

WESNET

The Women's Service Network



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

ANNUAL REPORT

2008 - 2009

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WESNET ANNUAL REPORT 2008 – 2009

PAULINE WOODBRIDGE

NATIONAL CHAIR

North Queensland Domestic Violence Service Townsville, QLD.

Reflecting on the progress and outcomes of the current issues affecting the Domestic and Family Violence Sector nationally, we can see some gains, many uncertainties, some losses and some steps forward. Throughout it all, there continues to run the strong thread of feminist commitment and passion that drives the workers within the organisations; the feminist organisations that then form the membership of WESNET.

Each of the States and Territories Women's networks provide a representative and an alternate who, along with the Indigenous and Non-English speaking background reps make up the WESNET national council. These women bring their skill and knowledge to WESNET building on their experience of working with victims, analysing policy, networking and lobbying on the entrenched issue of violence against women. The whole of the women's services sector at the same time as providing good supporting services for the women and children victims of Domestic & Family Violence has an underpinning of activism to stop the violence -and this has manifested in the slow development of women's services becoming involved in perpetrator programs provision from within a feminist framework.

WESNET had a very active year with our two projects rolling out so ably supported by Karen Bentley, project worker extraordinaire. The WESNET grants process went very well with 22 funded projects achieving their goals. The range of activities carried out was amazing and the outcomes will provide influences for some time to come. WESNET is very pleased with our successful management of this large project. The WESNET reps provided lots of support to the successful grantees and the whole project was skillfully managed by Julie Oberin, who guided us all through the process and milestones.

In May 2009 in Alice Springs, WESNET launched *Virtual WESNET*. Again this project was developed and carried out by the dynamic duo of Julie and Karen, supported by the National Committee. Do take the time to go to www.wesnet.org.au (it is much more than a website) and join this valuable tool for our sector, that will transcend distance and truly connect us to each other in the work we are doing through it's on line forums. The potential for extending our ability to help the victims and to stop the violence is in our hands and through *Virtual WESNET* we can support each other. Check it out; *Virtual WESNET* has been described as vibrant, colourful and easy to use.

Securing the project funding has enabled WESNET to be active on our member's behalf, building capacity in the sector and demonstrating the creative ways we attempt to bridge the shortfalls. However the lack of peak body funding continues to be a glaring gap, especially at a time when domestic and family violence is so firmly on the public agenda. We still need to achieve peak funding. In our current climate this is just as important as ever.

The *White Paper* on Homelessness and the *National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children*, gave our sector some good strong indicators for growth and development around domestic and family violence issues. It is so refreshing to have a Prime Minister who is making very public statements about violence against women. PM Kevin Rudd along with Minister for the Status of Women Tanya Plibersek MP are committed to actioning the recommendations from '*The Road Home*' and '*Time for Action*'.

Many workers from our sector contributed to these reports. It has always been a vision of the violence against women sector that eventually we will make real inroads on changing society to make it a safe and respectful non – violent environment for all of us.

At the next AGM I will step down as the Chair of WESNET. My involvement with WESNET started around 1993 with the initial meetings that then lead to the development of the network in 1994 in the format we know today. There are so many wonderful women who have been associated with the network and my tenure with WESNET has been a monumental experience because of them. The reps and alternates, the various secretariat and project workers and the member organisations are all appreciated for their commitment and achievements. I really thank you all, including the women who have personally mentored and supported my roles in WESNET. WESNET has given me a great national focus to build on my daily work with the women in domestic and family violence, working together to stop it.

WESNET INDIGENOUS REPORT

Shirley Slann

North QLD Domestic Violence Service Mt Isa, QLD.

There have been a number of developments in regards to Indigenous affairs this year, especially with the announcement of the National Indigenous Representative Body (NIRB). In August 2009 the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Tom Calma, presented Minister Macklin with the "Our Future in Our Hands" report on creating a sustainable National Representative Body for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people. It has also been verified that the NIRB will have an equal representation of women as well as men in the structure for the new body; this will ensure that Indigenous women's voices are heard.

The National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Women's Gathering was held in Brisbane in June this year and recommendations from that gathering were presented to the MINCO in Perth. The theme and focus of the 2009 Gathering was leadership, economic security and human rights. There were a number of recommendations made from the gathering and listed below is the response from the Ministers:-

Commonwealth, State, Territory and New Zealand Ministers' Conference on the Status of Women Communiqué:

Response to the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Gathering 2009 recommendations

To all National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Gathering (NATSIWG) delegates and Working Group members.

Introduction

The Commonwealth, State, Territory and New Zealand Ministers' Conference on the Status of Women (MINCO) would like to thank all of you for contributing your ideas, expertise and bringing the voices of your communities to the 2009 NATSIWG. We thank everyone who travelled from all around Australia, often over several days and across vast distances, to gather in Brisbane.

We would like to acknowledge the work of the NATSIWG Working Group, chaired by Leanne Miller, in developing the 2009 NATSIWG agenda and assisting in the delivery of a successful Gathering. Thanks also to the Queensland Government, the staff of the Office for Women (Queensland), and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women of Queensland for hosting the Gathering. Our thanks are also extended to the NATSIWG Secretariat and the facilitators for the Gathering, Llewellyn Williams and Wendy Watego-Ittensohn, for their support and work with the delegates to identify key priorities and develop recommendations for MINCO's consideration.

You have embraced the opportunity to create networks, share experiences and make connections with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women from throughout Australia. We value the time that you have spent talking to others in your communities to bring their views to MINCO's attention.

The 2009 NATSIWG agenda developed by the Working Group provided the Gathering with an opportunity to discuss priority concerns between delegates and also to hear information from the invited guest speakers Dr Jackie Huggins, Dorinda Cox, Julia Burns and Liz Bond on key initiatives which may impact on the policy statements and recommendations developed by NATSIWG.

The MINCO Chair, the Queensland Minister for Women, the Honourable Karen Struthers was pleased to attend the Gathering to receive a draft sample of the recommendations. We note the additional work that the Working Group members and delegates have put in to preparing the full set of recommendations for Ministers' consideration.

A total of twenty-five recommendations, grouped under six themes, have been made for MINCO's consideration and a further three points raised that had been previously recommended. Our response to your recommendations is provided in line with this structure and where possible we have identified actions to progress recommendations.

Theme 1: National Indigenous Representative Body

As the NATSIWG Working Group Chairperson Leanne Miller has noted in her introductory message to MINCO, 2009 has seen a number of significant structural changes in Indigenous Affairs. Alongside the delegates, MINCO also applauds the Steering Committee of the National Indigenous Representative Body (NIRB) for their commitment to an equal gender balance on the proposed NIRB.

Following the final report of the Steering Committee by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner Tom Calma on 27 August 2009, Ministers note the continuing work being conducted by the Honourable Jenny Macklin, Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs to establish an NIRB and believe it is essential that future arrangements for Indigenous women's consultative and advisory forums are aligned with this body.

In light of the consideration being given to an NIRB and the Australian Government's evaluation of the National Women's Alliances, Ministers agreed to fund the Gathering, at the current level of funding, for a further year. This will provide a mechanism for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women to have input

into government policy while future models of Indigenous consultation and advisory forums are being considered by the Australian Government.

Each jurisdiction maintains a commitment to supporting attendance of delegates to the NATSIWG and will consider the practicalities and process for delegate selection within their own resources. Ministers are pleased to note that the addition of an extra day for NATSIWG to meet has been beneficial.

Ministers will continue to invite representatives from the NATSIWG to attend the pre-MINCO Women's Advisor's Meeting (WAM) to discuss their recommendations to clarify and provide advice on NATSIWG discussions.

2. Torres Strait Islander Women

Ministers agree that the MINCO Chair write to the Chair of the COAG Early Childhood Development Steering Committee to raise awareness of the need for special consideration to be given to customary child rearing practices as highlighted by the Torres Strait Islander delegates, as well as the need for culturally appropriate responses to be adopted as part of the National Early Childhood Development Strategy.

Following on from one of the recommendations from the 2008 NATSIWG, MINCO is pleased to note an increase in the diversity of delegates at the 2009 NATSIWG, in particular the strong Torres Strait Islander representation. MINCO looks forward to continuing to hear the views from a broad range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in 2010. The Australian Government, States and Territories will continue to appraise their delegate selection processes to ensure that a broad spectrum of views are presented and that the consultation processes prior to NATSIWG enable all women's voices to be heard.

3. The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women

MINCO recognises that violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children is a critical issue and is of paramount concern. MINCO also appreciates the recommendations developed by NATSIWG in relation to the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women*.

As many NATSIWG delegates would be aware, the *National Council to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children* in its *Time for Action* report to the Australian Government in March 2009 identified closing the gap for Indigenous women as a key priority area. In response to the report the National Council's Plan was referred to COAG for the development of an integrated, comprehensive, cross-jurisdictional action plan.

The Australian Government is leading the development of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women* and has responded to 20 high priority areas identified in *Time for Action*.

The specific recommendations developed by NATSIWG will be referred to the COAG Working Group of officials responsible for the development of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women*, for their consideration.

4. Economic Security

MINCO acknowledges the life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous Australians and the consequence that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders may not fully benefit from their superannuation contributions. MINCO will refer your recommendation for consideration of accessing superannuation at 55 years to The Treasury, Australian Government.

Ministers thank NATSIWG for drawing their attention to concerns about access to work entitlements such as maternity leave, superannuation and annual leave provisions under Indigenous Employment Programs. MINCO will refer your concerns to the Australian Government's Department of Education, Employment, and Workplace Relations.

Ministers welcome your interest in financial education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. Australian, State and Territory Governments run financial literacy programs. However, Ministers will ask WAM to share each jurisdiction's activities to identify and share good practice. If any gaps in the availability of materials targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women are identified WAM officials will be asked to give further consideration to encouraging and promoting specialist financial education programs.

MINCO also notes that the Business Toolkit for Indigenous women is currently being finalised. A resource to assist Indigenous women build business skills was a recommendation made by delegates at the 2007 NATSIWG, and will assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who wish to start their own business with practical information and resources. Once finalised, officials will make this Toolkit widely available.

5. National Women's Alliances

MINCO praises your commitment to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's concerns are strongly and powerfully voiced.

The Australian Government is currently refocusing the model for the National Women's Alliances. The four Alliances (Security4Women, WomenSpeak Network, Australian Women's Coalition and the National Rural Women's Coalition) are funded to consult with constituents and provide advice to the Australian Government on policy issues relevant to women. A key consideration in the review is how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's views are represented to the Australian Government.

Ministers will ask WAM to develop a proposal for future arrangements for NATSIWG taking into account new directions for the National Women's Alliances as well as the Australian Government's response to the *Our future in our hands – Creating a sustainable National Representative Body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples* report, which outlines a proposed model for a new NIRB.

6. Human Rights

Ministers provide an undertaking to provide the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Australian Government's Attorney-General's Department with the NATSIWG recommendations on the development and implementation of an Australian Human Rights Act. Ministers will particularly emphasise the recommendation about delivering education and awareness programs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities regarding information on human rights to the Commission.

MINCO acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's particular cultural responsibilities in relation to water and natural resources.

MINCO will ask that WAM members take opportunities to address with their relevant jurisdictional colleagues the recommendations that relate to filling all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identified positions; the need for specialised programs working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as opposed to mainstreaming; and to maintain logos for identified Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs.

All jurisdictions have a range of strategies in public sector employment to support the attraction, recruitment and employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well as increasing opportunities for them to develop their leadership potential. Ministers encourage NATSIWG delegates to work with each jurisdiction to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are aware of what is in place to support them into employment, education or training.

Conclusion

MINCO looks forward to continuing to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's representatives to assist in closing the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and non Indigenous women. Ministers aspire to building a future in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's economic security, human rights, health, wellbeing and safety may be guaranteed, and their children and communities are able to access their full range of opportunities and develop their full potential.

MINCO looks forward to an ongoing dialogue with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women from throughout Australia and to continue to be informed by the valuable insight into issues affecting Indigenous women and their families.

The Commonwealth, State, Territory and New Zealand Ministers' Conference on the Status of Women (MINCO)

2 October 2009

The MINCO has currently extended the NATSIWG until October 2010.

It will be interesting to see if a National Indigenous Women's Alliance will be formed and the future of NATSIWG as well as the final outcome of the National Indigenous Representative Body (NIRB)

Let's see what eventuates in the next 12 months.

WESNET Immigrant, Refugee and Non-English Speaking Background Report:

Jane Corpuz-Brock

Immigrant Women's Speakout, NSW.

The NESB representative Jane Corpuz-Brock works closely with the Network of Immigrant and Refugee Women of Australia. She is a member of the NIRWA National Council. Through NIRWA the NESB representative is able to access the various state-wide CALD women's organizations throughout Australia. These state-wide immigrant and refugee women's organizations are sources of information and access to national activities that are being held. The NESB representative held discussions and meeting with representatives of the following state-wide organizations:

- 1) Multicultural Women's Advocacy (Tasmania)
- 2) Victorian Immigrant and Refugee Women's Coalition (Victoria)
- 3) Migrant Women's Lobby Group (South Australia)
- 4) Women's Sub-committee, Ethnic Communities Council (Western Australia)
- 5) Multicultural Council of Northern Territory (Women's Committee)
- 6) Immigrant Women's Support Service (Queensland)

With the YWCA as auspice organization, NIRWA held various workshops. One of these workshops was the Homelessness National Workshop, "Challenges for immigrant and refugee women" held on 28 March 2009 in Sydney. Members of the WESNET Board participated in this workshop. The NESB Rep was one of the workshop organizers and facilitators.

The WESNET NESB Rep, Jane Corpuz-Brock, also our WESNET sisters, Pauline Woodbridge and Julie Oberin have done presentations.

The following are excerpts from Jane's presentation:

"For many NESB women especially the newly-arrived, experience many barriers to private rental through commercial institutions such as real estate companies. The following are the identified issues by NESB women:

- *more in-depth knowledge of tenant's rights and responsibilities*
- *increasing rate of rental*
- *inequity in the selection process for tenancy*
- *lack of suitable accommodation for large families*
- *not able to show stable and long employment history*
- *not able to show track record in rental market "*

Family violence pushes out many NESB women and in many cases those with young children, out of their home. Many of these NESB women think that reporting their experience of family violence could result to leaving their home.

The NESB Rep on her paper also noted the following:

"In August 2008, the Flinders Institute for Housing, Urban and Regional Research of the Flinders University stated on its "Women, Domestic and Family Violence and Homelessness – A Synthesis Report" stated that: "...it is difficult to move immigrant groups from crisis services because of discrimination in the private rental sector and the high costs of private housing. Rental histories are difficult for newly arrived immigrants and those for whom the lease is in the husband's name. In addition some migrant women do not have adequate life skills to maintain a private rental tenancy".

Pauline Woodbridge and Julie Oberin made a joint presentation titled: "The Links between Domestic/Family Violence and Homelessness for Women and Children". Below are some excerpts from their joint paper:

"Women from immigrant and Non-English speaking backgrounds are less likely to report domestic violence and experience added barriers to accessing appropriate services including crisis accommodation services. Women from immigrant and Non-English speaking backgrounds face language and cultural barriers, along with racism as they negotiate their way through alien systems with very limited appropriate interpreting and cultural support services to help them."

The following are the recommendations from the participants of the workshop:

- Support by the government for new and emerging communities to develop their own housing advocacy through their own leaders

- The Government should consider providing hostel type accommodation for refugee and humanitarian settlers for a minimum of 2 years to facilitate their settlement into the community
- The Government should plan social housing and refuges with due consideration given to cultural elements e.g. extended families require housing of adequate size and with sufficient facilities
- The Government should review its definition of "housing affordability" for migrants and refugees taking into particular consideration the capacity for solo mothers and their children to acquire safe and long-term housing to facilitate their settlement into the community
- Government and non-government organisations alike should recognise and promote that it is everyone's human right to have adequate housing and income security to live a life of dignity and free of violence
- The Government must provide funds towards community based evidence gathering and research in collaboration with the community sector on homelessness relating to refugee and immigrant women. This information can be used to fill housing requirements and future housing developments
- Allocating funds to provide secure and hygienic public housing, with fairer and balanced rental regulations (e.g. Better individual case management).
- Allocating funds to meet the public housing needs of the increasing immigrant and refugee women's population in Australia.
- Ongoing continuous support for refugee and immigrant women who have been housed
- Availability of education on housing and a simpler system (e.g.- Affordable bridging courses)
- Sustainable community in public housing to overcome the safety and security issues
- Increase funding for service provision such as the private rental brokerage program
- There should be regulations on the prices for renting properties similar to bread and milk. The price of rental keeps going up
- Something has to be done by the real state agencies in regards to awareness for Landlords, who sometimes discriminate against people of CALD background
- There has to be cultural sensitivity for shared accommodation. It's hard for CALD people when they don't understand about other cultures and they don't have their needs included in service provision
- There has to be good housing planning. Access to activities (especially employment), and reasonable access to health, education, shopping, banking and other essential services such as child care is essential
- Generally speaking there is a big shortage of housing, there is not much to choose from, and sometimes safety is jeopardized. Changes such as putting rails on windows for safety are usually not allowed. The tenants end up paying for damages and this should be look at as everybody should feel safe in their homes
- CALD communities need to have education on tenancy rights
- There should be a regulatory mechanism that will monitor real estate agents in particular in times of significant increase of rent
- Referees - reference for newly arrived communities is really important when they are applying for housing. Perhaps, real estate agents could accept referrals from community leaders and service providers if clients have no track record in renting
- Policy submission by service providers and advocacy organizations to the Australian Human Rights Commission because "housing is a human right"

WESNET NORTHERN TERRITORY REPORT

Dale Wakefield

Alice Springs Women's Shelter, NT.

It has been an eventful & dynamic year in the Territory for women's services. The introduction of the mandatory reporting of domestic violence, and the impact of the changes to the SAAP policy, have been the main areas of concern in an environment of increased demand on services and decreasing exit points for women and children.

Mandatory reporting of Domestic Violence

In March 2009 the NT government introduced legislation to the Parliament that meant all adults over the age of 18 must report domestic violence incidents that involve serious physical harm or that a person reasonably believes that a person is at risk of serious physical harm. The law has received a lot of criticism from many sectors, and as the implementation process was poorly planned, its application has been patchy.

Generally there has been a mixed reaction within the domestic violence service sectors with WESNET membership services in Central Australia not reporting any major changes in practice and presentation at their services. However from some services in Darwin there has been concern that they are providing less early intervention support. Dawn House in Darwin has just received a grant to do some independent research into the effects of the law.

A \$15 million three year funding package was announced alongside the legislation, with all women's shelter's receiving an increase in funding. The amount of funding received varied from service to service depending on demand and the additional money was an extension of core services and did not attract separate reporting or additional objectives.

The NT government has also commissioned a social marketing campaign on domestic violence prevention which will commence next year.

SAAP/White Paper response

So far the NT Government has released very little response to the White Paper and is planning consultations with the sector in early November. Central Australian SAAP services have signed interim agreements and all Darwin services are due for new agreements by June 2010.

Of concern has been the reporting of the \$15 million spent under the mandatory reporting implementation as part of the NAHA response. This reflects the concern of WESNET nationally that domestic and family violence services may be marginalised in the process of the implementation of both the Homelessness White Paper & the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women. This will be the area WESNET NT members will be focusing in the next 12 months.

National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women

There has been no formal response from the NT Government about its response to the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women.

Other issues

At a recent face to face with all the women's shelters in the NT the main issue raised was lack of exit points. Vacancy rates in private rental vary between 3% and .3% across the Territory and housing prices in Darwin are on par with Sydney. The lack of response from Territory Housing despite significant funding from the Federal government to address indigenous housing and the ongoing decrease of public housing stock means that women and children accessing shelters have very few exit points. Whilst this reflects the national experience, it is a concern that the significant expenditure of the Federal Government under the guise of the intervention appears to have had little impact on the day to day reality on the ground in the Territory.

WESNET ACT REPORT

Richel Malouf
Housing Support Unit, YWCA of Canberra, ACT.

Current Territory Domestic/Family Violence Issues and Legislative Changes

Revised Domestic Violence and Protection Orders Act

On Monday 30th March 2009 the *Domestic Violence and Protection Orders Act 2008 (ACT)* commenced and the *Domestic Violence and Protection Orders Act 2001 (ACT)* ceased to have effect. While many of the changes were considered technical, a significant Amendment for those of us who work in the sector is the Amendment to who is now defined as a 'relevant person' and what is now defined as a 'relevant relationship' under the new Act. The Act now covers those people who are in an intimate relationship, *whether they have lived together or not*. This will effectively cover a range of relationships that were not previously covered, importantly; it will cover relationships such as boyfriend/girlfriend. As we are all too well aware, women in these relationships often present with the same levels of violence and abuse of power and control as women who live or have lived with their (ex)partner. This Amendment will also cover same sex relationships regardless of where the people reside. These changes are welcomed within the sector.

Review of ACT Family Violence Intervention Program (FVIP)

The FVIP was established in 1998 and is a coordinated interagency criminal justice and community agency response to family violence incidents where charges have been laid by the police. The focus of the FVIP is on improving the criminal justice response to family violence. The overarching objectives of the FVIP are to:

- work co-operatively together;
- maximise safety and protection for victims of family violence;
- provide opportunities for offender accountability and rehabilitation; and,
- work towards continual improvement of the FVIP.

In 2008 the Australian Institute of Criminology was contracted to provide a review of the ACT FVIP. The main purpose of the Review was to describe and evaluate the effectiveness of the FVIP including its governance structure and arrangements. The final Review Report will be released later this year.

Sexual Assault and Violent Offenders Bill

This new bill came into action in May 2009. The legislation now allows for the following:

- vulnerable witnesses to use CCTV from alternative locations;
- paper committals thereby reducing the number of times a victim has to present in court; and,
- police recordings as best evidence in court particularly child victims/witnesses.

Research Reports

Women and Prisons Report – Invisible Bars: the stories behind the stats by Deb Wybron and Kiri Dicker May 2009

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Women in the ACT by Rebecca Brewer April 2009

Marginalised and Isolated Women in the ACT by Sarah Maslen February 2008

Social Determinants of Women's Health and Well Being in the ACT Sarah Maslen September 2008

Domestic/Family Violence Sector Issues

Two ACT services received Commonwealth funding to implement Sexual Assault Prevention Programs for young people. One program is to be run in schools and the other through external school venues. A number of organisations will be involved in these sessions and we are all excited about carrying out this prevention work.

Some ACT women's services have supported women escaping DV with unresolved immigration status issues, reporting the following-

- Applications for permanent residency take an exceedingly long time.
- Women are often left with no income, no access to legal support, no accommodation (ineligible for Public Housing until permanent residency is granted) for extended periods of time up to 18 months in some cases.
- The cost of supporting a woman in this situation is approximately \$8000 per year – excluding accommodation.
- Women are left totally dependent on the refuge and other community services for support. Support includes financial assistance to access services including medical treatment, transport, food, clothing, utilities, education and the formation of social networks.

Recently the Human Rights Commission has been successful in having the '45 day rule for Bridging visas' removed which should shorten the time it takes to process applications for permanent residency. This is a great step forward and we anticipate shorter processing time for applications of women escaping DV in the very near future.

Supported Accommodation

The ACT continues to struggle with affordable housing options as does the rest of the country. Hopefully some of the new NAHA initiatives being developed will reduce this pressure. The chronic housing shortage in the ACT means Homelessness services have very few exit options and can end up accommodating people for 18 months to 2 years. It is not the best use of this type of accommodation and is something we constantly push to change.

ACT SAAP (now NAHA) services continue to work in the Pathways Project furthering connections with community based service providers as well as Mental Health ACT, Care and Protection Services, Housing ACT and Centrelink. This is a very positive project even though it means lots of work and meetings.

There has been a diverse range of people entering Supported Accommodation services in the ACT. Many have no English language and cannot read or write. This has made support to these clients difficult at times and has meant the increased use of interpreters which is very costly to some services.

Recently the Women's Services Network organised a specialist support service from Melbourne to conduct Sudanese Cultural Awareness Training in the ACT. 60 people attended this very successful training. And it has been a catalyst for more training and joint support work.

Many families coming into the services have complex family issues including

- Breaking the cycle of violence;
- Mental Health issues;
- Alcohol and Other Drug dependencies; and,
- Family Law and Child Protection issues.

WESNET SOUTH AUSTRALIA REPORT

**Vicki Lachlan
Louise Place, SA.**

Restructuring of the former 'SAAP Sector under the NAHA

For the entire year the DV sector and services in SA has been awaiting news about how the SA government was going to reconfigure the sector; we knew this would happen as all agencies with about to finish Service Agreements were only given interim ones for a year or two, depending on the cycle, and the reason given was that 'it' would all change.

There have been a number of different 'consultations', forums, and an information session during the period. However no concrete information was shared until quite late in the financial year, and as deadlines got closer they were delayed; so services have spent the entire year working under frustrating circumstances – not wanting to 'rock the boat' but all concerned about their future, and not knowing who, how or what was to come.

Eventually we were told that we would all be applying for positions on a "Preferred Support Provider Panel" through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process firstly, and then tendering for the provision of services within the traditional areas of expertise of 'SAAP'; but with a far more regionalised perspective, and nominating how we would be working in conjunction with other services (perhaps the ones we were tendering against!).

Services continued to do their work; respond to the ever increasing demand on their services, not knowing how their service would look within a short time, how their properties would be managed – indeed even whether they would have access to properties for their clients exiting their services, and how they would provide for their staff with an ever diminishing pool of funds – the SA government continually tell us that there is no funds for salary increases, extra services, the ability to respond to the new Family Safety Framework; and yet the Commonwealth is constantly saying they are providing more money.

Services on the ground are in a no win situation. We were preparing for the EOI and tendering process, but without a complete picture of what was required by the end of the financial year, services were still frustrated about their future positions.

As part of the restructure, though, we have one win. Part of the Consultation process has been the establishment of a Domestic Violence Steering Group, with a number of representatives from the sector included, that will oversee and drive the changes that are expected. The representatives include metro, rural, NESB and Aboriginal women that were nominated by our peak, the Coalition of WDVSSA. However the DV Steering group will not be selecting who gets Preferred Support Provider status; that is very clear in the negotiations to date. The government reps on the group are part of the team managing the reform process. It has been heartening that the Peak (we are unfunded) was formally recognised within this process.

SA Death Review Process

The Coalition of Women's Domestic Violence Services SA and the DV Death Review Advocacy Coalition have worked together in lobbying the SA Government to initiate a Death Review process here. We have held a number of rallies and vigils on the steps of Parliament House after each of the 8 deaths, women and children, which have occurred in SA over the last 7 months due to Domestic Violence. We have also run a media campaign highlighting these activities, the absolute tragedy and senselessness of their deaths, and trying to outline aspects and consequences of domestic violence within our society. We are yet to gain ground in getting such a Review process happening!

Family Safety Framework

Up until part way through this year there were three trial sites/regions piloting this Framework and way of working across agencies and services where families due to domestic violence were identified as 'high risk'. There was an extensive evaluation done of all aspects of the trial with feedback gathered from all involved, and now with some changes the FSF is being rolled out in another three sites/regions. It is expected that eventually this process will be used across SA in order to prevent serious injury or death due to domestic violence. Some regions not yet involved in the trials of the FSF have started having 'Family Safety Meetings' on their own initiative, to attempt to stop the increasing death toll, and to get services used to working across agencies on case management of high risk families.

SA Domestic Violence Laws

The Coalition also spent a lot of the year trying to ascertain the progress of the Laws that had been consulted on 2 years ago. Our contacts with SA's Attorney General, and one of our rallies also included questions to the government about their progress, eventually paid off, and the laws have been presented to Parliament.

Risk and Safety Reports to the Courts by DV Services

In order to establish this process a working party of both the NGO sector and the government developed the proforma for the Risk and Safety Reports, trained services in what was required and to ensure consistency across the sector in what was provided and are also monitoring the outcome and progress of the provision of these reports. SA Police were also involved and worked with the Victim's Support Service as part of the Women's Safety Strategy that has been agreed to throughout government and non-government agencies.

WESNET WESTERN AUSTRALIA REPORT

Kedy Kristal Pat Giles Centre, WA.

One of West Australian responses to the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) is to establish a WA Council on Homelessness to provide advice to the Minister on homelessness and to achieve the outcomes require under the NAHA and the Homelessness Partnership Agreement (NPA). The Council, when announced will have an independent Chair, five community members and 6 government departmental reps and academic.

The existing funding contracts for all women's refuges in WA will finish on 30th September 2009. The Dept of Child Protection and the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services held a forum to discuss service specifications, service groups and the preferred service provider process. It is expected that agencies, if they wish to, will have an option to have one funding contract that will replace the previous arrangement of separate funding contracts for each service, an agency may deliver.

The Compulsory Income Management (CIM) trials have been expanded to include Joondalup, Mirrabooka and Midland. An evaluation of the trials will be undertaken, including a cost evaluation, then a decision will be made by the Commonwealth Government about the future of the Program. A total commitment of \$18.9m over two years by the Federal Government has been made for the CIM trial. To date in WA, only 15 families are part of the CIM intervention and 112 are signed up voluntarily.

The Minister for Child Protection and Community Services, Robyn Mc Sweeney is very supportive of Compulsory Income Management.

The Minister, Ms Sweeney has recently disbanded the Women's Advisory Committee.

The 19th Annual Silent Domestic and Family Violence Memorial March was held on Thursday 23rd of April 2009 at Stirling Gardens. Over 300 people joined the rally and silent protest march to mourn the death of 17 women, children and men murdered in Western Australia by an intimate partner or family member between May 2008 and April 2009.

The Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Service have been lobbying for the development of a Domestic Violence Fatality Review process in Western Australia.

The Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services organized the Perth 'arm' of a coordinated national rally to campaign for Abuse free Contact and safer Family Court outcomes, held on May 3rd 2009 in Fremantle.

West Coast TAFE and the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services are currently piloting a partnership project offering Refuge staff the opportunity to gain qualifications through a skills recognition project.

Data from the new Refuge bed count on line site, run by the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services from January to April 2009 shows there have been an average of less than three Refuge beds available each day across the State.

The Peer Education Project continues in 2009. Four Schools participated in the project in 2008 with two of these schools continuing on in 2009. The Peer Education Project works with secondary schools in Western Australia, providing students with the knowledge and resources to make healthy and informed relationship decisions, and prevent the onset of relationship violence in later life.

Keeping Kids Safe Project

Between January and March a consultation with Child Support and Child Advocacy staff in refuges was undertaken. Of the 35 refuges in West Australia that provide support for women and children, 23 had a Child Advocate or Child Support Worker on staff at the time of the consultation. Fourteen of these workers were employed in a part-time capacity.

The Keeping Kids Safe training program has conducted workshops in Perth, Kalgoorlie, Kununurra and Roebourne. Further workshops are planned for Broome, Port Hedland, Karratha, Albany and Perth.

Good Practice Models Conference

As a part of the Keeping Kids Safe project the Women's Council will be hosting a good practice training conference: Supporting Children who have Experienced Domestic and Family Violence, 26th-28th October 2009.

The conference will bring together representatives from Refuges and Domestic and Family Violence Services from all over the state to showcase good practice models or programs that are working to support children and young people.

Figures released by the WA Council of Social Service (WACOSS) show that in the last twelve months, the cost of living in WA has risen by a minimum of \$43 per week.

From 2007 to 2008 costs increased by \$62 per week. The additional rise from 2008 to 2009 brings the total cost increase for the past two years to approximately \$105 per week.

“WACOSS’ most recent cost of living paper shows that from 2007 to 2009, household costs increased by at least \$105 per week, or 17.7% - just on selected basic living expenses. During the same period, average incomes have increased by less than half that rate, at 5.15%.

The first National Conference on Refugee and Immigrant Women: Setting the Social Inclusion agenda was held in March by the Federation of Ethnic Community Councils of Australia. The conference was very well attended and had many significant women speakers from across Australia, including Professor Hurriyet Babacan, and the Governor General Ms Quentin Bryce.

The 2nd Annual WA Family Pathways Network Conference was held on 18 June 2009. Called Ethical Dilemmas-Voices in the Family Law System the key note speaker was Mr. Anthony Douglas the CEO of the UK Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service. Mr. Douglas spoke about the UK experience of including the voice of children in family law proceedings.

The Family and Domestic Violence Unit who fund the coordinators to the Regional Coordinated Response to Family and Domestic Violence has been moved from the Dept of Communities to the Dept of Child Protection and another review of the interagency RCR committees is under way. The RCR’s are part of the Departments integrated response to family and domestic violence, and that encourages all regions to work together to case manage ‘high risk’ cases involving family and domestic violence.

On 17 December 2007, the former Western Australian Labor Government announced the \$114 million Redress WA Scheme for those adults who, as children, were abused and/or neglected in WA State care in Western Australia. In July 2009 the current Liberal Government halved the promised maximum payment for \$80,000 to \$45,000.00. Over 10,000 applications have been made to the Redress Scheme and the current government is claiming the amount allocated was insufficient following recent actuarial analysis commissioned by the Department for Communities.

The WA implementation plan of the Homelessness National Partnership Agreement has begun running Metro workshops to consult with service providers to develop service specifications for the new funding initiatives. Consultations in the rural and remote region will follow later in 2009.

WESNET QUEENSLAND REPORT

Lindy Edwards
Sera's Women's Shelter, QLD.

White Paper Implementation

As I am sure with other States, this has been the major issue for the sector in Queensland for the past twelve months. We have been anxiously awaiting details about how the Homelessness sector will benefit when Qld develops its implementation plan, but unfortunately initial optimism when the White Paper was released, has given way, to some extent, to feelings that there is not going to be a big change on the ground. We are definitely going to be seeing an increase in housing, both public and community, across the State, but there is no indication that there will be increased funding to enable existing services to provide the support needed. There is not a lot in the plan for women and children escaping domestic violence, although obviously there could be some benefits for women who are struggling to maintain tenancies, through some Early Intervention Programs.

From the beginning, the sector, led by QCOSS has worked to be involved with the state government in the development of an implementation plan. Meetings have been held with a small group of sector representatives, and state government representatives, pushing for a lot of sector participation and co-ordination at a local level. However, it has been a difficult process and there has been a feeling that the sector have not been listened to.

There is some positive news for the DV Sector. An initiative within Queensland's Plan to reduce domestic & Family Violence, "for Our Sons & Daughters", there is funding for three pilot programs across the state based on the models piloted elsewhere aimed at enabling women to stay safely in their homes. These pilots will be rolled out in Townsville, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast, the good news being that existing Regional Domestic Violence Services were approached to submit for the funding.

Qld.'s Whole of Government Response to DV

The Qld. Government has entered into a Queensland Compact, which describes a respectful relationship between the Government as funder, and the non-government funded services. This has been seen as a generally positive step forward.

This was announced last year, following which consultations were held around the state to get input from the Sector. Some aspects certainly looked promising, but there were concerns about how some aspects, e.g. Case Co-ordination teams, the concern being how these strategies would be implemented and how much the existing specialist domestic violence services would be involved.

A pilot is being funded for the Rockhampton area which will see the development of an Integrated model, aimed at better co-ordination and service delivery within the human and justice service systems. This is still in its early stages, but already there is some concern within the sector that the specialist domestic violence workers within the community sector (such as the Refuge) will not be full involved in this. A case co-ordination team will be set up and include a Domestic Violence Specialist Worker, but this person will be employed by, and sit within, the Department!

As part of the Whole of Government Response, the department announced a Review of the current domestic violence legislation. This is currently underway, not a lot is known about the progress of it, however, it is believed that there may be public consultations held in May 2010.

SAAP/CAP Issues

Following the election earlier this year, the Department of Communities has become a 'mega department', encompassing Housing and Child Safety and several other portfolios, with one Director General across the lot. This is supposed to improve things, and we were initially pleased to see Housing come into Communities as we had already been told that SAAP and CAP would be in the one department (Communities). We have seen little change on the ground as a result of this, however, as we continue to deal with Housing around our CAP properties and other housing related matters.

Workforce Development

On the 6th May the Qld. Industrial Relations Commission ruled in favor of the QASU's pay equity case, for the new Qld. Community Services & Crisis Assistance Award. This will see a significant increase in wages over the next 3 years. It is a significant recognition of the work mainly by women in this sector, and an acknowledgement of the previous undervaluing of this work.

Not all organisations are immediately covered by this award, but it is thought most will move to implement these increases for the workers, and many did so on the 13th July when the first increases came into effect.

Further good news came when the Queensland Government announced in the Budget that there would be \$414 million for increased wages for the Community Sector.

Not all organisations will receive increased funding as priority has been given to those services providing direct service delivery to clients, and particularly homelessness and DV Services. Most services have now been advised of what increased funding they will receive. Although this is a start, and the first increase of its kind in many years, for many organisations, there will still be long term issues, juggling funding to meet award commitments. As usual, with most things coming from the government, there is no explanation as to how the increased funding each service received, was calculated!

Interpreting Services

Finally Queensland is catching up with the other states with a commitment from the funding body (Department of Communities) to reimburse all services for the costs incurred using interpreter services for clients. It is still not the smooth process we would hope for as services have to pay the cost and then claim a reimbursement, but it's a start and we will be monitoring to ensure that these services continue to be available for all clients who need them.

D&FV Prevention Month

Another fairly successful month was had in May, with a variety of activities held across the State raising awareness of the issues. As in previous years, a Candlelight Ceremony was held on the 1st Wednesday in May, with candles being lit at the same time in every region. This year there was an attempt to have a similar activity in other States, coinciding with the 6.00pm candlelighting. Perhaps we will soon see a National Domestic Violence Prevention Month!

WESNET Projects

The two large projects carried out in Qld, appear to have been very successful. The Billboard Project in the Townsville Region was launched at the end of May. Billboards with very strong "stop domestic violence" messages will be in various positions in the region for the next 12 months.

The DV Death Review Project held three successful forums across the state, with information presented and people encouraged to participate in a postcard campaign to the Premier urging the establishment of a DV Death Review process. This led to the announcement by the Premier that a DV Death Review Board would be established.

However, this announcement was not exactly what the DVDRAG (DV Death Review Action Group) had been lobbying for as the Review Board would only be reviewing 60 cases over a 5 year period, and would not be an on-going process. The DV Death Review Panel is expected to deliver it's outcomes in March 2010.

WESNET VICTORIAN REPORT

Julie Oberin

Annie North Women's Refuge and Domestic Violence Service, VIC.

DVVic, our sector peak body has again worked hard to represent critical issues for us during the year. It has been another heavy year of reform work which takes its toll on our sector without much needed capacity building funds. Especially so, in the year when our services are undertaking rigorous Quality Assurance Accreditation through QICSA. Apart from some agencies which have been successful in tenders, it is still true that very little of the new funds has made its way to our sector as a whole, particularly to the women's refuges. It is difficult to understand this lack of State Government support for these critical services which doesn't appear to happen to this degree in other States. Whilst it is imperative that we focus on preventative work and mainstream agencies' responses, it is also critical to support the specialist women's domestic and family violence services in the work that they do. There still seems to be a misunderstanding too from Government about the nature of the work that women's refuges and outreach services do.

Like many other states/territories, 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. All of this at the same time as going through rigorous quality assurance accreditation processes. Very little funding rolling out from The Road Home Commonwealth/State implementation plans appear to be going to the specialist women's domestic and family violence sector. A sector which is already over-performing and can well do with a capacity building injection of funds.

Accreditation

Domestic and family violence services across the State have been going through an external accreditation process on the Victorian Homelessness Assistance Service Standards (HASS). Some agencies took on additional Quality Assurance Standards at the same time. Preparation for the accreditation has been an extremely onerous task, in particular for stand-alone agencies.

DVVic (Domestic Violence Victoria) and CHP (Council for Homeless Persons) Vic have attempted to support services as best as they can with some government support, but this does not replace specific resourcing at the service level.

The Victorian Family Violence Statewide Advisory Committee

The statewide committee has developed a State Plan to prevent violence against women. The plan is called The State Plan to Prevent Violence against Women 2010-2020.

Some new funds and programs include:

- Additional Intensive Case Management support for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and those with disabilities.
- Additional Case Management support for Indigenous women, Indigenous men and Indigenous children.
- Case Management funds for men who use violence against their family and have been removed from the family home.
- Expanded telephone service for men who use violence against family members.
- Additional funds to increase access into men's behaviour change programs via new intake responses.
- The commencement of the Certificate 1V in Aboriginal Family Violence Work.
- The ENOUGH campaign has been extended to the end of 2010 with an extension of the partnership with Netball Victoria, a partnership with the Australian Football League to produce a DVD, as well as media and promotions and training of Indigenous women to become family violence "champions".

Evaluation of the family violence reforms – SAFER research

Victoria received an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant in 2007 to evaluate the family violence reforms in Victoria. The research plan focuses on two agreed strands: the perspectives of women, children and men, and governance and pathways.

Current work is exploring the factors that contribute to women being safe at home, as well as the finalisation of a paper reviewing the governance of the integrated family violence system at a state and regional level. Timing of further work in the men's accountability stream is also under consideration in light of other developments in this area.

Family Violence Court Intervention Project

The Family Violence Court Intervention Project received funds from the State Budget to continue operations. The project was funded in conjunction with the Family Violence Court Division as part of the Whole of Government Strategy Supporting Courts to Address Family Violence.

The program directs men against whom an Intervention Order has been made, to attend an eligibility assessment, and if assessed as eligible, to attend specialist counselling programs to prevent their use of violence and abuse against women and children in the future. Support programs and services are also available to the man's current or former partner and affected children.

Regional Integrated Family Violence Committees

Regional Integrated Family Violence Committees are in operation across the State. The *Guiding Integrated Family Violence Service Reform 2006-2009 report* outlines the achievements.

Partnership Agreements between family violence service providers, Child FIRST/Family Services and Child Protection are being developed at regional levels.

Privacy and Information Sharing

Good findings regarding privacy and information sharing have emerged which may assist in more comprehensive risk assessments and risk management being made. Following feedback from the domestic and family violence sector the Family Violence Interdepartmental Committee worked with the Privacy Commissioner to develop guidance providing clear and unequivocal advice to service providers on their roles and responsibilities in sharing information about clients they support. A Fact Sheet was developed and widely distributed and the information is included in the Common Risk Assessment Framework. [www.women.vic.gov.au/web12/rwpgslib.nsf/.../\\$file/Theframework.doc](http://www.women.vic.gov.au/web12/rwpgslib.nsf/.../$file/Theframework.doc)

Further work is being explored with the Victorian Police considering the possibility of sharing the entire risk assessment and risk management form (the L17) with services after attendance at a family violence incident.

These are critical areas for strengthening risk management and development of a coordinated community response.

New Family Violence Bill

The new family violence Bill has been implemented over the last year. 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 Family Violence Safety Notices part of the Family Violence Legislation will be independently evaluated.

Indigenous Family Violence.

An Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Program is being developed in consultation with Indigenous community members.

Based on the Indigenous Violence against Women Public Awareness Campaign in Mildura, Victorian Police will be implementing similar campaigns in Warrnambool, Shepparton, Echuca, Bairnsdale and the Grampians over the next four years. It is hoped that local Family Violence Action Groups, Local and Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees, local police and other members of the Indigenous communities in these regions will participate in the projects. Following production of the commercials, pictorial pamphlets will be developed using the themes and images of the campaign.

The Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria has been undertaking a project focusing on improving the police response to incidents of family violence in three Aboriginal communities (Mildura,

Bairnsdale and Darebin) by developing protocols for police investigating incidents of family violence in the Koori community.

Two new Indigenous women's refuges are to be built in Mildura and Gippsland.

Koori Family Violence List

The Koori Family Violence List initiative aims to improve the courts capacity to provide a culturally appropriate response for family violence cases in the Koori community by developing partnerships with local Indigenous services, providing access to support for both Indigenous victims and offenders of family violence, and implementing training in Koori-specific family violence issues in Court.

Victoria Police Violence against Women and Children Strategy 2009-2014

This strategy commits Victorian Police to key objectives and actions to be achieved over the next five years.

Death Review Committee for Victoria

It is extremely pleasing that we now have a systemic review of family violence related deaths undertaken by the Coroner's office. More on this next year.

Victorian Family Violence Database

Measuring Family Violence in Victoria, Volume 4 of the Victorian Family Violence Data base, will provide trend analysis of family violence reports in Victoria for almost a decade, including:

- ▶ Victorian Police family violence incident reports
- ▶ Victorian Magistrates' and Children's Court finalised intervention order applications
- ▶ Victorian SAAP
- ▶ Data from Victorian Public Hospital Emergency Departments
- ▶ Initial snapshot data from the Department of Justice Victims of Crime Helpline
- ▶ Department of Human Services Integrated Reporting and Information System (IRIS)

Common Risk Assessment Framework (CRAF)

This continues to roll 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. More training in Comprehensive Risk Assessment is needed even though 120 training sessions had been delivered to 2429 participants. New workers come on board all the time.

The Department of Planning and Community Development is working with the Victorian Multicultural Commission to tailor the training materials and delivery to better support the CALD community.

The CRAF will be evaluated to look at the reach and coverage of the training as well as the level of unmet demand, and the impact on practice change.

Local Area Service Networks (LASN's) Opening Doors

These local area networks are focusing on homelessness entry points (Opening Doors) and are continuing their development across the State with a 1800 homelessness number to go live. Some problems include the lack of coordination between the Opening Doors Framework and the Integrated Family Violence Strategy and the potential duplication of pathways.

Child First.

This is a major reform primarily focused on Child Protection and Children and Family Services in the first instance and has created a new service response regarding the children we support in our sector.

Men's Behaviour Change Programs and Case Management Services for men who use violence against family members.

These are running across the State in varying degrees and have been enhanced with new service models focusing on increasing access to the programs and case management for men who are excluded from the family home.

Schools

A review of violence prevention programs in schools has occurred, undertaken by Vic Health.

Victorian WESNET projects

A number of Victorian projects were funded by the WESNET Capacity Building Grants program. These were:

- Partner Rape- Know About It, Respond Effectively, Prevent it: an educational DVD for health professionals and community members. (Women's Health Goulburn North East).
- Engaging Multicultural Faith and Community Leaders in the Early Prevention and Intervention of Violence Against Women. (Immigrant Women's Domestic Violence Service).
- Leadership and Women with Disabilities. (DVRC)
- Developing a Coordinated Community Response to Domestic and Family Violence (Loddon Campaspe Integrated Family Violence Services).

Domestic and Family Violence Services Staffing Crisis is ongoing

As reported last year, 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 contribute 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. We look forward to the ASU wage case.

WESNET NSW REPORT

Cat Gander NSW Women's Refuge Movement Resource Centre, NSW.

The NSW WESNET Representative is the Executive Officer of the NSW Women's Refuge Movement Resource Centre which is the central point for a network of women's and women and children's refuges situated across NSW providing support and accommodation to women and children escaping or experiencing domestic violence. The Centre regularly provides advice to government on policies and programs to improve responses and outcomes for women and children who are experiencing domestic violence. The Centre works closely with the sector to ensure that it can actively and effectively represent and advocate for its member refuges and the women and children they support.

The NSW WESNET Rep has continued to meet with and advise government and other organisations on a number of issues impacting on women and children experiencing or escaping domestic violence and on refuge service provision, such as Family Law, the Commonwealth's White Paper on Homelessness, implementation of the Keep Them Safe, the development of the NSW Domestic Violence Strategic Framework, the SAAP Performance Monitoring Framework and the NSW Homelessness Action Plan, and the Orana Far West Safe Houses Project.

Media interviews have been conducted with radio, print and television journalists on issues including refuges, domestic violence and its effects on children, legislative changes and homelessness.

Some of the media work to highlight women and children's issues include:

- ▶ Interview with Daily Telegraph, regarding ADVO breaches
- ▶ Interview with Sydney's Child Magazine
- ▶ Interview with ABC regional/rural radio on the barriers women experience in rural regional areas.
- ▶ ABC Radio – regarding Police powers in domestic violence cases

Strong links have been maintained with the other NSW SAAP Peaks; Homelessness NSW and Youth Accommodation Association NSW throughout the year.

Submissions

Submissions written throughout the year have included:

- ▶ Commonwealth Child Protection Framework
- ▶ NSW Domestic and Family Violence Framework
- ▶ NSW Homelessness Strategic Framework (Now the NSW Homelessness Action Plan)
- ▶ National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children

Orana Far West Safe Houses Project

Broadly the scope of this project is to:

1. Improve the capacity of the OFW Safe Houses in Bourke, Brewarrina, Lightning Ridge, Walgett and Wilcannia to improve safety and wellbeing of Aboriginal women and children experiencing or at risk of family violence.
2. Establish Child Focused workers in each of the 5 safe houses
3. Implement 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. Develop 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 project is managed by the Women's Refuge Movement in partnership with the Safe Houses and the Department of Community Services. Overall, it has been a successful year and the Safe House staff must be applauded to their dedication and ongoing commitment to the project through what has been a very busy year. One of the key focuses for the coming year will be strengthening interagency networks and development of regional and local plans and ensuring integration between these plans and the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Framework.

Some of the highlights for the project in 2008 – 2009 include:

- An increase in recurrent funding for the Safe Houses by the Hon. Minister Burney in March this year
- Employment and development of Child Support Workers in each of the five Safe Houses, thus an increased capacity within the Safe Houses to respond to the needs of children.
- Delivery of training in Certificate IV Aboriginal Family Health, provided through ECAV.
- Provision of Governance training by the Project Development Officer for each of the Safe Houses
- Physical Improvements for each of the Safe Houses including an increase in child focussed resources
- Increased access and delivery of training from the DoCS NGO Training Program
- Ongoing strengthening of the Safe Houses Regional Network, providing an important forum for peer support and skill sharing

WOMEN'S FAMILY LAW SUPPORT SERVICE

The Women's Family Law Support Service (WFLSS) is an initiative of the NSW Women's Refuge Movement (WRM) in collaboration with the Sydney Registry of the Family Law Courts (FLC).

The WFLSS model involves:

- ▶ coordinated court support provided by experienced women's refuge workers,
- ▶ clear roles and procedures for court support,
- ▶ protocols and collaboration with the Family Law Courts to promote smooth and effective operation, and
- ▶ Orientation and in-service training for court support workers which involves court personnel and lawyers.

The WFLSS assists women by:

- ▶ explaining the court environment (layout, roles of court and other personnel)
- ▶ explaining court processes
- ▶ helping to identify safety issues at court and promote safety while at court
- ▶ assisting with safety planning and in implementing safety plans
- ▶ identifying support and referral needs
- ▶ assisting women to obtain legal assistance and access to appropriate services
- ▶ reducing stress involved in attending court

In 2008, the WRM successfully applied for funding through the NSW Office for Women's Policy, Domestic and Family Violence Project Grants Scheme. Funding commenced in June 2008. In November 2008 a Coordinator was as employed on a permanent part-time basis of 21 hours per week. The Service seconds refuge workers on a monthly roster.

During 2008-2009 the service has built partnerships with solicitors who are prepared to provide pro bono assistance to women. The service now has an extensive list of solicitors who will take the matter on under legal aid.

Dr Lesley Laing is currently evaluating the service through a series of interviews with women who have used the service and court staff. Early feedback from the interviews demonstrates strong support for this type of service model to be expanded and replicated in other locations.

The model is unique in Australia and is currently being documented with the potential for replication in other Court Registries.

Key statistics for 2008-09

During the twelve months support period there were 194 support periods for women involving 322 children. The median number of children women had was 2 and 2 women had five children. The ages of women who received support varied from 18 years to over 60 years but averaged 31 – 50. Support was also given to 3 grandparents.

The service supported 84 women who had Apprehended Violence Orders, Interim Apprehended Violence Orders or Undertakings and another 74 women identified Domestic or Family violence in their relationship. In 76 support periods there was some involvement of the NSW Department of Community Services.

The main source of referrals was 126 from Seconded Refuge Workers, 28 Court staff, 14 Refuges, 13 Community Services and 13 other.

Only 78 women were entitled to Legal Aid and 99 were not with 17 to be determined. 26 women had their income over the threshold and 55 owned property or other assets over the threshold and 2 had already had judgment on their matter.

Half way through the year we found a number of women had spent an enormous amount of money funding legal representation. We began to include in our data collection 'cost and time'. To date two women have spent over \$700,000.00 and have been in court for over 4 years. Both women have lost their homes as a direct result of the legal costs.

The Impact of Housing on the Lives of Women and Children Post Domestic Violence Crisis Accommodation

This research was joint project between the WRM and the UWS Urban Research Centre. The research explored the links between housing provision and the wellbeing of women and children who had previously accessed crisis accommodation through women's refuges due to their experience of domestic and family violence. Several women's refuges assisted with the study by engaging participants. The project was launched in February 2009 at Parliament House by the Hon. Minister for Housing, Mr David Borger.

The research revealed the lengthy and fragmented processes that many of the women interviewed for the study experienced when seeking to obtain suitable housing for them and their children. The lack of appropriate housing that is housing that offers safety, affordability and security of tenure impacted directly on many of the women's ability to live a life free from violence.

The report included several recommendations to improve women's access to safe and affordability housing. The report was released just after the Commonwealth announced the Housing Stimulus Plan we have continued to advocate for increased access to appropriate housing for women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence. A copy of the report can be downloaded from the Resource Centre website:

<http://www.wrrc.org.au/resources/>

NSW Homelessness Action Plan

In June the NSW Government released the draft NSW Homelessness Framework for consultation. Throughout August and September the WRM Resource Centre attended the Newcastle, Coffs Harbour, Nowra, Sydney and Wagga Wagga consultations for the framework. The Resource Centre also consulted with the Orana Safe Houses at the August regional meeting. We advocated that the Framework should:

- Explicitly acknowledge the key drivers of homelessness such as domestic and family violence and seek to address these drivers. Domestic violence as highlighted by SAAP data has consistently been the most common main reason for seeking SAAP assistance. Addressing domestic violence along with the other drivers will be critical to reducing the number of people homeless.
- Provide mechanisms and incentives to address service system failures that directly lead to women and children becoming homeless
- Provide mechanisms to improve coordination at the local, regional and state level, yet be flexible enough to ensure that responses are able to meet the needs of communities and individuals
- Provide mechanisms to allow for ongoing dialogue between the community and government at the local, regional and state level
- Set targets and performance measures that enables all Stakeholders to measure progress

Following the consultation process the Resource Centre continued to advocate for increased visibility and responses to homelessness driven by domestic and family violence in the NSW Homelessness Action Plan.

The Homelessness Action Plan was released in August 2009 and we continue to work with Government and non-government stake holders to implement the plan.

WRMRC Research

WRM Turn-away Survey 13/10/08 – 26/10/08

In November the Resource Centre emailed a survey to WRM members to collect data on the number of women and children turned away over a two week period in October, from October 13th to October 26th. There were 30 refuges that responded. Of these 13 were from the Sydney metropolitan region and 17 were from regional and rural areas across NSW. 28 refuges for women and children responded and two refuges for women without accompanying children responded.

During the two week period from 13/10/08 to the 26/10/08 refuges were unable to meet requests for crisis accommodation for 592 women and children. In total there were 260 requests for crisis accommodation for women that could not be met, subsequently there were 332 requests for crisis accommodation for accompanying children that could not be met. On average participating refuges for women and children experiencing domestic or family violence turned away 16 women and children during the 2 week collection period¹. The average number unmet requests for women at each refuge during the two week period was 7 and the average number unmet requests for accompanying children turned away from refuges for children was 9.

Of the 30 refuges that responded 5 refuges knew of some women returning violence. From these refuges 2 were from Sydney metropolitan and 3 were from regional or rural areas in NSW. Forty four women and children returned to violence because their requests for crisis accommodation could not be met. The total of 44 included 22 women and 22 children. One regional refuge turned had to turn away 13 women and 10 children who then returned home.

It's not possible for refuges to know of all the women and children that are forced to return to or remain living with violence if they are unable to be accommodated within a refuge. It is therefore likely that many more women and children believed they had no other choice than return to the violence as their requests for crisis accommodation could not met.

Whilst no details of specific cases were provided a significant number of the 30 refuges that responded reiterated grave concerns for women and children that are turned away from refuges and return to the violence, who risk further trauma, injury and even death.

Housing Survey

Following the release of report *The Impact of Housing on the Lives of Women and children – Post domestic Violence Crisis Accommodation* the WRM Resource Centre distributed a questionnaire to refuges and safe houses to examine: the current exit points for women and children from refuges; the refuge's access to social housing stock for clients of their service; the level and nature of partnerships between women's refuges and community housing agencies; and finally the number of woman and children being turned away due to refuges operating at full capacity.

The results from the questionnaire were consistent with the findings from the earlier research undertaken by the NSW WRM with the UWS that found women's access to appropriate housing to be fragmented. A total of 27 refuges completed the questionnaire for the period between September 2008 to February 28th, 2009. From the Housing survey the median percentage of women exiting refuge accommodation into public and community housing stock across the participating refuges was 6% and 7% respectively. The median percentage of women exiting to live with family and friends was 12%; into private rental 15% and returning to live with the perpetrator 10%.

The questionnaire also asked refuges to report on their access to medium term and permanent housing stock for their clients. A total of 19 refuges had access to medium term properties, the total number of medium term properties used by these 19 refuges totaled 89. For these 19 refuges the median number of properties refuges had access to were 3. The majority of these properties were Community Housing stock, with some properties also identified as CAP properties. The refuge that had access to 15 medium term properties reported that these properties were a mix of community and public housing stock. Only 2 refuges had access to permanent housing stock, one refuge had access to 4 permanent properties and the other refuge having access to one.

Most of the medium term/permanent properties that refuges had access to was through partnerships with community housing providers. The total number of properties available through these partnership arrangements was 76. Of the total of 19 refuges that had a community housing partnership the median (average) number of properties available through the partnership were 3. The median number of properties available through a community housing partnership for all 26 refuges that responded to the partnership question was 2.

Of the refuges that had engaged in a partnership with a community housing provider 10 indicated that this partnership involved an arrangement where the community housing provider provided the tenancy management of properties and the refuge provided support to the client. Another 5 partnership arrangements involved the refuge head leasing properties from the community housing provider. Of the remaining three that indicated the type of partnership they had the arrangement involved the community housing organisation giving priority be given to clients of the refuge if there was ongoing support provided by the refuge, however with these arrangements there was no guarantee of access to properties.

NSW Domestic and Family Violence Strategy

During the year the NSW Government has undertaken an extensive consultation process towards the development of a state DFV Strategy. As a member of the Premiers Domestic Violence Prevention Council the NSW WESTNET Rep. has been involved in the development of the Framework for consultation and the consultation process itself.

¹ Average = median

Conference in China

The NSW WESNET Rep. was invited by the Human Rights And Equal Opportunities Commission to travel to China and give a presentation to the All China Women's Federation (ACWF), Civil Affairs and other bureaucrats on 'Domestic Violence Services in NSW. The Conference was organised under an international technical support arrangement between China and Australia. The presentation included:

1. an overview of the Role and History of the New South Wales Women's Refuge Movement, examples of practice, services, management, and client experience in Australia
2. case studies
3. the cycle of domestic violence and the 'power dynamics' central to understanding domestic violence and domestic violence services in Australia;
4. and finally the DVD of New South Wales Women's Refuges produced by Elsie's last year was shown.

The aim of the All China Women's Federation is to 'represent and safeguard women's rights and interests and promote equality between women and men.' Its main tasks in achieving this goal are: uniting and mobilising women to engage in China's reform program;

- educating and offering guidance to women to enhance their overall competence;
- representing women in the formulation of laws and governance and working to safeguard their legitimate rights and interests;
- providing services to women and children and coordinating all sectors to work in the best interests of women and children; and
- enhancing unity amongst women of all nationalities in China and developing friendly exchanges with women of other countries.

Article 5 of the *Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of Women* 1992 establishes a legislative basis for the role and functions of the ACWF. The ACWF operates through a pyramid structure, headed by the central ACWF, with administrative divisions at provincial, municipal and county, township and local level. There are about 60,000 federations at or above the township and neighbourhood level and 980,000 women's representatives' committees and women's committees at the grassroots-level and local level across China.

The ACWF has referred to itself as a non-governmental organisation since 1995. In recent years local women's federations across China have established specialist units to enhance their advocacy activities, working with relevant government units and departments to develop ways to better protect the rights and interests of women and children. Many local women's federations do operate primarily on the basis of the perceived needs of their constituency at a grassroots level. However, the ACWF as an organisation retains a dual role of representing women's interests to government and promoting party policies to women across the country, thereby acting as bridge between women and government. While ACWF has increasingly engaged in advocacy and has been outspoken on ensuring various issues receive high level attention and priorities at central and provincial level governments, the extent to which it can be classified as an NGO as the term is generally understood in the West and elsewhere is disputed.

We visited services that supported women and children experiencing domestic violence. The services were called Aid Stations and provided a range of other supports to people who were homeless and children who were orphaned or had been intercepted during a trafficking. Throughout the trip, many women, made speeches and talked about the problem of domestic violence in China, however the numbers of women, utilising the services were surprisingly low given the population and the purported problem. This could be because the approach appeared to be on reconciling the family and the lack of housing and other options for women to permanently leave their marriage.

WESNET TASMANIAN REPORT

Sandra Nichols
Jireh House, Tasmania

Safe At Home

Tasmania's domestic violence legislation falls under the Family Violence Act 2004. Last year, the Tasmanian WESNET report provided details of the findings from Stage 1 - the review of the legislation. This year, the 2nd stage of the review was completed and released in June 2009.

The findings revealed that there was evidence to suggest that the objectives (see website for objectives of legislation) are being achieved, in part; however, 37 recommendations were made by the reviewers for further improvement.

The most significant of the recommendations are:

- *The adoption of family safety as a unifying paradigm*
- *A strengthened risk management approach by Safe At Home*
- *A Victims Rights Charter for Tasmania*
- *Education programs in Tasmania's schools to assist children and young people to develop healthy and respectful relationships*
- *Support and training to achieve cultural competence by Safe At Home service providers*
- *Improved understanding and recognition of violence against people with disabilities*
- *Case management for victims and offenders in high risk situations*
- *Research into the makeup and needs of male victims and female offenders*
- *Establishment of a Specialist Family Violence Court*
- *Improved support for children appearing in court*
- *Use of specialist family violence prosecutors in family violence matters in the Supreme Court*

A copy of the terms of reference and the review report can be found on the Safe at Home website www.justice.tas.gov.au

My Bond

Most residential tenancies in Tasmania are covered by the Residential Tenancy Act (1997). The Act sets out the regulation around the payment and return of bonds.

From 1st July 2009, the Rental Deposit Authority (RDA) has held bonds on behalf of tenants and property owners/agents. Leases renewed or extended after 1st July 2009 were required to have the bonds lodged with the RDA. Other existing bonds were not affected. Although at times, it has taken longer for women to have bonds returned, it has provided some protection for women from unscrupulous landlords.

The Residential Tenancy Act 1997 and current issues in the residential tenancy market

In November 2009, discussion paper on the Residential Tenancy Act and issues in the residential tenancy market was released. The discussion paper explores issues such as security of tenure, rent increases, accommodation standards and dispute resolution and seeks comments and submissions from the public. The purpose of this paper is to give broad direction to the scope of a discussion about issues relating to the Residential Tenancy Act and the role of the Act in the residential tenancy market.

The Minister is calling for submissions that address the questions raised in this paper. Once submissions have been received and considered, broad policy options will be developed. There will be further consultation and engagement with the community in the development of any specific amendment of the Residential Tenancy Act, or any other actions needed to implement change.

Currently shelters in Tasmania are exempt from the RTA and a submission from all the women's shelters in Tasmania is currently being prepared to support this exemption being continued. Shelter Tasmania is also preparing a response to the submission request.

Quality Management or Continuous Quality Improvement and Quality Futures

The above words have become part of the everyday vernacular of Tasmanian Specialist Homelessness Services. An external review of service providers was conducted last year and a written final report provided to individual services. A detailed Work Plan was prepared for, submitted to and accepted by Quality Management Services for the majority of service providers.

However the Office for the Community Sector has indicated that Organisations must achieve compliance with the Fundamental Elements of the Standards within the Quality and Safety Standards Framework for Tasmania's Agency Funded Community Sector 2009-2012 under Quality Futures. This requirement is in the new Funding Agreement, therefore at this point in time, we are waiting for clarification and direction from the Department whether to continue with the QMS Work Plan or complete the Quality Futures workbook. Either way, all service providers will continue the Quality Improvement journey!

Unmet Demand

All of Tasmania's women's shelters have experienced an increase in unmet demands over the last 12 months. Exit points remain difficult to obtain given that Centrelink is the main source of income for the majority of clients. They are unable to afford to join the private rental market and public housing waiting lists are still long.

Mental health, cigarettes, alcohol, prescription and illicit drugs continue to be issues many Clients have when they enter shelter accommodation. It has been difficult, at times, to support clients with these issues. There has also been an increase in the number of women without status seeking accommodation over the last 12 months. However, sector reform has identified the necessity for Government and Non Government services to work together for positive client outcomes.

Training

Staff Training has continued to be somewhat of an issue for the sector this year. The lack of suitable training from Esset Australia has forced services to source training elsewhere. Several other service providers including SHS and HACC participated in a mid contract external review of the services provided by Esset Australia. Shelter Tasmania has requested that the findings of the review be made available throughout the Sector. The Department to provide training specific to the Domestic Violence Sector. It is pleasing to report that Shelter Tas. have organised the first of these training sessions to begin this month.

Gateway

During 2009, Tasmania saw the introduction of Gateway Services. 'The aim of Gateway Services is to provide a single, well publicised access point for individuals, agencies, services, and other professionals such as teachers, community agencies and general practitioners to refer clients for services and to obtain information and advice in relation to family support and specialist disability services'.

Women's shelters in Tasmania have been encouraged to refer women and children to the service in the appropriate region, however, there has been a few issues in regard to the implementation of this program and several services have reported that a number of their referrals have not been followed up – either at all or in a timely manner.

Prior to the Gateway Services being introduced in Tasmania, Centacare had received SAAP funding to pilot a **C.H.I.L.D (Children & Homelessness, Intervention, Learning and Development) (State-wide)** program. The core focus of this program was to support children in families who are homeless. Referrals were received only from SAAP services and each child was supported in an evidence based case management approach which provided holistic support in the family context. Given that domestic violence is the main driver of homelessness in Australia, this program was particularly suited to women's shelters. It provided long term opportunities for referred families to increase parenting capacity and liaise with schools, health professionals, sporting groups, community networks and family networks to improve child outcomes.

Although the CHILD program had widespread support, funding was not available to continue the program once the pilot project had been completed.

WESNET INCORPORATED
ABN 16 068 548 631

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2009

COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Your Committee Members submit the financial report of WESNET Incorporated for the financial year ended 30 June 2009.

Committee Members

The names of Committee Members throughout the year and at the date of this report are:

Name	Position
Pauline Woodbridge	Chairperson
Richel Malouf	ACT Representative
Cat Gander	NSW Representative
Dale Wakefield	NT Representative
Lindy Edwards	QLD Representative
Vicki Lachlan	SA Representative
Sandra Nichols	TAS Representative
Julie Oberin	VIC Representative
Kedy Kristal	Treasurer, WA Representative
Shirley Slann	Indigenous Representative
Jane Corpuz-Brock	NESB Representative

Principal Activities

During the year the Association provided Women's services in Australia dealing with violence against women and related issues. 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.

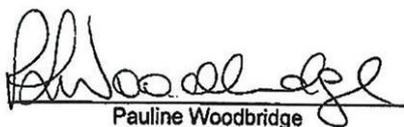
Significant Changes

No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the year.

Operating Result

The surplus of the Association for the period amounted to \$52,535 (2008: \$1,784 surplus).

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Members of the Committee:


Pauline Woodbridge


Kedy Kristal

Dated this

16th

day of

November, 2009

**WESNET INCORPORATED
ABN 16 068 548 631**

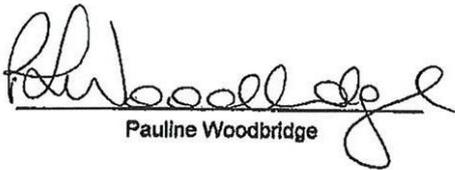
FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2008

STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

In the opinion of the Committee the financial report as set out on pages 3 to 18:

1. Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of WESNET Incorporated as at 30 June 2009 and its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (including Australian Accounting Interpretations) of the Australian Accounting Standards Board.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that WESNET Incorporated will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:


Pauline Woodbridge


Kedy Kristal

Dated this 16th

Day of November 2009

**INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT TO
THE MEMBERS OF WESNET INCORPORATED**

Report on the Financial Report

We have audited the accompanying financial report of WESNET Incorporated (the association) which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2009 and the income statement, statement of recognised income and expenditure and cash flow statement for the year ended on that date, a summary of significant accounting policies, other explanatory notes and the statement by members of the committee.

Matters Relating to the Electronic Presentation of the Audited Financial Report

This auditors report relates to the financial report of WESNET Incorporated for the year ended 30 June 2009 included on the Association's website. The Association's Committee Members are responsible for the integrity of the Association's website. We have not been engaged to report on the integrity of the Association's website. The auditors report refers only to the statements named above. It does not provide an opinion on any other information, which may have been hyperlinked to/from these statements.

If users of this report are concerned with the inherent risks arising from electronic data communications, they are advised to refer to the hard copy of the audited financial report to confirm the information included in the audited financial report presented on this website.

Committee's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The committee of the association is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the Associations Incorporation Act (ACT) 1991. This responsibility includes designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

Di Bartolo Diamond & Mihailaros

An Australian Capital Territory Partnership



Chartered Accountants
& Business Advisers

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Independence

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of Australian professional ethical pronouncements.

Audit Opinion

In our opinion:

The financial report of WESNET Incorporated is in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act (ACT) 1991 including:

- i. giving a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30 June 2009 and of its performance and its cash flows for the year ended on that date; and
- ii. complying with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the Associations Incorporation Act (ACT) 1991.

PKF – Di Bartolo Diamond & Mihailaros

Level 7, 28 University Avenue

Canberra City ACT 2601

Ross Di Bartolo

Partner

Dated:

16.11.09

Tel: 02 6257 7500 | Fax: 02 6257 7599 | www.pkf.com.au
Level 7, 28 University Ave | Canberra City | ACT 2601
GPO Box 588 | Canberra City | ACT 2601

PARTNERS:

Ross Di Bartolo B.A (Accounting). FCA

George Diamond B.Ec. FCA

John Mihailaros B.Comm (Accounting). CA

WESNET INCORPORATED
DETAILED PROFIT AND LOSS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2009

	2009	2008
	\$	\$
INCOME		
Grant Funding	644,294	-
Interest Received	26,269	3,518
Membership Fees	31,800	35,800
Other Income	481	2
Publication Sales	<u>160</u>	<u>664</u>
TOTAL INCOME	<u><u>703,004</u></u>	<u><u>39,984</u></u>
LESS EXPENSES		
Audit Fees	3,505	990
CBG Payment of Offers	493,375	-
Communications	2,847	-
Consultancy Fees	48,160	1,600
Content Migration	2,500	-
Depreciation	1,178	730
Employment Costs	21,581	16,879
Evaluation	6,400	-
Honorarium	27,250	-
Insurance	2,584	914
Interest	3,160	-
Postage	878	837
Printing and Stationery	1,914	1,403
Provisions for Future Expenses	(16,727)	12,472
Travel Related	30,076	-
Web Design & Forum Set Up	11,377	-
Other expenditure from ordinary activities	<u>10,411</u>	<u>2,373</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u><u>650,469</u></u>	<u><u>38,198</u></u>
OPERATING SURPLUS/(LOSS)	<u><u>52,535</u></u>	<u><u>1,784</u></u>