

WESNET

The Women's Service Network



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

**ANNUAL REPORT
2015-2016**

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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.

Goals

1. Membership Services.
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 2015-16

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Vacant

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The WESNET National Committee is comprised of positions for ten 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, community educators, policy officers, researchers and expert advisers. These women, along with 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 or area of expertise. 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

It is with pleasure that we present the 2015 – 2016 Annual Report to our members and supporters.

On behalf of the National WESNET Committee and staff, we thank you for your support of WESNET, particularly now as we try to help shape the wave of change gaining momentum across Australia in the community, media and government around what continues to be a violence against women epidemic.

Your membership is vital in this environment, to help WESNET continue the fight to improve National policy, legislation and responses to women and their children who experience domestic and family violence. WESNET undertakes this much needed advocacy role as the peak body for domestic and family violence services across Australia and we are making a difference.

WESNET relies on our member support and to continue our National Voice for the sector. At a time of continued major change, growth, increased demand, upheaval and uncertainty in our sector, it is vital that we come together to advocate and lobby for the women and their children that we work with and support, now and into the future, and for strengthened front line and prevention services. We are only as strong as our membership and your participation in, and support of, our work. We are aware that there are many organisations out there in the sector who are not current financial members. If all existing members could recruit one member each, (organisation or individuals) this would greatly enhance WESNET's voice to Government.

WESNET's advocacy work

With the implementation of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women currently underway and about to enter the Third Action Plan, as well as a number of governments cutting funding or refusing to restore cuts to vital services, it is critical that we join together to support WESNET advocate to ensure services which

support women and their children experiencing abuse, remain strong and viable.

I look forward to a strong and responsible Third Action Plan which addresses all 27 of the recommendations to COAG from the COAG Advisory Group to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children. I also look forward to the Third Action Plan committing to the recommendations to the Commonwealth government from the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence Recommendations.

Prevention work is crucial but we know it will continue to raise demand for front line services and increase the risk for many women and children until it is effective and the system is working right. It is critical that we strengthen the front line services until the demand goes down, otherwise we as a society will be negligent in allowing increasingly more women and children to remain in extreme danger from harm or death.

WESNET Committee and members continue to have positions on a number of key advisory mechanisms including the ANROWS Practitioner Engagement Group (an advisory group to assist in the translation of research to practice), ANROWS Disability Research Advisory Group, the Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Survey Specialist Advisory Group, the 1800 RESPECT Advisory Group, the Australian Bureau of Statistics Counting the Homeless in the Census advisory group, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Data Users Group, and Our Watch Awards Technical Advisory Group and Awards Judge. WESNET also contributes to various other national consultations and Round Tables as they occur.

WESNET remains a founding member of Homelessness Australia, providing advice on women's and children's homelessness. Homelessness Australia lost its government funding last year and WESNET continues to support Homelessness Australia to remain a viable peak advocacy body for reducing homelessness in Australia. WESNET is also lead agency and contract manager for the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA). If you haven't already please go to www.awava.org.au and see the wonderful work that AWAVA is doing. AWAVA is focused on all forms of violence against women and has undertaken some incredible work over its first few years of funding. To keep up to date with the work that AWAVA is doing, you can go to the website and subscribe to weekly e-bulletins (the "Weekly Round-up") follow AWAVA on twitter or follow AWAVA on Facebook.

Conference

Our Watch and AWAVA (supported by WESNET) are jointly hosted an amazing International Conference on Violence Against Women.

Speakers included Marai Larasi from the UK, Prof Rashida Manjoo former UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Natasha Stott Despoja, Rosie Batty, along with others and had four informative and interactive streams of important topics.

The SafetyNet Australia Project (Technology Safety Training)

WESNET established SafetyNet Australia in 2012, drawing on the work of the US-based National Network Ending Domestic Violence (NNEDV). This project provides resources to help victims and agencies respond effectively to the many ways that technology impacts victims of domestic and dating violence, sexual violence and stalking.

Everyone who attends this training has realised just how crucial it is for support workers to be trained about how technology can be used to abuse but also how technology can be used to keep women safe and be used as evidence against the abuser. A recent Australian study found that up to 98 per cent of DV Practitioners report that their clients are being abused through technology, with the three most common forms being text messages, Facebook and GPS Location tracking¹. See special report in the following pages.

WESNET Partnerships with Telstra and Government

In 2014 we developed a fantastic partnership with Telstra called **Telstra SafeConnections** to provide safe smart phones for women experiencing domestic/family violence. Telstra has provided the smartphones, pre-paid credit and information on the safe use of technology to WESNET for distribution through our partner full member agencies nationally to provide support to women impacted by domestic violence.

After a year of operation, we have around 100 WESNET member agencies distributing the phones all over Australia and great feedback from the sector about the project. Perhaps not surprisingly, the project was also noticed by the Federal Government and in late May 2016, WESNET was granted funding through the Commonwealth Women's Safety Package to train a range of front line agencies on smartphone misuse and how to help women remain online safely. Telstra, is also very happy with the project, and announced it will increase the number of phones to 20,000 over the next two to three years. This is an amazing contribution to this important programme which directly supports and

empowers women as well as skills up the workforce supporting these women.

With the funding WESNET is now able to increase the team of staff working solely on this important issue. We have appointed Karen Bentley as our National Director SafetyNet Australia and will shortly be appointing trainers and a small team to work on the project. This will include improving and streamlining processes for getting the phones to the frontline. If you are interested in becoming a distributing agency please register now at www.wesnet.org.au/phones.

WESNET has also been working with the Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner on a new two-hour training course around Women's eSafety. WESNET provided the content for the training program, which provides frontline services with an introduction to technology facilitated abuse. The free training is being rolled out across Australia. If you have more than 10 staff and a venue, an eSafety Commission or WESNET trainer will come to your workplace to deliver the training in house.

Until we redress gender inequality and how it intersects with other social inequalities we will not prevent gender-based violence against women and girls. Simultaneously we need to challenge gender stereotypes, sexism and misogyny and other oppressions which underpin and reinforce these inequalities. Social change requires a sustained and coordinated effort. Stay connected with WESNET as we continue to work towards our Vision "that all women and children live free of domestic and family violence and its consequences" – renew your membership, encourage other organisations to become members, attend our trainings and conferences, and follow us on Twitter and our website www.wesnet.org.au for all the latest information.

Thank you again for your ongoing support and please read the reports following.

Yours sincerely



Julie Oberin

National Chairperson

June 2016

¹ Delanie Woodlock, "Remote Control," *DVRVC Advocate*, April 22, 2015, 1-5.



Immigrant, Refugee and Non-English Speaking Background Women

Maya Audibegovic

CALD specific FV services across Australia reported a number of changes and reforms on State and Federal levels significantly impacting CALD women experiencing family violence.

To ensure greater support for the state's multicultural communities, in February 2016 Queensland Parliament passed the Multicultural Recognition Bill 2015. The Bill commits the Queensland Government to developing a whole-of-government multicultural policy and action plan to ensure that government services are responsive to the needs of our multicultural communities.

Queensland government also passed the law that make non-fatal strangulation and suffocation a new, separate offence, which could see offenders jailed for seven years. The new offence was one of the recommendations of the Special Taskforce on Domestic Violence report Not Now, Not Ever: Putting an End to Domestic Violence in Queensland.

In Victoria, the Royal Commission into Family Violence's final report, released in March 2016 and containing 227 recommendations recommends a number of changes to Victoria's responses to, and prevention of, family violence.

Thirteen months of evidence-gathering resulted in more than 1,000 written submissions, 44 consultation and focus groups attended by around 850 people and 25 days of public hearings, during which 220 witnesses gave evidence. Forty-one recommendations are specifically related to diverse victims of family violence including recommendations to improve the accessibility

of services and information to people with disability, Indigenous people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and older people. In relation to CALD communities affected by family violence, the report recommends specific actions around prevention in migrant communities, raising community awareness and increasing knowledge about family violence, improving access to services, overcoming language barriers and the appropriate use of interpreters.

In August 2015 Federal Government launched a pre-departure information pack that aims to reduce violence against CALD women coming to Australia on a Partner visa. The pack is available in 22 languages with information on Australia's laws relating to domestic and family violence, sexual assault and forced marriage, and support services available in Australia.

Outlining the discussions from the first national roundtable on responding to violence against CALD women and their children, in April 2016 Federal Government released "A Platform for Action" report. The report highlights that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to addressing domestic and family violence. The report focuses on the following priorities:

- addressing gender inequality
- recognising the diversity of CALD communities
- connecting services on the ground
- using culturally appropriate education strategies
- empowering communities and fostering leadership
- working with men and boys to change behaviour
- creating safe and supportive workplace environments
- improving research, data and sharing of information.

Lifeline Australia, in partnerships with recognised multicultural service providers, including Immigrant Women's Support Services (QLD) and InTouch (Vic), continues to deliver Multicultural DV-alert workshops across Australia. Lifeline Australia is currently developing training to assist settlement workers to recognise signs of domestic and family violence and how to respond.

In May 2016, a number of interstate CALD women family violence services met in Adelaide for what was the very first meeting of the National CALD Family Violence Network. The primary function of the network is to provide for a stronger voice for CALD victims of family violence and the services specialising in supporting them. The network provides an opportunity to share knowledge, practice wisdom, successes and challenges of these organisations and to identify issues for joint advocacy.

For Migrant Women's Support Services (MWSS) (SA), 2015/2016 major action was around the closure of a 30 years long era of the agency and the preparation for transitioning to its new identity as the Migrant Support Program of the newly established entity, the Women's Safety Services SA. On service delivery level. MWSS

provided support to 315 CALD women and 193 accompanying children from 55 diverse ethnic backgrounds. MWSS also won the 2015 Governor's Multicultural Award in the category of community sector organisations.

In 2015/2016 Immigrant Women's Speakout (NSW) commenced initial stages of establishing a CALD women's shelter that will focus on the accommodation needs of single CALD women without income. The shelter will open in November 2016.

Nine years ago and in partnership with a TAFE qualifications provider, the Multicultural Women's Advocacy Service in WA created a program called "Moving On". Tailored courses have been delivered to CALD women at MWAS premises. The programme has been very successful leading to many women (over 500) in the last 9 years successfully completing the courses and either moving to tertiary study or employment. In the last year the success of the programme saw MWAS get federal funding for 2 years to employ career counsellors who assist participants. In addition, a driving program has been established to further enhance skills of these women.

2015/2016 highlights for InTouch include:

- support provided to 1001 women and more than 800 accompanying children from 98 different cultural backgrounds
- 431 women received immigration support
- 38 women participated in the therapeutic group sessions
- 12 children between the ages of seven and 13 years participated in the therapeutic children's holiday program
- 500 health professionals including maternal child health nurses were trained in Dandenong as part of the Health Justice Partnership Project
- 100 community frontline workers have participated in the Multicultural DV Alert workshops delivered by InTouch
- 312 women were supported at Dandenong, Heidelberg and Sunshine Magistrates' Courts

Recently established network of national CALD family violence services will focus its advocacy around the following issues:

- the importance of CALD specific family violence services and their experience and expertise in providing culturally appropriate services and tailored responses that meet unique needs of some of the most vulnerable women from CALD backgrounds
- CALD specific family violence services are critically under-resourced and need significant and urgent funding that reflects demographics

- of Australian population with 30% of the population being first generation migrants
- CALD data should be a prerequisite component of every relevant research and related data collections
- Experiences of CALD women to be centre of every reform, legislation and program development, not to be add-ons including active participation of CALD services and clients in their design
- Funding support for the recently established network of CALD family violence services



Older Women

Pauline Woodbridge

Has the plight of Older women fallen off the radar? Are the issues faced by older women too often like the women themselves; invisible?

Older women come in all shapes and sizes; they come with a variety of backgrounds, experiences and lifestyles and they carry the stories of their lives in their bodies, in their minds, their feelings and their memories.

For some older women deprivation, marginalisation, subordination and experiencing violence has been lifelong: for others the slide into poverty, isolation and depression has been a cascading process. Often initiated by leaving a violent and abusive relationship, followed by the loss of her home, her job, her family, and her health resulting in older women finding themselves in unsafe, unstable and untenable situations. Too many older women experience poverty, isolation, homelessness and develop mental illnesses.

Each individual woman is left to deal with her own situation as best she can, but the experiences borne by individual older women is a reflection of the way our society and systems have failed women. It is a reflection of the political, cultural and economic structures within our patriarchal led society and the way it has played out in the lives of all women and has additional impacts on older women.

The pathway of disadvantage is supported by attitudes and myths that have taught the women they are not as valuable as men and even less valued if the older woman comes from a diverse cultural background. When we take into account the intersectional layers of disadvantage of racism, ableism and sexism, coupled with a welfare system that does not respond well to their needs, it is not surprising that older women are falling through the cracks.

There had been widespread acknowledgement of the growing demographic of single older women from the baby boomers and other eras but rather than leading to dignified resourcing we notice a continuum of thought (if we think about the problem at all) that either 'blames the victim' or ignores older women and their 'lifestyle choice'. Older women have the least economic power available to women in this society and this makes it difficult for them to collectivise and act in their own best interests. Options of single affordable accommodation, provision of supportive group/cluster housing with universal design principles, appropriate care homes and other possible

arrangements are not commonplace within our housing options.

It is clear that in the current political climate of blaming the individual for their situation as well as a climate of cutting welfare and ignoring the rates of poverty, unemployment and homelessness, older women continue to be missing in both awareness and service provision.

It is clear that the reason we have the services for women that we do, is because we have an independent and active women's sector. Many of the foremothers of the women's movement are now themselves ageing. So once again we will need to rely on ourselves and each other, our collective energy and will, to bring about the changes we need, so that older women can live with dignity, security and safety. Let's get to work and insist our political and social systems recognise and support the needs of Australia's older women, they have helped make this country, now the country needs to give back.



New South Wales

Ela Foster

Overview of changes and changes/reforms in the 2015-16 period.

Legislative Reform

There have been a significant number of amendments to the *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007* (NSW).

Enabling legislation for NDVOS

The *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (National Domestic Violence Orders Recognition) Act 2016* (NSW) was assented to on 6 April 2016 enabling automatic recognition and enforcement of DVOs made in other jurisdictions in preparation for the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme.

Implementation of the recommendations from the statutory review

Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Amendment (Review) Act 2016 No 33 was assented to on 28 June 2016, implementing all 17 recommendations of the statutory review of the *Crimes (Domestic and Personal Violence) Act 2007* (NSW).

Some of the key changes include the following:

- The Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO) system will now hold perpetrators accountable for trying to control their victims through fear and violence.
- Domestic violence offences will also now include any and all NSW or Commonwealth criminal offences where the defendant intends to coerce, control or cause the victim to fear for their safety, like using a mobile carriage service to menace, harass or cause offence.
- The law also introduces ADVOs written in plain English, which spell out examples of the consequences of breaches to improve information for perpetrators and victims. (These are due to be released on 22 October.)
- For the first time, NSW courts would have power to impose an ADVO, without the court having to be satisfied that a victim actually fears violence.
- The legal definition of a domestic relationship is also being expanded so a victim's current

partner can seek an ADVO if targeted by the victim's ex-partner.

- Magistrates will hear final applications for ADVOs even if the victim doesn't appear in court and police will be notified of any application to change or revoke an ADVO.
- The legislation will also enshrine in law that self-represented defendants cannot personally cross-examine child witnesses during ADVO applications, and that a person cannot apply for an ADVO to be revoked after it has expired.

Tenancy Rights for Domestic Violence victims

Domestic violence victims in NSW will also be given the power to terminate rental contracts early under changes to the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010* (NSW). Bill not yet assented to.

Funding boost to Domestic Violence Crisis Accommodation Services

The NSW Government approved a \$20 million funding boost to existing Domestic Violence Crisis Accommodation Services (including mainstream services now responsible for providing these services). The funding was designed to give more women assistance around the clock through local initiatives which:

- Provide expert and responsive 24/7 on-call services.
- Increase beds through refuges renting nearby properties.
- Provide more crisis/emergency accommodation and temporary accommodation.

On the ground the success of this initiative is yet to be determined. There have been reports that in some regions the pressure of additional beds has resulted in a reduction of support able to be provided to women and children accessing the services.

Expansion of Start Safely Subsidy

NSW Government also announced \$43 million in funding over four years for housing supports through Start Safely, providing short to medium-term financial help for people escaping domestic and family violence who are at risk of homelessness. The funding helps women move from crisis and medium-term accommodation services into stable housing in the private rental market, and free up places in crisis accommodation for other women.

Additional sites implemented for Staying Home Leaving Violence and Safer Pathway – Local Coordination Point/Safety Action Meeting Models

In the 2015-16 period, the Safer Pathway Local Coordination Point/Safety Action Meeting and the Staying Home Leaving Violence models have been implemented in additional regions across the state, with more to be rolled out over the next few years

The NSW Government is doubling its investment in specialist domestic violence services and initiatives to more than \$300 million over four years, up from \$148.5 million in the 2015-16 Budget. Whilst this is minimal compared to the impressive commitment demonstrated by the Andrews Government Victoria to adequately resource domestic violence services, it is warmly welcomed.

The following initiatives will commence in the 2016-17 period:

It Stops Here: Safer Pathway Reforms

New sites

NSW Government announced there will be an additional 21 sites rolled out in 2016-17. Nineteen (19) of these sites have been announced so far.

The expanded funding means women on moderate incomes who fall just outside the social housing eligibility threshold can access the subsidy. In addition, the level of the subsidy will be increased, so that more families can seek rental housing in their local communities.

The maximum length of the subsidy will be extended from two to three years. Money will also be available to help women build their independence through education and training, as well as assist them with set up costs of a private tenancy.

Expansion of Staying Home Leaving Violence

Additional \$25 million will be invested in the Staying Home Leaving Violence program over the next four years. There are presently 27 sites with 4 new sites to be rolled out in 2016-17. Concern has been raised at the local level that the funding provided for each service is insufficient to meet demand, particularly in regional areas where a single agency is required to service women over large region.

Perpetrator Interventions

GPS monitoring

NSW Government will invest \$2.9 million over four years to introduce GPS monitoring to improve victim safety.

There will also be an option for a victim to carry a corresponding device so an alert will be generated if the offender approaches their vicinity.

High Risk Offender Teams in Police

\$22 million will be invested over four years to roll out Police High Risk Offender Teams (HROT), as announced in October 2015. The first two specialist teams have been launched in the Northern Region and the Central Metropolitan Region.

NGO-Led Community Based Perpetrator Interventions

\$15 million will be invested over four years for NGO-led community based perpetrator interventions, including \$8

million in new funding, to change behaviour. There is little detail so far on how this will be implemented.

The membership includes a diverse range of women's services across NSW including: Refuges, Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services, Health Centres, Counselling and Information Centre and Immigrant Women's Speakout.



Queensland

Lindy Edwards

Membership includes domestic violence Refuges, Specialist DV Services, Sexual Assault services, and other specific Women's Services

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Services, funded through the Department of Communities, were offered 5 year Service Agreements, instead of the previous 3 years, which was greeted positively by services, as it provides greater stability and continuity of funding.

The Domestic Violence Legislation has been reviewed and key changes have been proposed, which are generally seen by the sector, as a positive move. The Amendment Bill includes changes to improve the protections provided to victims and their families and provide more tailored responses, hold perpetrators more accountable and encourage behaviour change, and enhance the court and justice response, ensuring victim safety remains at the centre of decision making. Key changes recommended in the amendments include, orders to be a minimum of 5 years, unless there are good reasons for it to be shorter, courts required to consider if additional conditions are necessary, increasing the maximum penalties for breaching police protection notices.

As part of the implementation of recommendations from the Task Force Report, domestic violence refuges to move from Department of Housing to Department of Communities, who are responsible for the funding of specialist domestic violence and sexual assault services. This is a positive change in terms of ensuring the cohesiveness of the domestic violence sector.

A Domestic Violence Death Review Board has been funded and established following the Task Force recommendation. The DV Death Review Action Group has transitioned to the newly established National Red Rose Foundation.

Two new shelters have been funded and established, in Townsville and Brisbane, one of the first recommendations to be implemented from the Not Now Not Ever Task Force Report. These are the first new shelters to be funded in Queensland in more than 20 years. In the Townsville region, the addition of 10 further properties has resulted in a much greater number of women and children being able to access safe accommodation when fleeing domestic violence. Whilst it has not completely met the intended outcome of no more women being placed in Motels, certainly the

number, and length of stay of these women has greatly reduced. In addition, in both areas, funding has been provided for outreach to be provided when women do have to be placed in Motels, a recognition of the importance of ensuring that women are not left unsupported and vulnerable.

EVAWQ, the Qld peak body for domestic violence, sexual assault and womens health services was incorporated and has continued to meet regularly. Already EVAWQ is being sought out by government as the appropriate pathway for information sharing with the Qld violence against women sector.

In the 2016/17 Budget, there were substantial provisions in respect of domestic violence and sexual assault. Approximately \$233 million was announced providing much needed funds to fill the service gaps, and recognition by the Queensland Government that the sector is experiencing large increases in demand.

Highlights of this, was the announcement that a further 2 shelters would be established in a rural and remote area, and there would be funding for a new service type to respond to women experiencing violence, with the establishment of women's recovery and sexual assault services.

During 2015/16 the WESNET/Telstra Safe phones partnership has continued to provide further safety for women and children escaping domestic violence. Queensland WESNET members have played a strong role in the distribution of the phones to women across the state, with 15 member organisations signing up as Local Agencies.

The Queensland government has accepted all 140 recommendations of the Task Force Report and will continue implementing them throughout 2016/2017.

There are to be trials for Integrated Responses established, in three regions across the State, with funding to be made available for a further 5. ANROWS has been commissioned by the Qld. Government, Department of Communities to develop key components for integrated response service trials and there are to be consultations held in Brisbane and Cairns towards the end of this year.

Further specialist Domestic Violence Courts are to be established across the state, following the successful trial of the specialist court on the gold Coast.

Since the Labour Government took office in Queensland in January 2015, there has been a real emphasis on domestic violence, along with huge increases in funding. Although the sector is obviously pleased about the recognition of the important issue and the need for increased funding and resources, it does bring with it certain other issues that are being experienced around

the state. Because of the open tender process, many large organisations are competing with the smaller specialist domestic violence services for the funding. It is of concern that these larger organisations do not have the expertise and the gendered analysis of domestic violence. In addition, the increase in funding and establishment of new domestic violence positions, brings with it the added problem of attracting suitably experienced workers to the positions, and generally raises the issue of building/growing a domestic violence specialist workforce.



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.

With all initiatives listed below improving outcomes for our clients (other than the major uncertainty of funding and ongoing sustainability):

- Commenced our campaign for the continuation of service agreements and funding post June 2017 for all domestic and Aboriginal family violence services
- Distribution of the WESNET/Telstra Safe Connections phones going very well – with almost all services taking up the option of being agencies for them and getting phones out to the women.
- The COAG Advisory Panel Report disseminated to state bureaucrats
- The changes to the SA Tenancy Legislation came into force - ensuring ongoing leases, or the ability to break leases without punishment, and increasing safety for women experiencing domestic violence in both the private rental and public housing sectors that was included as an initiative of the Intervention Order legislation.
- MAPS - **Multi-Agency Protection Service** being an initiative hosted by SA Police and including most government departments in sharing info re 'at high risk' DV cases to keep women and children safer – has now included the NGO sector – with DV workers included in the process.
- The Parliamentary Social Development Committee Report was handed down, with many recommendations reflecting sector views, and other similar documents on a national level.
- Amalgamation of the largest Regional Domestic Violence service – Central DVS, with a number of other services – the D&AFV Gateway service, the Migrant Women's Support Service – becoming **Women's Safety Services of SA** – incorporating also the Women's Safety Contact program, and others.
- **Offender's Data Base** now well established and being used as required by services and SA Police alike.

- Work being done on DV and Pets – such as the **Safe Kennels for Pets Program**
- Changeover of SA's Minister for the Status of Women, the previous one was well regarded, however the new one has stepped into her role and met with services as required and is working very closely with the sector.

Most government departments well on their way to White Ribbon Accreditation – training to government departments provided in partnership with Women's Safety Services SA and Working Women's Centre.

Highlights of 15/16:

- Increased media attention on incidents and issues around domestic and Aboriginal family violence – mostly written well
- Launch of **Parliamentarians United Against Domestic Violence** – all SA MP's signed up to this agreement.
- Official Launch of the **ZAHRA Foundation** – with dignitaries such as the Premier and the Governor supporting the work it plans to do.
- The **Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Service** Launch – managed through Victim Support Service SA, working well for women going through court processes and with the sector.
- Working closely with the Office for Women.
- 3 Reps from SA part funded by the Coalition to attend the **GNWS Third International Conference** in The Hague.
- Again a successful **Candle Lighting Vigil in memory of women and children** held in Elder Park in the city.
- Two country meetings of the Coalition held during this year – one in Ceduna and one in the Limestone Coast (Mt Gambier) – always a good opportunity for the urban services to understand the isolation of the far outlying country services, and the extra difficulties faced for women and children from those regions
- Working with Westpac on their banking practices and policies, and how to protect their workers hearing the issues, when dealing with women who are experiencing domestic or Aboriginal family violence, and how to protect their workers experiencing D&AFV
- Regular meetings of the Coalition with the SA Commissioner of Police and the CEO of the Department of Communities and Social Inclusion

Coalition developed a new Strategic Plan, updated most of our operational documents and provided position papers on relevant topics

Future Direction

Current focus on funding post June 2017 and awaiting feedback from our Minister re: plan to ensure ongoing funding and what will be the potential sector reforms.



Tasmania

Jacinta Atkins

Tasmania-WESP Womens Essential Service Providers (WESP), Tasmanian peak body for women's services has members from across women's services sector, including women's shelters, sexual assault support services, Domestic Violence Counselling service, housing connect services. WESP have been successful in the 2014/15 period in a member drive. This has increased interest from not only new members but has reinvigorated members to attend meetings. Meetings are held every six weeks in Ross, Tasmania, a central location for services across the state.

On 13 August 2015, the Government released **Safe Homes, Safe Families** Tasmania's Family Violence Action Plan 2015 – 2020 (**Safe Homes, Safe Families**). **Safe Homes, Safe Families** is the Government's new, coordinated, whole-of-government action plan to respond to family violence.

An additional \$25.57 million has been committed to new and direct actions over the next four years. This includes:

- \$8 million to establish Safe Families Tasmania
- \$685,000 to change attitudes and behaviours that lead to family violence
- \$12 million to support families and children
- \$4.75 million to strengthen legal responses.

More emergency beds to assist in the growing demand for accommodation from women that are presenting as homeless due to family violence.

Hobart Women's Shelter is moving from a dispersed model and land has been purchased and guiding will commence latter in the year on a new shelter that will house the five extra beds for the state.

Legal Aid has been extended across the state for victims of Family Violence with specific workers and offices in the south north and north west. They are also running clinics in outreach offices to reach as many victims as possible.

New funding has also been allocated for a program Safe Choices across the State. The program is a Case management and support program set up to complement the existing counselling programs state wide. The roll out by the Department is in increments across three years. Hobart in the first three years, the north west Tasmania then Launceston.

DSS has also funded an FTE state wide worker to work specifically with women with disabilities.

The Safe Families Coordination Unit continues the justice response to family Violence. The unit has 'investigators' from all Government departments in Tas. Including education children's services health and mental health. They have access to most if not all Government data bases in Tasmania. All high end police family violence risk assessments are investigated daily, this model is developed to track perpetrators and in theory arrest them in a timely manner.

Relationships Australia have been funded to work with perpetrators and will be commencing programs in January.



Victoria

Margaret Augerinos

Overview of changes/reforms since 15/16

As with the previous years report, the last 12 months in Victoria were dominated by the Royal Commission into Family Violence and subsequent funding announcements.

Highlights of 15/16

The Royal Commission into Family Violence which was established in February 2015, undertook a range of community consultations, received over 1,000 submissions and had a number of public hearings to consider a range of expert opinions. Given the broad scope of its terms of reference, it was no surprise its findings, when released, numbered in excess of 2,000 pages.

In all, the Commission made 227 recommendations covering a range of areas from prevention work to legislative reform.

The Commission noted that Victoria has strong foundations in which to build its future response to family violence and noted the strong legislative framework in place, the network of dedicated specialist family violence services, the presence of regional integration committees, good police response etc.

However, it also noted there were significant gaps and obstacles that are limiting the effective implementation of laws, policies and programs. In particular, it noted that all parts of the service system were overwhelmed by the number of family violence reports; efforts to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions were grossly inadequate and too little effort was made in preventing violence.

In moving forward, and at the heart of its 227 recommendations, the Commission noted that new approaches to responding to family violence should be guided by and take into account the following:

- Reflecting the experience of victim/survivors;
- A more sustained focus on supporting children and young people;
- All services must be responsive to victims' needs;
- Services must work better together;

- A sustained focus on effective perpetrator interventions;
- Moving beyond a crisis response: prevention, early intervention, recovery and resilience;
- Family violence must be a core area of responsibility for government – noting that substantial investment needs to be made;
- Developing and using technological solutions; and
- Harnessing community effort.

The Commission's recommendations for new approaches cover the following:

- Support and Safety Hubs in local communities throughout Victoria, to make it easier for victims to find help and gain access to a greater range of services
- New laws to ensure that privacy considerations do not trump victims' safety—with a Central Information Point to funnel information about perpetrators to the Hubs
- An immediate funding boost to services that support victims and families, additional resources for Aboriginal community initiatives and a dedicated funding stream for preventing family violence
- A 'blitz' to rehouse women and children forced to leave their homes, supported by expanded individual funding packages
- An expanded investigative capacity for police and mobile technology for front-line police, including a trial of body-worn cameras
- More specialist family violence courts that can deal with criminal, civil and family law matters at the same time
- Stronger perpetrator programs and increased monitoring and oversight by agencies
- Family violence training for all key workforces—including in hospitals and schools
- Investment in future generations through expanded respectful relationships education in schools
- An independent Family Violence Agency to hold government to account.

Premier Daniel Andrews, on release of the findings, stated that the government accepts all 227 recommendations.

Just two weeks later, Premier Andrews announced a \$572 million package over 2 years to implement around 60 of the most pressing recommendations. This is seen as down payment on the full investment package.

The sector broadly viewed the release of the Royal Commission into Family Violence report as a watershed moment in our community response to family violence

and that many of the recommendations represent a step forward into Victoria developing a world class and world leading response to victim/survivors of family violence and in the prevention of violence.

The sector was heartened by the statement of the Royal Commission that there is currently “inadequate investment to prevent and respond to family violence” and agreed wholeheartedly that the capacity of specialist family violence services should be increased so that we can “move from managing demand to meeting demand”.

The sector appreciated that the Royal Commission recognised the important work of the specialist women’s family violence sector, and that any reform and development needs to build on the strengths of the system, our specialist services and be done in partnership with stakeholders. There was certainly no disagreement that an immediate and substantial increased amount of funding is required at all levels of the system.

Moving forward, the government established the Family Violence and Service Delivery Reform Unit to lead and coordinate the state response. This unit sits within the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

In addition, a Statewide Steering Committee, co-chaired between Minister Fiona Richardson (since replaced by Minister Jennings) and Fiona McCormack (DV Vic) has been established to help guide the implementation of the reforms. A Victims Advisory Council chaired by Rosie Batty has also been formed to provide advice to government.

The Victorian Government is also currently drafting the Family Violence Action Plan which will outline a 10 year vision for reform. It is expected to be released in November 2016.

Future Direction

The biggest challenge for the Victorian sector in the coming years is responding to the increased expectations and pressures that new funding brings. The other concern for member services is the pressure placed on government by other parts of the sector who see funding possibilities through the increased investment opportunities. The experience and wisdom of the specialist women’s sector must be prioritised in expanding services and response. WESNET is in a good position to provide leadership and representation to this effect not only with regard to Victorian services, but also across Australia.



Western Australia

Kedy Kristal

Forty-two West Australian Women and children's refuges.

Overview of changes/reforms

The new metropolitan Refuge System Service Model commenced in October 2015. The metropolitan region has been divided into three regions, north, south and east, each with a lead 24/7 refuge and a group of 6-7 refuges included in the hub for each region. A memorandum of understanding outlining roles and responsibilities has been signed off by nearly all refuges who are party to the RSS model.

The lead refuges will provide immediate crisis accommodation for single women and families at imminent risk of violence. After the initial accommodation period these clients will be moved into longer term refuge accommodation and support from a refuge within a hub. The new model has been evaluated by Professor Donna Chung and colleagues at Curtin University

Feedback from the evaluation has shown significant benefits to date, some of which were unanticipated benefits.

- improved communication between refuges;
- cooperation and coordination in the sector resulting in greater transparency of bed usage;
- improved awareness and documentation of high risk;
- a better understanding of problems and more proactive management of women through refuges;
- improved trust between stakeholders; and

Refuges were also meeting regularly in their Hubs and reported improved relationships and better understanding of individual refuges capacity and limitations.

Federal government funding through the Women's Safety package was announced in June 2016, the department of Child Protection and Family Support has targeted this money to

- \$600,000 over 3 years to fund a Local Support Coordinator in the Murchison region.

- Increase the capacity of three metropolitan Safe at Home programs and to develop an Aboriginal specific Safe at Home service.
- Expand SAH Models/DV Outreach to Pilbara and Peel regions.

Safer Families, Safer Communities: Kimberley Family Violence Regional Plan 2015-2020

Following extensive consultation and information analysis, an across government and community sector plan for responding to family violence in the Kimberley region has been developed. [The Safer Families, Safer Communities: Kimberley Family Violence Regional Plan 2015-2020 \(Kimberley Plan\)](#) focuses on Aboriginal families and communities as a priority and outlines a whole of community response. This includes improved access to and effectiveness of existing service responses, including civil and criminal justice processes, and working alongside Aboriginal people, families and communities to develop and/or strengthen local responses to family violence. The Kimberley Plan is informed by the report [Family Violence in the Kimberley](#) which documents the outcomes of data analysis, stakeholder consultation and case reviews.

Highlights of 15/16

Refuges have been identifying for many years an increasing number single women and families coming into refuges without any income. This year in the metropolitan area we initiated a voluntary six month survey to collect data on this issue.

The survey targeted women with or without accompanying children escaping domestic and family violence and who had no access to income including NZ residents and women who only received a special benefit due to having child born in Australia

The results from the first 6-months of the survey shows: between January to June 2016, 15 Refuges accommodated and supported 77 women and 70 children. (5 of these clients were community based with 1 coming into refuge after the support period started). 24 were single women.

The main countries of origin: NZ 11, India 6, Iraq 6, Japan 5, Vietnam 5, Philippines 4, China 3, Indonesia 3. Main supports: Cash/vouchers \$7302 Food \$16,906, Medical \$5,343 Rent not collected \$48,116. Costs for clothes, transport and housing were also provided and the total cost was \$88,856.00.

All the refuges have committed to collect the data for the next six months and include visa categories and several more refuges have join the project, following the next six month survey we will present the findings to the

Department of Child Protection and Family Support.

The inaugural Family Violence Governance Council was held in January 2016 and the CEO of the Women Council for Domestic and Family Violence Services (WCDFVS), Angela Hartwig is the sector representative. The Council will coordinate and drive strategic planning, provide leadership and respond to emerging DFV issues.

IWD 2016-Funds for Freedom Fundraiser at the Duxton Hotel with guest speaker Professor Donna Chung, was well attended. This self-funded project provides women and children exiting Refuges with the opportunity to receive a grant of up to \$500 to purchase white goods and/or essential items.

In May 2016 the new Ellenbrook Family Support service opened, with 5 crisis accommodation units built on a large block, there are three two- bedroom units and two three- bedroom units. The centre will operate without staff on-site providing up to 6 months of crisis accommodation for families able to live independently.

On 19th May 2016, the Hon Andrea Mitchell MLA, Minister for Child Protection announced the release of *Homelessness in Western Australia - A Snapshot of the State Government's role in Homelessness Policy Services and Future Directions* (the Homelessness Paper). As part of this planning work, The Department for Child Protection and Family Support is organising homelessness forums on *Reviewing and strengthening the Western Australian response to homelessness: the way forward*. These forums are being held in country regions and across the Perth metropolitan area between early July and September 2016.

The Ministerial Advisory Council on Child Protection (MACCP) is conducting consumer consultations which aim to gain insight into women and children's experience of the service system responses when they have sought help and support.

The Women's Council will undertake the consultation and provide a final report with recommendations on ways to improve how agencies (in particular, police, courts and child protection authorities) respond to women and children in cases of domestic and family violence.

On 1 July, the Department for Child Protection and Family Support launched new practice guidance for child protection workers about assessing and responding to family and domestic violence.

The practice guidance includes procedures for conducting assessments, safety planning, engaging and responding to perpetrators and seeking violence restraining orders on behalf of children. It takes into consideration the findings of the Ombudsman Own Motion Investigation into VROs, the learnings from the Luke Batty Inquest and changes to the *Children and Community Services Act 2004* which provide for greater exchange of information in cases of family and domestic violence, and explicit recognition that exposing a child to family and domestic violence is a form of emotional abuse.

Future Direction

The WA State government goes to election in early 2017 and a coalition of community sector agencies and unions called the **Safe Systems Coalition** are looking at how Western Australia can leverage off the findings from the Victorian Royal Commission by examining the applicability of the recommendations to this state and to explore options to address the challenges that are unique to our state.

The SSC will be releasing a score card in the lead up to the State election. Correspondence will also be sent to leaders of each party asking them to demonstrate how their domestic and family violence policy will address key criteria.

Perpetrator Accountability. The department of Child Protection and Family Support has announced it will be releasing a competitive tender to establish a perpetrator peak body.

Dignity 2017:

The exciting news is that Dignity 2017 will be hosted by the WCDFVS in Perth on 23-25 May next year and will be attended by a number of international keynote speakers and presenters from Vancouver, Montreal, Sweden, Aotearoa (NZ) in particular. The WCDFVS will be celebrating 40 years 1977-2017, an event not to be missed. Drs Allan Wade, Linda Coates and Cathy Richardson, from the Centre for Response-Based Practice will be keynote speakers.

Women With Disabilities WA and the Women's Community Health Network WA has recently embarked on a 12 to 15 month project 'Doors to Safety' – for women with disabilities experiencing domestic and family violence. The purpose of the project is threefold:

- Build the capacity of the disability support sector and the domestic and family violence sector to identify and effectively respond to women with disabilities experiencing domestic and family violence.
- Establish pathways to safety for women with disabilities experiencing domestic and family

violence that can be accessed by women with disabilities; the domestic and family violence sector; and the disability sector.

Enable women with disabilities to identify domestic and family violence and, should they experience it, where to seek support.



Safety Net Australia

Karen Bentley

Safety Net Australia (Technology Safety Training and Advice)

The SafetyNet Australia project is about the intersection of technology and violence against women. Based on the US National Network to End Domestic Violence (NNEDV) Safety Net Project, it focuses on how technology is misused to exert power and control over women and how support services and women can effectively respond. We work with government, corporate partners and front line services to address the impacts of technology misuse, provide training and educational resources, and advocate for strong policies that further the safety, privacy and rights of women who have experienced gender-based violence.

2015-16 has been a great year for the Safe Net Australia Project, with WESNET gaining critical funding as part of the Federal Government's \$100m Women's Safety Package and increased support from Telstra for the SafeConnections project.

Funding and support to expand SafeConnections

Through the SafeConnections project, WESNET and Telstra work in partnership to provide new smartphones to women experiencing domestic violence, empowering them to stay safely connected to support networks.

Telstra initially donated 2,500 smartphones to WESNET for this purpose. On 17 March 2016, the Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull, MP, announced \$2.5 million for WESNET to undertake the Safer Technology for Women initiative and Telstra announced that it would be increasing the number of smartphones donated to 20,000.

Thanks to the Federal Government's and Telstra's increased support, we will be providing more support to workers and women, including by:

- significantly expanding the SafeConnections distribution network, making smartphones more

accessible to eligible women and their children and

- developing and provide training nationally to frontline services to increase their knowledge of technology facilitated abuse and how to respond.

Education and training

As part of the Federal Government's \$100m Women's Safety Package, the Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner was provided with funding to develop a new eSafety for Women project. Under this project, WESNET has worked closely with the Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner to develop a free two-hour training workshop that began rolling out nationally in June 2016. The eSafety for Women project also includes a new website, resources and helpful videos on the new website www.esafety.gov.au/women

In late November and early December 2015, the ACT Government again invited the SafetyNet team to present training for the ACT Sector. This time, a full four days of training was delivered to over 70 DV and other professionals. The training was very well received and covered a wide range of technology-abuse. Helen Campbell and Alex Davies from the NSW Women's Legal Services presented a half-day session on the legal issues relating to technology facilitated abuse and relevant federal and ACT legislation.

Emerging trends

As technology is always changing, the effectiveness of our resources and advice for workers and women depends on us staying up to date on emerging trends. To this end, Julie Oberin and I attended the NNEDV's 3rd Technology Safety Summit in San Francisco in July 2015, along with other DV professionals, law enforcement, legal and justice advocates and technology companies.

This learning will be integrated into our education resources, advice to workers and women at risk, and will inform the new training being developed as part of the Safe Connections project.

We are thrilled that the SafetyNet Australia project has attracted increased resources and support in 2015-16. We look forward to delivering more training, resources and support to minimise the impact of technology misuse on women experiencing domestic violence.

Treasurer's Report

Kedy Kristal

This year WESNET has continued with its partnership with Telstra to help women impacted by domestic violence to stay safely connected, the distribution of these phones is ongoing and in conjunction with our partner agencies nationally. Recently Telstra has committed to significantly expanding our program and will be donating 20,000 smartphones.

Additionally, the Federal government has announced funding to WESNET to train frontline services in how to become a distributing agency for the phones and to skill up workers about the use of smartphones, this will be a significant expansion to our existing program.

Work will continue on increasing the membership of WESNET, as these fees are essential to WESNET's continuing activities.

WESNET has made a profit overall in this financial year of just under seventeen thousand dollars and will go into 2016/17 with a budget expectation of increasing this to thirty thousand dollars.

The audit was again an unqualified audit and I would like to thank Lisa Thomas for her work during the year.

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink, appearing to read 'Kedy Kristal', written in a cursive style.

WESNET INCORPORATED
ABN 16 068 548 631
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016

WESNET Incorporated
ABN 16 068 548 631
Financial Statements
For the year ended 30 June 2016

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WESNET Incorporated
ABN 16 068 548 631
Committee's Report
For the year ended 30 June 2016

The Members of the Committee herewith submit the financial report of WESNET Incorporated for the financial year ended 30 June 2016.

Committee Members

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

Julie Oberin - Chairperson	Vicki Lachlan
Mirjana Wilson - Public Officer (left as committee member August 2015).	Margaret Augerinos
Ela Foster	Kedy Kristal - Treasurer
Dale Wakefield (left August 2015)	Jane Corpuz-Brock
Lindy Edwards - Secretary	Jacinta Atkins
Pauline Woodbridge	Maya Avdibegovic
Carolyn Lewis (Appointed November 15, Left April 2016)	

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 of the Association for the period amounted to \$16,980 (2015: \$3,288)

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



Kedy Kristal
Treasurer - Committee



Margaret Augerinos
Committee Member

Dated this 3rd day of November 2016

WESNET Incorporated
ABN 461 068 548 631
Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income
For the year ended 30 June 2016

	Notes	2016 \$	2015 \$
Revenue	2	629,772	445,820
Employee Provisions Expense		(134,053)	(106,327)
Other Expenses	3(a)	(476,540)	(334,076)
Audit Fees	3(b)	(2,199)	(2,129)
Current year surplus before income tax		<u>16,980</u>	<u>3,288</u>
Income Tax Expense	1(a)	-	-
Other Comprehensive Income		-	-
Net Current Year Surplus		<u>16,980</u>	<u>3,288</u>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

WESNET Incorporated
ABN 16 068 548 631
Statement of Financial Position
As at 30 June 2016

	Notes	2016 \$	2015 \$
Assets			
Current Assets			
Cash on hand	4	706,618	236,671
Accounts receivable and other debtors	5	36,583	10,546
Other Current assets	6	7,947	11,570
Total Current Assets		<u>751,148</u>	<u>258,787</u>
Total Assets		<u>751,148</u>	<u>258,787</u>
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Accounts payable and other payables	7	704,155	228,612
Employee provisions	8	5,355	5,517
Total Current Liabilities		<u>709,510</u>	<u>234,129</u>
Total Liabilities		<u>709,510</u>	<u>234,129</u>
Net Assets		<u>41,638</u>	<u>24,658</u>
Equity			
Retained surplus		<u>41,638</u>	<u>24,658</u>
Total Equity		<u>41,638</u>	<u>24,658</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 2016

Notes	Retained Surplus	Total
	\$	\$
Balance at 1 July 2014	21,370	21,370
Net surplus for the year	3,288	3,288
Other comprehensive income for the year	-	-
Total Comprehensive Income	3,288	3,288
Balance at 30 June 2015	24,658	24,658
Balance at 1 July 2015	24,658	24,658
Net surplus for the year	16,980	16,980
Other comprehensive income for the year	-	-
Total Comprehensive Income	16,980	16,980
Balance at 30 June 2016	41,638	41,638

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 2016

	Notes	2016 \$	2015 \$
Cash Flows From Operating Activities			
Operating grant receipts		487,881	322,942
Receipts from membership and customers		209,438	196,061
Interest received		2,174	1,390
Payments to suppliers and employees		<u>(229,546)</u>	<u>(425,130)</u>
Net cash provided by operating activities	9	<u>469,947</u>	<u>95,263</u>
Net increase in cash held		469,947	95,263
Cash on hand at the beginning of financial year		236,671	141,408
Cash on hand at the end of financial year	4	<u>706,618</u>	<u>236,671</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 2016

Note 1 Summary of significant accounting policies

The financial statements are special purpose financial statements prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic) . The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historic costs and do not take into account changing money values or, except where stated specifically, current valuations of non-current assets.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless stated otherwise, have been adopted in the preparation of these financial statements.

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) Employee Provisions

Short-term employee benefits

Provision is made for the association's obligation for short-term employee benefits. Short-term employee benefits are benefits (other than termination benefits) that are expected to be settled wholly before 12 months after the end of the annual reporting period in which the employees render the related service, including wages, salaries and annual leave. Short-term employee benefits are measured at the (undiscounted) amounts expected to be paid when the obligation is settled.

Other long-term employee benefits

Provision is made for employees' annual leave entitlements not expected to be settled wholly before 12 months after the end of the annual reporting period in which the employees render the related service. Other long-term employee benefits are measured at the present value of the expected future payments to be made to employees. Expected future payments incorporate anticipated future wage and salary levels, durations of service and employee departures, and are discounted at rates determined by reference to end-of-reporting-period market yields on government bonds that have maturity dates approximating the terms of the obligations. Any remeasurements of other long-term employee benefit obligations due to changes in assumptions are recognised in profit or loss in the periods in which the changes occur.

The association's obligations for long-term employee benefits are presented as non-current provisions in its statement of financial position, except where the association does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least 12 months after the reporting date, in which case the obligations are presented as current provisions.

WESNET Incorporated
ABN 16 068 548 631
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 30 June 2016

Note 1 Summary of significant accounting policies (continued)

(d) 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.

(e) Cash on hand

Cash on hand include cash on hand, deposits held at-call with banks and other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

(f) 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.

(g) Comparative Figures

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

(h) Revenue and Other Income

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

Government grants are recognised as revenue when the association has performed the services for which the grant was received. If, at balance date, grant monies are held, but services are to be delivered in the next financial year, the unexpended grants are recorded as a current liability on the statement of financial position. This approach is not in accordance with AASB 1004 Contributions, which would deem the income to be recognised when it is controlled.

(i) Accounts Payable and Other Payables

Accounts payable and 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 2016

Note 1 Summary of significant accounting policies (continued)

(j) 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 (i.e. trade date accounting adopted).

Classification and subsequent measurement

Financial instruments are subsequently measured at fair value, amortised cost using the effective interest method, or cost.

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.

WESNET Incorporated
ABN 16 068 548 631
Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 30 June 2016

Note 1 Summary of significant accounting policies (continued)

(j) Financial Instruments (continued)

Impairment

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") having 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.

For financial assets carried at amortised cost (including loans and receivables), a separate allowance account is used to reduce the carrying amount of financial assets impaired by credit losses. After having taken all possible measures of recovery, if management establishes that the carrying amount cannot be recovered by any means, at that point the written-off amounts are charged to the allowance account or the carrying amount of impaired financial assets is reduced directly if no impairment amount was previously recognised in the allowance account.

When the terms of financial assets that would otherwise have been past due or impaired have been renegotiated, the association recognises the impairment for such financial assets by taking into account the original terms as if the terms have not been renegotiated so that the loss events that have occurred are duly considered.

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.

When an impairment loss on a revalued asset is identified this is recognised against the revaluation surplus in respect of the same class of asset to the extent that the impairment loss does not exceed the amount in the revaluation surplus for that class of asset.

(k) 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.

(l) 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.

Key estimates

(i) Impairment - general

The association assesses impairment at the end of each reporting period by evaluation of conditions and events specific to the association that may be indicative of impairment triggers. Recoverable amounts of relevant assets are reassessed using value-in-use calculations which incorporate various key assumptions.

(m) New and Amended Accounting Policies Adopted by the Association

Certain new AAS's have been issued that are not mandatory for the 30 June 2016 reporting period. The association has assessed these pending standards and has identified that no material impact will flow from the application of these standards in future reporting periods.

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Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 30 June 2016

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Note 2 Revenue		
- Operating Grants	487,881	322,942
- Other Operating Revenue	107,338	87,804
- Member Subscriptions	32,379	33,684
- Interest Received	2,174	1,390
	<u>629,772</u>	<u>445,820</u>
Note 3(a) Other Expenses		
- Consultancy fees	48,939	47,027
- Management fee	122,515	109,936
- Management costs - AWAVA & Safer Tech	84,029	54,531
- Meeting and Conference Costs	78,506	18,137
- Employee Cost - Recruitment	8,505	455
- Insurance	1,610	3,124
- Postage	1,979	1,837
- Printing and Stationary	681	3,810
- Subscriptions / Membership	1,555	546
- Travel related expenses	91,047	54,392
- Bad debts written off	1,953	6,138
- Miscellaneous- Other expenses from ordinary activities	35,221	34,143
	<u>476,540</u>	<u>334,076</u>
Note 3(b) Auditor's Remuneration		
- audit of financial report	<u>2,199</u>	<u>2,129</u>
Note 4 Cash on hand		
Cash at bank-unrestricted	706,618	236,671
	<u>706,618</u>	<u>236,671</u>
Note 5 Accounts Receivable and Other Debtors		
Accounts Receivable	36,583	10,546
	<u>36,583</u>	<u>10,546</u>

No impairment of accounts receivable and other debtors was required at 30 June 2016 (2015: NIL)

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Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 30 June 2016

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.

2016	Gross Amount \$	Past Due and Impaired \$	Within initial trade terms \$	Past Due but Not Impaired (Days Overdue)		
				31-60 \$	61-90 \$	>90 \$
Trade Receivables	36,583	-	36,036	303	244	-
Total	36,583	-	36,036	303	244	-

2015	Gross Amount \$	Past Due and Impaired \$	Within initial trade terms \$	Past Due but Not Impaired (Days Overdue)		
				31-60 \$	61-90 \$	>90 \$
Trade Receivables	10,546	-	7,449	2,883	214	-
Total	10,546	-	7,449	2,883	214	-

	2016 \$	2015 \$
Note 6 Other Current Assets		
Prepayments	7,947	11,570
	<u>7,947</u>	<u>11,570</u>
Note 7 Accounts Payable and Other Payables		
Trade creditors	41,184	29,900
Revenue in Advance	573,891	159,201
Accrued Expenses	27,256	17,998
GST Liability	61,824	21,513
	<u>704,155</u>	<u>228,612</u>

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Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 30 June 2016

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Note 8 Employee Provisions		
Current		
Annual Leave	5,355	5,517
	<u>5,355</u>	<u>5,517</u>
Analysis of Employee Provisions - Annual Leave Entitlements		
Opening Balance as at 1 July 2015	5,517	
Additional provisions	6,222	
Amounts used	<u>(6,384)</u>	
Balance at 30 June 2016	<u>5,355</u>	

Employee Provisions - Annual Leave Entitlements

The provision for employee benefits represents amounts accrued for annual leave.

Based on past experience, the association doesn't expect the full amount of annual leave to be settled wholly within the next 12 months. However, the amount must be classified as a current liability because the association does not have an unconditional right to defer the settlement of the amount in the event employees wish to use their leave entitlements.

Note 9 Cash flow information

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

Current year surplus	16,980	3,288
Changes in assets and liabilities		
- (Increase) decrease in accounts receivable and other debtors	(26,037)	29,382
- (Increase) decrease in other assets	3,623	(5,786)
- Increase (decrease) in accounts payable and other payables	475,543	64,062
- increase (decrease) in employer provisions	<u>(162)</u>	<u>4,317</u>
Net cash flows from/ (used in) operating activities	<u>469,947</u>	<u>95,263</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 \$206,544 (2015: \$164,467) to Annie North Inc. in relation to the service provided by the Annie North Inc., CEO and other Finance & Administration staff.

b. Other Related Parties

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

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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. There is a subcontract with YWCA Canberra for rental payments of \$2306 per quarter for the next 12 months, total \$9224 per year.

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Payable - minimum lease payments		
- no later than 12 months	9,224	8,809
- between 12 months and 5 years	-	-
- greater than 5 years	-	-
	<u>9,224</u>	<u>8,809</u>

This agreement is currently only for the next 12 months.

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

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Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 30 June 2016

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:

	Notes	2016 \$	2015 \$
Financial Assets			
Cash on hand	4	706,618	236,671
Accounts Receivable and other Debtors	5	36,583	10,546
Other Current Assets	6	7,947	11,570
Total Financial Assets		751,148	258,787
Financial Liabilities			
Financial liabilities at amortised cost:			
- Accounts Payable and other payables	7	642,331	207,099
Total Financial Liabilities		642,331	207,099

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.

Discussions on monitoring and managing financial risk exposures are held and minuted by the committee of management

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.

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. The association has no significant concentrations of credit risk with any single counterparty or group of counterparties. Details with respect to credit risk of accounts receivable and other debtors are provided in Note 5.

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Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 30 June 2016

Note 15 Financial Risk Management (continued)

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 association manages this risk through the following mechanisms:

- preparing forward looking cash flow analysis in relation to operational investing and financing activities,
- only investing surplus cash with major financial institutions, and
- proactively monitoring recovery of unpaid debtors.

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

	Within 1 Year		1 to 5 Years		Total	
	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Financial liabilities due for payment						
Accounts Payable and Other Payables (excluding Annual Leave and grants receivable in advance)	642,331	207,099	-	-	642,331	207,099
Total contractual outflows	642,331	207,099	-	-	642,331	207,099
Total expected outflows	642,331	207,099	-	-	642,331	207,099
Financial assets - cash flows realisable						
Cash On Hand	706,618	236,671	-	-	706,618	236,671
Accounts Receivable & other Debtors	36,583	10,546	-	-	36,583	10,546
Total anticipated inflows	743,201	247,217	-	-	743,201	247,217
Net (outflow)/inflow on financial instruments	100,870	40,118	-	-	100,870	40,118

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 cash and cash equivalents.

The association also manages interest rate risk by ensuring that, whenever possible, payables are paid within any pre-agreed credit terms.

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.

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Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 30 June 2016

Note 15 Financial Risk Management (continued)

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

	Current Surplus	Equity
	\$	\$
Year ended 30 June 2016		
+/- 2% in interest rates	+/-1,283	+/-1,283
	Current Surplus	Equity
	\$	\$
Year ended 30 June 2015		
+/- 2% in interest rates	+/-1,905	+/-1,905

No sensitivity analysis has been performed on foreign exchange risk as the association has no significant exposure to currency risk.

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.

	Note	2016		2015	
		Carrying Amount	Fair Value	Carrying Amount	Fair Value
		\$	\$	\$	\$
Financial Assets					
Cash on hand (i)	4	706,618	706,618	236,671	236,671
Accounts receivable and other debtors (i)	5	36,583	36,583	10,546	10,546
Total Financial Assets		743,201	743,201	247,217	247,217
Financial Liabilities					
Accounts Payable and other payables (i)	7	642,331	642,331	207,099	207,099
Total Financial Liabilities		642,331	642,331	207,099	207,099

- (i) Cash on hand, 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
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Statement by Members of the Committee
For the year ended 30 June 2016

In the opinion of the Committee of WESNET Incorporated the attached financial report as set out on pages 1 - 16:

- (a) Presents a true and fair view of the financial position of WESNET Inc. as at 30 June 2016 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:



Kedy Kristal
Treasurer - Committee



Margaret Augerinos
Committee Member

Signed this 3rd Day of November 2016

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF WESNET INCORPORATED

Report on the Financial Report

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of WESNET Incorporated (the association), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2016, 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, and has determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 is appropriate to meet the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The committee's responsibility also includes such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a 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.

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial report gives a true and fair view of the financial position of WESNET Inc as at 30 June 2016 and of its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, and the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*.

Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 to the financial statements, which describe the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist WESNET Inc to meet the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

RICHMOND SINNOTT & DELAHUNTY
Chartered Accountants



P. P. Delahunty
Partner
Bendigo

Dated this 1st day of November 2016