

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

A YEAR OF GROWTH



WOMEN'S
COMMUNITY
SHELTERS

Contents

- 2 Contents
- 2 Acknowledgement of Country
- 3 Domestic and Family Violence Crisis
- 4 Executive Reports
- 6 Vision & Values
- 7 What We Do
- 8 5 Year Highlights
- 9 2023 Year In Review
- 10 Impact & Innovation
- 12 People
- 14 Supporters
- 16 Financial Review

Acknowledgement of Country

The Haven - Nepean Women's Shelter recognises the First Nations people of this land and their ongoing connection to culture and country.

We acknowledge First Nations people and Torres Strait Islanders as the Traditional Owners, Custodians and Lore Keepers of the world's oldest living cultures, and pay our respects to their Elders - past and present.

As we work to address the pressing issues of domestic and family violence and homelessness, we must recognise the strength and resilience of these communities, who have endured these challenges for generations.

We also acknowledge the ongoing consequences of colonisation, which continue to impact these communities today.

We acknowledge the importance of self-determination, and we are committed to listening to and learning from these communities as we work together to create a safer, more inclusive society for women and children escaping homelessness and domestic and family violence.

The Domestic & Family Violence Crisis

Every week, on average one woman is killed by a current or former partner.⁽¹⁾

Between April 2022 and March 2023, there were 1,551 domestic and family violence (DFV) offences reported within our local region.⁽²⁾



1,551



Source: 1. Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS). 2018.
2. NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. 2023

Extraordinary Growth, Empowering Community

2022/2023 was no ordinary year for The Haven - Nepean Women's Shelter. We have seen extraordinary growth not only in the need for our services but in our internal structures and the support we are now able to offer to women and children in need.

Starting with our retro disco and ending with a community ball, we danced our way through the year and set our sights on supporting more women and children.

We applied for the new Core and Cluster funding from the NSW State Government and were successful.

Partnering with Women's Community Shelters and Evolve Housing, we secured The Haven Residences. The Residences provide 11 self contained units for crisis accommodation and rapid rehousing. In May 2023 we opened stage 1 and began welcoming women and children. We are proud to say we were the first to establish and operate under this core and cluster model and this successful expansion is a testament to all who worked and assisted on the project.

We can now provide accommodation and support for 44 women and 113 children per annum across both our Shelter and Residences.

Sadly, the trajectory of family and domestic violence within our community and society continues to escalate unabated. We want to do more than provide crisis accommodation and case work support for women and children staying at the Shelter, the Residences and in our outreach program.

To this end, we have continued with our enormously successful schools' program with WCS's Walk the Talk program, which seeks to shift culture and attitudes amongst young people.

We are deeply grateful to the individuals, businesses, politicians, sporting groups, mum's groups, school children, local community groups, university groups, faith based groups and other charities who always have the women and children of The Haven in their minds.

The work The Haven does cannot be done in isolation. It can only be done in and with community. Change can only occur with the commitment of dedicated individuals who collectively come together in some way to make a change. And that is what The Haven community is doing, together. For that we are grateful.

A very special thanks to all of The Haven staff for their dedication, professionalism, compassion, commitment and diligence. Our staff are the soul of our organisation. Thank you to our fellow board members who continue to donate their time, skill and resources to lead The Haven.

Finally, and most importantly, to the women and children who have called The Haven home, we commend you on your bravery and we hope that you see that behind you is a community of people and business who wish you safety, strength, security and lives free of violence.

Sharon Levy
Chair

Natalie Falvey
Co-Chair

Leading with Vision, Inspiring Success



Innovation, Growth and Connection are the words that capture 2022/23 at The Haven.

We commenced the year with a purposeful vision to utilise the thoughtful feedback of clients, sector research and the teams innovative ideas to grow The Haven, in both programs and safe beds. The Haven has a firm foundation in community, intelligent and experienced sector staff, strong leadership and the commitment and skills of our volunteer Board. Through a pioneering partnership between The Haven, Women's Community Shelters and Evolve Housing, we launched a ground-breaking project The Haven Residences, the first of its kind in NSW under the Core & Cluster funding.

Establishing The Haven Residences, enabled us to expand capacity from 6 women with or without children, to 17 women with or without children, who are experiencing homelessness due to domestic violence, family violence and/or sexual assault. We have more than doubled the size of our team including specialist case workers, team leaders, program coordinators, child support workers and youth connections workers.

Connection is a fundamental pathway to safety for all who live, work and volunteer at The Haven. I want to thank every Woman, young person and child at The Haven for trusting us with your safety. It is my privilege to witness a woman or family leave The Haven and walk into their future with purpose, safety and support.

Clients share not only their experiences of trauma with us, but their great joys and self-reflection around their growth. We have the honour of witnessing babies take their first steps, women get their first job, people learning to cook from one another, fear when first arriving transformed into singing and dancing in the shelter, cultural celebrations and oh the food!

The Haven continues to create a deep sense of belonging. The amazing people who have made it possible over this last year and whom continue to build connection, strength and support from the depths of traumatic experiences, are jewels of the rarest kind. Thank you to the amazing team of staff, Board, students and volunteers at The Haven; Georgie, Safia, Bradyn, Jade, Alysha, Sarah, Alice, Allison, Israa, Ashleigh, Tamlyn, Chantelle, Tash, Chloe, SMJ, Paul, Meghan, David, Alex, Ros, Erin, Sharon, Nat, Bec, Fi, Tricia, Sam A, Katherine, Kelly, Cindie, Tanya, Kate and Neena.

Thank you, Women's Community Shelters and the dynamic team at the Hub for your dedication to The Haven and commitment to growth and innovation alongside us.

With gratitude and strength,

Samantha Campbell

Executive Officer - Client Services



Mission

Our mission is to provide a safe inclusive environment to empower and inspire women and children to rebuild their lives with dignity. We do this through:

- Offering a safe haven for women and their children escaping homelessness, and domestic and family violence.
- Working in partnership with women and children to build the confidence to regain control of their lives.
- Providing services which inspire the strength to rebuild an independent life free from violence.
- Providing knowledge and support with a strengths based focus.
- Establishing a sense of community, connection and safety to enhance well being.

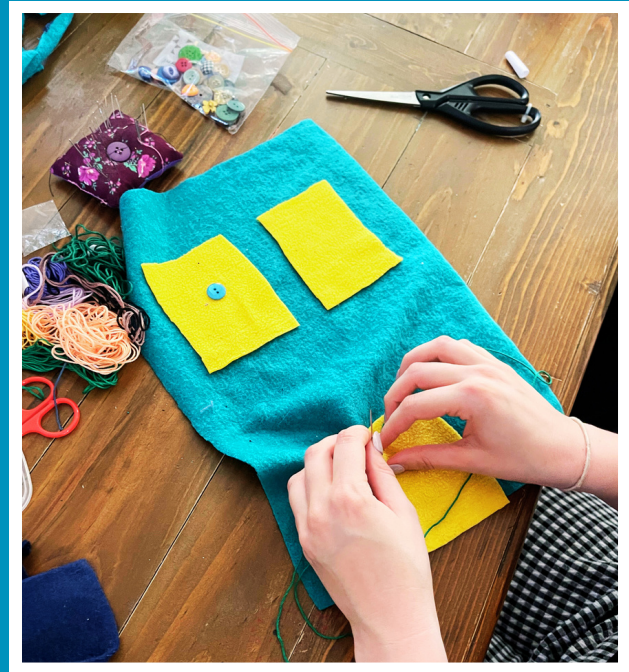
Values

Empowering: we enable women and children to develop confidence and strength in gaining control of their life, making their own decisions and claiming their rights.

Compassionate: we are respectful, non-judgemental, and understanding of our client's and other's needs.

Innovative: we seek new and creative ideas when developing and delivering programs and service for the betterment of our clients and organisation. Leading the way within our sector.

Visionary: we envision what our sector will look like in the future and develop a sustainable and suitable plan to achieve this.



What We Do



Crisis Accommodation: Capacity to support up to 44 women and 113 children per year. Providing Case Workers, Child Support Workers, Youth Connections Workers and Outreach Support.



Rapid Rehousing: Capacity to support up to 12 women and 42 children per year. Providing Case Workers, Child Support Workers, Youth Connections Workers and Outreach Support.



Programs: Include Women's Wellness, Family Connections, Youth Connections, Soaring Strengths, School Engagement, Volunteering, Building Access Disability, Inclusion and Outreach.



Community Engagement: Includes Volunteer Board, Volunteer Program, Walk The Talk, Donors, Champions and Partners.



Sector Engagement: Includes Women's Community Shelters (WCS), Evolve Housing, Nepean DV Network, DVNSW and Project Partnership People with Disabilities Australia.

Celebrating 5 Years



2017

Partnered with WCS
Board, Funds &
Property Secured

2018

Officially Opened

2019

School Engagement
Program Launched

People With Disability
Australia Building
Access Project

2020

COVID-19

2021

COVID-19

2022

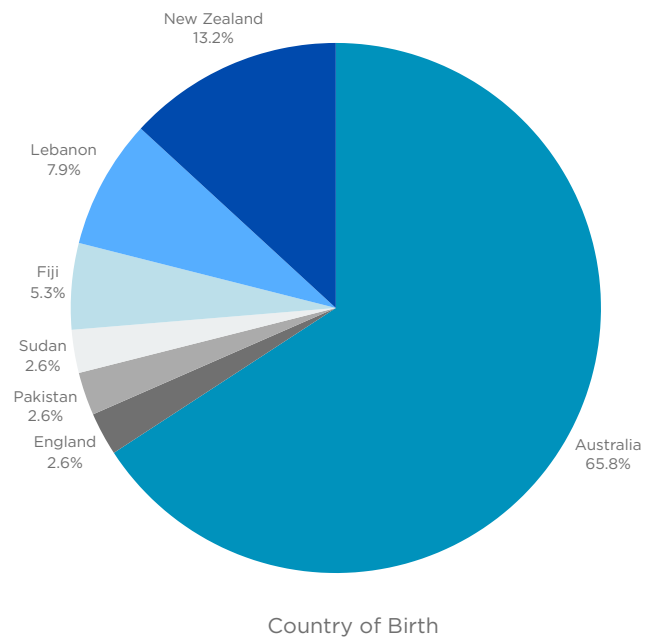
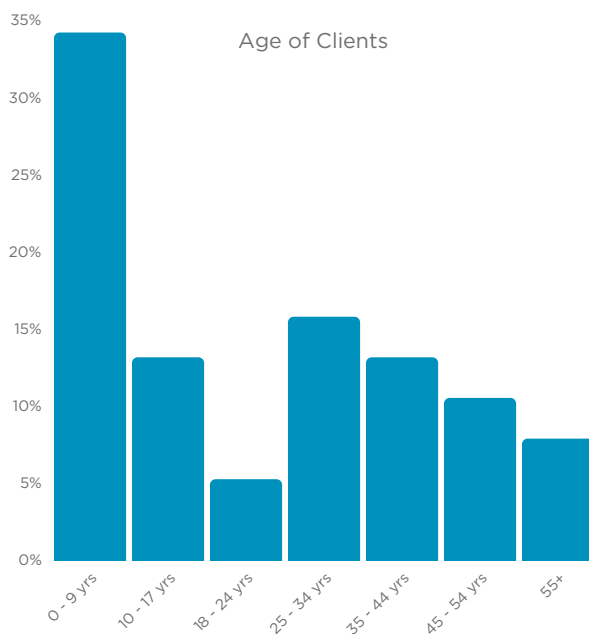
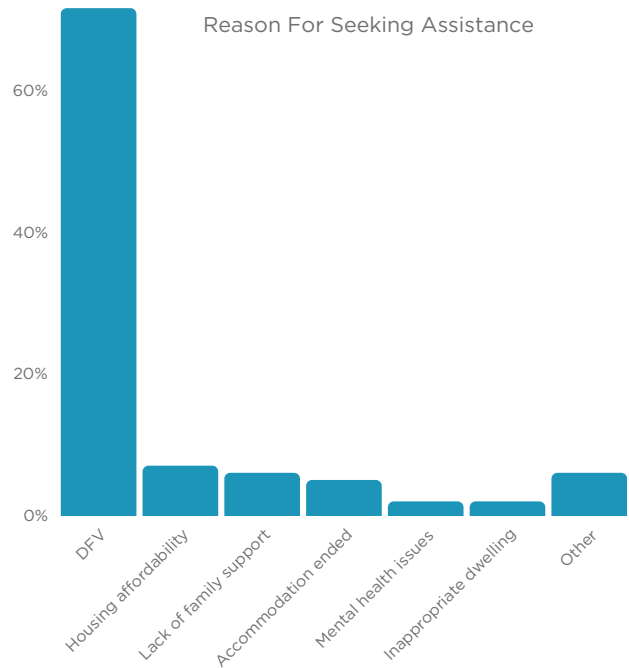
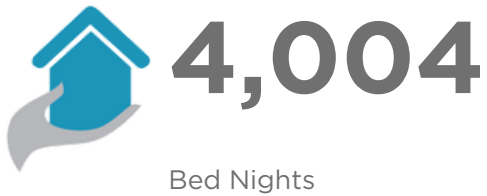
Soaring Strengths
Program Launched

Youth Connections
Program Launched

2023

5th Birthday
Mayoral Ball Fundraiser
Opened The Haven Residences

Year In Review





Impact & Innovation

Core & Cluster

In May 2023 we opened our second service site 'The Haven Residences'.

This marked the first occasion in which Women's Community Shelters has worked with a shelter in their network to use the innovative "core and cluster" accommodation model, which allowed for the expansion of The Haven.

The Haven Residences operates from an entire apartment complex and provides clients access to staff support 24 hours per day, 7 days per week through direct service delivery and on-call service provision. The project will deliver eleven fully self-contained residential units and one on site office located within the Penrith LGA. The Haven Residences will provide a mixture of core and cluster units and rapid rehousing units – for single women and women with children.

The crisis accommodation will be provided for three months, and rapid rehousing accommodation will be provided for approximately six months. Crisis accommodation is very short term, with substantial support services required, whereas rapid rehousing is a longer tenure, and targets people with less intense support needs, but still in crisis housing need.

The implementation of this project is the culmination of The Haven's strategic vision, fundamental and innovative partnerships with WCS and Evolve Housing, and the backing and support of the Nepean Community.

Impact & Innovation

Programs

In 2022 we were successful in obtaining grants for two programs that increased the support we can offer clients in service and in outreach. Both programs were co-designed with clients, to provide clients with more specialist trauma support to rebuild their lives.

Soaring Strengths Mentorship Program

The program is a pilot funded by NSW Government Department Resilience NSW. It is a unique program that connects community mentors and clients in an area of aspiration for their education and employment. The program includes job skills and supports, community workshops and paid community traineeships, with a focus on overcoming the barriers experienced by women who have experienced domestic violence, family violence and/or sexual assault.

Youth Connections Program

This program is funded by NSW Department of Communities and Justice and is a uniquely designed program by The Haven, to rebuild connection for young people aged 12- 24yo with themselves, their peers, their family, and their culture. The program was co-designed with 3 young people aged 15-17yo in shelter. The success of this pilot supported The Haven to build our Youth Connections Program into the Core & Cluster design.

Outreach Program

This program provides case work support for clients who have moved from shelter and are living in the community, working toward their goals of independence. Clients have received support for vocational training, employment, parenting and healing from trauma. Their caseworker continues to provide advocacy and support coordination which align with their goals. Trained staff members provide ongoing safety planning with clients as situations change. The program is outcomes focused and follows a person-centred practice.

Child Support Program

The Child Support Program is funded by Women's Community Shelters and supports children in shelter aged 0 - 12yo with healthy routines, identifying and supporting developmental gaps, school liaison to increase learning, and rebuilding family connection and safety. Plus links to community supports for health and specialist development needs. We have supported 15 children through this program.

Walk the Talk

The Walk the Talk Program (WTT) is delivered through Women's Community Shelter to high schools. WTT is a service learning program that provides students with literacy around gender equality and healthy relationships, then encourages them to action what they learn by supporting their local women's shelter.

Schools Engagement Program

The Haven partnered with the WTT schools to deliver a school engagement program. This includes, our staff supporting a peer leader group from each school to develop and implement their fundraising idea with a community awareness campaign.

The Haven engaged with 6 WTT schools throughout 2022/23: St Paul's Grammar School, Kingswood High School, St Luke's Catholic College, Blaxland High School, St Mary's Flexible Learning Centre and St Dominics College.

Board



Sharon Levy, Chair



Natalie Falvey, Co-Chair



Fiona Skrzypnik, Treasurer



Rebecca Jarrett-Dalton,
Secretary



Tricia Hitchen, Board



Katherine Brinks, Board



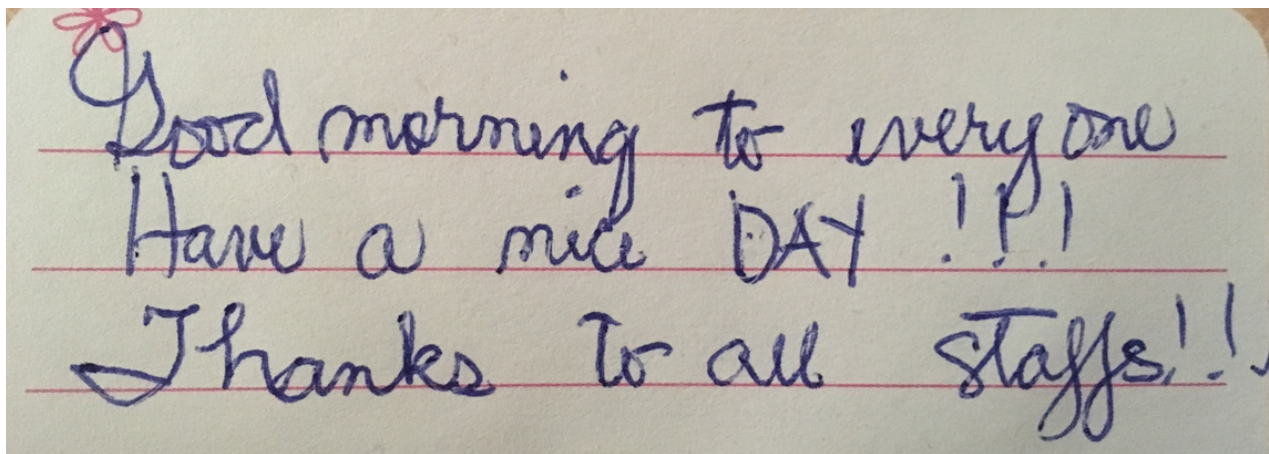
Samantha Anderson, Board



Kelly James, Board

Meet our dedicated team of professionals who have contributed their expertise, passion, and collaboration to drive our success.

Client Feedback



"Thank you for providing a safe and peaceful place to stay. Thank you for listening to me when I was stressed and despondent, providing advice and encouragement. Getting to know you and other residents has helped me to come out of my shell and learn to trust others again."
Lucy*

"On that first day I didn't think I could be anymore grateful to you for taking me in, accepting me and saving my life. Your great big hearts have put me back on the right track again. Forever grateful. Rebecca*



"This shelter is like a family home should be, it's full of love and care, you give support to everyone." Paula*

*Name changed for privacy.

Supporters

We're constantly inspired by our community of supporters, donors, fundraisers, and partners. They're the reason why we can do what we do, making a positive difference in the lives of women and children.

Sector Partners - Women's Community Shelters & Evolve Housing

The Haven, Women's Community Shelters (WCS) and Evolve Housing, proudly announced a groundbreaking partnership to increase access to shelter accommodation and support services across the Penrith LGA, NSW.

The project, known as The Haven Residences, launched during Domestic and Family Violence Prevention month in May 2023, and has received backing from the NSW Government's Domestic Violence investment funding.

Community Partners

Panthers
Penrith RSL
St Mary's League Club

Champions

Kickaboom
Frankly My Dear Coffee
Penrith Early Learning Centre
Sue Day

Grants

NSW Government
Resilience NSW
Department of Communities & Justice
Commonwealth Bank
Westfield Local Heroes

Online Community

Facebook Followers 4,280
Instagram Followers 790
LinkedIn 173

Volunteers

Together our volunteers have donated 180 hours* of their time throughout the 2022/23 financial year. Our volunteers are fundamental to The Haven operating efficiently and effectively. We thank you for your support: SMJ, Paul, Meghan, David, Alex, Ros, Erin and Jess.
*Excludes Board Hours.



Community Supporters

Thank you to all the businesses, charities and individuals who support us.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Read



Financial Review

The Haven’s capacity and positive impact has increased substantially this financial year to meet the needs of women and children in the Nepean region.

Highlights include:

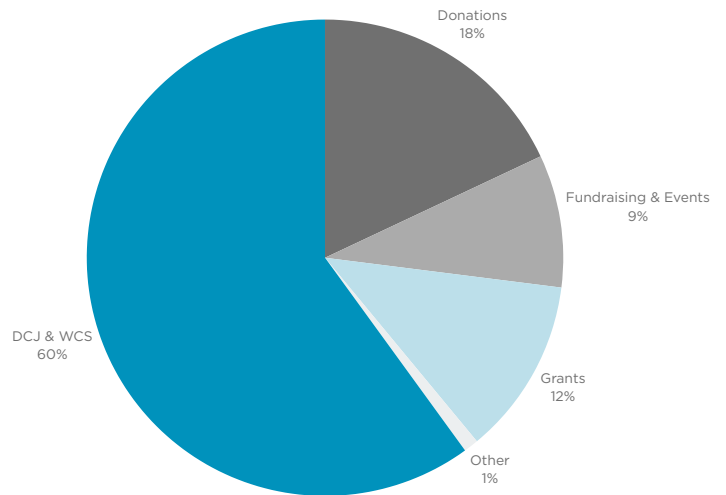
- The expansion of The Haven to a second site under the Core and Cluster funding model.
- The launch of our Youth Connections and Soaring Strengths Mentorship programs, which were funded through additional grants secured.

Critical to our success are the donations made by our community. This year donations have increased through direct giving and money raised through events held by us and by the community.

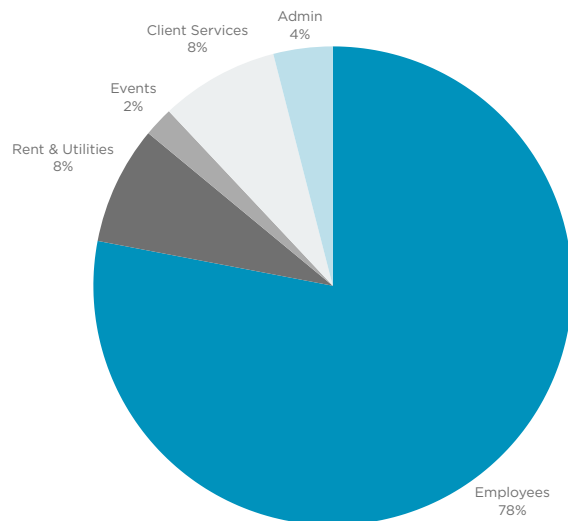
As we continue to grow and expand, so does the need for these critical donations. We are exceptionally grateful for the ongoing support we receive from our community allowing us to continue to provide a safe haven for women and children.

To support the ongoing work of The Haven, as we grow to meet our community needs, fundraising remains a necessary focus.

The full financial report is available at the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission website (acnc.gov.au) via the ‘Find a Charity’ function.



Income



Expenses



TO DONATE PLEASE VISIT THE HAVEN - NEPEAN WOMEN'S SHELTER
OR SCAN THE QR CODE



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