

# From the Chair & CEO

Miriam Moreton, Chair and Janet Saunders, CEO

The Hobart Women's Shelter (HWS) is committed to innovation and best practice as we provide support, housing and advocacy for women and children experiencing homelessness and all forms of violence.

Over the year we continued to see a high number of requests for accommodation.

From July 2020-June 2021, 76% of women and children, nearly 900 women and children in total, seeking accommodation at the Hobart Women's Shelter were turned away, as we were at capacity. These figures are more than double the national number of women who are turned away from crisis accommodation across Australia. However, we know that these figures do not reflect the true state of women requiring support, only those who know to ring the Hobart Women's Shelter, indicating the demand in Hobart for crisis, transitional and permanent housing is therefore significantly higher.

Every day the Hobart Women's Shelter listens to women who are unable to be accommodated outline the measures they will take to survive, including sleeping in cars, separating children, and leaving them with different friends. Women form 71% of all people who are not assisted by specialist homelessness services in Tasmania, this represents the highest proportion of women unassisted in any State in Australia.

We can see that women and their children are being disproportionately affected by the impact of the COVID19 pandemic and that the growth of social housing for women in Tasmania has not kept pace with the need. Family violence is a leading cause of homelessness for women in Australia and, during COVID19, violence against women and girls has been named the 'shadow pandemic'. **United Nations, Women.**

Tasmania has an affordable housing crisis that is particularly damaging for women and children facing violence.

The recent **Equity Economics Report: Nowhere To Go - The Benefits Of Providing Long Term Social Housing To Women That Have Experienced Domestic And Family Violence** states that family and domestic violence is the primary reason women and children seek specialist homelessness services, but only 3.2% are currently receiving the long-term housing solutions they need.

Policy decisions and funding allocation need to take a **gender-responsive approach to housing and other specialist services**. It needs to be recognised that women, in particular women experiencing violence, are vulnerable to experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.

## Projects and Initiatives:

### Perpetual Impact Grant

Through the Perpetual Impact Grant, we have been supported by the Isabelle Sims Foundation to design and build a house, centred on the specific needs of women and children. It will be cost-effective, flexible, secure, energy efficient, aesthetic, durable and quick to assemble and disassemble. It will adapt existing design models with a demonstrated record of cost-effective implementation. We are developing the design brief in consultation with women with lived experience of homelessness. Our learnings from this project will inform future development and strategy for the Shelter.

### Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP)

We were successful in receiving a 3-year grant from the Tasmanian Community Fund (TCF) to deliver Mentors in Violence Prevention workshops across the State. Delivered in partnership with Engender Equality, Women's Health Tasmania and the Women's Legal Tasmania, the Mentors in Violence Prevention Program is a leadership program that views all participants as empowered bystanders who can confront, interrupt, or prevent violence.

The Mentors in Violence Prevention Project is important for the whole community as it seeks to enlist all people in helping to end violence in our communities by equipping them with the skills to be effective bystanders.

This collaboration between Hobart Women's Shelter, Women's Legal Tasmania, Engender Equality and Women's Health Tasmania has been central to the way we work and deliver MVP. The combination of effort and expertise produces benefits greater than those working alone.

## Therapy Programs

### Harcourts Foundation - Therapeutic Horticultural Program

Hobart Women's Shelter was awarded a \$15,000 grant to fund landscaping and the creation of an edible garden. The project has enhanced and increased the sense of community within the Shelter and provided the women and children with new opportunities to enhance their wellbeing. Available studies within diverse settings indicate that therapeutic horticulture programs are effective for reducing stress, depression, and negative feelings, as well as promoting relaxation, social inclusion, and self-confidence.

The Therapeutic Garden Program has provided opportunities for activities such as planting, weeding, and watering for women and children and opportunities to connect to family and cultural backgrounds. The fresh produce from the gardens is used in our Cook and Connect program.

**Cook and Connect:** Growing vegetables and cooking healthy meals on a budget. We were very fortunate to have had the support of Government House Executive Chef Ainstie Wagner to not only attend the Shelter and mentor the women who joined the classes, but also to design the recipes for the classes.

**Art Programs:** Trauma informed art and craft sessions including painting, pottery, and scrapbooking.

**Women's Creative Writing:** A strength-based approach to the development of language skills, self-esteem, and confidence.

**Women in Sport:** A well-being and fitness badminton program.

**Holiday Activities:** Including social circus, shadow puppet workshops, art and craft skills, NAIDOC week activities.

We would like to thank the many individual donors and the Merridew Foundation for their continued support, and The Elsie Cameron and Elsie Flood Foundation for their investment so we can support more women, children, and young people into the 21/22 FY.

## Counselling

The Paul Ramsay Foundation provided funding to the Shelter to employ an onsite Counsellor.

A total of 107 counselling sessions have been undertaken since the position commenced in February 2021. Many of the women who attend counselling sessions will choose to use the service on multiple occasions for the duration of their time at the shelter, there have been several that have had over 10 sessions. In total 33 women have accessed counselling and on average attended 3 sessions each. The women have repeatedly expressed their appreciation in being able to use this Counselling service and expressed a range of benefits.

## With thanks

Over the last year, our volunteers have given many hours of their time to ensure successful delivery of a range of events and programs. We would like to acknowledge the dedication and work of our Volunteer Coordinator Sue, and our other volunteers, our thanks cannot be overstated.

We would like to thank our dedicated and passionate staff, and our Board for their hard work, professionalism, humility, and respect. It has been a big year with another expansion and the continuation of COVID-19. Our staff, board and volunteers have been patient, flexible and responsive to the challenges we faced throughout the year. We are excited about the future of the Hobart Women's Shelter, and will work to continue our Vision to, *"Create a safe and inclusive community free from violence, inequality and injustice"*.

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hobart  
women's  
shelter



Support, housing and  
advocacy for women and  
children experiencing  
homelessness and all  
forms of violence.

2020/2021  
Annual Report

# During 2020-21:

Hobart Women's Shelter provided

# 27,613



bed nights of accommodation

As of 30 June 2021, HWS managed:

# 25

Crisis Accommodation Properties

# 7

Transitional Accommodation Properties



## Thank you to our supporters

We continued to see support from the community grow this year, receiving many donations from generous individuals, businesses, organisations and schools wanting to make a difference. Without these donations we would not be able to introduce some of the initiatives that have made a difference to the families that we support.

Occupancy rates:

Crisis units and Transitional accommodation

# 94%



Total number of women and children that requested accommodation (this includes women that call multiple times)

# 5303

 this year

# 3517

 last year

hobart women's shelter



Puppetry



Edible Garden



Drumbeat

# 46.7%

Domestic and Family Violence was the main reason for seeking support followed by housing crisis and affordability and inadequate or inappropriate dwelling.

# 76%

of the women and children seeking crisis accommodation could not be accommodated due to being at capacity. Or 8 out of every 10 women and children, nearly 900 women and children that we couldn't support.

# 59.1%

had a housing outcome vs. 69.7% the previous year

We accommodated and supported

# 179

women



# 201

children



Autumn Crafts

Draw or write what you liked best about the activities.



This includes 20 families, including 42 children, in our Transitional accommodation properties