Sector Remuneration Survey conducted in the Alcohol and Other Drug, Family Domestic Violence, Mental Health and Women's Health sectors in WA found that:

- Only 4% of survey workers earn above the average adult fulltime weekly earnings.
- 85% of the workforce hold post school qualifications.
- 35% of workers do not expect to be working in the sector in 2 years time.
- 75% of workers reported always, often or sometimes having difficulty in managing their current workload.
- A total of 123 workers had resigned as a result of stress or burnout in the past two years.

The Community Service Sector in WA is in the midst of a recruitment and retention crisis. The sector workforce is declining with many workers due to retire in the next decade. Youth are not coming into the sector in large numbers. Enrolment in community related University and TAFE courses is in decline. Staff turnover rates are nearly double the national average. Funding meant for direct service provision is being increasingly consumed by recruitment and turnover costs. Changing economic and social demand has brought increasing consumer demand for services. The turn away rate for some services has increased by 75%. Workers are becoming increasingly overwhelmed with high workloads. Many clients are presenting with co-occurring drug and alcohol and mental health issues. The incidence of stress and burnout in workers is rising. Insurance and compensation costs for agencies have escalated. There is widespread low remuneration throughout the sector. Salary levels do not reflect the knowledge and skills required of the workforce. Inadequate remuneration has forced many community service workers to leave for higher paying positions in the public and private sectors. There is a high level of pay disparity between the community service and public sectors. Pay disparity for similar positions can be up to \$22,000.

- 253 staff had left in the past two years indicating that better pay elsewhere was a key factor for leaving.
- Nearly half of agency managers rated their recruitment success as having no success at all or being unsatisfactory.
- 76% of agency managers reported receiving 5 or less applicants for advertised positions.

### **State/territory policy and/or legislative changes.**

The recent State government elections have resulted in a change of government (Liberal/National Coalition) which at this time (October) is still in the early stage of allocating portfolios and reviewing its policy directions.

The Labor state government agreed to the quarantining of Centrelink payments (up to 70%) for any families in the Kimberly's and Cannington (eastern suburb of Perth) where Department of Child Protection(DCP) has identified children at risk of neglect .

Cannington is also one of the suburbs where the Government is fining parents whose children don't attend school.

Legislation for the mandatory sexual abuse reporting in WA will go before parliament in 2009, The previous Labor government allocated \$5.63 million over the next 4 yrs for new sexual abuse treatment services. The new Liberal government is keen to expend mandatory reporting to issues of neglect and emotional abuse.

An additional Hardship Utilities Grants Scheme (HUGS) to be funded by DCP to reduce disconnection of essential utilities.

The Labor government has allocated \$114 million to Redress WA for ex-gratis payments and counselling for people abused in state care.

### **Domestic/Family violence sector issues.**

A new refuge for young mums 14-18 yrs with DV issues based in Perth will be funded \$1.8million over next 4yrs. At present an interim service has open in temporary premises accommodating 2 families.

The evaluation of the West Australian SAAP I&I pilots has been completed but not released yet, services are hopeful that funding will continue.

The Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (WCDFVS) has secured funding to develop their website to include a statewide WA refuges online. This system will allow all refuges to update daily their bed numbers and provide Urgent messages or alerts , this information will be accessible by other refuges and the Dept of Child Protection.

The Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services won the tender to provide two years of DV training to staff at Department of Housing and Works offices across WA.

HURT: Is an innovative, media rich, interactive, website designed to provide insight into the experience of domestic and family violence. The website contains 109 video clips of women, children and men describing their experience of domestic and family violence, embedded within a 'virtual' family home. Users of the website can travel through different rooms in the house (much like a video game) and interact with different items and objects, each of which

are linked to different stories about domestic and family violence. The experiences described within HURT are real stories retold by actors.

A DVD containing a smaller sample of video clips is also being developed. The DVD is designed to act as a complement to existing training resources, providing real people's stories to complement theoretical models and statistics. HURT will be launched on White Ribbon Day, Tuesday November 25th.

### **Domestic and Dating Violence Peer Education Project:**

The Peer Education Project is designed to raise students and teachers awareness about domestic, family and dating violence and the resources that are available within their local community to support people who have been involved in a violent relationship. A Peer Education approach is being used which means that a small group of students from participating schools are trained to share information about domestic, family and dating violence with their peers. This approach was undertaken due to demonstrated success in a variety of projects with young people in the past. In addition to Peer Education, this project also involves information seminars and resources for teachers, classroom based education for all students, and building networks between schools and their local service providers. This whole of school approach is designed to increase understanding of all people within the school about the incidence and effects of domestic, family and dating violence. In 2007 the Peer Education Project was delivered in two schools in regional WA. Currently the Peer Education Project is being delivered within four metro and regional schools and it is expected that an additional two schools will come on board next term.

Two new resource kits for CALD communities and African Communities have been produced through funding from the Family and Domestic Violence Unit. The kits include a DVD , trainers manual and participants handouts.

The Women's Multicultural Advocacy Service and WCDFVS continue to lobby for changes to the Visa category 457 and other related skill migrant visas, so that like protected Special Category Visa (SCV) holders (309 and 820 Visas)-spouses and families of applicants on Temporary Visa 457 can access DV provisions and Financial assistance such as Special Benefit and Crisis Payment.

These visa's do not fall within the DV provisions and are ineligible for Centrelink, Medicare and other forms of necessary support as a victim of domestic and family violence. Spouses and families of 457 visas are faced with deportation if they choose to escape DV and not live with their spouses and their situation is reported to DIAC.

The 18th DV memorial March was held in April, this is a silent March to remember the women, children and men killed each year in Family Violence, 17 in WA in the last year.

The Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services in partnership with DCP held a DV Services Forum on 10<sup>th</sup> July. The dept of Child Protection funded attendance for

rural and remote refuge managers. Ludo McFerran was invited to present on the Bega Staying Home Leaving Violence Model.

### **Child advocacy centres**

The Parkerville centre continues to lobby for the development of a Child Advocacy Centre in the Armadale region. Child Advocacy Centres are a multidiscipline team approach to assessment, care and treatment for abused children. In October, three specialists from the San Diego Chadwick CAC presented two, one day workshops on the work of a CAC.

### **Pink Ribbon events**

The Cancer Council this year targeted women refugees in WA offering small funding grants to services to raise awareness of Breast and cervical cancer, these grants were taken up across the state.

TAFE is keen to pilot the Recognition of Current Competencies Model (RCC) with three metropolitan Refuges. Refuge staff can be assessed on their current experience and knowledge and qualify for a Certificate III, Certificate IV or Diploma. This would be conducted within the workplace and a great way for Refuge workers to obtain formal qualifications. This model will benefit workers who have been working in the field, have a range of knowledge and experience and wish to formalize it through this process.

WCDFVS has indicated that they are keen to host the next World Refuges Conference in Perth.

## **INDIGENOUS REPORT**

### **SHIRLEY SLANN**

North Queensland Domestic Violence Resource Service (Mt Isa)

The Prime Minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd's Apology to Indigenous Australians made on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2008 was a milestone event for Indigenous Australia and was long overdue.

The Prime Minister appointed the National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their children on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2008. It was also good to see that the representatives on the council were from all over Australia. The aim of the National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children is to oversee the Government's commitment to establish the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their children.

I also attended the National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Women's Gathering (NATSIWG) in Hobart this year as one of the Australian Government representatives and also presented the recommendations from the NATSIWG to MINCO. I am also on the NATSIWG Working group and we have met with the National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children on a few occasions.

This year I was appointed on my second term on the Queensland Domestic & Family Violence Ministerial Advisory Council as North Qld Representative and also appointed Deputy Chair for the first time. The Queensland Domestic & Family Violence Protection Act (1989) will be reviewed next year.

The Queensland Government have developed a whole of government strategy to target Domestic & Family Violence 2009-2013 and have held numerous consultations through out the state. The Qld Government has welcomed feedback regarding the "Consultation Paper".

Domestic & Family Violence Prevention Month was a huge month and the theme focused on Perpetrators of Domestic & Family Violence.

I had a very exciting experience in September this year, when I attended the "1<sup>st</sup> World Conference on Women's Shelters in Edmonton, Alberta Canada. I did a key note address on Domestic & Family Violence in Indigenous & Rural & Remote communities. 720 people attended the conference from all over the world and I was very honoured to be invited to present. The Alberta Council of Women's Shelters sponsored my trip. I had never before travelled over seas and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. It was very interesting to see and hear from the "First Nations People" and the similarities that they have with us Indigenous Australians. There were a number of amazing speakers and it was great to hear from a number of women from all over the world, share their stories and their experiences.

It is good to see that there is more of a focus around Domestic & Family Violence and that the government is starting to look at plans and strategies in reducing the violence that is inflicted upon women and their children. As a community we must say "No to Domestic & Family Violence" and make perpetrators accountable for their actions, however providing services for perpetrators to change their behaviour.

## **NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING BACKGROUND**

**ANNABELLE ALLIMANT** (Immigrant Women's Support Service (Brisbane))

This report is written in my role as the non-English speaking background (NESB) representative in WESNET. Until recently I was the coordinator of Immigrant Women's Support Service (IWSS) in Brisbane and have held the position of NESB representative in WESNET for the last 2 years.

The issues confronting women from NESB continue to be significantly represented in services as their marginalisation due to the multiple personal and systemic barriers enmesh with their experiences of domestic and/or sexual violence.

Writing this report affords the opportunity to continue to raise awareness of the issues women and their children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CaLD) experience in their settlement in Australia. Whilst I have identified issues specifically experienced by refugee and humanitarian entrants I note that other residents from CaLD communities also experience issues that are often left unattended as they receive no settlement support on arrival. This includes people arriving in categories such as: family reunion; skill migrants; international students; partner visas and other temporary visa holders.

The issues for humanitarian entrants and refugees continue to be of high concern for domestic violence services specifically, but not restricted to, as complexities of migration and settlement experiences emerge. There are a number of critical aspects of particular concern including housing, access to accurate information, issues to do with child safety and access to interpreting services for funded organisations to ensure culturally appropriate service delivery to women from NESB.

**Housing** – As per the WESNET Annual Report 2007, accessibility of emergency housing, transitional and long term housing is an issue relevant for the whole of the community, but particularly for women and their children escaping violent households. Specific issues however, for women from NESB and/or new and emerging communities, include women with a number of children and the impossibility to be housed adequately. The issue of housing has been highly noted as well for women without children and/or single women and their ability to secure adequate safe housing. The issue of housing places risks with Department of Child Safety and leads to increased financial hardship as rent is expensive when needing a house with a greater number of rooms.

**Domestic Violence** – Some key issues identified for women from NESB, particularly from new and emerging communities are: understandings of their rights in Australia; language barriers; access to appropriate interpreters particularly where some dialects are not available through interpreting services; life skills necessary for the context of living in Australia; understandings of the definitions of domestic violence in Australia; cultural stigma associated with breaking patterns of violence; understandings of legal alternatives in relation to family law and domestic violence; and community isolation. There are expectations in relationships that traditional roles and cultural values continue in Australia. The professional anecdotal

experiences informs me that the above listed barriers place significant pressures on women to maintain unsafe relationships due to the isolation confronted in Australia.

**Community Education** – It is identified and demonstrated through pilot projects undertaken that there needs to be intensive education on issues related to domestic and family violence to CALD communities. The coined phrase ‘one size does not fit all’ is very relevant when it comes ensuring information is accessed by all members in the community in a manner that is relevant to their needs.

An example of community education that proved to be successful is that of ‘Healthy Family Relationships Project’ undertaken by IWSS in collaboration with two other services in Queensland. This project engaged in the provision of information, support and strategies for ‘healthy relationships’ with women, men and young people in families. It involved 4 group sessions of 10 weeks each where women were provided with information in a cross-culturally sensitive manner. The groups involved a combination of both information dissemination and therapeutic group work. The facilitators working in this project assessed the outcomes as successful based on the level of participation – at least 70% attendance on a weekly basis, the level of engagement by participants with local services, the level of interest from the participants for information and the feedback provided by the women to the external evaluator.

I take the opportunity to highlight this example because it is a recent pilot project that specifically targeted new and emerging communities (from The Sudan and Burundi). This project further demonstrates how services are required to think ‘outside the square’ in ensuring community education about life in Australia when working with women from NESB. Some of the specific strategies utilised in this project included: sound cross-cultural understandings by the facilitators; consultation with the relevant communities prior to commencement; processes of engagement with Bilingual Cultural Assistants (BCA) from those communities; provision of adequate support and training to the BCA’s; opportunity to support women’s world views whilst presenting new information relevant to the context of life in Australia; ensuring a safe space for women to speak about the challenges of settling in a new country; provision of accurate and relevant information about the law in Australia; ensuring issues such as child care/access to the venue/catering were met and maintaining a ongoing communication with all women to assess their needs and the relevance of information presented.

Community education is a way of raising awareness about information that may be relevant to families, in particular women, in relation to relationships. It is also about supporting a shift in understanding whilst ensuring that women are validated by what they bring to this country in the form of their own world views. It is an incredibly empowering experience to be the bridge of incremental understanding through sharing of information. Furthermore, the group work model utilised within this project provided a wealth of knowledge to the facilitators involved and throughout every group sessions the learning was always reciprocal. It is this level of engagement that afford windows of opportunities for growth in the broad sense of

cultural inclusiveness and further development of trust that is so important when building a multicultural society that respects all forms of diversity.

**Access to Interpreting Services** - The experiences I have observed during this year continue to identify a lack of use of professional interpreters in various contexts. The matter of adequate funding to community based organisations for engagement of professional interpreters places additional pressure on services however the issue of inappropriate and/or lack of use of professional interpreters is seen within both Government Departments and non-government organisations. The role for client advocates becomes critical as the need to be a voice for women from NESB is heightened through this identified gap.

In concluding this report I take this opportunity to thank my colleagues in the WESNET committee and IWSS sister services throughout the country for the opportunity I have been afforded through this participation to continue to raise awareness of the issues for women NESB in Australia. The role of representing issues for marginalised women throughout Australia is not one that can effectively be undertaken by one representative. I would assert that it is the collective wisdom and shared knowledge of all women on this committee and NESB/CALD activists throughout Australia who attempt to make a difference for women who would not be heard otherwise who share in this responsibility.

Prepared by  
Annabelle Allimant

**WESNET Inc**  
**Audited Statements**  
**2008**

**AUDITOR'S REPORT**

Audit report to the members of WESNET Inc.

**Scope**

We have audited the financial statements of WESNET for the year ended 30th June 2008.

While WESNET Inc is responsible for the financial report, we have conducted an independent audit of it in order to express an opinion on it to the members.

Our audit has been conducted to provide reasonable assurance as to whether the financial report is free of material misstatement. Our procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial report

**Opinion**

In our opinion the accounts of WESNET are properly drawn up in accordance with the provisions of the Associations Incorporation Act and provide a true and fair view of the accounts as at 30th June 2008 and the results of its operations for the year then ended.



Peter Hyndal  
Director  
Brazen Books Pty Ltd

22nd September 2008

Prepared by Brazen Books 22nd September 2008

## CERTIFICATE FROM THE COMMITTEE

We, the undersigned, being two members of the Committee, state on behalf of the Committee:

i. That the members of the Committee during the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008 were-

ii.	Pauline Woodbridge	Chairperson
	Shirley Slann	Secretary, Indigenous Representative
	Kedy Kristal	Treasurer, Western Australia Representative
	Biljana Petrova	Aust. Capital Territory Representative
	Cat Gander	New South Wales Representative
	Kaz Phillips	Northern Territory Representative
	Lindy Edwards	Queensland Representative
	Vicki Lachlan	South Australia Representative
	Ann Hurd (resigned)	Tasmania Representative
	Sandra Nichols (appointed)	Tasmania Representative
	Julie Oberin	Victoria Representative
	Annabelle Allimant	NESB Representative

i. The principal activities of the association during the year have been those of a national non-party political independent organisation of Women's services in Australia dealing with violence against women and related issues. WESNET is recognised as the national sector peak body by both the government and non-government sectors and has considerable expertise in the areas of policy development and the delivery of quality advice and information to government of issues impacting on women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence. WESNET promotes innovative models of practice and service delivery, undertakes community education, and conducts or facilitates research on the key issues around domestic and family violence and related issues for women and their children.

### ii. STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

In the opinion of the committee the financial report as set out on the following pages:

- (a) Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of WESNET INC (Women's Services Network).
- (b) At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that WESNET INC (Women's Services Network) will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

**Chairperson: Pauline Woodbridge**

**Treasurer: Kedy Kristal**

**Dated this**  **day the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2008**



**WESNET Inc**  
**Balance Sheet**  
**As at 30th June 2008**

<b>Assets</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>
Cash At Bank		
Commonwealth Bank Account	723,489.58	27,115.98
LESS Grant Payment FACSLIA	(625,000.00)	-
Westpac Bank Account	82.48	(259.63)
DGR Account	2.00	-
Investment Account	<u>32,589.44</u>	<u>30,723.11</u>
	131,163.50	57,579.46
Other Current Assets		
General Debtors	114.18	102.71
Prepayments	900.24	-
Accrued Income	<u>1,282.70</u>	<u>418.99</u>
	2,297.12	521.70
Non Current Assets		
Office Equipment At Cost	9,328.38	7,893.91
Less Accumulated Depreciation	<u>(6,935.71)</u>	<u>(6,447.36)</u>
<i>Written Down Value</i>	2,392.67	1,446.55
Furniture & Fittings At Cost	3,879.00	3,879.00
Less Accumulated Depreciation	<u>(3,657.65)</u>	<u>(3,509.40)</u>
<i>Written Down Value</i>	221.35	369.60
Total Non Current Assets	2,614.02	1,816.15
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b><u>\$ 136,074.64</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 59,917.31</u></b>
<b>Less Liabilities</b>		
Current Liabilities		
Credit Card	1,680.80	111.00
Sundry Creditors	62,379.99	543.17
Accrued Expenses	990.00	931.84
Staff Leave Accruals	<u>1,118.43</u>	-
	66,169.22	1,586.00
Provisions		
Provision for Website	4,062.91	6,000.00
Provision for Publications	7,000.00	-
Provision for Conferences	<u>9,727.27</u>	<u>5,000.00</u>
	20,790.18	11,000.00
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b><u>\$ 86,959.40</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 12,586.01</u></b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b><u>\$ 49,115.24</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 47,331.30</u></b>
<b>Accumulated Funds</b>		
Accumulated Funds	47,331.30	45,361.83
Add Net Surplus/(Deficit) for Year	1,783.94	1,969.47
<b>Total Accumulated Funds</b>	<b><u>\$ 49,115.24</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 47,331.30</u></b>

**WESNET Inc**  
**Audited Statements**  
**July 2007 - June 2008**

	2008	2007
<b>Income</b>		
Memberships	35,800.00	34,077.27
Publication Sales	663.60	622.72
Bank Interest	3,517.74	2,482.68
Other Income	2.00	-
<b>Total Income</b>	<b><u>\$ 39,983.34</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 37,182.67</u></b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Audit Fees	990.00	2,272.73
Bank Charges	264.84	165.86
Consultancy Fees	1,600.00	2,000.00
Depreciation	730.13	1,210.76
Equipment	479.09	-
Insurance	914.15	926.87
Postage	837.43	522.95
Printing and Stationery	1,403.21	830.18
Provisions for Future Expenses	12,472.00	11,000.00
Wages and Salaries	15,610.60	11,596.63
Subscriptions and Memberships	136.36	186.36
Sundry	-	262.82
Superannuation	1,268.06	1,043.71
Telephone	552.07	612.20
Travel	391.46	2,107.13
Workers Compensation	550.00	475.00
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b><u>\$ 38,199.40</u></b>	<b><u>\$35,213.20</u></b>
<b>Operating Surplus/ (Deficit)</b>	<b><u>\$ 1,783.94</u></b>	<b><u>\$1,969.47</u></b>

## **FINANCIAL MEMBERS**

Access North  
Albany Women's Centre  
Albury Supported Accommodation Services  
Alice Springs Women's Shelter  
Alice's Cottages  
Amelie House  
Anglicare – Tasmania  
Anglicare Tasmania Inc. Limani-Anglicare  
Anne Summers  
Annie Kenney Young Women's Refuge  
Annie North Women's Refuge  
Armidale & District Women's Centre  
Bega Women's Refuge  
Beryl Women's Refuge  
Blue Gum  
Bramwell House  
Brenda House  
Bundaberg & District Women's D.V. Svce  
Byanda/Nunyarra  
Cairns Regional Domestic Violence Service  
Canberra Rape Crisis Centre  
Caroline Lodge  
Carrie's Place Women's & Children's Services  
CASA House  
Catherine Haven Women's Shelter  
Catherine House  
Cawarra Women's Refuge Aboriginal Corp.  
Ceduna Domestic Violence & Family Service  
Centacare Murraylands Support & Acc.Svce  
Centacare Transitional Support Service  
Central Eastern DV Service(Dawn House)  
Central Violence Intervention Programme  
Chrysalis Support Service  
  
City Women's Hostel  
Clarence River Women's Refuge & Outreach Services  
Cooroonya Domestic Violence Service  
Cumberland Women's Health Centre  
Daughters of Charity Services  
Dawn House Women's Shelter  
  
Dept for Community Development (WA)  
Detour House Inc  
Dolores Single Women's Refuge  
Domestic & Family Violence Court Assistance Service  
Domestic Violence & Incest Resource Centre  
Domestic Violence Crisis Service  
Domestic Violence Legal Workers Network  
Domestic Violence Regional Service  
Domestic Violence Resource Centre  
Domestic Violence Service of Central QLD  
Domestic Violence Victoria  
Doris Women's Refuge  
Drug & Alcohol Women's Network  
Dubbo Women's Housing Program  
Eastern D.V. Outreach Service  
Elizabeth Hoffman House  
Elandra Women's & Childrens Service  
Elouera House  
Elsie Women's Refuge  
Emma House Domestic Violence Service  
Erin's Place Inc  
Esperance Crisis Accommodation  
Essie Women's Refuge  
Eva's Project  
Family Access Network  
Family Accommodation & Support Service  
Families Plus – Supported Accommodation  
Gareema Women's Refuge  
Gawooleng Yawoodeng Aboriginal Corporation  
GippsCare Domestic Violence Outreach Service  
Gold Coast Centre Against Sexual Violence  
Goulburn Valley Community Health Service  
Gove Crisis Accommodation  
Gunyah Women's Housing  
Hanover Women's Service  
Hanover Young Women's Intensive Support Service  
Hastings Women's & Children's Refuge  
Hedland Women's Refuge  
Hinchinbrook City Support Centre

Hobart Women's Shelter  
 Huon Domestic Violence Service  
 Immigrant Women's Speakout Association  
 Immigrant Women's Support Service  
 Inanna Inc  
 Innari Women's Housing Scheme  
 Ipswich Women's Shelter  
 Ipswich Women's Centre Against D.V.  
 Jardamu Safe House – Wyndham  
 Jenny's Place  
 Jireh House Association  
 Kamira Farm  
 Kangaroo Island Health Service  
 Kara House  
 Karinya Young Women's Refuge  
 Katherine Women's Crisis Centre  
 Kempsey Women's Refuge  
 Killara Women's Refuge  
 Koolkuna Women's Refuge - Eastern  
 Region Domestic Violence Service.  
 Lauren House (Northern Sexual Assault  
 Group)  
 Lifeline Australia  
 Lillian's  
 Lismore Women & Children's Refuge  
 Lotus House Indo-Chinese Young  
 Women's Refuge.  
 Louisa Women's Refuge  
 Lowana Young Women's Service  
 Lower Hunter Women's Housing  
 Lucy Saw Centre Association  
 Majella House  
 Majura Community S.A. Unit  
 Mallee Domestic Violence Services  
 Manly Warringah Women's Resource  
 Centre  
 Manning District Emergency  
 Accommodation  
 Manning Valley Neighbourhood Services  
 Marcia Women's Refuge  
 Marian Community  
 Marian Villa Women's Refuge  
 Marnin Bowa Dumbara Family Healing  
 Centre  
 Marnja Jarndu Women's Refuge  
 Marrickville Women's Refuge (Jean's  
 Place)

Maybanke Accommodation & Crisis  
 Support Service.  
 McCombe House  
 Migrant Women's Emergency Support  
 Service  
 Migrant Women's Support &  
 Accommodation Service.  
 Molly's House  
 Molonglo Women's & Children's Services  
 Monaro Crisis Accommodation Service  
 Moree Women's Refuge  
 Mornington Peninsula D.V. Service  
 Moruya Women's Refuge  
 Murraylands Support & Acc. Service  
 Multicultural Women's Advocacy Service  
 Muslim Women's Support Centre  
 Namoi House (Barwon Cottage DV  
 Service)  
 Nardine Wimmins Refuge  
 National Council of Single Mothers and  
 their Children.  
 NESH Women's Scheme  
 Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara  
 Yankunytjatjara Women's Council.  
 Ngarangga Ngurra Aboriginal Corp  
 Niandi Women's Halfway House  
 No to Violence  
 North Queensland Combined Women's  
 Services Inc.  
 North Queensland Domestic Violence  
 Resource Service.  
 Northern Domestic Violence Service  
 Northern Peninsula Area Women's Shelter  
 Northern Region Young Women's  
 Accommodation Project.  
 NSW Department of Community Services  
 NSW Women's Refuge Resource Centre  
 Oakleigh Court  
 OARS Women's Accommodation Support  
 Service.  
 Olive's Place  
 Orana Lodge  
 Pam's Place Crisis Accommodation  
 Resource & Referral Service.  
 Pat Thomas Memorial Community House  
 Patricia Giles Centre  
 Pat's Place

Port Augusta Regional Women & Children's Support Services.  
Queensland Women's Health Network  
Quantum Support Services – Family Violence Programme  
Regina Coeli  
Relationships Aust. D.V.  
Rockhampton Women's Shelter  
Rosa Shoalhaven Women's Refuge  
Ruah Refuge  
Ruby Gaea - Darwin Centre Against Rape  
Ruth's Women's Shelter  
Sera's Women's Shelter  
Sexual Assault Support Service  
Share & Care Community Services  
Waminda House.  
South East Regional Domestic Violence Service  
South West Refuge  
South West Women's Housing  
Southern Domestic Violence Service  
St. George Women's Housing  
St. Louise Lodge Women's Refuge  
St. Vincent de Paul Society  
Starick Services  
Stepping Out Housing Program  
Stirling Women's Refuge  
Supported Accommodation – Families Plus Support, Help & Empowerment (SHE)  
Tablelands Women's Centre  
Tanderra Women's & Children's Refuge  
Tennant Creek Women's Refuge  
Toukley Women's Refuge  
Tumut & District women's Support & Housing  
Tweed Shire Women's Service  
Uniting Care Wesley Adelaide Inc  
Vinnies Services  
Wagga Wagga Women's Refuge  
Waratah Support Centre  
Warilla women's Refuge  
Warrawee Women's Shelter  
Warrina Women & Children's Refuge

WAYSS  
Wimlah Refuge  
Windana Support Centre  
Wollongong Women's Housing  
Wollongong Women's Refuge (Lotties Place)  
Women Up North Housing  
Women's Centre Cairns Inc  
Women's Centre for Health Matters  
Women's Council for Domestic & Family Violence Services.  
Women's Domestic Violence Central Crisis Service.  
Women's Health Goulburn NE  
Women's Health West  
Women's House Shelta  
Women's Housing Association Hunter Region  
Women's Housing Association SA  
Women's Information & Counselling Service, Port Stephens.  
Women's Information, Support & Housing in the North (WISHIN)  
Women's Liberton Halfway House  
Women's Resource, Information & Support Centre (WRISC)  
Women's Shelter Armidale  
Woorarra Inc  
Yarredi Services  
Yawarra Meamei Women's Group  
Yemaya  
Young Women's Place  
Young Women's Support Service (Girls' Time Out).  
YWCA Australia  
YWCA of Canberra  
YWCA of Darwin – Domestic Violence Programme  
Zena Collective (Barwon Women's Domestic Violence Service).  
Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre  
Zonta House Refuge Association



# **Women's Services Network**

**WESNET NATIONAL SECRETARIAT**

GPO Box 1579 Canberra City ACT 2601

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[www.wesnet.org.au](http://www.wesnet.org.au)