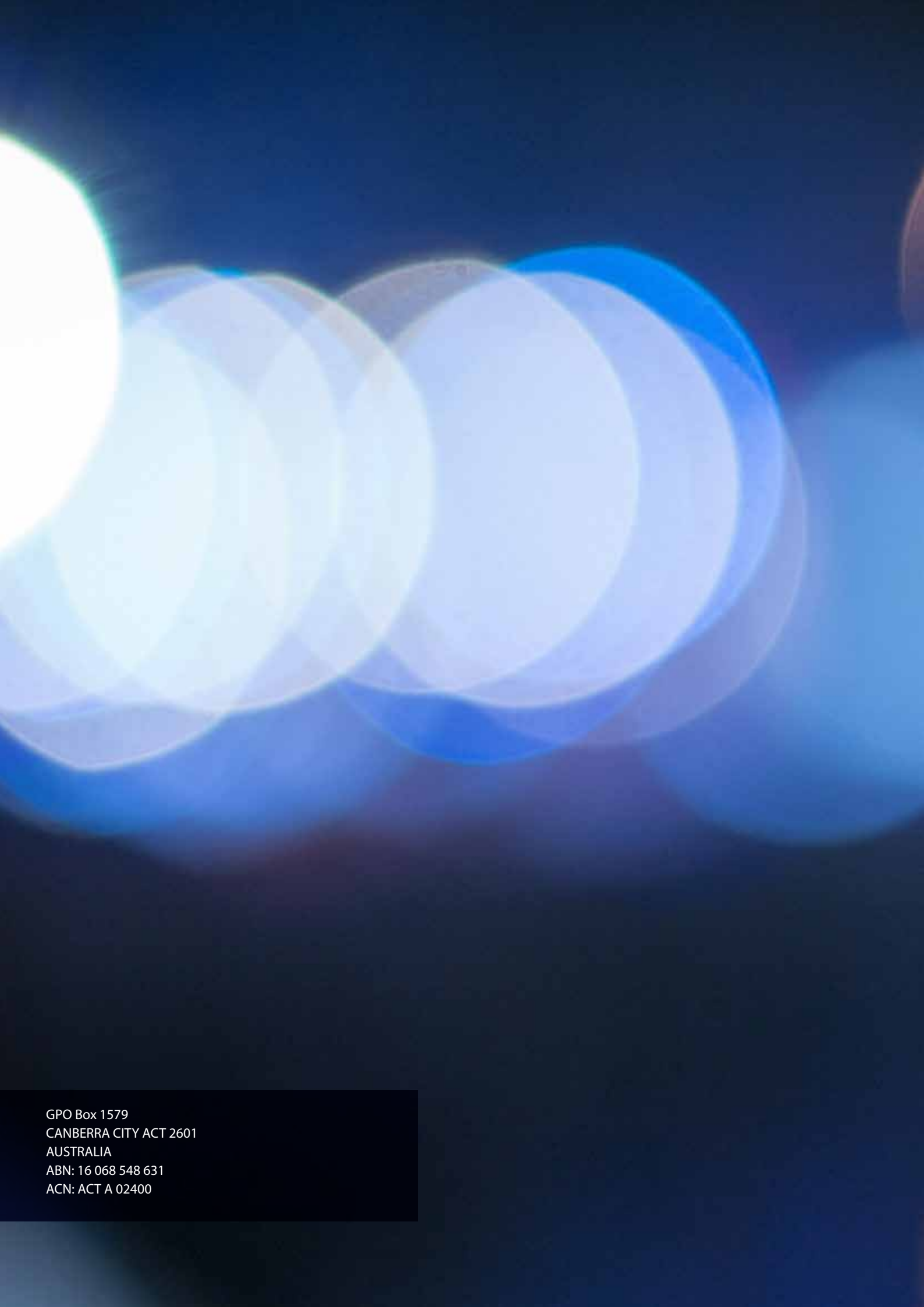


ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17



WESNET
The Women's Services Network

 1800WESNET
National Toll Free 1800 937 638
 wesnet.org.au
 [WesnetAustralia](https://www.facebook.com/WesnetAustralia)
 @WESNETAustralia



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**WESNET
Annual
Report
2016-17**

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.

VISION

That all women and children live free from domestic and family violence

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.

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.

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, we acknowledge that women and children's experiences are also intrinsically shaped by their ethnicity, culture, ability, age, gender identity and class.

Our Committee



The WESNET National Committee is comprised of 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.

OFFICE BEARERS

Chairperson

Julie Oberin
Annie North Inc (VIC REP)

Vice Chair

Lindy Edwards

Treasurer

Margaret Augerinos

Secretary

Vicki Lachlan

Public Officer

Mirjana Wilson

STATE & TERRITORY REPRESENTATIVES

ACT

Frances Crimmins - from November 2016
YWCA ACT Family Violence Programs

New South Wales

Ela Foster - left October 2016
Hayley Foster - from November 2016
Northern Rivers Women's Domestic
Violence Services

Northern Territory

Di Gipey - from October 2016
Alice Springs Women's Shelter

Queensland

Lindy Edwards
Sera's Women's Shelter

South Australia

Vicki Lachlan
Louise Place

Tasmania

Jacinta Atkins
Safe Choices

Victoria

Margaret Augerinos (alternate)
Centre for Non-Violence

Western Australia

Kedy Kristal - left November 2016,
returned April 2017
Women's Council for Domestic and
Family Violence Services

INTERSECTION & DIVERSITY REPRESENTATIVES

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women

Vacant

Immigrant, non-English speaking background and Refugee Women

Maya Avdibegovic - Left April 2017
Jane Corpuz-Brock
Immigrant Women's Speakout
Association

Older Women

Pauline Woodbridge
North Queensland Domestic Violence
Resource Service

Our work

Established in 1992, the Women's Services Network (WESNET) is the peak body for Australian domestic and family violence services.

Our National Committee is comprised of women who volunteer their time and expertise to further our work as a sector and in the elimination of violence against women. Drawn from every State and Territory in Australia, they are grassroots service managers, direct service workers, counsellors, trainers, peer educators, researchers, and expert advisers. These women are also 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. There is also a representative for immigrant and

refugee women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and older women.

We participate in key national policy debates and consultative processes, research and develop publications, and present at national and international conferences. .

The WESNET Committee and members continue to hold 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), the Australian Bureau of Statistics Personal Safety Survey Specialist Advisory Group, the 1800 RESPECT Advisory Group, the National Community Attitudes Survey Advisory Group, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Data Users Group, and Our Watch Awards Technical Advisory Group. WESNET also contributes to various other national consultations and Round Tables as they occur, along with high level State and Territory advisory mechanisms.

WESNET remains a founding member of Homelessness Australia, providing advice on women's and children's homelessness.

We recognise domestic and family violence is only one form of violence against women. WESNET works with other organisations in Australia and internationally.

In addition to our advocacy work we have two main programs. We are the contract manager for the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA). We also have the Safety Net Australia project, which has grown significantly this financial year with the support of Telstra and funding from the Commonwealth Government. The Safety Net Australia program works at the intersection of technology and violence against women. You can read more about our two programs in the individual reports from both these programs in this Annual Report.

Our staff

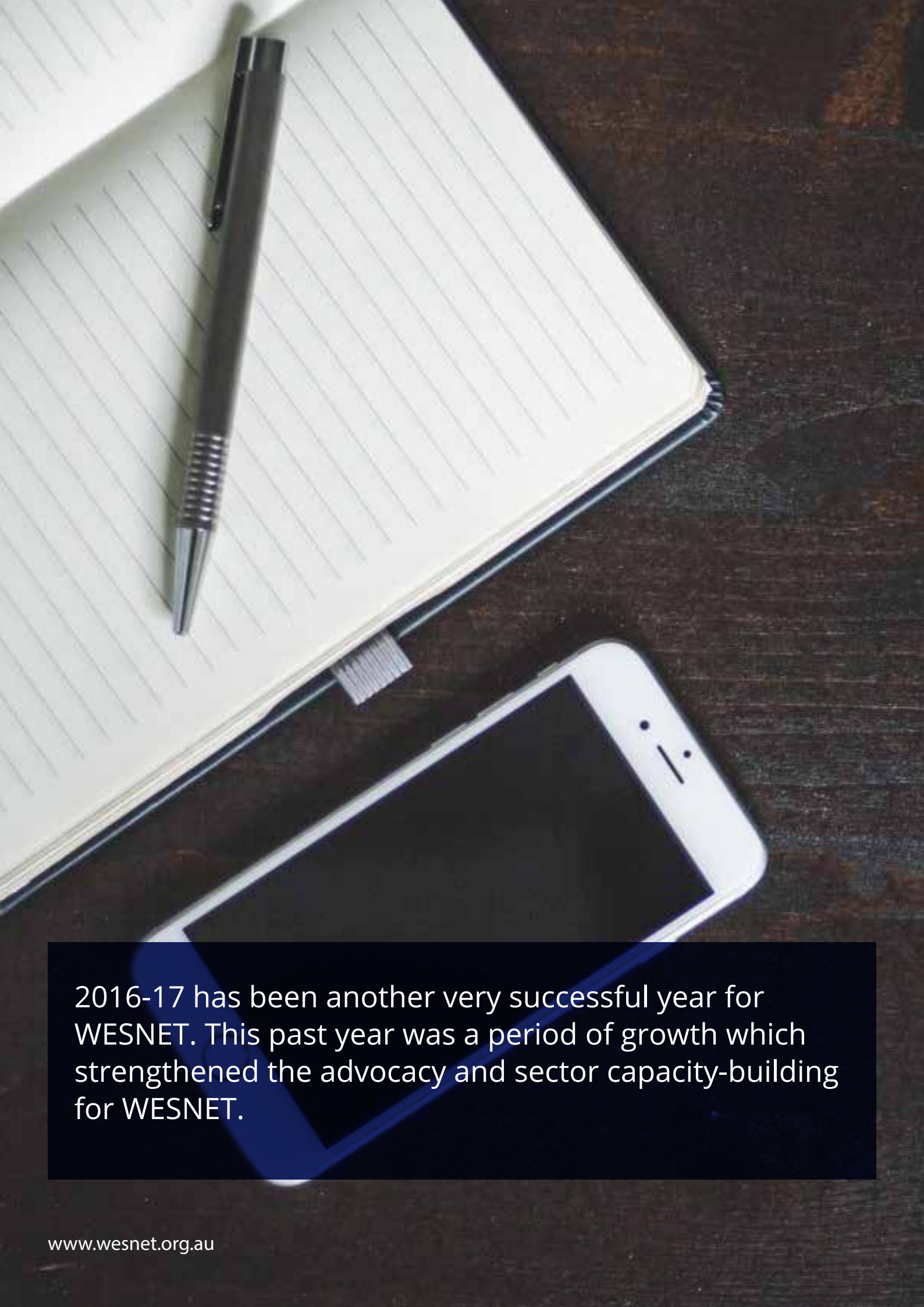
Safety Net Australia Team

Karen Bentley
Kaofeng Lee
Heidi Guldbaek
Ella B
Diana H
Natalie M
Elly S

AWAVA Team

Dr Merrindah Andrew
Teena Saulo (left April 2017)
Anahita Surya
Megan Morris (unpaid leave April 2017)
Tina Dixson (commenced April 2017)





2016-17 has been another very successful year for WESNET. This past year was a period of growth which strengthened the advocacy and sector capacity-building for WESNET.

WESNET Chair Report

Julie Oberin

It is with pleasure that we present the 2016-17 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 during this wave of change that is rolling out across Australia.

2016-17 has been a significant year for the domestic and family violence sector and for WESNET and AWAVA.

We are pleased to see such great momentum on the issue of eliminating violence against women and WESNET and the services we represent can take pride in the work we have been doing to help women and their children impacted by domestic and family violence.

As the peak body for domestic and family violence services across Australia WESNET acts as the conduit between the front-line services and government and other key stakeholders. This positions WESNET in a critical and key position to provide high level and practical advice to government and policy influencers on issues impacting the response to, and prevention of domestic and family violence.

WESNET draws on the expertise of skilled and experienced staff, front-line practitioners, policy specialists, managers and researchers to provide key advice that WESNET can formulate and articulate through key advisory mechanisms.

There is a lot of work going on in Australia at this time around gendered-based violence against women and their children and it is critical that the front-line sector represented by WESNET remains as strong and in touch as it can.

During 2017-18 WESNET will be focusing on increasing our advocacy and support towards supporting frontline agencies to respond to victim/survivors of violence along with continuing to work towards the prevention of this gender-based violence.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the WESNET staff from both the Safety Net Australia and AWAVA teams for all their work during the year. They have achieved an enormous amount and delivered some fantastic outcomes for WESNET.

We are also grateful for the ongoing partnership and support from Telstra for our work in technology safety and for donating thousands of smartphones. We are thrilled to have our work through this partnership recognised. We received our second Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Award in November 2016,

On behalf of the National WESNET Committee and staff I thank our members for your continued support of WESNET's work. Our advocacy for, support of and capacity building of the anti-violence against women sector remains front and centre as we try to support the social change gaining momentum across Australia: in the community, media and government

around what continues to be a violence against women epidemic.

As always your financial 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, with your support, advice and contribution of real life de-identified case studies, along with you working at the grass-roots level, are making a real difference as we chisel away challenging myths and stereotyping, violence supporting attitudes, and beliefs which blame victims and which excuse, justify or have empathy with perpetrators. Victims are never to blame for the abuse inflicted on them, and perpetrators are always accountable for their actions.

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".



Julie Oberin
National Chair



AWAVA Report

WESNET is the lead agency and contract manager for the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA).

AWAVA staff are a small team based in Canberra under the leadership of Dr Merrindahl Andrew. AWAVA is focused on all forms of violence against women and has undertaken incredible work since being funded in 2010. 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. Below is a short report on AWAVA’s work.

AWAVA’s advocacy efforts over the year have been focused on three main areas of work. A few highlights in these three areas are:



The role of specialist women’s services in responding to and preventing violence against women and children.

AWAVA has worked alongside other community organisations to advocate for funding security for these services, and recognition of the distinctive role of women’s services. AWAVA were part of the campaign to #saveNPAH (the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness), which contributed to a decision by the Australian Government to extend NPAH and create a [new agreement](#) [1] with funding certainty for homelessness services.



Supporting the implementation of the National Plan.

AWAVA made substantial input to the drafting of the [Third Action Plan](#) [2] under the National Plan and has continued to play a role in linking the women’s services sector with policy development in this area. Partly as a result of their advocacy, the Third Action Plan document includes references to the role of specialist women’s services – this is the first time a National Plan / Action Plan has done so. AWAVA is now represented on the Working Group contributing to the Third Action Plan activities in the area of housing and homelessness.



Access to justice for women and children living with or at risk of violence.

Following on from AWAVA’s other policy work in this area, AWAVA recently produced a [major issues paper on sexual violence law reform and access to justice](#) [3], which they will use as a platform for their advocacy in this area. They made [submissions to family law inquiries](#) [4] and supported Women’s Legal Services Australia’s Safety First in Family Law campaign, which was recently successful in securing from the Australian Government a commitment to ban direct cross-examination of victims/survivors by their abusers in family law cases.



If you haven’t already please go to www.awava.org.au and see the wonderful work that AWAVA is doing.

[1] http://www.budget.gov.au/2017-18/content/glossies/factsheets/html/HA_17.htm. [2] <https://plan4womenssafety.dss.gov.au/the-national-plan/third-action-plan/> [3] <http://awava.org.au/2017/05/19/research/sexual-violence-law-reform-access-justice>. [4] <http://awava.org.au/2017/0/0/submissions>



Other Work

Internationally, AWAVA has participated in the Commission on the Status of Women meeting in New York in March 2017, as well as coordinating NGO access to the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women during her visit in February 2017. AWAVA's international conference, co-hosted with Our Watch in September 2016, was a major success – you can read a report from the conference [here](#).



DELAIDE CONV

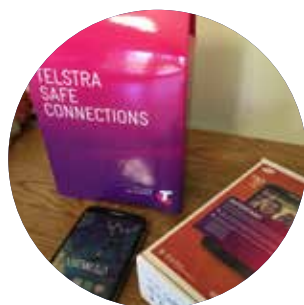


Workers want technology safety training. They see how powerful it is when a woman can finally identify how her abuser keeps finding out where she is, and come up with a plan that keeps her connected and safe.

Safety Net Australia Report

Technology safety for women

2016-17 has been a great year for the Safety Net Australia Project, with WESNET growing the reach and impact of Safe Connections, delivering more training events, and hosting its first Technology Safety Summit.



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.

Training

Safety Net offers training for front-line workers on technology safety topics

Support

Safety Net provides support to front-line workers working with women experiencing technology facilitated abuse

Advice

Safety Net advises policy makers and technology companies on safety and privacy issues

Access to Tech

Safe Connections program offers women experiencing violence free smartphones so they can have a safe way to connect

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.

We believe all women have the right to benefit from the digital revolution. Too often, we hear of victim-blaming responses to technology facilitated abuse, which minimise the harm it causes and/or fails to hold perpetrators of violence accountable for their actions.

Telling women to stop using technology because they are being abused, compounds their isolation, and reduces access to personal and

professional support networks.

Having access to a new mobile phone is a good first step, however a new phone alone, isn't enough to create safety. It's by connecting with a skilled worker who can help identify how an abuser is misusing technology, and work with a victim to create a technology safety strategy, that gains in women's safety and inclusion are made.

Growing Safe Connections

Safe Connections is a partnership between Telstra and WESNET which provides new smartphones and pre-paid credit to women affected by family and domestic violence, via a national network of front line organisations. Now, with funding from the Australian Government

Department of Social Services, WESNET delivers a two-hour curriculum about Smartphones and Safety to participating frontline agencies and other interested stakeholders, as well as providing public resources on techsafety.org.au.

In 2016-17, WESNET doubled the number of frontline agencies participating in Safe Connections, making free smartphones available in 181 agencies across the country. The growth in the network of participating agencies has amplified the accessibility and impact of the program for victim-survivors. In the twelve months to June 2017, there were 2,124 victim-survivors who had received a free smartphone, and a further 1,775 phones had been given to frontline agencies, ready for victim-survivor use.

To support the growth of the program, WESNET engaged four administrative staff and two national trainers, to support the National Director. Safe Connections grew substantially in 2016-17 in terms of participating agencies, phones given to the women and staffing, and is expected to continue to grow strongly, in accordance with demand

(cont...)

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for technology safety advice, training and smartphones for victim-survivors.

Education and training

Funded by the Department of Social Services as part of the Federal Government's \$100m Women's Safety Package, WESNET's national trainers developed a two-hour curriculum Smartphones and Safety, which focuses on how smartphones can be misused to abuse, stalk, or harass another person and strategies for responding. Participants learn the different ways

that abusers misuse smartphone technology, how to identify which phone technology is being misused, and assist clients in developing safety and evidence-collection strategies to address phone technology-facilitated abuse. The training was rolled out from March 2017, and by end of June 2017, WESNET had delivered 97 training events to over 1,111 frontline workers from 197 organisations. This included three customised training events for specialised audiences, including police. Feedback from participants to date

has been overwhelmingly positive, with 98 per cent of post-training survey respondents indicating that they felt more confident assisting their clients respond to technology facilitated abuse.

In addition to the training events we have delivered, we provided advice and support to frontline workers on over 60 instances of technology facilitated abuse in the period Aug 2016 – Jun 2017, demonstrating that there is significant demand in the sector for specialised technology safety advice



In a survey of training participants
98% of respondents
said they felt
more confident in
assisting their clients
experiencing tech
abuse



two new
websites



2nd Crime
Prevention
Award



Two new tech
safety trainers
joined the
team

1 tech
summit

We train workers to think about how women can use technology to minimise her risks and maximise her opportunities to connect with supportive people.



for women experiencing domestic and family violence.

Inaugural Technology Safety Summit

In November 2016, WESNET hosted its inaugural Technology Safety Summit in Sydney. A one-day event, it attracted over 100 delegates from sectors including legal, police, welfare, family violence and digital technology. The program featured WESNET and NNEDV technology safety experts and trainers, talking about technology, women, and safety. Highlights included

a keynote speech from Dr Hugh Bradlow, Chief Scientist, Telstra, and an all-female panel discussion between representatives from Telstra, Facebook, Google and Twitter, facilitated by Cindy Southworth, Executive Vice President, NNEDV.

Day 2 of the conference was a closed invitation-only session, which facilitated collaboration between key stakeholders including government departments, NNEDV, the Office of the eSafety Commissioner, academic criminologists, ACCAN, Internet Advocates, technology

companies (Uber and Telstra) and representatives from NGOs working with women experiencing violence. WESNET's inaugural Tech Safety Summit provided frontline workers with a new opportunity to learn about technology safety in the context of domestic violence, and encouraged the initiating and strengthening of cross-sector relationships and collaborations. We looking forward to building on the successes of the inaugural event in coming years.



Training events
97

395 tech
abuse calls



1,919 to
1800WESNET



1,111 Frontline
workers trained

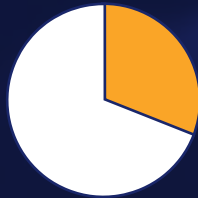
trained
197
orgs

WESNET-Telstra Safe Connections Statistical Snapshot 2016-17

Telstra and WESNET have been partnering since 2014 to provide pre-paid smartphones with \$30 credit to women impacted by domestic and family violence. With funding support from the Commonwealth Government through the Women's Safety Package, WESNET has been able to significantly grow the program's reach and impact during the financial year. The program now also involves upskilling frontline workers through face-to-face technology safety training.

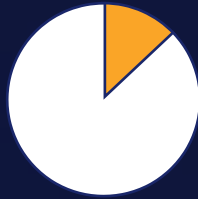
Demographics

31%



Aboriginal and/
or Torres Strait
Islander

13%



Immigrant,
refugee & non-
English speaking
background

7%



women with
disability

Many of the women accessing the phones identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, of immigrant refugee and/or from a non-English speaking background or as a woman with a disability.

Frontline Agencies



181 Agencies
+201%

The number of frontline agencies with the program doubled during 2016-17

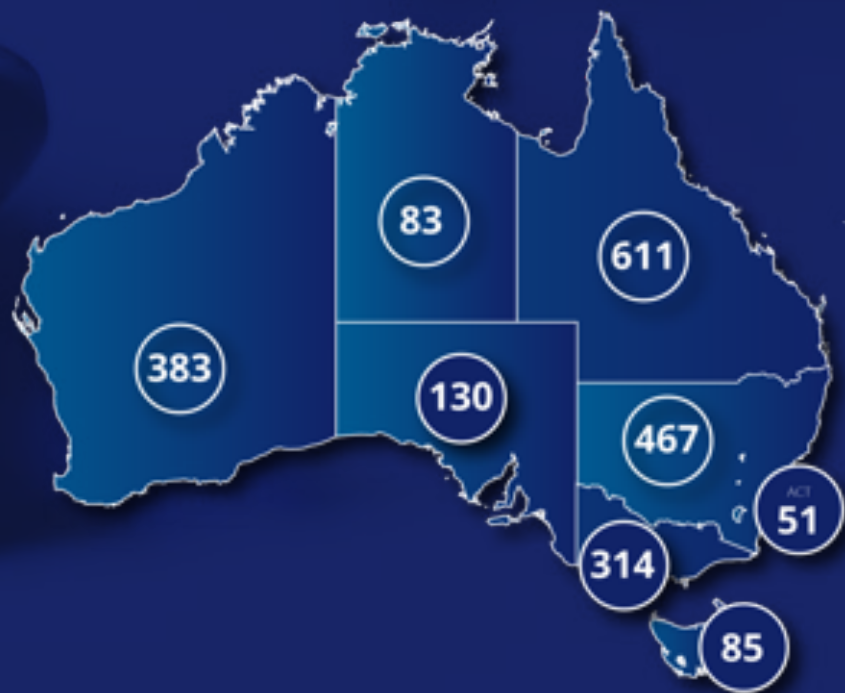
A total of 3,289 phones have been handed out since the program began.

Women in all States and Territories of Australia have received phones through one of the 181 frontline agencies who are a part of the program.

Phones given out since commencement

3,289 phones

Phones given to women by State and Territory



Phones given to women in 2016-17

2,124 phones

In the twelve months to June 2017, 2,124 survivors have received phones. There are another 1,775 phones with 181 frontline agencies ready to be provided to the next woman who needs one.

Most survivors have been female. Some phones have also been provided to male dependents.

Gender Demographics



2%



98%



"I look forward to this event continuing annually to provide a solid platform for technology discussion and the sharing of information."





WESNET hosted the inaugural Technology Safety Summit Australia in Sydney on 21 November 2016
Thankyou to our principal sponsor Telstra for their support



Treasurer's report

Margaret Augerinos

The last financial year has seen continued growth for WESNET, with income of \$1,600,369 compared to \$555,903 the previous financial year. This is mainly due to our continued partnership with Telstra and funding from the Commonwealth Government focusing on training front-line workers and supporting women impacted by domestic violence to stay safely connected.

Membership revenue has remained fairly stable, however, a key part of our next strategic plan will be working on increasing the membership of WESNET, as these fees are essential to WESNET's continuing activities.

WESNET ended the year with an overall profit of \$54,140.

Our assets at 30 June 2017 were \$961,006, with liabilities of \$865,228. Most of these liabilities relate to

payments/grants in advance and associated end of financial year liabilities. Our equity at 30 June 2017 was \$95,778.

The audit was again an unqualified audit and on behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank Lisa Thomas for her work during the year in managing the finances.

Margaret Augerinos
Treasurer

Another year of growth for the Women's Services Network



Financial Summary

2016-17

Below is a summary of our audited financial statements. A full copy of the 2016-2017 audit is available on request. The audit of our financial records was completed in October 2017 by RSD Audit Pty Ltd.

	2017 \$	2016 \$
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS		
Cash Flows From Operating Activities		
Net cash provided by operating activities	231,035	469,947
Net increase in cash held	231,035	469,947
Cash on hand at the end of financial year	937,653	706,618
INCOME STATEMENT		
Revenue	1,600,369	555,903
Expenses	1,546,229	538,922
Net current year surplus	54,140	16,980
BALANCE SHEET		
Assets		
Current Assets	961,006	751,148
Non-Current Assets	0	0
Total Assets	961,006	751,148
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities	865,228	709,510
Non-current Liabilities	0	0
Total Liabilities	865,228	709,510
Net Assets	95,778	41,638
Total Equity	95,778	41,638

