

WESNET

Women's Services Network



Annual Report

2012-13

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Our Members

Our members, Australia's domestic and family violence services, are a service system of complex service delivery organisations that are specialists in assisting women experiencing or escaping domestic and family violence. Our members include:

- Women's refuges/shelters
- Halfway houses
- Safe houses
- Women's medium-term housing schemes
- Information and referral services
- Sexual assault services
- Outreach services.
- Counselling services
- Advocacy services
- Indigenous services
- Immigrant, refugee and non-English speaking background services
- Other women's services

The models of domestic and family violence services in Australia are diverse. They range from single communal shelters to multi-building cluster models of self-contained units with counselling rooms, children's resource buildings, playgrounds, and group or training rooms; to shop fronts in busy shopping centres servicing dispersed houses throughout the community; to large purpose built facilities in remote areas; to lone outreach workers working out of other organisations. They may be a crisis phone service that also provides crisis accommodation, a community development worker, a counsellor, a networker, a children's worker, or a worker in an isolated community with little support. They may specialise in certain disadvantaged groups of women and children in their community.

Vision

That all women and children live free from domestic and family violence and its consequences.

Purpose

WESNET is a national women's peak advocacy body that facilitates and promotes policy, legislative and programmatic responses relevant to women and children who have experienced domestic and family violence.

WESNET advances responses which:

- ensure the safety of women and children,
- empower them to live free of violence, and
- improve the social, political and economic status of women.

WESNET works within a feminist framework which promotes an understanding of domestic and family violence as gendered violence.

In addition, WESNET acknowledges that women and children's experiences are also intrinsically shaped by their ethnicity, culture, ability, age, sexuality and class and that gender inequality intersects in complex ways with other social inequalities and forms of oppression.

Goals

1. Represent and support Members in the important work they do.
2. Promotion of the prevention of domestic and family violence.
3. Continue to strengthen our viability and relevance as a peak body.
4. Contribute to and monitor policies, legislation and programs which impact on women and children experiencing domestic and family violence.

Committee Members 2012-13

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women

Casual Vacancy

Immigrant, Refugee and non-English speaking background Women

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The WESNET National Committee is comprised of twelve women who volunteer their time and expertise to further our work in our sector to eliminate violence against women. Drawn from every State and Territory in Australia, they are grassroots service managers, direct service workers, counsellors, trainers, peer educators, researchers and expert advisers. They are supported by and draw from their extensive networks. These women, along with other women in the domestic and family violence sector across the country, are Australian experts in various aspects of domestic and family violence. They are experts in policy and legislative frameworks, evaluation and what constitutes 'good practice'. They are fully conversant with 'good practice' discourse and programs in each of their States and Territories. On the Committee there are also delegates for immigrant, refugee and non-English speaking background women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and older women.

Committee Reports

National Chair

Julie Oberin

The domestic and family violence sector across Australia is in varying degrees experiencing increased demand for our services, shrinking budgets and major, often multiple reforms. We are seeing escalating violence against women and girls in some areas, increased reporting by women, and in some places, particularly in remote areas, extreme violent incidents continue. At least one woman a week is murdered in Australia by an intimate or former intimate partner. Despite the problem continuing, and the major reforms underway, the domestic and family violence specialist service sector continues to improve services, raise awareness and work on early intervention and the prevention of violence against women and girls.

Women from immigrant, refugee and non-English speaking backgrounds continue to be further marginalised when experiencing gender based violence. In this report, Jane Corpuz-Brock talks about the small but important positive steps in successfully advocating for changes to evidentiary requirements for the Family Law Provisions in the Immigration Act. She also talks about the 1 Billion Rising phenomenon and school children 'flash mobbing' to highlight the issue. The AMARWA and NIRWA National Conference on the Elimination of Violence against CALD women was well attended and focused on issues such as forced and servile marriage, trafficking and female genital mutilation/cutting. Women from CALD backgrounds with disabilities are a particularly disadvantaged and marginalised group of women. Jane talks about the importance of Australia ratifying the Migrant Worker Convention so that migrant women workers on 457 visas who are experiencing family and domestic violence can have equitable access to services. The "Empty Shoes" campaign symbolically representing women who have died from Intimate Partner Homicide would have been a powerful reminder that approximately one woman a week dies in Australia at the hands of her intimate partner who is almost always a man.

As the "Baby Boomers" age, we know that older women are going to become more disenfranchised from society, particularly if they have experienced domestic or family violence or sexual assault during their life span. The consequences on physical and mental health and confidence, along with other structural issues such as low superannuation, marginalised workforce participation due to part time and casualised work often disrupted by child rearing, discrimination and living longer than men are

evidenced. These women will increasingly be needing supports and Pauline Woodbridge outlines in this report that there needs to be a shift in thinking from some of the service sector about older people and how we respond to them.

Services in the ACT saw massive funding cuts this year which according to Carol Benda's report had particular impact on children's and young people's services. The impact of these cuts to funding will be borne out over coming months, years and generations. Despite these cuts to essential services, the community sector held the Summer of Respect campaign focusing on sexual violence, and the important Partners in Prevention function promoting business and departmental partners to participate in their own way in preventing violence against women. The year saw strong representation from Women with Disabilities ACT calling for the ACT government to ensure data disaggregation by sex and disability is recorded.

NSW is also experiencing significant reforms in the domestic and family violence sector as well as Transitional Housing Rent reform. Changes to Victims Compensation in NSW resulted in DVNSW, WESNET, AWAVA and their members becoming a signatory to a complaint submitted to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Professor Rashida Manjoo. (Refer to Tracy Howes report for the link to the complaint).

DVNSW's submission on Child Protection reform highlights issues felt by our sector in other states and territories. It is counterproductive to continue to focus on punitive measures against mothers for 'failing to protect' their children from their fathers. It is counterproductive to not understand the nature of domestic and family violence and sexual abuse in families and to not provide the necessary supports for the victims/survivors and to hold the perpetrator accountable for his actions.

2012 saw the emergence of the NSW Women's Alliance bringing together NSW peak women's organisations and state-wide services working to prevent sexual, domestic and family violence.

Dale Wakefield reports that the NT is the only jurisdiction to still provide an implementation plan to the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and Children. However, importantly domestic and family violence services were quarantined from Territory budget cuts, but sexual assault services in Darwin were cut. This is hard to fathom given demand and the fact that the Royal Commission had just started. Dale talks about the huge challenge remote services and remote communities constantly face when staff and service locations are known given the

extreme levels of violence these communities experience.

Jacinta Atkins talks about the Front Door into Housing reforms in Tasmania, and WESP's advocacy resulting in domestic violence specialist positions being implemented for clients accessing the 'Front Door'. After noticing little media on the issue of domestic violence cases, WESP members took action to highlight the extent of domestic violence in that state by holding candlelight vigils. This resulted in significant media reporting on the issue. Tasmania will also be introducing a new data base tool and WESP have worked hard to advocate for the confidentiality and safety of women experiencing domestic violence in its development.

Vicki Lachlan reports on the uncertainty NAHA funded services faced when their contracts were only renewed for one year. South Australia has introduced a Family Safety Framework and strengthened their information sharing guidelines to help prevent domestic murder and domestic and family violence. Along with enhanced risk assessment tools, a 'gateway to service' has been introduced to enhance client pathways to the right service response. It will be interesting to see the result of the fast tracking of reports to the Child Abuse Report Line from domestic and family violence services.

Margaret Augerinos reports on multiple reviews and reforms occurring in Victoria simultaneously, potentially resulting in significant change for the sector. DVVic is working with the domestic and family violence sector (Rising to the Case for Change) to explore better ways of responding to and preventing violence against women and children. The Family Violence Death Review report highlighted important findings on risk factors. And the EVA Media Awards were again a hit and important part of improving media reporting, raising awareness and contributing to primary prevention.

WA has seen the mapping of domestic and family violence services aimed to review and improve responses and integration. The report found that many marginalised groups of women were still facing barriers to accessing appropriate services.

The Case Management and Coordination Services have been replaced with Family and Domestic Violence Response Team, an early intervention approach following police call outs, and including multi agency safety planning.

Kedy Kristal points out in this report some positive reforms in WA with the introduction of 5 year service agreements, joint development of outcome based services, reduced non-administrative red tape, a new legal service for Indigenous women, and 2 new refuges in metro Perth and one in Busselton.

Last year we had no nominations for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander position on the Committee. Consequently the Committee declared the position a

casual vacancy and we have called for expressions of interest on our website and through our members.

As I write this report I reflect that I am a woman, a mother, a sister, an auntie, a partner, a service provider, an advocate, an activist, and as a survivor of domestic violence and sexual assaults I am not going to talk about women as if they are 'others'. One in 3 of us has experienced physical violence. 85% of these 1 in 3 women are assaulted by a current or former partner, family, friend or known male and ¾ of these physical assaults occurred in the woman's home¹.

Domestic and family violence is the leading contributor to death, disability and illness in women aged 15 to 44 years. It is responsible for more of the disease burden in women than many well-known risk factors such as smoking and obesity².

Almost 1 in 5 women has experienced sexual assault. 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused in some way before the age of 18 years. Most of these by someone they know. Many of these are abused in their home³.

We only have to look at the gendered nature of homelessness in Australia. 59% of people supported in specialist homelessness services are female⁴. Each year 1 in 42 women aged 15-24 will access a specialist homelessness service⁵.

Domestic and family violence is the number one reason why people present to specialist homelessness services with 55% of females citing this reason, and a total of 25% of all clients⁶.

Women experience inequality based on their gender. This is a fact across the globe and here in Australia, the lucky country.

As the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls recently said:

*"[Violence against women is] reaching epidemic proportions...if this was a medical disease, a state of emergency would be declared globally"*⁷

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Personal Safety Survey Australia 2005* (Reissue), Catalogue no. 49060 (2006) Canberra Australia.

² The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, (2004), *The Health Costs of Violence: Measuring the burden of disease caused by intimate partner violence*, Melbourne, p. 8.

³ Australian Institute of Criminology (1993)

⁴ AIHW (2012) *Specialist Homelessness Services Data Collection March Quarter 2012*.

⁵ AIHW (2012) *Specialist Homelessness Services Data Collection March Quarter 2012*.

⁶ AIHW (2012) *Specialist Homelessness Services Data Collection March Quarter 2012*.

⁷ *Special Rapporteur on violence against women its causes and consequences, Professor Rashida Manjoo, March 2013*⁷

Gender inequality intersects in complex ways with other social inequalities such as ethnicity, culture, class, ability and sexuality. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 35 times more likely to be a victim of domestic or family violence at the same time as they experience the aftermath of colonisation and ongoing oppression, disadvantage, marginalisation and discrimination.

As we know, these groups intersect. As Pauline Woodbridge outlines in her report, older women are another marginalised group which we will see a lot more of as the large demographic cohort of baby boomers, age. These women are more likely to have been casualised or part-time in the workforce, out of the paid workforce undertaking caring roles, forced out of the workforce early due to discrimination or poor health, these women have less or no superannuation and savings, they face discrimination in gaining or regaining employment and in the housing market, they may be widowed, in poor health due to the violence and abuse they have experienced across their lifespan, from their journey from girl-child to older woman⁸.

Young women are more likely to be homeless as a result of domestic and family violence and sexual abuse. Young women are extremely vulnerable to ongoing violence and sexual abuse after they enter the homelessness service system. Team this with poor mental health as a consequence of the abuse and they become extremely at risk.

Women with disabilities are particularly vulnerable and marginalised and are overrepresented in all of the main social determinants that increase the risk of homelessness. These include unemployment and underemployment, inadequate income and poverty, domestic and family violence including violence and abuse from carers, discrimination, exclusion, poor health and of course disability and their gender⁹. This is not helped by the continued lack of secure affordable housing. Even though there have been improvements they are not happening fast enough and still not enough housing has full disability access and appropriateness. New research shows that women with disabilities experience more violence, for longer periods, from more perpetrators. This is a travesty.

The United Nations Commission for the Status of Women 57th Session Agreements this year include this statement:

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- Nation states must:
- “Take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social, educational and other measures to protect and promote the rights of women and girls with disabilities as they are more vulnerable to all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse,

including in the workplace, educational institutions, the home, and other settings”

Women from immigrant, refugee and non-English speaking backgrounds are an increasing group accessing specialist homelessness services. Women who have experienced early and forced marriage and are escaping violence will increasingly appear in women’s refuges and other services. Women on temporary visas who have been brought here for what can only be described as forced or coerced domestic, sexual and labour servitude, reluctantly access our services when they have nowhere else to turn, women who are victims of violence, abuse and trafficking.

So how are the Road Home and the National Plan to reduce violence against women and girls going? We have heard about the “welfarisation” of young people. Well systematic and entrenched male violence against women also causes the “welfarisation” of women and their children into the homelessness service system. Women, just like me, you, the women you know, our mothers, our sisters and our daughters are abused, terrorised, controlled, eroded, and maintained in a state of fear. Without really focusing on primary prevention and the necessary early intervention that we need to happen, many of these women and their children are forced into the homelessness service system, into poverty, isolation, exclusion, unstable housing, stigma and shame and eroding physical and mental health.

I have cautioned previously that women and their children who experience domestic and family violence were in danger of falling through the gap between The Road Home and the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children.

There are some great innovations being undertaken in many different parts of Australia, responsive to local contexts and designed to meet specific needs. Many of these programs are funded under the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness - in all of its instability. These, sometimes quite small projects, showcase what can be done with investment in creative solutions to complex problems. They also remind us how important the National Partnership is for reducing homelessness driven by domestic or family violence, and how intrinsically it is linked with meeting the objectives of the *National Plan*, and in turn, our international obligations. However it is not ok to destabilise the momentum of the specialist homelessness service systems response by not providing secure long term investment for services so that good services can continue to build and the sector can retain specialised staff who know they have a job in 2 months time.

The *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children* is now in its second stage and must not lose its momentum. The *National Plan* is the primary measure against which the Australian Government reports to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women on its progress in addressing and preventing violence against women. Achieving the

⁸ McFerran, L. (2009) *It could be you: Older, Female, Single and Homeless* (full citation needed).

⁹ WWDA (2008) *Shut Out, Hung Out, Left Out, Missing Out*, (need full citation)

National Plan's vision requires sustained investment by governments, Commonwealth, States and Territories irrespective of political persuasion.

Barriers that exist for many particularly vulnerable groups of women remain a significant challenge for Australia. These women are at increased risk of violence and typically experience multiple barriers to redress. Preventing and addressing violence for these groups of women remain some of the most challenging and complex areas that demand our collective attention.

The advanced, un-edited version of the United Nations Agreed Conclusions (C) (ddd) demonstrate the importance of strengthening multi-sectoral responses and addressing the housing needs of women and girls experiencing violence: the conclusions state that national states must provide

*"...specialist services as appropriate, State and independent women's shelters and...public housing services to provide low threshold, easy to reach and safe assistance for women and children, as well as assistance, protection and support through access to long-term accommodation"*¹⁰

There is still disconnection between the Road home and the National Plan.

It is important to also talk about primary prevention and service responses in difficult times. Community awareness raising is not the same as primary prevention. Community awareness raises demand for overstretched services who already have increasing turn away. It is necessary but not sufficient. Raising demand for domestic and family violence services actually causes more risk for women and children seeking help and support as they speak out or leave the relationship.

One in two people who request immediate accommodation are turned away each night due to high demand and under-resourcing, and a majority of these people are women and their children. Most of the children are under four.

Our sector has reported that it has found the progress of the National Plan frustrating. The implementation plan for the first three year action plan was published only 9 months before the end of the three year term. We see in Dale Wakefield's report that the NT is still to develop and release their state/territory level implementation plan. Progress is slow. Some are regressing. In the ACT women's refuges and other providers have faced huge cuts. One women's refuge is reported to have faced a 45% cut. QLD services face efficiency cuts. Valuable services such as Sisters in Side have been defunded, as have QLD Working Women Centres and Tenancy Advice Services with the Commonwealth picking up the tab. Whilst NT shelters have some growth funds to address increased

demand, and WA has two new refuges in Perth and one in Busselton, other refuges, domestic violence services and women's homelessness services across the country, in the main, are being squeezed.

The Respectful Relationships programs rolled out in schools are not being evaluated against how well they are educating about gender and other social inequalities. Many "primary prevention" activities are missing the mark due to focusing only on respectful relationships and community awareness of violence against women, rather than the real issues of gender inequality and how that intersects with other social inequalities.

So how do we plan for the future? An independent monitoring and evaluation framework is finally being developed for the National Plan. This should have been put in place at the onset, but better late than never. The National Plan Implementation Panel advisory groups are yet to be established – more than 3 years on. However the new Minister assisting the Prime Minister for Women, Senator Michaelia Cash has expressed strong support for the National Plan and in expediting the setting up of the NPIP advisory groups.

Minister Cash is also supportive of AWAVA's work and keen to have a close involvement with AWAVA's work plan. WESNET as lead agency brings together 19 peak bodies and networks to form AWAVA, the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance, one of the 6 commonwealth funded National Women's Alliances. WESNET is very proud to oversee this work and the important advice it harnesses and delivers on all forms of violence against women.

WESNET also continues to provide Australian Safety Net training to those working in the violence against women field. This important training exposes how technology can be used to harass, stalk and threaten women but also how it can be used to provide evidence of this abuse.

Under the National Plan we do have the newly establishing National Centre of Excellence, the jewel in the National Plan's crown, and the women's anti-violence sector looks forward to its work and working closely with it. We also have a new organisation focusing on primary prevention against women and their children Chaired by former Democrat Leader Natasha Stott Despoja. Our sector is also looking forward to working closely with this new important Foundation. We look forward to supporting its development and work in redressing the human rights violation of violence against women and their children.

Violence against women will cost the Australian economy \$15.6 billion per year by 2021 – 2022 unless effective action is taken to prevent this violence¹¹. The

¹⁰http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/csw57/CSW57_agreed_conclusions_advance_unedited_version_18_March_2013.pdf

¹¹ The National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children (2009), *The Cost of Violence Against Women and Their Children*, Department of Families,

health impacts on women is now known. The impacts on children is now known. The relationship between violence against women and homelessness is now known. The relationship between domestic and family violence and child abuse is also well known.

It is important that all governments heed the potential impact on our service system of constant and major reforms and not put at risk small and medium sized community based agencies which have been working tirelessly and effectively in their communities for years. It is important to not view the women's domestic and family violence sector as a secondary or tertiary service response only without recognising the important community awareness, capacity building, and primary prevention work they do. It is important to not lose three decades of cumulative specialist knowledge and practice wisdom from the women's specialist domestic and family violence sector, women's sexual assault sector, women's health sector, migrant women's services, women's disability services, women's housing services, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's services and women's legal services.

It is absolutely critical to focus on the primary prevention of violence against women. This can only be done by reducing structural inequalities based on gender, social, cultural, economic, and political inequalities – and how they all intersect in complex ways. It can only be done by increasing women's access to education, meaningful employment, economic and health well-being and political participation. It can only be done by keeping women and children safe in the meantime, holding perpetrators to account and applying social sanctions on violence supporting attitudes and behaviours.

We need to change the sexist, demeaning attitudes, values and beliefs about women pervasive throughout our society which hold up violence and abuse of women. Physical violence is simply the pointy end of these values and beliefs.

This is the hard work as our tendency is to focus on pathologies of individuals and the bad behaviour of some men. Some even blame the women.

It is hard work because it makes us look inward at our very own relationships and families. But we must take the difficult road.

It is only with a sustained, comprehensive, coordinated, strategic effort and commitment over the long term with political will and investment from all jurisdictions that we can look forward to successful social change.

At the 57th Session of the United Nations Commission for the Status of Women we heard that the most vulnerable person on our planet today is the girl-child. Let's put a stop to that here in Australia for a start.



Immigrant, Refugee and Non-English Speaking Background Women

Jane Corpus-Brock

Reforms on the Family Violence Provisions (FVP): Changes to FVP evidentiary requirements

In mid-2012 the Immigrant Women's Speakout Association (Speakout/IWSA) and the NESB DV Network is more determined than ever to make changes to the Family Violence Provisions (FVP) to reduce the hardships of those accessing the regulations. Many of the women who have come through Speakout/IWSA's doors need assistance with accessing FVP, so our caseworkers know firsthand the difficulties they face. Speakout/IWSA met with Chris Bowen, the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship. We met with Minister Bowen on two occasions to discuss the challenges women face when they access FVP. Our years of experience and from the involvement of women from our networks, in particular the NESB DV Network and WESNET, Speakout/IWSA successfully advocated for changes to evidentiary requirements for FVP, which came into effect on the 24th November 2012. These changes are one small step in the right direction, but Speakout/IWSA will keep working with our partners to make FVP fair, accessible and client-centric. The NESB DV Network affiliates, WESNET and AWAVA supported in amplifying this campaign in their meetings and discussions with politicians and policy advisers with government.

Highlights

One Billion Rising

On 14th February, over 250 women and men joined "One Billion Rising" in Parramatta to call for an end to violence against women around the world. IWSA and other local groups and individuals came together to protest against the pattern of abuse which is captured on the statistics that say: 1 in 3 women will be beaten or raped in her lifetime. The crowd assembled outside Parramatta Town Hall to dance to 'Isang Bilyon' the One Billion Rising song of the Philippines. The song urged women and men to break free of violence and rise up from the ground to stand in solidarity with all those who say No to violence against women and children. Participants said that through the flash-mob dance they bring the message to the community: "Now is the time for women and men to take action and demand an end to violence and rape against women and children. The events in New Delhi, India, Steubenville, Ohio and other places are an alarming reflection of the statistics and it's time for us to

challenge laws, institutions, and individuals who allow or commit violence against women. "One Billion Rising" is about recognising these struggles and working for change so women and children will be safe.

There were 50 high school students from the Arthur Phillip High School in Parramatta who joined the flash-mob dance. Community workers from women's services in Western Sydney, employees of the Parramatta City Council, NSW Attorney-General's Department, Legal Aid Commission, women's organisations, such as Asian Women at Work, Turkish Women's Group, other organisations and bystanders stepped in and swayed their arms and stomped their feet with the music.

International Women's Day

On the 9th of March hundreds of women, men and children joined the International Women's Day march in Sydney CBD. The march began at noon, winding from Town Hall toward Circular Quay where the crowd assembled again to hear speeches, watch performances, and did the flash-mob dance again for One Billion Rising. Immigrant Women's Speakout Association and its member organisations Asian Women at Work and the Philippines-Australia Women's Association and others attended the event to join in representing the culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and groups of Sydney.

Tara Moss, Canadian-born and Sydney-based model, writer and popular novelist joined the celebration at Town Hall. Ms Moss had spoken about the International Women's Day 2013 theme of ending violence against women. She urged the gathering to remember women who are victims of domestic homicide and violence, and for the community to keep speaking up about the issues.

WESNET NESB Representative, Jane Brock was one of the speakers at the rally. She has emphasised that "International Women's Day is about celebrating the successes and achievements of women throughout history, as well as the achievements of everyday women – including those made by women of CALD background. Some migrant women on temporary partner and spousal visas have been trafficked or abused by their partners, but continue to show resilience and strength. We remember and celebrate those women today."

Family Picnic and Stories of Resilience

On 10th March, Speakout/IWSA also gathered with locals in Parramatta Park to celebrate International Women's Day in Western Sydney. Women and men attended the speeches and picnic to share and hear one another's success stories and celebrate the ladies in their lives. One CALD woman shared her story of experiencing and overcoming domestic violence in Australia, emphasising the importance of community support in her journey. Speakout/IWSA continues to work with migrant women who experience domestic violence in NSW.

National Conference on Elimination of Violence Against CALD Women

NIRWA (Network of Immigrant and Refugee Women Australia) and the Australian Migrant and Refugee Women's Alliance (AMaRWA) co-organised the "Stand Up!" - Conference for the elimination of violence against Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) women on 29-30 April 2013 in Canberra. It was estimated that 250 women and men attended the conference.

Forced and servile marriages came out strongly in many workshop discussions as well as the issues on criminal justice system and community responses. Other concerns raised were violence against CALD women with disabilities and from Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex communities.

WESNET NESB representative and Speakout/IWSA Executive Officer, Jane Brock, also spoke in a workshop on Family Violence and Immigration issues. Concerns were raised around the availability of services for women on partner visas with temporary residency and bridging visas. Workshop participants called for improved access to Centrelink crisis payments for all women escaping domestic violence. Also, Immigrant Women's Speakout Association Management Committee member, Aurelia Gallardo, presented a paper on a study exploring the sexual experiences of women with disabilities within their complex social environment.

Campaign for Australian Ratification of the Migrant Workers Convention

NIRWA has been holding activities to promote the Australian ratification of the Migrant Workers Convention. Included in the discussions about the convention is the issue on equity and access to services in particular for migrant workers who are temporary residents and are on 457 visas, and are experiencing family and domestic violence. The campaign has used a postcard printed with the text: "215 Million reasons to support migrant workers' rights" and a letter in plain language printed on the back of the postcard urging the Prime Minister and government to sign and ratify the convention.

The campaign was launched in New South Wales on 17th June 2013 at the Bankstown Roundhouse jointly organised by Immigrant Women's Speakout Association and Asian Women At Work. On that day immigrant and refugee women and their families attended the launch and enjoyed face-painting and balloon sculpturing for the kids and a nutritious meal.

Future Direction

Empty Shoes Installations – campaign to end Homicide by Intimate Partner

In Australia, more than one fifth of all homicides occur between intimate partners (also known as Intimate Partner Homicide – IPH). This means that there are roughly 76 homicides involving intimate partners every year. Men are the perpetrators and women are the victims in over three quarters of these homicides. In light of the call to end Homicide by Intimate Partner, Speakout/IWSA and affiliates of the DV NESB Network will hold "Empty Shoes" campaign in various suburbs in Sydney in December 2012.

The Empty Shoes Project aims to educate people about domestic violence by talking about 'domestic violence homicide' at the running of the installations. The project is co-ordinated by the NESB DV Network together with Speakout/IWSA. This project includes a public installation, distribution of educational flyers and a website (currently in development). The public installation is composed of pairs of shoes, personal artefacts and story cards, clustered together to represent the lives of women, children and others who have been killed in domestic violence homicide. Viewers of the installation are encouraged to recognise the warning signs of an increased risk of domestic violence homicide and to seek help for themselves or their friends.

Australian Ratification of the Migrant Workers Convention

NIRWA will intensify its campaign calling on the Australian government to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrants Workers and Members of Their Families. It is hoped that the campaign momentum will pick up as each NIRWA State member organisation organise launches with the signing of the Postcard as take off point. NIRWA is asking the Australian public to sign the postcard and share their voice, or just provide a name and signature, to support the '215 Million Reasons – the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families' and send to the office of the Prime Minister.

Older Women

Pauline Woodbridge

As I attend networks and events around my region, it seems that Housing workers are talking about clients having a sense of entitlement without a sense of responsibility, that the welfare client groups are coming from a strong rights agenda with the expectation that the service sector will/must provide, with little effort needed by the client. Stories of abusive behaviour towards service providers are emerging; examples of social housing being trashed, unpaid debt, difficulty with engagement with the clients in housing services and a range of other issues around complex client need seem to be emerging more strongly. Many older homeless people lack the capacity to plan for their own welfare or make decisions in their own best interest. One worker described his work with older homeless men as 'palliative care' due to the very poor health status of the men he works with. Although the experience of older women who have been a victim of domestic or family violence is not described above, it seems that the sector work to assist the most disadvantaged people in our communities is finding itself operating in a different environment.



Highlights of 2012-13

In May 2013 WESNET members held a Talking Circle at the Homelessness Summit held in Sydney. The discussion was wide ranging and covered topics such as new and emerging trends such as the increase of older single women with a past history of domestic violence whose children have grown and left home and the women are now living in poverty. They face an added problem with getting suitable affordable housing. NSW and Qld services report seeing an increase in older women who are homeless and living in their car. This was a well attended and lively discussion with reports on innovation, partnerships, the impact of Government policies, etc from reps from all States or Territory except NT.

Future Direction

All the States and Territories as well as Commonwealth funded service sectors are undergoing massive change. In some cases it is hard to see what the future directions will mean and others are already dealing with changed conditions and policies. Ensuring the survival of the grass roots, community based sector is an important focus as we assess the opportunities, threats and risks

Australian Capital Territory

Carol Benda

ACT Women's Services Network

The ACT Women's Services Network is a network of women's services and organisations that exist to provide support to women in the local (and in some cases regional) Canberra community. The purpose of the network is to provide a peak forum for women to share information, to develop responses on common issues for women and to progress the work on those common issues.

Members

- ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS)
- Beryl Women Inc.
- Canberra Rape Crisis Centre (CRCC)
- Domestic Violence Crisis Service
- Doris Women's Refuge
- Inanna Inc
- Karinya House
- Multicultural Women's Advocacy
- The ACT Office for Women
- Toora Women Inc
- Women's Centre for Health Matters Inc (WCHM)
- Women And Prisons Group (WAP)
- The ACT Women's Health Service
- Women's Information and Referral Centre (WIRC)
- Women's Legal Centre
- Women with Disabilities ACT (WWDACT)
- YWCA of Canberra

Overview of changes/reforms since 11/12

Funding Cuts to women's housing/homelessness services

In 2009 the Australian Government revised funding allocations made to states and territories in the National Affordable Housing Agreement. The ACT was advised that funding would be reduced by \$5.9m as of July 2015. In May 2013, the ACT Government announced that it would be passing on \$3.6m in funding cuts, rather than the full \$5.9m cut by the Australian Government.

When the final funding offers were made, the majority of the funding cuts have been borne by services that specialise in responding to the needs of children, young people and adults living with the impacts of trauma (mostly gender specific services offering a model of care that allow gender segregated support and housing options).

The ACT Women's Services Network worked closely with ACTCOSS on a submission to Government in response to the funding offers which highlighted some key concerns such as:

- This funding offer, if implemented in its current form, will lead to many essential services stopping and will compromise the capacity of the ACT to reduce homelessness.
- There has been insufficient consideration across the whole of the ACT Government of the negative impacts of funding cuts on people who access the relevant programs, and the need to find a sustainable approach to resourcing services that support people who live with the impacts of trauma and/or do not have a safe, stable, secure home.
- Reduced capacity in gender specific services will lead to some people delaying access to services, which will increase the harm experienced prior to seeking support and result in more complex needs once people do present to services.
- There has been insufficient consideration across the whole of the ACT Government of the negative impacts of funding cuts on people who access the relevant programs, and the need to find a sustainable approach to resourcing services that support people who live with the impacts of trauma and/or do not have a safe, stable, secure home.
- There is no evidence of an analysis of the impact of the cut to social housing and homelessness support services on demand for other services, or the creation of gaps in referral options for non-homelessness services looking to access support for people accessing those services.
- The funding offer will also lead to service gaps within the social support system and spikes and bulges in demand in high cost tertiary level services. These demand-driven services – the Emergency Response Services, Hospitals, Mental Health Crisis team, Care and Protection services – cannot put a cap on responding because they are the end of the line.

DV & Sexual Assault Laws

The ACT Government is currently reviewing the domestic violence and sexual assault laws in the territory.

FVIP

The Australian Institute of Criminology's undertook a review of the Family Violence Intervention Program, for full report see:

<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/tbp/41-60/tbp052.html>

DisabilityCare

The ACT is a launch site for DisabilityCare Australia (formerly the National Disability Insurance Scheme).

Highlights of 12/13

Events

The Summer Of Respect, ACT's campaign to promote community awareness of, and conversations about, sexual violence and respect, was held again in 2012-13. The campaign began in late October with Reclaim the Night and continued until International Women's Day on March 8.

ACT Women's Services Network members were involved in organising the inaugural Partners in Prevention Function held on 26 November 2012 at the National Press Club which encouraged business, community and government leaders to discuss and brainstorm strategies to address violence against women and their children in the ACT.

Reports and Submissions

The report *Strong Women: Great City* presents a snapshot of findings from a survey of women with disabilities who live in the ACT by Women With Disabilities ACT (WWDACT) and the Women's Centre for Health Matters (WCHM). The survey was undertaken to highlight areas of need where data does not currently exist, particularly ACT specific data disaggregated by sex and disability. The report is available at <http://www.wchm.org.au/WWDACT/wwdact-reports-and-publications>.

The network lodged an ACT Budget submission, in brief this submission called for the Government to commit to:

- investment in the collection of gender disaggregated data
- ensure the needs of women are met within the homelessness sector
- ensure on-going funding to support the Summer of Respect campaign
- include violence prevention & gender equality within the scope of the new Health Promotions Grants program
- find other opportunities to support gender equality through existing grants and funding programs
- to provide additional funding to support the network to operate
- fund the Women And Prisons (WAP) Group ACT

Future Direction

Human Rights Audit and Review of Treatment of Women at the AMC

The ACT Human Rights Commissioner is seeking public submissions to inform a review of female detainees at the ACT's adult prison, the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC). The Review will measure compliance with the ACT Human Rights Act 2004 and Discrimination Act 1991. The audit will examine the current legal framework and operational practices in relation to high priority areas that engage fundamental human rights, such as accommodation; privacy; educational and vocational programs; opportunities for work; detainees' ability to observe their religion; discipline; segregation and seclusion; staffing; support for women to maintain relationships with families and dependent children ; appropriate health care for women, including mental health care, drug and alcohol

services and reproductive health care. And transitional programs and support for women leaving the AMC.

WCHM has worked closely with the ACT Women And Prisons group to highlight the issues for women in the AMC given that women constitute a tiny minority group within the gaol environment in which most resources are allocated to the majority male inmate population. There are many aspects of the prison that function well, and AMC and Corrections staff have generally been responsive to complaints or other issues that require attention. However, WCHM and WAP believe that there are a number of areas of concern which will need to be addressed if AMC is to be truly 'human rights compliant'.

ACT also has the highest proportion nationally of female prisoners with prior imprisonment at 72%.

The Ministerial Advisory Council on Women has consulted and produced a Shadow Report on The ACT Women's Plan 2010-2015.

New South Wales

Tracey Howe

Overview of changes/reforms since 11/12

Going Home Staying Home “GHS” Reform (specialist homelessness services/SAAP)

In July 2012, the NSW Government announced that the specialist homelessness service system in NSW (formerly called SAAP) would be subject to “reforms”. The full force of the reform agenda will commence in the 2014/15 year.

The key agenda of GHS reforms is that the system focuses on people, not models of service delivery and that cycling in and out of homelessness be curbed (attached are 2 fact sheets produced by WRM for members outlining GHS principles and our view).

Domestic and Family Violence Reform

The Office of the NSW WRM attended three consultations conducted on behalf of the NSW Government FACS and has been working closely with the NSW Women’s Alliance to engage with the NSW Government on its ongoing development. Since January, the Alliance has met with representatives from FACS and Women NSW about the DFV Framework and has made numerous comments and recommendations through this meeting and subsequent correspondence to FACS and KPMG on the Framework and its associated governance structures.

The Alliance considers that it will be important to develop structures to facilitate meaningful engagement and representation from these communities throughout the implementation of the DFV Framework. One potential mechanism to support this at the statewide level would be the development of subcommittees to provide advice to the Council. The membership of subcommittees would not need to be necessarily drawn from the Council. The Alliance would welcome the opportunity to provide advice and nominations to these committees and is well placed to do this through its broad range of networks, members and partnerships with other agencies and relevant experts in the domestic and family violence field and related areas.

The Alliance welcomes the acknowledgement for the need for more coordination between the child protection system and the domestic and family violence service system. Currently, child protection responses tend to focus on the damage that the violence has caused the child, and the blame is often directed and felt by the mother, not the perpetrator. The Framework should emphasise the importance of, and provide mechanisms to support the development of coordinated service system responses that are focused on ensuring the safety of both women and children, in addition to responding to individual needs.

There is no clarity yet in the draft framework as to which agencies will be defined as Specialist Domestic and Family Violence Services. The accuracy of this definition and associated mapping processes in identifying of these agencies across NSW will be critical to ensure that not only specialist services are actively engaged in the ongoing development and implementation of a coordinated service system response at the regional level but also to ensure that services with insufficient expertise and experience are not deemed to be so through the mapping exercise. It is proposed also in the DFV Framework that all victims are referred to the central referral point within 24 hours. The Alliance has serious concerns that information sharing without consent as proposed in the draft Framework and the Justice Framework may undermine the safety of some victims/survivors. In addition to potentially compromising the immediate safety of children.

The DFV Framework must be grounded in a human rights framework and should explicitly acknowledge Australia’s obligations to eliminate violence against women as outlined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women 1979 (CEDAW) ratified by Australia on 28 July 1983 and CEDAW Committee General Comment No 19 (General Comment No 19). Violence against women is one of the most widespread human rights abuses in Australia, yet there is no acknowledgement of this in the draft Framework.

The Framework at this stage remains relatively silent on engagement with mainstream services and commonwealth agencies and systems including, but not limited to, the Department of Human Services and the Family Law system. Coordination between Commonwealth services and legal systems are a critical component to integrated service system.

Transitional Housing Rent reform

The NSW Government’s Housing NSW, Community and Private Market Housing Directorate (CAPMH) in April, issued all SHS transitional housing providers with advice about the Rent Reforms for SHS Transitional Housing (3-18 month) providers¹¹. This reform is a continuation of rent reforms which have been occurring across the community housing sector since 2008

SUMMARY

In April 2013, CAPMH advised of the introduction of Commonwealth Rent Allowance (CRA) maximized rents for SHS managed transitional properties (3-18 months) that are part of the Crisis Accommodation Portfolio (CAP). The introduction of CRA maximized rents is to commence on the 1st January 2014 for new tenants only, and intends to:

- Align the rent setting of transitional CAP properties with the rest of the community housing portfolio (with the exception of crisis properties).

¹¹ Email sent to SHS transitional Housing Providers on April 16, 2013

- Increase rental revenue available to SHS managing the properties.
- From 1 July 2015, the SHS Transitional Housing provider managing the property will be required to take full financial responsibility for property management functions (including rates, planned and responsive maintenance) with associated costs to be funded by rental income.

These recently announced rent reforms for SHS transitional housing present particular challenges for specialist DFV services, particularly in the context of parallel reforms including Going Home Staying Home (GHS) and the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH).

ISSUES RAISED BY THE WRM

The WRM along with the other homelessness peaks, have been in discussion with CAPMH about the implications of the rent reforms on the resources and capacity of member services. To date we have had several meetings with Government colleagues where we have raised a range of issues identified by members, including:

- The impact of a significant increase in property and asset management responsibilities
- The significant burden on services to meet additional regulation requirements;
- Property financial losses despite predicted increased income generated through Commonwealth Rental Allowance (CRA) maximization;
- Reduction of income previously generated through tenant rental income to supplement support services;
- Particular impact of higher maintenance costs for services in rural or remote areas than metro providers; and

In addition to these key service provider concerns, central to WRM representations were the specific impacts of this policy change on our members, and the women and children they support, including:

- Property access issues for women and children escaping DFV with potential loss of DV specific properties - or a reduction in the portfolio - if properties are transferred to a larger provider to manage.
- Reduced ability - or inability - of services to continue to accommodate clients who have a reduced capacity to pay rent i.e. women exceeding income/assets eligibility guidelines & women who are not Australian citizens or permanent residents.

The WRM provided detailed submissions to CAPMH, and presented evidence of current and common provider practice, in the provision of transitional housing to these clients for reduced (or no) rent due to their particular difficulties in obtaining housing.

The WRM expressed grave concern that services would lose the flexibility to accommodate clients from these groups, with the proposed policy applicable

across all properties and its subsequent increased financial and regulatory burden.

In addition, if properties were transferred to larger social housing providers, these women would not meet the Social Housing eligibility criteria, which they are not required to meet when they are accessing SHS transitional housing.

The WRM will continue to update members with transitional properties on the progress of negotiations with CAPMH in relation to the SHS Transition Housing Rent Reform.

In the meantime, if you have questions or concerns, please contact Taryn Champion, Policy Manager on (02) 9698 9777 or by email at po@wrrc.org.au. Additionally, further information on the reforms is available on the Housing NSW website: <http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/Community+Housing+Division/Community+Housing+Providers/Specialist+Homelessness+Services/>

Changes to Victims Compensation

NSW Government announced changes to Victims compensation and introduced the *Victims Rights and Support Bill 2013* (the *new Scheme*). The NSW WRM was very concerned about particular aspects of the Bill, particularly

- limiting it to crimes reported to Police or Government agencies;
- the proposed 10 year timeframe for making applications;
- proposed reduction in actual payment amounts
- lack of recognition of abuse experienced over time and types of abuse experienced (including psychological and financial);
- and that the changes are to be applied retrospectively to include victim's that have already made application

The NSW Women's Refuge Movement wrote directly to the NSW Premier, the Attorney General and other key Members of Parliament. We are also supporting the Community legal Centres Campaign which includes other members of the NSW Women's Alliance, Women's Legal Services NSW and Warringa Baiya.

As part of the Campaign the Premier and AG were urged to:

- remove the bill and engage in a proper consultation with those who will be impacted by the changes.
- Or if the Bill is not removed the following changes are sought
- no reduction in payments,
- allowing existing victims to be dealt with under the old scheme,
- remove the 10 year time limits in the legislation,
- recognise psychological harm from domestic violence with appropriate financial compensation and
- accept reports made to support services.

The NSW WRM was also a signatory to a complaint submitted to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Ms. Rashida Manjoo. This complaint letter and further information on the campaign can be found at <http://www.womenslegalnsw.asn.au/law-and-policy-reform/NSW-Victims-Compensation-Review.html>. Unfortunately, the Bill has passed through the NSW Upper House the only one amendment being made, please see message below from the Community Legal Centres campaign

"After a very lengthy debate in which the concerns of many community organisations were raised and read out, the Christian Democratic Party moved an amendment that was supported by the government. This amendment will remove the 10 year-time limit for victims of child sexual abuse so there are no time limits for such victims in applying for some limited forms of financial assistance and a recognition payment. This is a significant amendment. You can read Hansard at: http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/web/commo.n.nsf/V3HHBDayLC?open&refNavID=HA3_1&key=20130529

While we are deeply disappointed about many other aspects - the retrospective application of the law; the failure to adequately recognise domestic violence and adequately compensate domestic violence, sexual assault and child sexual abuse; the absolute 10-year time limit for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault; and the challenging documentary evidence requirements, we believe the amendment to remove time limits for victims of child sexual abuse would not have been possible without your assistance. It also highlights the importance of collective action."

Child Protection legislative reform

WRM submitted a response to the *Discussion paper: Legislative Reform, Legislative proposals: Strengthening parental capacity, accountability and outcomes for children and young people in State care.*

The submission expressed the NSW WRM disappointment that many of the proposals contained within the Discussion Paper appear to be increasingly punitive measures with very little acknowledge of the need for both child protection system and domestic and family violence responses to focus on improving the safety and wellbeing of the children and adult victims (usually the mother) of domestic and family violence.

Currently, child protection responses tend to focus on the damage that the violence has caused the child, and the blame is often directed and felt by the mother, not the perpetrator. Many of the proposals in the Discussion Paper continue in that vein. An increase in punitive measures against the non-offending caregiver in addition to being unjust, particularly when Government agencies have not provided support sought to improve the victims' safety and wellbeing, will also act as a deterrent for victims of domestic and family violence accessing support services.

The submission expressed particular concern in relation to the proposals for the introduction of mandatory parenting education classes and the proposal to introduce very short 'restoration to care' timeframes before permanent care of options, including adoption are considered.

Highlights of 12/13

1. Formation of the "NSW Women's Alliance"

In the second half of 2012 the NSW WRM, through the Office of the WRM led the establishment of the Women's Alliance in collaboration with the NSW Rape Crisis Centre. The Alliance brings together NSW peak organisations and state-wide service providers working within the sexual violence and domestic and family violence fields who are responding to and working to prevent violence against women. The NSW WRM has a key role on the Alliance as a co-convenor with the Rape Crisis Centre and also acts as the Secretariat to the Alliance. The Alliance's Vision is for a world where there is no sexual violence, domestic or family violence

Membership of the Women's Alliance currently consists of ACON Health Ltd, F Collective, Inner City Legal Centre, Muslim Women's Association, NSW DV Coalition, NSW Rape Crisis Centre (co-convenor), NSW Women's Refuge Movement (co-convenor/ Secretariat), Older Women's Network, Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre, Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service NSW Inc, Women's Health NSW, Women's Legal Services NSW, Immigrant Women's Speak Out.

2. \$1.9m of Housing NSW funds distributed to all specialist homelessness services for workforce and industry development for alignment with the GSHS reforms – uptake high from women's DV services

3. NSW Women's Refuge Movement changes name to Domestic Violence NSW and opens up membership to all DV services

From July 2013, NSW Women's Refuge Movement becomes Domestic Violence NSW, and the business arm becomes Domestic Violence NSW Service Management (a separate company limited by guarantee and with an external board).

Future Direction

2013/14 in NSW is going to be a year where previously separate service systems are compelled to unite – both NGO and government due to the overlapping policy frameworks and integrated response obligations being attached to future funding programs.

DV NSW will build peak and open membership to strengthen the voice of DV services across the state.

2014/15 in NSW will result in a whole new approach to homelessness support for DV refugees as the model of service delivery is going to change to client and not service centred. This will require services to work with

women wherever they may be and not just in the crisis refuge space.

WESNET can influence these changes by supporting the sector in our state by adding their voice to state peak's, that women and children should not be disadvantaged in any way due to policy reform. In fact, the reform platforms should come with extra funding in order for them to be effective and have sustainability that will really impact on reducing violence against women and children. And, of course, the government should be consulting with and seeking buy-in from the sector as they advance any such reforms.

Northern Territory

Dale Wakefield

Overview of changes/reforms since 11/12

Since the change of government in August 12 there has been little policy development or new reforms announced that directly relate to the domestic and family violence sector. The Office of Womens Advancement has been developed but it is still unclear where domestic and family violence policy will sit within government

The NT remains the only jurisdiction to not present an implementation plan to the National Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and their Children.

Highlights of 2012-13

Overall the sector was pleased that DFV services were quarantined from funding cuts in the last budget, however the impacts of the Fair Wage decision, lack of exit points and increased demand continues to place stress on all member services. As a sector we were extremely disappointed that some sexual assault services were cut in Darwin especially as the Royal Commission starts.

Several member services have experienced high risk violent incidents in the last 12 months. This has highlighted the challenges of delivering services in small jurisdictions especially where services location are publically know and rates and severity of violence within the community are so extreme.

Future Direction

Safety and security and how we deliver this in a women & children friendly way is going to be a strong focus for the membership in the next twelve months. The funding for remote Safe House is also due for renewal in the next twelve months. Services for women in remote communities continue to be a huge gap in the regional service sector and we will continue to monitor and advocate around this issue.

Queensland

Lindy Edwards

The whole sector in Queensland is currently in a state of great uncertainty and apprehension as a result of recent Department of Communities plans to “recommission” the various community service sectors. Exactly how they intend to do this is still not completely clear, but services have been warned that it is about efficiency and saving money, and there is an emphasis on collaboration and amalgamation. It has been indicated by the government that there will be open tendering and there is great concern about the future of the smaller non-government services, who will find it harder to compete with the larger ‘faith based’ organisations in a competitive process.

We have already seen the funding on offer for a dv shelter in Far North Qld. being reduced by about \$150,000 per annum, when it was released for tender.

The recommissioning process has already begun with the Youth sector, and this was to be followed by the Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault sector, and then Homelessness. However, things then got even more confusing when it was suddenly announced that all homelessness services would be moving into the Department of Housing, and this includes domestic violence shelters. The Department of Housing has recently released its Homelessness to Housing Strategy, which talks about realignment of the sector, and has a strong emphasis on collaboration and development of alliances. So it is unclear at this stage if we are to “recommissioned” along with the specialist domestic violence and sexual assault service, or “re-aligned” with other homelessness services.

From the 1st January 2013, services in Queensland were subjected to an across the board funding cut. For shelters this was 1%, but for other non-accommodation services the cut was 3.75%.

Some services were completely de-funded, most notable was the Tenancy Advice services across the State, all of which were closed. Last minute funding grants made available by the Federal government, enable them to keep operating, however, this will cease at the end of December 2013, and there appears to be no willingness by the State government to re-fund them.

New Service agreements which tie services to achieving outputs and very high target hours make it increasingly difficult for services to continue providing community education/awareness-raising, and advocacy, which seems a contradiction to the Department’s push towards greater collaboration between services.

The Department of Communities has developed a Common Homelessness Assessment and Referral tool for all homelessness services to be implemented later this year. It is intended that this will create smoother

pathways and better outcomes for clients. Domestic violence shelters will be using a more specific DV Risk Assessment tool, whereby information will be shared (with consent) between the shelters, referral line and Regional DV Services. Whilst it is seen there could be some benefits in a common risk assessment tool, there is a lot of concern about the confidentiality of women’s information and which services will have access to it. In addition, there is concern about the Departments ability to track clients, and monitor women who present more than three times.

National Plan

Currently there are 6 funded programs across the state, working with women to stay safely within their homes. Generally these are working well, but clearly this should be seen as only one response for women escaping domestic violence, as many women still choose not to remain in, or return to the home, for a variety of reasons. Shelters, as an immediate crisis response, are still essential. Many of the issues for the programs are external factors, such as court order conditions not being granted, inadequate responses from the police, perpetrators not being held accountable, and systems that make it difficult to have the perpetrator removed from the lease.

Other Issues

Refuges across Queensland are supporting an increasing number of women without access to income, because of their particular immigration status. This is proving to be a huge drain on the resources of overstretched services, as would be the case in all other States. A new issue however, that has been raised by shelters in Far North Qld., is that of women from Papua New Guinea, who have fled domestic violence in PNG and are being referred in to shelters in Far North Qld., where they need to remain for long periods without access to income, whilst their situation is assessed by Immigration.

Women’s Services around Queensland continue to hold Red Rose Rallies highlighting the deaths of women and children as a result of domestic violence. Unfortunately, they seem to be happening far too often. They are held each time another woman is killed by a partner or ex-partner.

Following a review of the DV Protection Act, the amended legislation came into effect in September last year. Although there was some optimism about some of the changes, eg courts having to consider naming children on the order if they were in the home, even if this is not asked for, and Voluntary Intervention Orders for men to attend perpetrator programs, this has not always played out in practice. Magistrates at times seem to have their own interpretation of the legislation, such as suggesting that if a perpetrator agrees to a Voluntary Intervention order, the DVO should not be granted, as there needs to be some incentive for him to participate in the program!! Womens services are concerned that it seems that the woman’s safety is being lost and his past history of violence is less important than him having some incentives to make changes.

South Australia

Vicki Lachlan

South Australia – through the Coalition of Women's Domestic Violence Services of SA Inc. This is an unfunded peak for all domestic and family violence services across SA, we have 23 member services.

Overview of changes and reforms

All NAHA funded services in SA were informed that owing to uncertainty of the extent of the program in the future that the three year contracts which ended on June 30 2013, would be extended for only one year (13-14fy), until the commonwealth re-committed to the program. This however was only communicated mid-May; hence services were becoming very uncertain of their future prior to this announcement.

The SA Family Safety Framework (FSF) operates over almost the entire state at this stage – only one region to go. Also as a result of the Coroner's findings from one death recently of a woman, the extent of ability to share information through the SA Information Sharing Guidelines has been strengthened to include women who are victims of violence. The Coroner also referred to the FSF in his findings as a mechanism to further enable and empower agencies dealing with women victims and their children to assist and protect them to the best of their ability. He also made recommendations that involved the SA Police.

Over the period the department have formalised and strengthened the role of 'gateway to service' for all agencies funded under NAHA – meaning that, regardless of criterion, an agency will provide a response to anyone who is homeless that makes contact to ensure their needs are met. This is done by providing a 'warm' referral – not just a list of phone numbers or a refusal to service – it is intended that this 'gateway' will ensure that a pathway to an appropriate service is provided. Agencies are also required to work with motels or caravan parks, through Housing SA, in their regions to ensure an emergency response is available for women and children if their service is full.

Standing alongside the core and cluster sites for crisis/emergency accommodation for women and children, services have always had transitional housing which was leased from Housing SA and sub-let to women and children on an outreach basis – this housing, in the metro area only, has now been transferred to the Women's Housing Association to property manage, with the individual metro regional D&FV Service having allocation rights. The process was quite convoluted, but most is now completed. The rural and remote D&FV services continue to manage this housing internally.

Workers in the sector have remained active in ASU campaigns for transferring workers to the Modern Award and Pay Rates. Independent services have also

collaborated to enable the changes to the new award and conditions.

Coalition member organisations have also been active in their own regional Violence Against Women Collaborations which were set up by the department initially and are now managed by the D&FV services. Coalition members have actively contributed to D&FV local and state-wide research projects.

The Coalition is working on a new way of honouring women or their children who lose their lives due to D&FV to ensure the recognition of their loss, and knowledge of the associated issues, is wide spread in the community.

The Coalition members continue to be active supporters of AWAVA and WESNET, with reports shared every meeting.

The Department of Corrections is actively collaborating with Coalition members on their Victim's Register, sharing knowledge on active Intervention Orders and actions of the perpetrators.

Changes have occurred in SA to fast track reports to the Child Abuse Report Line from D&FV services, enabling quicker methods of reporting.

D&FV Services have been able to refer women to the Catherine House program which educates and enables pathways to employment for women who have been disadvantaged in this area due to D&FV history.

The Men's Perpetrator Housing project is now on-line.

Highlights of 2012-13

The Coalition has:

- Revamped its Website.
- Launched a Strategic Plan for 2012-2014.
- Begun work on establishing a VAW peak for SA (aiming for it to be funded), working with sexual assault services and other agencies working with VAW.
- Established better connections with all of the remote services in SA – Coober Pedy, Ceduna and the APY Lands.
- Actively advocated for the continuance of funding for the SA NAHA sector and D&FV services in particular
- Held a well-attended AGM, Strategic Plan Launch and Networking Lunch for the sector and stakeholders.
- Worked closely with the department on the State Coroner's recommendations, resulting in more comprehensive shared risk assessment tools, and the changes to the Information Sharing Guidelines.
- Worked closely with all sectors within the NAHA funding range to ensure the best service possible for all women and children.
- Been working on internal policy statements.

- Engaged a professional minute taker (funded by membership fees) to ensure accurate recording of our meetings..

Future Direction

The services across SA are keen for any advocacy or assistance from WESNET to ensure that the NAHA funding or similar remains in place to continue the work of the sector with ensuring the ongoing assistance and safety of women and children from violence perpetrated against them.

SA D&FV services are very keen to host a domestic and family violence conference for the sector.

Tasmania

Jacinta Atkins

TASMANIA-WESP

WESP is the Peak body for Women's Service Providers in **Tasmania**.

WESP represents 19 services. These services include Womens Shelters, Specialist Homelessness Services, Womens Health and Shelter Tasmania.

Overview of changes/reforms

TASMANIA has introduced a Front Door into Housing Services. All SHS (Special Homelessness Services) services have been included in the Front Door model with all referrals into Women's Shelters, transitional, crisis and all other Housing support, including Bond assistance and Tenancy support needing to pass via the front door. Clients will be assessed at the front door and referred to support services and/or accommodation e.g. Sheltered accommodation. WESP had a significant role in the development of the provision within the front door for women in Domestic Violence. This resulted in Domestic Violence Specialist positions being implemented in one of the services providing support to the clients accessing the Front Door in both the North and South of the state. The model will be fully integrated into the service system in July 2013.

Highlights of 12/13

The April meeting of WESP highlighted the poor media coverage of the number of escalating DV cases in the State. At that meeting, members determined to use the upcoming Candlelight Vigils in each region in May to seek greater media exposure.

North-West Coast WESP members, RAIN and Warrawee, working with other groups under the auspices of the DVCC North-West group, organised a well-attended Candlelight Vigil at the Central Coast Community Centre, Ulverstone. The Vigil organisers worked with their local newspaper, The Advocate, to generate a well-written 5.5 pages of articles, which included both hard-hitting news stories and a heart-felt personal feature article from a deceased victim's family.

Using the Vigil as a vehicle, The Advocate's coverage also extended to interviewing Warrawee staff and reporting on the vital State-wide issues of Victims Response Team (VSRT) cutbacks and lack of police training in DV.

Future Direction

TASMANIA, as part of the restructure are planning the implementation of a Data Base called "ASK" to replace the use of SHIP, very similar to that of South Australia.

WESP have been at the forefront in advocating for the confidentiality of Women escaping Domestic Violence within the Data Base and our lobbying has greatly contributed to the Government re-think on the "sensitive client" issue on ASK.

Other

WESP have a representative on the Consultative committee for the Tasmanian implementation of the Nation Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children. WESP and Warrawee Women's Shelter are the only invited non-Governments to sit on the committee.

Victoria

Margaret Augerinos

The EVAs Media Awards 2013

The EVAs Media Awards continue to grow from strength to strength and recognize journalists for excellence in the reporting of violence against women, in print, television, radio and online media; and celebrate media contributions to the prevention of violence against women.

The 2013 EVAs were announced on 19 July 2013.

Among the night's winners:

- Nicole Brady (former) The Sunday Age journalist won the GOLD EVA for her exceptional series 'Lifting the Lid'.
- Nicole Ferrie from the Bendigo Advertiser won Best News Report in Print for her brilliant series 'Real Action Needed'.
- Daily Life's Clementine Ford won Best Opinion/Commentary in any Medium for her thought-provoking piece 'Can we please stop the victim blaming?'.
- The ABC's Guy Stayner won Best Television Current Affairs/Feature (less than 15 mins) for his impressive piece 'Restraining Orders'.
- Madison Magazine's Clair Weaver won Best Magazine Report/Article in Print for her commanding piece 'Silent Witness'.
- Moreland Leader's Tessa Hoffman won Best Suburban Report in Print for her important piece 'Stop the Violence'.

We understand that this project will soon be expanding to have a national focus. Congratulations to all the winners of EVAs, and to the organizers for doing such a fantastic job in running the awards.

Rising to the Case for Change Project

In December 2011, the Victorian Government released the "Case for Change" document. In the Ministers (Mary Wooldridge & Wendy Lovell) opening statements in the document they stated: "The Victorian human services system largely works in rigid silos where case managers are often unable to link individuals and families to the full range of services they require. This results in poor outcomes for the clients and the Victorian taxpayer." They go on to say "The structural challenges highlighted in this document show the need for a 'joined-up' service model, where there are no wrong doors for clients and any entry point ensures that individuals and families are efficiently and effectively assisted to access whatever range of services and support they need."

In response to this, the Victorian peak – DV Vic – has commenced a project called "Rising to the Case for Change". In February 2013 DV Vic were awarded funding for a twelve-month part-time position to support the family violence sector through sector reform, in what DV Vic have branded the 'Rising to the Case for Change' Project.

This area of work includes working alongside members to find ways of improving outcomes for women and children experiencing family violence, to find ways to systematically intervene before violence escalates (i.e. when warning signs appear), while developing a community understanding of the causes of violence against women to prevent violence before it occurs.

The Rising to the Case for Change project has been working with DV Vic members since late June 2013 to brainstorm and develop a clear vision of possible 'next steps' to improved responses to women and children experiencing or at risk of family violence by focusing on:

1. Client Outcomes and Outcome Measures
2. Systems and Practice Integration and
3. Service and Funding Models

With the project's consultations wrapping up in September 2013, DV Vic will be collating existing data, alongside case studies from the sector, to populate the final report.

Victorian Crime Statistics – 2012/2013

The 2012/2013 Victorian Crime Statistics report an increase of 3.4% from the number of offences recorded in 2011/12. The 2012/13 crime rate per 100,000 population was 7157.1, an increase of 1.6% compared with 2011/12.

As with previous years, there was an increase in crimes against the person, mainly attributed to an increase in family violence reporting. This represents increased confidence by women and children to report family violence and also represents improved practice by police and the justice system in prosecuting family violence related offences.

As reported by Victoria Police, "The number of crime against the person offences increased by 7.2% during 2012/2013 to 58,312 offences recorded in 2012/13. As a rate per 100,000 population, this represents an increase of 5.3%. The increase in crime against the person was primarily driven by a rise in family violence-related crime. The number of these offences increased by 18.4% between 2011/12 and 2012/13. In contrast, crime against the person offences not arising from family incidents increased by just 1.0%. Offences arising from family incidents accounted for 39.4% of all crime against the person offences during 2012/13."

Police Commissioner Ken Lay remains a vocal advocate of ending gender based violence, in particular family and sexual violence to women and children.

Coroners Court Systemic Review of Family Violence Deaths (VSRFVD)

In November 2012, the Coroners Court of Victoria released the first report of the “Victorian Systemic Review of Family Violence Deaths”.

Homicide in Victoria between the years 2000 to 2010 were reviewed for this report. The report found that “A substantial proportion of homicides identified by the CCOV during this period were determined to be relevant to the VSRFVD. Specifically, just over half (53%) involved an intimate partner or other family member, or otherwise occurred in a context of family violence. Among deaths of relevance to the VSRFVD, intimate partner homicides comprised the largest group (47%), followed by incidents involving parents and children (26%). Although males comprised a larger proportion of the total number of homicides that were identified, females were more often killed by an intimate partner or other family member.”

The report goes on to state: “Domestic and family violence death reviews conducted in other jurisdictions typically consider relevant deaths as a connected group, rather than isolated incidents. This approach enables the identification of common patterns or themes among fatal events.

Many of the known risk and contributory factors associated with escalating and severe violence described in the research literature were identified as relevant to the incidents that were examined. These included: a history of family violence; relationship separation; threats of harm; alcohol misuse; and the presence of a mental illness. In addition, factors associated with the increased vulnerability of victims, such as having a disability or culturally and linguistically diverse background, were noted among the cases that were reviewed. Additional themes that emerged included: barriers for victims disclosing family violence; a need for increased community understanding and recognition of this problem; and the regularity of victim contact with the health and justice system.”

The concluding remarks in the Executive Summary note: “A broad spectrum of family violence deaths feature in this report. The evidence gathered confirms the need to be cognisant of recognised risk factors and the importance of building a responsive service system that is able to identify and respond appropriately. The system gaps, coronial recommendations and associated responses presented in this analysis are a valuable starting point from which further research and prevention efforts can be made. Accordingly, Section 4 draws attention to three focus areas for strengthening the service system, increasing victim safety and improving the response to family violence in this state.”

Whilst there does not appear to be any ongoing dedicated funding for this unit within the Coroners Court, the court has diligently worked to continue to

examine family violence related deaths within the framework established for the unit when first funded some years back.

Victorian Homelessness Action Plan (VHAP) 2011-2015

Whilst the report was announced with much fanfare a year or so ago (details of the plan in last year’s Annual Report), there has been very little activity around increased funding to the family violence sector, with the exception of around \$16 million over 4 years announced in late 2011.

A number of Innovation Action Projects were piloted during 2012/2013, with evaluations of those taking place in June 2013. Announcements about the future of the projects will be made in the early part of the 2013/2014 year.

The Victorian Government also commenced its VHAP System Reform Project in the latter part of the 2012/2013 year with the statement that “despite a 39 per cent increase in expenditure over the past five years, we have not seen a reduction in the number of clients accessing services and are therefore no longer homeless. This suggests the current service system is not getting to the root cause of homelessness.”

The government has stated it’s goal is to assist all people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness to access and maintain stable housing, to find work and to participate in the life of community.

To lay the foundations for these new directions, more information is required on how the current homelessness service system operates, such as who is being provided with what type of service, and the effectiveness of the service system in meeting the needs of people who are homeless.

The Reform Project seeks to understand more about how the service delivery system works through exploring 5 key focus areas:

1. Mapping and analysis of homelessness funding and distribution of related services in Victoria to inform recommendations on the future distribution of funding and services that reflect current and emerging communities of disadvantage.
2. Review of homelessness programs to assess what works for clients and make recommendations on a future homelessness service system and models, in keeping with VHAP policy directions aimed at early intervention and prevention of homelessness.
3. Client forecasting study examining future demographic trends and anticipated client service needs.
4. Providing support and coordination for the Ministerial Advisory Council on Homelessness.
5. Development of an outcomes-based funding model and framework that will deliver the

VHAP policy direction aimed at early intervention and prevention of homelessness.

The Government is hoping the project will deliver:

- A deeper understanding of the scope of current homelessness service delivery including related family violence services delivery in Victoria
- Clear recommendations to build a more efficient and effective service system that supports early intervention and prevention, and/or breaks the cycle of homelessness and leads people to independence
- Identify opportunities for integration, streamlining, coordination and improved service delivery.

At the conclusion of the project the five areas will be consolidated into a strategic framework to guide the implementation of sector reform. The report will include a number of chapters, including but not limited to the following:

- Client outcomes framework
- Shared practice framework with client focused outcomes
- Client outcomes based funding framework
- Quality improvement framework
- Implementation plan for sector reform
- A monitoring and evaluation framework for implementation of the sector reform.

Service Sector Reform 2013

Running parallel to the VHAP System Review process is the Service Sector Reform 2013 Project aims to improve how government and the community sector work together to improve the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged Victorians.

Peter Shergold AC was appointed by government to assist government and the community sector to improve outcomes for people by delivering services in more effective, efficient and innovative ways.

A discussion paper "Towards a more effective and sustainable community services system" was released, and was followed by a submission and consultation process in early 2013. Professor Shergold released his interim consultation feedback report, "Service Sector Reform: Reflections on the consultations" in May 2013.

Professor Shergold outlined 22 key themes he picked up on through the consultation and submission process. Some of these include:

- There needs to be a clear, system-wide vision of the outcomes sought from services delivered to vulnerable and disadvantaged people, including the development of better performance indicators and impact metrics.
- There should be progressive expansion of place-based funding and delivery, providing

communities with greater opportunity to tailor services to regional and neighbourhood needs

- Improved collaboration is required across the system and should be supported by effective partnership arrangements.
- Government should take a strategic approach to commissioning community services.
- There needs to be greater focus on addressing the underlying causes of disadvantage, vulnerability and social exclusion.
- In terms of the capability of community organizations, size does not necessarily matter.
- The impact of red tape imposed on organizations delivering community services should be significantly reduced.
- A culture of innovation needs to be actively encouraged.
- Community service providers, individually or collectively, may need to enhance their organizational capability and to improve managerial and governance expertise.

Professor Shergold's final report is due to be released in 2013/2014, and will no doubt pave the way for a future recommissioning framework. This report, together with the VHAP Review, and the recommissioning frameworks for other parts of our sector (PDRSS and AOD) will in my opinion, lead to significant funding and program changes for the housing, homelessness and domestic violence service systems.

Western Australia

Kedy Kristal

Overview of changes/reforms

In early 2011 the Department for Child Protection and Family Services engaged the Women's Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services WA (WCDFVS) to undertake a project mapping the Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) service sector in Western Australia (WA), with a specific focus on women's refuges, and to make recommendations to create a more flexible and responsive mix of service delivery models and enable a more integrated service system.

The report was informed through consultation with women's refuges which identified a number of service gaps in the WA women's refuge service system. This was primarily due to eligibility criteria that denied families access or a lack of appropriate service delivery or service design models available to meet their specific needs. These included but were not limited to:

- women with complex needs/dual diagnosis;
- women experiencing homelessness for reasons other than domestic violence as the primary cause;
- women with older boys;
- women with a disability;
- women with larger families;
- women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and
- women without permanent residency and/or ineligibility for Centrelink entitlements.

A workshop was held with refuge managers and DCP staff in December 2012:

The Department of Child Protection and Family service highlighted these issues for consideration and comment:

What is the true cost of services?

What judgments or determinations can we make about the quality and quantity of services being provided?

How can we achieve better integration of the service system?

Another two day workshop was held in April 2013 with refuge managers from across the state and a list of recommendations was developed for consideration by the WCDFVS executive committee .

The recommendations will now go to DCPFS.

It is expected that any decision by DCPFS about possible changes in service delivery or models will be linked to the Dept. request for service provision documentation when refuges current funding contracts end (September 2013).

Highlights of 11/12

The 17 Case Management and Coordination Services ceased in January 2013 and have been replaced by the Family and Domestic Violence Response Team (FDVRT). This is a partnership between the Department for Child Protection and Family Services, WA Police and not for profit DV services.

The FDVRT aims to improve the safety of child and adult victims of family and domestic violence through a collaborative approach that focuses on timely and early intervention following a police call-out to a domestic violence incident.

The collaborative approach of FDVRT includes:

- joint risk assessments using a common framework informed by police, child protection and specialist family and domestic violence workers;
- identification of opportunities to intervene early with families experiencing family and domestic violence;
- timely responses following a police call-out;
- responses targeted to client need, identified risk and unique case circumstances;
- supported and streamlined client pathways through the service system;
- coordinated responses between partner agencies; and
- multi-agency safety planning on a needs basis involving agencies and organisations that have a role in responding to family and domestic violence.

Future Direction

The state government continues to roll out the Delivering Community Services in Partnership (DCSP) Policy, which changes the way community services are delivered. The policy will introduce longer term service agreements (up to 5 years), the joint development of outcome-based service requirements and reduce non-administrative "red tape" for organisations.

Two long standing gaps in service provision will be addressed in the coming year.

The Women's Law Centre has secured 12 months of funding for legal services for Indigenous women including Family Court matters, Violence Restraining Orders and Care and Protection orders.

The WA State Government made an election commitment to fund 2 new women's refuges in the Perth metropolitan region. This is in addition to the current work happening to establish a refuge in Busselton.

Treasurer's Report

Kedy Kristal

This year WESNET has worked hard to increase the membership base and to continue to develop new sources revenue. A lot of work has gone into developing the safety and technology workshops into a webinar format and several webinars have been delivered. Membership of WESNET continues to grow and these fees are essential to WESNET's continuing activities. WESNET made a very small increase overall in this financial year and will go into 2013/14 on a very tight budget. The audit was again an unqualified audit and I would like to thank Belinda Gomez for all her work over the year.



Financials 2012-13

WESNET INCORPORATED
ABN 16 068 548 631
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2013

WESNET Incorporated
ABN 16 068 548 631
Financial Statements
For the year ended 30 June 2013

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WESNET Incorporated
ABN 16 068 548 631
Committee's Report
For the year ended 30 June 2013

The Members of the Committee herewith submit the financial report of WESNET Incorporated for the financial year ended 30 June 2013.

Committee Members

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

Julie Oberin - Chairperson	Vicki Lachlan
Carol Benda - public officer	Margaret Augerinos
Cat Gander (resigned November 2012)	Kedy Kristal - Treasurer
Dale Wakefield	Shirley Slann (resigned November 2012)
Lindy Edwards - Secretary	Jane Corpuz-Brock
Pauline Woodbridge	Jacinta Atkins
Tracey Howe (appointed November 2012)	

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 changes in the nature of these activities occurred during the year.

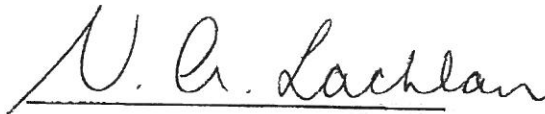
Operating Results

The profit/(loss) of the Association for the period amounted to \$3,682 (2012: \$80,141)

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



Treasurer - Committee



Committee Member

Dated this 31st day of October 2013

WESNET Incorporated
ABN 461 068 548 631
Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income
For the year ended 30 June 2013

	Notes	2013 \$	2012 \$
Revenue	2	483,093	504,756
Employee Benefits Expense		(151,055)	(58,563)
Other Expenses	3(a)	(324,281)	(521,494)
Audit Fees	3(b)	(4,075)	(4,840)
Current year surplus before income tax		3,682	(80,141)
Income Tax Expense		-	-
Other Comprehensive Income		-	-
Total Comprehensive Income for the year		3,682	(80,141)

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

WESNET Incorporated
ABN 16 068 548 631
Statement of Financial Position
As at 30 June 2013

	Notes	2013 \$	2012 \$
Assets			
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	52,729	234,843
Accounts receivable and other debtors	5	37,269	107,246
Other current assets	6	-	648
Total Current Assets		<u>89,998</u>	<u>342,737</u>
Total Assets		<u>89,998</u>	<u>342,737</u>
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Accounts payable and other payables	7	69,252	331,185
Employee benefits	8	5,512	-
Total Current Liabilities		<u>74,764</u>	<u>331,185</u>
Total Liabilities		<u>74,764</u>	<u>331,185</u>
Net Assets		<u>15,234</u>	<u>11,552</u>
Equity			
Retained surplus		<u>15,234</u>	<u>11,552</u>
Total Equity		<u>15,234</u>	<u>11,552</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

WESNET Incorporated
ABN 16 068 548 631
Statement of Changes in Equity
For the year ended 30 June 2013

Notes	Retained Surplus \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 July 2011	91,693	91,693
Net surplus for the year attributable to members of the entity	<u>(80,141)</u>	<u>(80,141)</u>
Balance at 30 June 2012	<u>11,552</u>	<u>11,552</u>
 Balance at 1 July 2012	 11,552	 11,552
Net surplus for the year attributable to members of the entity	<u>3,682</u>	<u>3,682</u>
Balance at 30 June 2013	<u>15,234</u>	<u>15,234</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

WESNET Incorporated
ABN 16 068 548 631
Statement of Cash Flows
For the year ended 30 June 2013

	Notes	2013 \$	2012 \$
Cash Flows From Operating Activities			
Operating grant receipts		353,832	308,850
Receipts from membership and customers		194,419	108,624
Interest received		5,467	9,741
Payments to suppliers and employees		(735,832)	(525,811)
Net cash provided by operating activities	9	<u>(182,114)</u>	<u>(98,596)</u>
Net increase in cash held		(182,114)	(98,596)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of financial year		234,843	333,439
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of financial year	4	<u>52,729</u>	<u>234,843</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

WESNET Incorporated
ABN 16 068 548 631
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 30 June 2013

Note 1 Summary of significant accounting policies

The financial statements cover Wesnet Inc. as an individual entity. Wesnet Inc. is an association incorporated in ACT and operating pursuant to the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*.

Basis of preparation

The financial statements are general purpose financial statements that have been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, Australian Accounting Interpretations, and the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*. The association is a not-for-profit entity for financial report purposes under Australian Accounting Standards.

Australian Accounting Standards set out accounting policies that the AASB has concluded would result in financial statements containing relevant and reliable information about transactions, events and conditions to which they apply. Material accounting policies adopted in the preparation of these financial statements are presented below and have been consistently applied unless otherwise stated.

The financial statements, except for the cashflow information, have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs, modified, where applicable, by the measurement at fair value of selected non-current assets, financial assets and financial liabilities. The amounts presented in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest dollar.

Accounting Policies

(a) Income tax

Wesnet Inc. is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

(b) Goods and services tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office.

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the statement of financial position.

Cash flows are presented on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows from investing or financing activities, are recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO are presented as operating cash flows included in receipts from customers or payments to suppliers.

(c) Asset Capitalisation

All asset purchases above \$1,000 are capitalised into the Statement of Financial Position then depreciated. Asset purchases less than \$1,000 are expensed as minor asset purchases in the Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income.

WESNET Incorporated
ABN 16 068 548 631
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 30 June 2013

Note 1 Summary of significant accounting policies (continued)

(d) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at-call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less, and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities in the Statement of Financial Position.

(e) Accounts Receivable and Other Debtors

Accounts receivable and other debtors include amounts due from members as well as amounts receivable from customers for goods or services sold during the ordinary course of business. Receivables are expected to be collected within 12 months of the end of the reporting period are classified as current assets. All other receivables are classified as non-current assets.

Accounts receivable are initially recognised at fair value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method, less any provision for impairment.

(f) Comparative Figures

Where required by Accounting Standards comparative figures have been adjusted to conform with changes in presentation for the current financial year.

(g) Revenue and Other Income

Income is recognised as revenue to the extent that it is earned. Unearned Income at reporting date is reported as income in advance.

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest rate method.

Revenue from the rendering of services is recognised upon the delivery of the service to the customer.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

Government Grants

Non-reciprocal grant revenue is recognised in profit or loss when the association obtains control of the grant and it is probable that the economic benefits gained from the grant will flow to the association and the amount of the grant can be measured reliably.

If conditions are attached to the grant which must be satisfied before it is eligible to receive the contribution, the recognition of the grant as revenue will be deferred until those conditions are satisfied

When grant revenue is received whereby the association incurs an obligation to deliver economic value directly back to the contributor, this is considered a reciprocal transaction and the grant revenue is recognised in the statement of financial position as a liability until the service has been delivered to the contributor, otherwise the grant is recognised as income on receipt.

(h) Accounts Payable and Other Payables

Accounts payable other payables represent the liability outstanding at the end of the reporting period for goods and services received by the association during the reporting period, which remain unpaid. The balance is recognised as a current liability with the amounts normally paid within 30 days of recognition of the liability.

WESNET Incorporated
ABN 16 068 548 631
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 30 June 2013

Note 1 Summary of significant accounting policies (continued)

(i) Financial Instruments

Initial recognition and measurement

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised when the entity becomes a party to the contractual provisions to the instrument. For financial assets, this is equivalent to the date that the association commits itself to either purchase or sell the asset (ie trade date accounting adopted).

Financial instruments are initially measured at fair value plus transaction costs except where the instrument is classified "at fair value through profit or loss" transaction costs are expensed to profit or loss immediately.

Classification and subsequent measurement

Financial instruments are subsequently measured at fair value, amortised cost using the effective interest method, or cost. *Fair Value* represents the amount for which an asset could be exchanged or a liability settled, between knowledgeable, willing parties. Where available, quoted prices in an active market are used to determine fair value. In other circumstances, valuation techniques are adopted.

Amortised cost is calculated as the amount at which the financial asset or financial liability is measured at initial recognition less principal repayments and any reduction for impairment, and adjusted for any cumulative amortisation of the difference between that initial amount and the maturity amount calculated using the *effective interest method*.

The *effective interest method* is used to allocate interest income or interest expense over the relevant period and is equivalent to the rate that discounts estimated future cash payments or receipts over the expected life (or when this cannot be reliably predicted, the contractual term) of the financial instrument to the net carrying amount of the financial asset or financial liability. Revisions to expected future net cash flows will necessitate an adjustment to the carrying amount with a consequential recognition of income or expenses in profit or loss.

(i) *Loans and receivables*

Loans and receivables are non-derivative financial assets with fixed or determinable payments that are not quoted in an active market and are subsequently measured at amortised cost. Gains or losses are recognised in profit or loss through the amortisation process and when the financial asset is derecognised.

(ii) *Financial liabilities*

Non-derivative financial liabilities other than financial guarantees are subsequently measured at amortised cost. Gains or losses are recognised in profit or loss through the amortisation process and when the financial liability is derecognised.

Impairment

At the end of each reporting period, the association assesses whether there is objective evidence that a financial asset has been impaired. A financial asset (or a group of financial assets) is deemed to be impaired if, and only if, there is objective evidence of impairment as a result of one or more events (a "loss event") that has occurred, which has an impact on the estimated future cash flows of the financial asset(s).

In the case of financial assets carried at amortised cost, loss events may include indications that the debtors or a group of debtors is experiencing significant financial difficulty, default or delinquency in interest or principal payments; indications that they will enter bankruptcy or other financial reorganisation; and changes in arrears or economic conditions that correlate with defaults.

WESNET Incorporated
ABN 16 068 548 631
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 30 June 2013

Note 1 Summary of significant accounting policies (continued)

(i) Financial Instruments (continued)

Derecognition

Financial assets are derecognised where the contractual right to receipt of cash flows expires or the asset is transferred to another party, whereby the association no longer has any significant continuing involvement in the risks and benefits associated with the asset. Financial liabilities are derecognised where the related obligations are either discharged, cancelled or expire. The difference between the carrying value of the financial liability extinguished or transferred to another party and the fair value consideration paid, including the transfer of non-cash assets or liabilities assumed is recognised in the profit or loss.

(j) Impairment of Assets

At the end of each reporting period, the association assesses whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. The assessment will consider both external and internal sources of information. If such an indication exists, an impairment test is carried out on the asset by comparing the recoverable amount of that asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less cost to sell and its value-in-use, to the asset's carrying amount. Any excess of the asset's carrying amount over its recoverable amount is immediately recognised in profit or loss.

(k) Critical Accounting Estimates and Judgements

The association evaluates estimates and judgements incorporated into the financial statements based on historical knowledge and the best available current information. Estimates assume a reasonable expectation of future events and are based on current trends and economic data, obtained both externally and within the association.

(l) New Accounting Standards for Application in Future Periods

The AASB has issued new, revised and amended standards and interpretations that have mandatory adoption dates for future reporting periods. The association does not anticipate early adoption of any of these reporting requirements and does not expect them to have any material effect on the association's financial statements.

WESNET Incorporated
ABN 16 068 548 631
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 30 June 2013

	2013 \$	2012 \$
Note 2 Revenue		
- Operating Grants	353,832	328,850
- Other Operating Revenue	77,756	131,047
- Member Subscriptions	46,038	35,118
- Interest Received	5,467	9,741
	<u>483,093</u>	<u>504,756</u>
Note 3(a) Other Expenses		
- Consultancy fees	32,094	55,924
- Management fee	110,551	31,800
- Management costs - AWAVA	43,125	216,425
- Meeting Costs	22,024	21,272
- Employee Cost - Recruitment	-	-
- Insurance	2,145	1,636
- Postage	1,985	1,230
- Printing and Stationary	10,460	5,281
- Subscriptions / Membership	1,930	1,965
- Travel related expenses	45,435	128,730
- Bad debts written off	9,948	-
- Other expenses from ordinary activities	25,458	12,640
- Miscellaneous	19,126	44,591
	<u>324,281</u>	<u>521,494</u>
Note 3(b) Auditor's Remuneration		
- audit of financial report	<u>4,075</u>	<u>4,840</u>
Note 4 Cash and Cash Equivalents		
Cash at bank	52,729	234,843
	<u>52,729</u>	<u>234,843</u>
Note 5 Accounts Receivable and Other Debtors		
Accounts Receivable	37,269	107,246
	<u>37,269</u>	<u>107,246</u>

WESNET Incorporated
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Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 30 June 2013

Note 5 Accounts Receivable and Other Debtors (continued)

Credit Risk

The association has no significant concentrations of credit risk with respect to any single counterparty or group of counterparties.

The following table details the association's contributions and other debtors receivable exposed to credit risk with ageing analysis and impairment provided thereon. Amounts are considered as "past due" when the debt has not been settled within the terms and conditions agreed between the association and the member or counterparty to the transaction. Receivables that are past due are assessed for impairment by ascertaining their willingness to pay and are provided for where there are specific circumstances indicating that the debt may not be fully repaid to the association. The balances of receivables that remain within initial terms (as detailed in the table) are considered to be of high credit quality.

2013	Gross Amount \$	Past Due and Impaired \$	Within initial trade terms \$	Past Due but Not Impaired (Days Overdue)		
				31-60 \$	61-90 \$	>90 \$
Trade						
Receivables	37,269	-	7,291	845	22,800	6,333
Total	37,269	-	7,291	845	22,800	6,333

2012	Gross Amount \$	Past Due and Impaired \$	Within initial trade terms \$	Past Due but Not Impaired (Days Overdue)		
				31-60 \$	61-90 \$	>90 \$
Trade						
Receivables	107,246	-	106,036	-	-	1,210
Total	107,246	-	106,036	-	-	1,210

		2013 \$	2012 \$
Note 6 Other Assets	Prepayments	-	648
		<u>-</u>	<u>648</u>
Note 7 Accounts Payable and Other Payables	Trade creditors	9,096	15,713
	Revenue in Advance	21,173	270,917
	Accrued Expenses	37,950	23,835
	GST Liability	1,033	20,720
		<u>69,252</u>	<u>331,185</u>
Note 8 Employee Benefits	Current		
	Annual Leave	5,512	-
		<u>5,512</u>	<u>-</u>

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Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 30 June 2013

Note 9 Cash flow information

Reconciliation of cash flow from operating activities with net current year surplus

Current year surplus	3,682	(80,141)
Non - cash flows in current year surplus		
- Net (gain)/loss on disposal of assets	-	-
Changes in assets and liabilities		
- (Increase) decrease in receivables	69,977	(76,893)
- (Increase) decrease in other assets	648	(648)
- Increase (decrease) in payables	(261,933)	59,086
- increase (decrease) in provisions	5,512	-
Net cashflows from/ (used in) operating activities	<u>(182,114)</u>	<u>(98,596)</u>

Note 10 Related Party Transactions

a. Key Management Personnel

The Chair of the Board is also employed by Annie North Inc. and information relating to her remuneration is disclosed in the financial statements of Annie North Inc. During the year WESNET Incorporated paid \$153,676 (2012: \$248,225) to Annie North Inc. in relation to the service provided by the Annie North Inc., CEO and other Administration staff.

b. Other Related Parties

WESNET Incorporated has conducted transactions with its member organisations on normal commercial terms and conditions during the year.

Note 11 Events after the reporting period

There have been no events after the end of the financial year that would materially affect the financial statements.

Note 12 Contingent Liabilities & Contingent Assets

There were no contingent liabilities or contingent assets at the date of this report.

Note 13 Commitments

There are no capital commitments.

Note 14 Association Details

Registered place of business and registered office of the association is:

Wesnet Inc.

166 Queen Street

Bendigo, VIC 3550

Association Incorporation Number: A02400

Australian Business Number: 16 068 548 631

Note 15

Financial Risk Management

The association's financial instruments consist mainly of deposits with banks, short term investments, accounts receivable and accounts payable.

The totals for each category of financial instruments, measured in accordance with AASB 139, as detailed in the accounting policies to these financial statements, are as follows:

The association does not have any derivative instruments at 30 June 2013.

Financial Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents
Accounts Receivable and other Debtors
Other Assets
Total Financial Assets

	Notes	2013 \$	2012 \$
4		52,729	234,843
5		37,269	107,246
6		-	648
		<u>89,998</u>	<u>342,737</u>

Financial Liabilities

Financial liabilities at amortised cost:
- Accounts Payable and other payables
Total Financial Liabilities

7		68,219	310,465
		<u>68,219</u>	<u>310,465</u>

Financial Risk Management Policies

The association's Board is responsible for, among other issues, monitoring and managing financial risk exposures of the association. The Board monitors the association's transactions and reviews the effectiveness of controls relating to credit risk, liquidity risk and market risk.

The Board's overall risk management strategy seeks to ensure that the association meets its financial targets, while minimising potential adverse effects on cash flow shortfalls.

Specific Financial Risk Exposures and Management

The main risks the association is exposed to through its financial instruments are interest rate risk, liquidity risk and credit risk. There have been no substantive changes in the types of risks the association is exposed to, how these risks arise, or the Committee's objectives, policies and processes for managing or measuring the risks from the previous period.

Note 15

Financial Risk Management (continued)

a. Credit Risk

Exposure to credit risk relating to financial assets arises from the potential non-performance by counterparties of contract obligations that could lead to a financial loss to the association.

Risk is minimised through investing surplus funds in financial institutions that maintain high credit rating or in entities that the committee has otherwise assessed as being financially sound.

Accounts receivable and other debtors that are neither past due nor impaired are considered to be of high credit quality.

b. Liquidity Risk

Liquidity risk arises from the possibility that the association might encounter difficulty in settling its debts or otherwise meeting its obligations related to financial liabilities.

The table below reflects an undiscounted contractual maturity analysis for non derivative financial liabilities. The association does not hold directly any derivative financial liabilities.

Cash flows realised from financial assets reflect management's expectation as to the timing of realisation. Actual timing may therefore differ from that disclosed. The timing of cash flows presented in the table to settle financial liabilities reflects the earliest contractual settlement dates.

Financial liability and financial asset maturity analysis

Financial liabilities due for payment

Accounts Payable and Other Payables (excluding Annual

Leave and grants receivable in advance)

Total contractual outflows

Total expected outflows

Financial assets - cash flows realisable

Cash and cash equivalents

Accounts Receivable

Total anticipated inflows

Net (outflow)/inflow on

	Within 1 Year		1 to 5 Years			Total	
	2013	2012	2013	2012	2013	2012	
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	
	68,219	310,465	-	-	68,219	310,465	
	68,219	310,465	-	-	68,219	310,465	
	68,219	310,465	-	-	68,219	310,465	
	52,729	234,843	-	-	52,729	234,843	
	37,269	107,246	-	-	37,269	107,246	
	89,998	342,089	-	-	89,998	342,089	
	21,779	31,624	-	-	21,779	31,624	

Note 15 Financial Risk Management (continued)

c. Interest Rate Risk

Exposure to interest rate risk arises on financial assets and financial liabilities recognised at the end of the reporting period whereby a future change in interest rates will affect future cash flows or the fair value of fixed rate financial instruments. The association is exposed to earnings volatility on floating rate instruments. The financial instruments that expose the association to interest rate risk that are limited to lease liabilities, listed shares, cash and cash equivalents.

Sensitivity analysis

The following table illustrates sensitivities to the association's exposures to changes in interest rates and equity prices. The table indicates the impact on how profit and equity values reported at the end of the reporting period would have been affected by changes in the relevant risk variable that management considers to be reasonably possible.

These sensitivities assume that the movement in a particular variable is independent of other variables.

Year ended 30 June 2013
+/- 2% in interest rates

Current	Surplus	Equity
\$	\$	\$
+/-1,055	+/-1,055	

Year ended 30 June 2012
+/- 2% in interest rates

Current	Surplus	Equity
\$	\$	\$
+/-4,697	+/-4,697	

There have been no changes in any of the assumptions used to prepare the above sensitivity analysis from the prior year.

Fair Values

The fair values of financial assets and financial liabilities are presented in the following table and can be compared to their carrying amounts as presented in the statement of financial position. Fair value is the amount at which an asset could be exchanged, or a liability settled, between knowledgeable, willing parties in an arm's length transaction.

Fair value may be based on information that is estimated or subject to judgement, where changes in assumption may have a material impact on the amounts estimated. Areas of judgement and the assumptions have been detailed below. Where possible, valuation information used to calculate fair value is extracted from the market, with more reliable information available from market that are actively traded.

		2013		2012	
	Note	Carrying Amount	Fair Value	Carrying Amount	Fair Value
		\$	\$	\$	\$
Financial Assets					
Cash and cash equivalents	(i)	52,729	52,729	234,843	234,843
Accounts receivable and other debtors	(i)	37,269	37,269	107,246	107,246
Total Financial Assets		89,998	89,998	342,089	342,089
Financial Liabilities					
Accounts Payable and other payables	(i)	68,219	68,219	310,465	310,465
Total Financial Liabilities		68,219	68,219	310,465	310,465

The fair values disclosed in the above table have been determined based on the following methodologies:

- (i) Cash and cash equivalents, accounts receivable and other debtors and accounts payable and other payables are short-term instruments in nature whose carrying amount is equivalent to fair value. Accounts payable and other payables exclude amounts relating to the provision for annual leave, which is outside the scope of AASB 139.

WESNET Incorporated
ABN 16 068 548 631
Statement by Members of the Committee

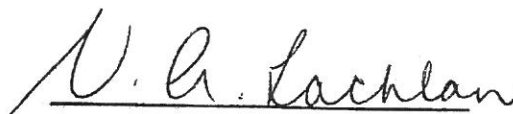
In the opinion of the Committee of WESNET Incorporated the attached financial report as set out on pages 1 - 18:

- (a) Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of WESNET Inc. as at 30 June 2013 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; and
- (b) At the date of this statement there are reasonable grounds to believe that the association 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:



Treasurer - Committee



Committee Member

Signed this 31st day of October 2013



**Richmond
Sinnott &
Delahunty**

Chartered Accountants

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WESNET INCORPORATED

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

TO THE MEMBERS OF WESTNET INC

Report on the Financial Report

We have audited the accompanying financial report of WESNET Inc, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2013, the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, and the certification by the members of the committee on the annual statements giving a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the association.

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 Reform Act 2012 and for such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

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 directors, 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.

Auditor's Opinion on the Financial Report

In our opinion, the financial report of WESNET Inc is in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012, including:

- i. giving a true and fair view of the association's financial position as at 30 June 2013 and of its performance for the year ended on that date; and
- ii. complying with Australian Accounting Standards as disclosed in Note 1.

RICHMOND SINNOTT & DELAHUNTY
Chartered Accountants



PHILIP DELAHUNTY

Partner

Bendigo

Dated this 31st day of October 2013